

TOWN PLAN 2015

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Pawlet Planning Commission has prepared this Pawlet Town Plan under the authority of the Selectboard and will submit this Plan for formal approval to the Rutland Regional Planning Commission.

This Plan is prepared pursuant to VSA 24, Chapter 117: *Municipal and Regional Planning and Development*. The Pawlet Town Plan is devised to be compatible with that Statute, with the Rutland Regional Plan, and with approved plans from adjoining communities.



This Plan seeks to reflect the objectives and needs of Pawlet's citizens and may be used as a guide to the future growth and development of the Town. In preparing this Plan, a special effort has been made to consider:

- all types of uses in the Town—including farming, residential, commercial, and industrial;
- all types of residents—including young and old, working and retired, seasonal and year-round; and
- all socioeconomic levels.



II. OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this Plan is to guide development according to the following major objectives of the Town of Pawlet:

1. Promote the health, safety, and general welfare of all the inhabitants.
2. Protect and conserve the value of property.
3. Conserve and encourage the value of community, as reflected in the examples of:
 - volunteerism,
 - neighborhood cohesion,
 - spontaneous assistance offered by townspeople to each other,
 - social supports provided by churches, schools, scouts, 4-H, and other formal and informal groups.
4. Maintain the integrity of Pawlet and West Pawlet as respective villages within the framework of the Town.
5. Achieve the best possible quality of environment for the Town's residents.
6. Provide appropriate sites in the Town for residences that will be required by population growth in the foreseeable future, including accommodating the need for affordable housing.
7. Minimize the tax burden on property owners by maintaining a community that operates efficiently and economically.
8. Emphasize the Town's support of a diverse farming economy, where both large and small operations help sustain the community, recognizing and respecting the differing needs of both farmers and non-farmers.
9. Encourage the maintenance and conservation of agricultural lands for the production of agricultural products, and promote soil conservation practices that protect the long-term productivity and viability of agricultural soils.
10. Support and promote the critical mass of external infrastructure that agriculture requires.
11. Permit, where appropriate, commercial and industrial enterprises that provide gainful employment for Town residents and augment the tax base of the Town.



12. Encourage home and cottage industries in the Town to continue and new ones to develop, as a means of enhancing the Town's community character.
13. Control residential development required for anticipated population in order to minimize both the need for additional roads in the Town and the costs of servicing them.
14. Keep the rugged and poorly accessible mountain and forest areas free from development, reserving them for forestry and other uses appropriate to their wilderness character.
15. Develop long range plans for recreation and education in cooperation with other towns and the region. Acquire sites for these facilities before development makes acquisition more difficult and costly.
16. Develop long range plans for public water supply and sewage disposal systems for village areas. In areas not served by the public systems, require a population density low enough to insure the permanent feasibility of private water supply and sewage disposal.



IMPLEMENTATION

General

In view of these major objectives, specific topics to be implemented follow. These topics are discussed below, including the means for implementing them. Implementation must be achieved through (1) changing and adopting zoning regulations and other land use controls, (2) making inclusions in the capital improvement budget as part of the Town's financial planning process, (3) developing policies, (3) cooperating with other government agencies, (4) pursuing various studies, and (5) educating residents.

Most of the responsibility for implementation rests with either the Planning Commission or the Selectboard. Sometimes one body is primarily responsible, sometimes both share responsibility and must work together. For some issues the Emergency Manager needs to take a significant role, and sometimes the Energy Group. Both, however, both operate under the authority of the Selectboard, and the cooperation of the Selectboard is essential to accomplish implementation. Keeping the Selectboard informed is therefore necessary in all cases.

Land Use and Zoning

The Planning Commission has a central role for developing issues of Land Use and Zoning that the Selectboard must incorporate into ordinances and policies.

Agriculture

One of the principal concerns of the Planning Commission lately in respect to land use and zoning is preserving and developing the agricultural heritage of the Town. To do this the Planning Commission must stay in dialog with all those engaged in agricultural pursuits, encourage public awareness of agricultural issues and needs and conservation issues, and attend to the various infrastructure concerns that are necessary to support agricultural activity.

General Land Use Concerns

Other land use concerns the Planning Commission must address include the effect of regulations in the various zones and any issues that call for modification or refinement of regulations. The issue of Village density in relation to economic development is an ongoing concern. Floodplain and other fluvial issues have come especially to prominence after the flooding caused by Tropical Storm Irene, and these issues often require working with appropriate State, regional, and Federal agencies.

Solar siting is another issue that has recently come much to the fore, one that directly affects agricultural land use.

Transportation

The Selectboard has primary responsibility for transportation and utilities and facilities in the Town.



The Selectboard needs to attend to a number of transportation issues, in many cases securing cooperation from the Agency of Transportation. Safety concerns are prominent highway issues, especially involving vehicle speed and pedestrian and bicycle safety. Grant funding can be helpful for addressing these issues.

Regarding Town highways, the emergency situation created by Tropical Storm Irene has given importance to improving the section of Chet Clark Road that has lately become significantly impassable, because it could provide the only route of travel between Pawlet and West Pawlet in severe flooding that impaires connections via State roadways.

Utilities and Facilities

A number of issues developed in this planning process require attention by the Selectboard and the Planning Commission, both jointly and separately:

- Drinking water (Planning Commission)
- Storm water drainage (Planning Commission)
- Sewage (jointly)
- Emergency Services (jointly)
- Town Hall (Selectboard)

- Capital Budget (Selectboard)
- Recreation (Planning Commission)

Ecological, Scenic, and Historical Resources

The Planning Commission should consider helping to establish a conservation commission. A conservation commission could assist the Planning Commission with a number of initiatives proposed in this Plan, and it could assist the Design Review Board with the review and evaluation of development proposals.



Education

Education is almost exclusively the concern of the Pawlet and Unified School Boards.

The Mettawee School would like the help of both the Planning Commission and the Selectboard in these ways:

- Publicizing openness to visits by parents and other community residents.
- Developing the School's partnership with emergency management.
- Supporting its function as a Red Cross shelter. Significant funding for purchase of an emergency generator has been secured, but more is needed through donation or otherwise to fund the purchase.

An ancillary concern that is developing for the Town is the potential consolidation of districts in the Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union. This could result in the loss of Pawlet's special designation of Granville middle and high schools for Pawlet students.

Energy

The Pawlet Energy Group has made a number of recommendations for the Town in the course of the current planning process. It especially recommends that the Pawlet Selectboard should confirm its support of the policies and recommendations outlined here and work with the Pawlet Energy Group to make Pawlet a place where energy resources are used so as to minimize consumption, cost, and environmental impact.

The Energy Group asks that the Selectboard set an example of energy efficiency with its properties and that it develop effective outreach programs for educating residents about important energy programs and resources, including PACE, NeighborWorks of Western Vermont, Efficiency Vermont and Green Mountain Power.

Recommendations for the Pawlet Energy Group itself:

The Pawlet Energy Group should develop a comprehensive list of energy-related programs to be implemented over the next five years and present this list to the Select Board by December 31, 2015. This list should include priorities, specific timelines, and any resources required such as allocation of town monies.

The energy group should also continue to network with other town energy groups and keep informed of relevant regional and statewide events, such as the annual VECAN meeting, climate change conferences, and the Rutland Regional Planning Commission's Energy Committee.

Flood Resilience

Flood resilience involves another set of issues that have come to the fore after the flooding caused by tropical storm Irene. These issues, like others raised by Irene, often require working with appropriate regional and State agencies.

These issues include development concerns about not worsening flooding, as well as flood hazard area mapping, restoring natural river functions, and storm water issues.

Emergency management is another concern related to flood resilience. Issues include providing assured emergency communication between the fire departments and the highway department, relocating the Pawlet Fire House and VTEL communications out of flood danger.

Coordination and outreach efforts are yet another aspect of flood resilience, planning emergency operations, educating about flood hazards, and communicating effectively with State agencies. Pursuing federal buyout funds for future disasters is another important outreach requirement.



Economic Development

A central factor in Pawlet's economic development is maintaining the character of the Town that makes it attractive to new residents in terms of its school, its community nature, and its aesthetic.

The Planning Commission and the

Selectboard must strive jointly to:

- Provide an economic climate that encourages and grows the sort of small businesses, trades, and occupations, that have thrived in the Town, and leverage past success to promote new enterprises.
- Preserve the Town's agricultural heritage and encourage development of new agricultural projects.
- Foster commercial incubation by developing means that bring together Pawlet's business people, its creative people, its not-for-profit people, its educators, and others who could provide ideas and interactive stimulation.
- Promote business opportunities afforded by fiber optic infrastructure.

The Planning Commission must attend rigorously to keeping Village Center designations current and energetically pursue the opportunities that the designations afford, including State and federal grant opportunities.

The Commission must also pay close attention to developments respecting the Town's demographic character and the needs of its residents for safe and affordable housing.



Throughout the implementation matters spoken to here and their specifics detailed in previous sections of this Plan, there run requirements for communicating with, informing, and educating the public. The Town has increasingly availed its growing digital technology resources. The original technology of email has been supplemented by Internet access and the Web and most recently by social media. This has allowed access to information and resources that formerly required visits to the Town Clerk's Office. Among other things, land records and a variety of maps are available online. The Town Clerk and others now post local news and information to social media that used to require waiting for newspapers. Residents find out readily about Town emergencies. The official website of the Town of Pawlet, www.pawlet.vt.gov, provides extensive information and could be used to greater advantage by the Town.

The Town can increase the efficiency of its functions and keep its citizens well-informed by promoting the digital literacy of its officials and staff through training and by its full adoption of digital technology. The Mettawee School ensures digital literacy for the Town's children, and peer influence fosters digital literacy in many adults. The Town's leadership can model and inspire its citizens' digital literacy, especially for those who did not grow up with the technology. Digital means have become a fundamentally useful basis for implementing the Town's plans.

THE FUTURE OF OUR TOWN WILL REFLECT THE BALANCE WE ARE ABLE TO STRIKE BETWEEN PRESERVING THE BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPE OF PAWLET AND ENCOURAGING LOCAL BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE. KEY TO THIS PROCESS IS ENGAGING THE LOCAL RESIDENTS IN TOWN PLANNING AND OTHER ASPECTS OF TOWN GOVERNMENT AND ENCOURAGING YOUNG, TALENTED PEOPLE TO LIVE IN PAWLET.

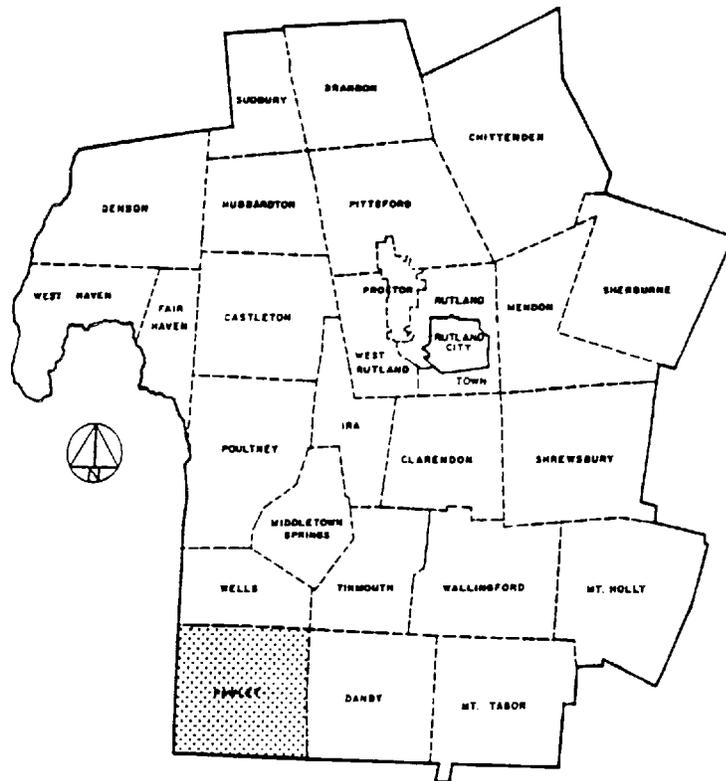
-survey respondent

III. LAND USE AND RELATED RESOURCES

LOCATION

Pawlet is located 25 miles southwest of Rutland on Vermont's western boundary. The closest urban concentration is the Village of Granville, just across the New York State line to the west. Adjacent towns to Pawlet are Wells on the north, Danby on the east, Rupert to the south and Granville and Hebron, New York, to the west.

Location of Pawlet in the Rutland Region



POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

The Town is rural in nature with several population concentrations. The two major population centers are Pawlet Village, located at the junction of Routes 30 and 133, and West Pawlet, located at the junction of Route 153 with Railroad Street and Egg Street, close to the Town border with Granville, New York. The Town offices are located in Pawlet Village. West Pawlet developed around the

former railroad depot and the slate industry, which operated numerous quarries in the vicinity.

Smaller concentrations of population are located at Spruce Gum (east of West Pawlet) North Pawlet, Spanktown (north of Pawlet Village), the Town Hill development (east of Pawlet Village), and Jockey Street (south of Pawlet Village). The area on Route 149 adjacent to the New York State border town of Granville has historically been a thickly settled area of mixed use—housing, commercial, and industrial. It is also the site of recent development. Other concentrations of residential development are beginning to form in the area of Blossom’s Corners, located at the junction of Routes 30 and 149, and in the vicinity of Edgerton Hill, in the northeast quadrant of the town.

MAJOR HIGHWAYS

The principal highway in the Town, Route 30, runs roughly southeast to northwest through the Town. Route 30 begins in Brattleboro and terminates in Middlebury. The other major highway in the Town, Route 133, begins at the intersection with Route 30 in Pawlet Village, heads easterly less than a mile and runs northeasterly to the four-corner meeting point of Pawlet-Wells-Tinmouth-Danby and ends finally in West Rutland.

TOPOGRAPHY

A ridge of mountains, the most prominent physical characteristic of the Town, runs through it in a northerly direction. The highest elevation on it is Bald Mountain at 2,088 feet. A parallel ridge lies to the east, its peaks just beyond the borders of the Town. The slopes of this latter range within the southeastern Town borders rise over 2200 feet, up toward the 3110-foot peak of Woodlawn Mountain in Danby. The lowest elevation in the Town, 421 feet, occurs in the Mettawee River Valley, which runs through the Town from southeast to northwest, on the eastern side of the principal mountain ridge. The Valley, in its breadth, is both a significant feature of the Town and a notable topographic feature in comparison to narrow valleys in much of the rest of the State. The Mettawee River,



The Mettawee River Valley, south view from Haystack summit.

flowing through the Valley, links most of the settlements in the Town and lessens the impact of the natural barrier of mountains that separate Pawlet Village from West Pawlet. A second major river, the Indian River, flows from south to north near the western border of the Town and into New York State, where in Granville, New York, it joins the Mettawee, which ultimately flows into Lake Champlain.

The Mettawee River Valley, primarily, and the Indian River, to a lesser extent, provide Pawlet with broad level land that contributes to the persistence of farming in Pawlet, in contrast to the situation that farming has generally ceased in the hilly regions of Vermont, because it is no longer economically viable there. Climactically, Pawlet is the southernmost town to experience the effect of Lake Champlain, which moderates temperatures and provides a longer growing season for Pawlet than for locations to the south and east. This is another benefit for farming in Pawlet.

LAND USE PATTERNS AND CURRENT/FUTURE ZONING

Land Use

Agriculture, especially dairy farming, constitutes the most prominent land use in



the Town. The lands in the valleys of the Mettawee River, Flower Brook, and the Indian River and along the Route 133 corridor are used extensively for farming and dairying. A significant number of these lands have been protected from development by conservation trusts. In 2013 the Town adopted Unified Bylaws which

promote clustered development, thereby affording a new level of protection for agricultural and open lands.

The industrial uses in the Town are principally quarrying and processing of slate and gravel, trucking, and bulk fuel storage. There are self-employed tradespersons, construction and excavation contractors, landscapers, and loggers, and there are numerous cottage industries, including weaving, pottery, cabinetry, cut and pierced lampshades, jewelry, and sewing. There are also numerous commercial activities that are facilitated by the development of the digital/electronic/computer realm and its Internet manifestations. They include illustration, graphic design, publishing, and video production. Several commercial

establishments are also present in the Town, including ones that provide retail, banking, and professional services.

Residential development is dense in the West Pawlet and Pawlet villages, with approximately 61 residences in Pawlet Village and 132 in West Pawlet. Commercial establishments are interspersed with residential development in both villages.

Pawlet Village and West Pawlet are currently designated as Village Centers by the State of Vermont. Village Center designation is an important tool used to protect and enhance the characteristics of the areas that are valued by the community. The designations can improve Pawlet's vitality and livability by supporting the goals of this plan, including those regarding land use. The Designated Village Centers are shown on the Future Land Use Map.

Authorized by 24 V.S.A. §2793a, Village Center designation recognizes and encourages local efforts to revitalize Vermont's traditional village centers. In accord with the land use goals of the State of Vermont, the designation encourages compact village centers surrounded by working rural lands. The designation must be renewed every five years.

Older housing is located in a linear pattern along the roads of the Town, in the historic New England manner. Newer housing is generally located away from roads, partly in clustered developments, which permits less and more efficient roadways and can foster a sense of community within the cluster.

Current Zoning

The current zoning regulations (Unified Bylaws) of the Town define the following principal districts:

Highland (H). The Highland District consists of all land in the Town above 1500 feet elevation. The purpose of this District is to protect the forest resources, the natural beauty, the purity of the watershed headwaters, and the more delicate ecological balance of these areas.

Flood Plain (FP). The Flood Plain Overlay consists of the areas of the Town, directly adjoining streams, which have been covered with water during flood periods. The purpose of this District is to protect the health, safety, and property of the residents and to preserve the areas for farming and limited recreational purposes.

River Corridor (RC). The River Corridor Protection Overlay designates the land area adjacent to a river that is required to accommodate the dimensions, slope, planform, and buffer of the naturally stable channel and that is necessary for the natural maintenance or natural restoration of a dynamic equilibrium condition and for minimization of fluvial erosion hazards, as delineated by the Agency of Natural Resources in accordance with river corridor protection procedures (10 V.S.A. Chapter 32 § 752.)

The River Corridor and Floodplain Management Program, developed by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), delineates areas subject to

fluvial erosion. Full details can be found at http://floodready.vermont.gov/flood_protection/river_corridors_floodplains/river_corridors.

Forest and Agriculture (FA). The Forest and Agriculture District consists primarily of land below 1500 feet elevation which has slopes of more than 15%. The purpose of this District is to limit residential use therein to a sufficiently low density to preserve water purity and insure safe and adequate sewage disposal.

Industrial (I). The Industrial District is in the western part of the Town adjacent to and including the present location of quarrying operations. The purpose of this District is to promote the general welfare and the sound economic development of the Town and to encourage the best use of land in areas most appropriate for the location of suitable industrial establishments, but not to exclude agricultural use.

Village and Commercial (VC). The purpose of the Village and Commercial District is to combine residential use with compatible commercial establishments in the traditional village pattern in order to provide pleasant living conditions and to promote convenient shopping and service facilities.

Agriculture and Rural Residential (ARR). The purpose of the Agriculture and Rural Residential District is to insure the preservation of the natural resources and the rural and scenic qualities of areas that are planned to be predominantly agricultural and residential in character.

The adoption of Unified Bylaws in 2013 has given a significant additional dimension to zoning regulations. The Unified Bylaws have added a Flood Plain and a River Corridor Protection Overlay. Notably, they promote clustered development, which facilitates growth while affording an enhanced prospect of protection for agricultural and open lands. The adoption of subdivision regulations in the Unified Bylaws has changed the Town's Act 250 classification from one to ten-acre, which has transferred the regulation of some development from the District Commission to a Town Development Review Board.

The specifics of land use described above, as they apply to the various areas of the Town, are detailed by the maps preserved in the office of the Town Clerk and available on the Town website www.pawlet.vt.gov.

Future Zoning

Major topics that have recently become increasingly important for land use policies and planning concern agriculture, solar siting, and storm water management.

Agriculture

Agriculture has traditionally been and continues to be a major and distinctive feature of land use in Pawlet. The Mettawee River Valley and, to a lesser extent, the Indian River Valley, provide Pawlet with broad, level land and highly valued soils that contribute to the persistence of farming in the town, especially dairy farming. However, given shifting economic and workforce conditions, the decline in the number of exclusively bovine dairy farms has freed up good land for other agriculture ventures. Much of the prime cropland has been protected from development by inclusion in the Mettawee Valley Conservation Project.

Section XII Economic Development provides more detail about agricultural and other business developments.



The shift in Pawlet's agriculture over the past several decades warrants careful attention if the town is to retain its rural character. In 1974, there were 39 dairy farms in Pawlet, shipping milk from 2390 cows. At present, in 2015, there are fewer than 10 dairies shipping milk from approximately 1200 cows.

Other agricultural enterprises include production of vegetables, vine crops, beef, pork, maple goods, and some fruits.

Solar Siting

Recent concern for renewable energy and the allocation of subsidies for technologies that provide it has led to increasing initiatives for solar development projects. The existence of three phase electrical power lines in Pawlet provides attractive opportunities for siting these projects. The Town desires, however, that these projects be limited to designated industrial zones, which are readily available.

The Town does not want to see solar generation facilities and their ancillary infrastructure situated in places that occupy currently used agricultural and forestry lands, nor on those lands not currently in use for large scale farming, but that are potentially useful for new agricultural uses and their supporting infrastructure.

Neither does the Town want to see solar generation facilities nor their ancillary infrastructure situated in ways that compromise the Town's rural aesthetic, extraordinary view shed, and valuable place on The Stone Valley Byway. These

Residents value agriculture

Approximately 40% of respondents responding to a survey conducted for this Plan indicate that protecting farms and farmland is the most important of various issues regarding Pawlet's future. No other issue is so outstanding. See also Appendix B.

features provide important lures for tourism as well as attractions for the sort of residential development that has historically brought otherwise city-dwellers to the Town, providing employment for construction trades, landscapers, and other services required by second home owners and retirees. Additionally, the recent provision of fiber optic connectivity makes it inviting for remote workers and entrepreneurs to relocate from urban areas to Pawlet's more enjoyable environment. It is a false bargain that would trade the economic benefit gained from tourism and residential advantage for a few kilowatts of electricity that often benefit out-of-state financial interests.

Storm Water Management

A comprehensive, effective system of storm water management combines Low Impact Development (LID) and Green Storm water Infrastructure (GSI). Details are discussed in *Section V, Utilities and Facilities*.

Recommendations for Land Use and Zoning

To implement the objectives cited by this Plan, the following recommendations are made respecting future zoning and land use:

- Provide strong support for the continuation of traditional agriculture as well as for innovative endeavors, including enterprises that add value in terms of production and processing or by provision of complementary services.
- Pay special attention to the infrastructure needed to support agriculture, maintaining sufficient agricultural activity to keep providers of infrastructure economically viable.
- Find ways to facilitate maintenance of large conserved parcels in light of agricultural operations that require smaller footprints.
- Modify industrial zoning, presently a single district, into two types of districts, heavy and light. Locations of these districts and the kinds of activities allowed in each should take into account existing uses and issues such as noise, site safety, materials storage, operating hours, site lighting, and parking.
- The parking problem in the Pawlet and West Pawlet village and commercial (VC) districts should be more fully addressed. Many of the smaller, pre-existing commercial lots have inadequate areas for parking. In such cases, common-parking areas should be developed, or areas for overflow parking should be identified.
- Development of affordable housing should be facilitated in compact village centers.
- Enhance the flexibility of land use regulations to accommodate and facilitate new developments in agriculture and the protection of the resources that support them.
- Continue working with the appropriate State agencies and organizations to develop policies and plans regarding river corridors and floodplains.

- Undertake policy initiatives to insure that solar generation facilities and their ancillary infrastructure are situated in places that do not compromise the Town’s values.

RESOURCES

In addition to the treatment here, resources are variously addressed in the Sections *IV Transportation*; *V Utilities and Facilities*; *VI Ecological, Scenic, and Historic Resources*; and *VIII Energy*.

Water

The Town is favored in its water resources. It has adequate supplies for the personal use of its residents, as well as rivers, streams, and wetlands that provide recreation and natural beauty. The latter aspect of water resources is addressed here, and in *Section VI, Ecological, Scenic, and Historic Resources*. The former aspect of water resources is addressed in *Section V, Utilities and Facilities*.

The Town should continually seek to protect its water resources—rivers, streams, marshes, and other wetlands. To insure the full protection of these resources by federal and state laws, the Town should seek to make their designation especially clear in respect to:

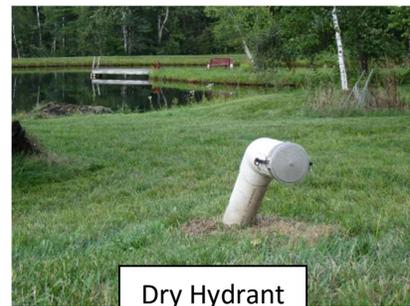
- areas along the Mettawee and Indian Rivers and the streams in their watersheds,
- the adjoining marshes and wetlands,
- the marshes and wetlands along the Town’s northern and southwestern borders,
- resources for agricultural irrigation and for processing of agricultural products to ensure the quality of water for these uses,
- the importance of water access for fire and emergency use.

As scientific understanding of streams and waters continues to develop, ongoing efforts should be undertaken taken to preserve the quality of these resources within the Town.

Water resources are also treated in *Section V, Utilities and Facilities* and *Section VI, Ecological, Scenic, and Historic Resources*.

Wildlife

It is critically important in the planning process to appreciate the impact of land use on the existence and viability of wildlife ecosystems. Wildlife is plentiful within the Town. Particularly notable are animal populations of deer, wild turkey, and bear. Besides animal wildlife, several areas of notable ecology are present in the



Town. Policy and planning considerations regarding these resources are treated in *Section VI, Ecological, Scenic and Historic Resources*.

Highways

The highways of the Town represent an important resource for the mobility of its residents and its visitors. They are also important because they facilitate emergency services. Their safety and adequacy are critical.

Highways are treated extensively in *Section IV, Transportation*. Highways are significant also respecting land use. One of the historic influences of the automobile has been the tendency for strip development. Strip development has many negative impacts, including traffic congestion, threats to safety, and visual ugliness. The highway corridors—Routes 30, 133, 149, and 153—should be preserved from purely linear development at least by limiting curb cuts. Development should also be encouraged to take place in clusters away from these highway corridors by limiting road access to these corridors. The Unified Bylaws adopted in 2013 make significant gains toward realizing these purposes.

Any new private road construction in the Town should be done by and at the expense of the owners or developers of the subject lands. Such roads should be constructed according to the appropriate Town or State road standards, even though the Town is not obligated to accept them as Town roads. It is especially important that these roads afford easy access for emergency vehicles. Recent State regulations stipulate the importance of covenants between abutters for the maintenance of common private roads in areas of development.

The mileage of roads the Town must maintain and remove snow from should be kept to a reasonable minimum to stabilize the Town's highway costs.

Minerals

Sand and Gravel

Sand and gravel deposits are abundant throughout the Town. Many of these deposits are actively being extracted. Most pits lie within Agricultural and Rural Residential (ARR) districts and represent conditional uses therein. Existing zoning regulations govern these uses.

The primary concern of the Town is that extraction shall not: reduce a site to waste land; disrupt water tables; nor produce other effects, such as silting, which damage adjoining property. If extraction is done in phases, as is often required by Act 250 requirements, reclamation should be completed for each phase before a new phase is undertaken.

Clay

Though none is extracted presently, deposits of clay that may be commercially viable are found in the Town.

Slate

The vein of colored slate found in the western part of Pawlet is unique in the world. The vein runs for about 25 miles from Rupert, Vermont, to north of Castleton, Vermont. A mile at its greatest width, it straddles the Vermont–New York border. The slate in this vein is unique for the variety of its colors—green, gray, purple, red—in combination with the strength of the material. Companies mining this slate are small and family-owned, with one exception. Some of the companies and their milling operations are based in Vermont, others in New York, but they may draw from quarries in either state.



The major products of slate are flooring and roofing tile. Some large structural pieces such as countertops are produced, as well as a variety of specialty items. “Flagging” stone for walks, terraces, and the like is produced from slate that usually cannot be worked more finely. Some waste slate is also crushed to produce a more durable and attractive surface material for driveways than gravel. Unprocessed waste is readily available for fill, for only the trucking cost.

Ceramic tile is the major competitive material for applications that slate most often fills. Because of the far greater aesthetic variety of ceramic tile, it dominates most competitive applications. Slate has achieved some favor recently, however, because of its natural quality.

The mining and processing of slate represent two relatively distinct phases. In the last two decades the proportion of labor required for the mining phase has diminished markedly, because modern heavy equipment has been introduced into the quarries (or “pits”). In former times much of the processing also was done at the side of the pit. Now the raw slate from several pits may be trucked to one mill. With the new use of machinery, rubble is no longer deposited in the tall piles that may still be seen on the local horizon. Instead it is dumped in low piles more suited to the operations of trucks. Also, since only a small portion of the slate that reaches the mill actually becomes finished product, waste that would previously have been produced near a pit is moved farther from it.

The mining and finishing of slate is largely non-polluting. Blasting is relatively minor, compared to other types of rock mining, because slate is fragile, and there is a premium on the extraction of as large pieces as possible. Finishing slate requires large amounts of water for lubrication and for cooling cutting and

grinding processes. Water is readily obtained from currently unused pits, which fill from ground water. The water is recycled.

Slate mining differs in at least two important respects from other types of mining and resource extraction:

1. Quarries tend to remain in operation for a long time—even more than a century—without a substantial increase in size. The amount of value added by the labor of finishing is extremely high in proportion to the value of a quantity of the material itself. The mining itself represents a minor operation compared to the processing of slate.
2. Slate that has frozen cannot be worked into a finished product. Because of this, extraction can only be done in small quantities at a time in winter. Pits that are not actively worked are allowed to fill with water to protect the remaining slate.

The areas of slate quarrying and processing in Pawlet have been delegated by the Zoning Ordinance to the existing Industrial District (I) in order to forestall conflict with residential uses. While such conflict may be forestalled, recent criticisms of quarrying center on the waste piles from old quarries and the “abandoned” quality of quarries that are not currently used.

Several years ago State legislation enabled owners to register and henceforth bring their quarries under a grand fathering protection that importantly simplifies regulatory requirements for them. Act 250, the State's primary law governing commercial development, which had been coincidentally enacted during a period when the slate industry was at an historic ebb, became onerous when the industry experienced its recent revival. Traditionally, quarries had been opened and closed depending on commercial demands generally and particularly on demand for one or another color of slate. When old quarries were reopened to service the current revived demand, Act 250 came to be applied as if the use were new. The legislation established registration as a means of maintaining a legally active status for intermittently closed quarries.

Major impetus for the legislation came from a recommendation of the Pawlet Town Plan prior to this revision, which urged inventory and ownership identification of apparently abandoned quarries. The plan recognized that a significant number of quarries had been closed when slate demand fell off simply because they became uneconomic to work with the methods in use at an earlier time. Because of a revival of demand in the late 20th century, capital resources newly become available. The capital finances modern operations that have revived quarrying, transforming sites people had come to regard as useless back into assets and sources of employment.

The consideration remains, however, that it is highly unlikely resources could ever be mustered to fill in all old quarry pits. On the other hand, reopening some quarries has led to reclamation of old waste piles for use as fill. Whatever the present state of affairs, inventory and ownership identification is a logical first

step toward creative use of these sites, as well as toward taking further advantage of Pawlet's unique slate resource.

IV. TRANSPORTATION

INTRODUCTION

This section describes the Transportation Plan adopted by the Town of Pawlet. The purpose of the Town Transportation Plan is to provide guidance for the maintenance and necessary development of roads and other ways to facilitate travel that benefits the inhabitants of the Town respecting their commerce, safety, and leisure, while preserving the rural character of the Town.



The road system of the Town is shown on a map available in the Appendix.

EXISTING ROADS

Pawlet has four distinct classifications of roads: Rural Minor Arterials, Rural Major Collectors, Rural Minor Collectors and Local Roads. Presently these roads are adequate for Pawlet's needs.

There are three highways of major importance to the Town: State Highways 30, 133, and 149. Classified as Rural Minor Arterials, they provide the primary transportation connections within the Town and to the rest of the region.

Definitions

Rural Minor Arterials move large volumes of traffic from one part of town to another. Off-road access is a secondary function of arterials, and curb cuts therefore are limited.

Rural Major Collectors carry traffic from local roads to arterials.

Rural Minor Collectors are similar to rural major collectors, except they carry less traffic volume.

Local Roads provide access to property abutting the public right-of-way. Local roads are not intended for use by through traffic.

Inventory

Rural Minor Arterials

Route 30 runs southeast to northwest through the Town. It follows the Mettawee River Valley from Dorset to East Rupert and passes into Wells. Route 30 provides the major connection for Pawlet to Manchester in the south and Poultney and Middlebury in the north. Except for the portion between Route 153

and the Wells Town line, which is rated fair, the road has been given a good sufficiency rating for the length of Pawlet. The road is wide, with good shoulders and good passing sight distances. Through most of Pawlet the road has a somewhat widened paved shoulder for bicyclists.

Traffic volumes on Route 30, recorded 0.4 miles north of River Road, have increased significantly in recent years, from 1800 Average Daily Traffic (ADT) in 2008 to 2500 ADT in 2014. Route 30 also has the largest number of accidents on Pawlet's roadways. Twenty-seven of Pawlet's 60 reported accidents in 2010-2015 have happened on Route 30.

Route 133 runs northeast from Pawlet Village to and through Middletown Springs, Tinmouth, Ira, and thence to West Rutland. This road is a major route to and from Rutland for all towns through which it passes. In 2012, an ADT of 1500 was recorded 0.6 miles east of Route 30, and more recently an ADT of 570 was noted 0.2 miles south of Kelly Hill Road. The difference in the ADT between these two locations is a rough index of the traffic on the Danby-Pawlet Road.

Route 149 connects Route 30 with routes 22 and 22A in New York State, which are major arteries for travel to the South and North. Route 22 connects with routes for New York City. Route 22A, after running briefly through New York State, provides an important route north to Burlington from this part of Vermont. Route 149 also connects to the Lake George area of New York State.

Rural Major Collectors

One numbered State Aid road passes through the Town, Route 153. It serves a collector function. Within the Town, Route 153 connects the Village of West Pawlet with Route 30 and points north, and with the Village of Rupert to the south.

Rural Minor Collectors

River Road, a paved road (Town Highway #1) runs parallel to the Mettawee River from Butternut Bend on Route 30 to an intersection with Route 153. It is an important shortcut connector between the villages of Pawlet and West Pawlet, which are the two major clusters of population in the Town.

The Danby-Pawlet Road, a paved road, runs from its intersection with Route 133 to Danby Four Corners. Though technically only a minor collector, it in fact carries a very large volume of through traffic, and especially truck traffic. Though no traffic count has been conducted for at least 10 years, the difference noted above between counts at the two locations on Route 30 indicates roughly an ADT of 930. Past data suggests that volume of truck traffic on the road is approximately double the State average for its class of road.

North Road, a paved road, runs from an intersection with Route 30 in North Pawlet north to Wells, VT. It is a principal route into Wells and a shortcut alternative where Route 30 makes a bulge to the west.

The Button Falls Road, a paved road, is a principal route from Pawlet into Granville, NY, in addition to Route 149, described above.

Local Roads

With the exception of a few short, paved streets in the villages of Pawlet and West Pawlet, all local roads have only gravel surfaces. Most traffic on them is only for local access, although the roads differ considerably in the amount of traffic that they bear.

Developments

- As part of the statewide Enhanced 911 program, the Town of Pawlet in 1998 officially adopted names for all of its roads, over and above the numeric designation that was the sole official designation previously.
- The intersection of Route 30 with North Road (Town Highway #5) has been marked with warning signs on both roads, subsequent to a serious accident there in 1993. North Road is a short cut across a bow in Route 30, and it therefore carries an excess of traffic for a local road.
- The intersection of Routes 30 and 149 at Blossom's Corner has been improved by changed alignment of Route 149, but visibility problems remain when approaching it along Route 30 because of trees that grow in the line of sight across a slight bow Route 30 makes at the intersection.
- Pawlet participated in the High Risk Rural Road Program in 2013 for the Danby-Pawlet Road and minor safety improvements, such as signs, are expected to be implemented in 2015 to effect these improvements.

Issues

Road Safety

Pawlet's most significant issue with respect to road safety is vehicle speed on its roadways. In the last decade the Town undertook to establish and post speed limits on its local paved roads. It has no jurisdiction over speed limits on State roads, however, so it must resort to petitioning the Agency of Transportation to consider reducing speed limits on parts of the State roads that local experience deems hazardous for existing speed limits. Route 30 contains several hazardous sections, as outlined below:

- The first is located in Pawlet Village, where a curve over the Flower Brook Bridge coincides with the angled intersection of Route 133 and two local roads. A beginning response to this situation is detailed in the discussion of the *Pedestrian Access Study* below.
- A second hazardous location on Route 30 is just east of Butternut Bend. Westbound vehicles moving at excessive speed on this curve may leave the roadway.



- Another hazardous portion of Route 30 is the Jockey Street area south of Pawlet Village. Speeds increase there as the vehicles leave the Village, and there is poor visibility in the passing zone.
- Still another hazardous area is the intersection of Route 30 and River Road (Town Highway #1) at the base of Butternut Bend. This intersection is hazardous due to the angle of the intersection, as well as the angle and elevation of the curve on Route 30. Caution signs and reduced speed limits may be appropriate here.
- The intersection of Route 153 with Route 30 has become somewhat hazardous due to increased traffic volumes since construction of the new Mettawee Community School on Route 153 nearby.
- On Route 133, about 1/2 mile east of Pawlet Village, semi-trailer trucks entering and exiting a trucking company pose a dangerous situation, because the entrance/exit is just around a curve that is blind and descending for vehicles proceeding toward the Village.
- Inadequate provision for slow moving farm vehicles, prevalent because of the extensive farming in Pawlet, creates dangers on the local highways. More extensive warning of such vehicles is required, as well as places for these vehicles to pull off the highways to allow other vehicles to pass.

Pedestrian Access Study

In October 2014, The AARP, in coordination with the Rutland Regional Planning Commission and residents of Pawlet, conducted a walk audit to assess the safety of Pawlet's village center. The audit covered the intersection of VT Route 30 and VT Route 133 and School Street. While the village center was found to be appealing overall, auditors found pedestrian conditions to be unsafe due to high driver speeds, and a lack of pedestrian infrastructure, including a lack of crosswalks and pedestrian signals and poor sidewalk connectivity.

Following the walk audit, the following changes were recommended:

- Reduce speed on Route 133 approaching the intersection with Route 30 and implement traffic calming measures approaching the village center in order to reduce motorist to speed.
 - Narrow the lane width at the intersection of Route 30 and Route 133 by creating a wider shoulder with striping. (Both VTrans regulations and the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) guidelines for traffic standards and safety allow for a lane width of 10 feet).
 - Add 4 crosswalks to the intersection, one at each intersecting roadway.
 - Consider rapid flashing beacons, and walk signals
 - Reduce speed limit in village center to 25 mph.

- Restore existing sidewalk along Route 30. Increase connectivity by adding additional sidewalks that connect residences with amenities and services in the village center.
- Create wider shoulders to accommodate pedestrians.

During the audit, residents of Pawlet expressed a desire for enhanced pedestrian mobility and support in the village center to encourage community vibrancy.

Some steps the Town could take to work towards this goal include:

- Apply for Bicycle and Pedestrian Program and Transportation Alternatives grants for active transportation infrastructure.
- Have the Selectboard seek safety improvements for West Pawlet Village and the monument intersection there.
- Improve the condition of Route 153 on the south of and into West Pawlet Village
- Encourage more enforcement of speed limits in the Village.

Maintenance and Improvement

The State Agency of Transportation undertook a new approach to transportation issues in 1993 with the establishment of regional transportation bodies. Pawlet is a member of the Rutland Region Transportation Council, which resulted from this initiative. As the regional transportation bodies became established, the Agency now turns to the regional bodies for some prioritization of highway projects. The Agency has also begun to avail the regional bodies to vet a variety of local assistance and grant projects.

The longstanding system of State aid processes and categories remains the greatly preponderant means of major funding for local roads and bridges, but the Town now works in a more complicated transportation situation. Currently, towns large enough to employ managers have an edge in that situation because those managers include securing grants and funding as part of their jobs. Small towns such as Pawlet may lose out if they cannot adequately monitor new transportation developments. The attention required taxes traditional volunteer resources.

While the Town must continue its traditional pattern of relations to the Agency of Transportation and the transportation districts, and its concern for proper layout of highways and implementation of efficient flow of traffic on its highways, it must also begin to see beyond the traditional "asphalt, gravel, and concrete" perspective. A world in which information often becomes more important than physical resources means that an electronic database may become as important as a quarry for gravel.

Development

Pawlet has no plans to construct any new Town highways.

One development to consider, however, is to improve the section of Chet Clark Road that has become significantly impassable. The Road is a class 4 road that is not maintained in winter and only minimally otherwise. It is the only Town road that connects the villages of Pawlet and West Pawlet. All other connection between the two villages is via state highways. Chet Clark Road provides potentially a more convenient connection for citizens coming from West Pawlet, and especially points south, to vote or transact business at the Town Hall. It might also be the only possible connection on the south side of Flower Brook in the event of a flood emergency that renders the Flower Brook bridges respectively on Routes 30 and 133 unusable.

New roads may be constructed by private individuals in the course of development or subdivision, but they must meet the Town's road specifications or the Town's subdivision road specifications. Otherwise they will be ineligible even to petition at some possible point in the future for acceptance and maintenance by the Town. Recent statute also specifies that new private roads must be protected by written covenant among the abutters that provide for maintenance and upkeep. Private roads generally even need maintenance covenants in case an abutter applies for a mortgage. Lenders now require such covenants as a condition of loans.

The focus of development in the future, rather than resting exclusively on construction of roads and bridges, needs to expand to include development of information systems such as databases of road and bridge information that will facilitate management and maintenance, especially in interaction with both ongoing State programs and special grant programs.

The Town has no formally designated parking areas for facilitating carpooling, which has become increasingly important for commuters in recent years. The State has developed Go! Vermont <http://www.connectingcommuters.org> as an online resource to facilitate carpooling and other transportation assistance. Some locations are used informally for carpooling, but more formal designation ought to be considered.

US Census data from 2010 indicates that 70% of a Pawlet workforce of 791 were solitary commuters and 9% were carpoolers.

OTHER

Delaware and Hudson ROW

The former Delaware and Hudson Railroad right-of-way has been deeded to the State Agency of Transportation and is administered by the Department of Forests and Parks. No wheeled vehicles are allowed, other than bicycles, and no new residential crossings are permitted. Existing crossings and farm crossings are still permitted. This 'trail' is a significant recreation resource.

Bicycles

Bicycle traffic, especially in tour groups, has become significant in Spring through Fall. The Town should work to see that shoulders on State roads are widened to provide for cyclists when other improvements are made. The Town should also

consider bicyclists' safety in designing improvements to State Aid and local roads as well, and might consider working with tour group offices to identify the better routes through Town.

PLANNING

This new orientation of the State Agency of Transportation has a two-fold significance for the Town. First, it means that the Town must pursue an activist role to move its transportation concerns forward. Second, it gives the Town a significant voice in respect to transportation matters in the region generally.

In both regards, it is very important that the Town send effective representation to the Rutland Region Transportation Council and to the Rutland Regional Planning Commission. If the Town sends different representatives to each of these bodies, the representatives must coordinate closely in order to be effective. Effectiveness also requires that representatives acquire extensive knowledge of State policies, regulations, rules, and procedures.

V. UTILITIES AND FACILITIES

DRINKING WATER

Present Supply

Significant numbers of driven wells, dug wells, and springs provide water in most of the Town. Drilled wells are generally used for newly constructed residences. In Pawlet Village, the Lathrop Spring, located below Cemetery Hill, provides water to three single-family dwellings, three rental units, and four commercial establishments. Another spring, near the Masonic Hall, is not currently in use.

In the far western area of town, 75% of homes draw their water from drilled wells averaging 200 feet in depth. These wells penetrate an underground slate ridge underlying much of the area.

Sulfur in the water degrades the quality of some wells in the town. This is more of an aesthetic issue than a health concern. Older town plans have noted that nitrate contamination may be an issue in some of the shallow wells in North Pawlet. However, recent water data compiled by the VT Department of Health do not indicate a problem with nitrate. On the other hand, arsenic levels in local wells have been known to exceed the maximum contaminant level. While the vast majority of wells tested in Pawlet do meet the standard for arsenic, information is critical. It is recommended that residents, test their water regularly. For more information on testing frequency and how to order the appropriate test kits see http://healthvermont.gov/enviro/ph_lab/water_test.aspx.

Future Planning

The rural areas of the town should continue to rely on individual sources for domestic drinking water. This is eminently feasible, provided that residential density remains low in these areas. For this reason, it is important that the restrictions on density imposed by the conditions of Agricultural and Rural Residential (ARR) and Forest and Agricultural (FA) zones be strictly maintained. Even beyond these restrictions, care must be taken to

see that traditional definitions of the activities permitted in these zones are adhered to, so that new definitions promulgated by governmental entities other than the Town of Pawlet do not distort the original intent of these zoning restrictions.

The villages of Pawlet and West Pawlet presently have no great problem obtaining potable water on an individual basis, except that wells must often be very deep. Despite the present availability of water, investigation and planning for potential municipal water sources should begin so that such sources can be identified and protected from contamination. Any planning for municipal water supply should include provision of adequate water for fire protection as well as for domestic use.

The recharge areas for major springs should be identified and protected from contamination. Groundwater resources should be located and protected in a similar manner. Compilation of well log records and GIS or similar mapping should be used to help identify aquifers. A health ordinance governing water and sewage should be considered as a first step in protecting present and future water supplies.

Regular testing of wells by their owners through available State and other programs should be encouraged. Compilation of data from such tests could provide a valuable resource for future Town planning.

The Water subsection in *Section III, Land Use History and Resources*, addresses additional concerns relevant to future planning.

STORM WATER DRAINAGE

Present Conditions

Pawlet lies entirely within the Mettawee Valley watershed. An effective system of storm water management would reduce sedimentation and minimize erosion in local streams (such as Flower Brook, Indian River and Mettawee River), as well as limit the movement of pollutants into more distant surface waters (including Lake Champlain).

To prevent flooding along the roads, a fairly extensive collection of culverts is required. The main clusters are:

- In Pawlet Village there are several short culverts that cross School Street. Nearby, long lengths of pipe drain storm water along Route 30. Others cross the southern end of Route 133;
- In West Pawlet Village, a culvert runs the length of New Street.

There is also drainage infrastructure at key areas along Route 153.

The highway department removes debris from inlets periodically and cleans sediment from piping as needed.

Pawlet's dedication to a low density environment places it in a favorable position to realize the advantages a comprehensive, effective system of storm water management that combines Low Impact Development (LID) and Green Storm water Infrastructure (GSI).

LID refers to an approach to land planning and site design that tries to prevent and minimize environmental degradation. GSI refers to and relies on the physical elements (natural or man-made) of the landscape to address or minimize impacts from storm water runoff. In other words, LID is a series of planning principles and GSI is a set of physical best management practices. Reference the following links:

<http://lid-stormwater.net/background.htm>
http://www.vtwaterquality.org/stormwater/docs/sw_gi_2.0_green_stormwater_infrastructure.pdf

Future Planning

The inventory of culverts should be maintained and updated as needed. A layer of storm drain data should be added to the Town's online GIS (Geographic Information System).

SEWAGE

Present Conditions

In West Pawlet Village, the municipal sewage system has about 130 users (hook-ups) and has a maximum capacity of roughly 200. The wastewater treatment facility (WWTF) was fully refurbished in 2013. Solids are shipped to the Rutland WWTF, where anaerobic digesters complete the decomposition process.

Sewage throughout the rest of Pawlet is treated on the lots of the individual or multifamily housing units that generate it. The units use septic tanks in combination with drywells or leach fields. Homeowners are responsible for periodically pumping the sludge out of their septic tank and disposing of its contents.

According to the Wastewater Disposal Systems Analysis prepared by Dufresne & Henry, Engineers, a document which is no longer extant, there may be areas in Pawlet Village where storm drainage and raw sewage are combined in the same system. This concern is now being pursued, using grant monies obtained from the State. An Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) study began in April of 2015. Based on the results, the Town will need to ensure that state rules are enforced. Additionally, it may need to modify its bylaws, or even consider infrastructure to accommodate a municipal sewage system in Pawlet Village.

As the problems of sewage sludge and septage disposal become more acute, places like Pawlet with extensive agricultural lands can become targets for such programs as "beneficial reuse." These programs attempt to redefine wastes as fertilizer, even though those wastes contain heavy metals and organic contaminants.

The Town ultimately averted one such threat when it incorporated its zoning ordinances by amendment into the regional solid waste plan devised by the Solid Waste Alternatives Communities/Joint Municipal Survey Committee (SWAC/JMSC). SWAC/JMSC has been superseded by the Solid Waste Alliance Communities. The Town has worked to ensure that the SWAC solid waste plan mitigates against such threats, but vigilance will be required in the future to ensure that successive SWAC plans continue to address the threat. The Town additionally should consider developing specific ordinances to prevent exploitation of agricultural lands for waste disposal, because of the potential threat such exploitation poses to domestic and potential municipal water supplies.

Future Planning

The rural areas of the Town should continue to rely on individual on-site subsurface means for sewage treatment, and residential densities should be kept low enough to allow such disposal without problems to adjacent neighbors or water supplies. State septic regulations provide important protection for the Town. The enforcement of these regulations is indirect. Compliance is mostly left to scrutiny as part of the property transfer process. State approval of new or refurbished septic systems is now recorded as part town property records.

Efforts should continue in Pawlet to solve the problems of inadequate or non-existent sewage disposal systems in Pawlet Village. The study identified several potential sites for a treatment plant in Pawlet and recommended a preferred site for its location.

Future planning for sewage and treatment systems that may be required in the Town should explore options that have become feasible as alternatives to traditional chemical/mechanical methods. Such alternatives include biological treatment methods and other methods that do not generate sludge that poses potentially costly disposal problems.

The Town should also anticipate problems that may occur in the future due to requirements for septage disposal and seek to encourage methods such as dewatering and composting that will facilitate the disposal of septage with minimal or no risk to public health.

SOLID AND HAZARDOUS WASTE

In the spring of 1999, the Town closed its landfill for solid waste disposal on the outskirts of West Pawlet; the facility had reached capacity. For disposal of solid waste, the Town now directs its residents to use one of the nearby transfer stations in the region. The closest option is on Route 22 in Granville, New York — -a privately run facility operated by Earth, Waste and Metal. A second, more distant, option is the transfer station on Gleason Road in Rutland, Vermont. Pawlet maintains a schedule of hazardous waste disposal days for residents to rid themselves of items not disposable as ordinary transfer station waste.

In 1993 the Town adopted a Solid Waste Plan on a model devised by the Solid Waste Alternatives Communities/Joint Municipal Survey Committee (SWAC/JMSC) of the Rutland Region. Pawlet's adoption of the Plan was subsequently ratified by the State. Although several communities working together devised the plan, it was crafted to allow each community to modify and adopt it separately. Pawlet adopted and amended it to conform to the Town Zoning Ordinances. By adopting the plan, the Town became, in effect, a municipal solid waste district. That plan and the related ordinance have been superseded by new solid waste regulations governing the Solid Waste Alliance Communities (SWAC), successor to SWAC/JMSC. The Town will need to attend carefully, as noted above, to future SWAC solid waste plans to prevent so called "beneficial reuse" of septage.

ELECTRICAL

Small Scale Generation

Net metering in Vermont provides incentives to utility customers who invest in small scale electrical generation. Homeowners who generate more energy than they use get credit for adding power to the electrical grid. Typically solar (photovoltaic) panels are used, but Pawlet's landscape provides opportunities to generate power from other sources as well, such as hydroelectric, biomass, and wind.

The use of solar power also allows some Pawlet homeowners to live comfortably in places distant from electric distribution lines — entirely "off the grid."

The dam that forms the Mill Pond at the intersection of routes 30 and 133, was once used as a private source of hydropower. It is currently inoperable. However, there are plans to refurbish it and put it back into service. Some local dairy farmers have experimented with "Cow Power," a program offered by Green Mountain Power that

produces electricity from the methane in cow manure. Similarly, other biomass such as corn stalks, can be used for power generation.

Although the use of alternative sources power is strongly encouraged, Pawlet's economy depends on tourism and agriculture. Therefore, siting decisions for solar panels, wind turbines, and their maintenance roads should be balanced against the aesthetics of the viewshed and the value of fertile soils. For more information, see *Section VIII, Energy*.

Large Scale Generation and Distribution

Green Mountain Power merged with Central Vermont Public Service (CVPS) in 2014. Using the high voltage transmission mains owned by Vermont Electric Power Company (VELCO), Green Mountain Power serves local homes and businesses. Their fuel mix consists largely of hydroelectric power from Canada and a fair amount of nuclear energy from New Hampshire. (Vermont Yankee stopped operation in 2014). They have approximately 2000 customers in the local area, which covers Pawlet, Rupert and portions of Wells. Their nearest service fleet is based in Poultney, VT.

The transmission system routes electrical lines to the Pawlet substation on Bull Frog Hollow Road where it splits into two branches for distribution. One branch runs alongside the Granville border and serves the Village of West Pawlet. The other runs along Route 30. It serves Pawlet Village and continues south to Dorset. These are radial lines; they are fed from one direction. Interruptions in service may be more frequent than in areas with built-in loops, since maintenance close to the substation affects the entire distribution line.

Three-phase power is available in many areas of Pawlet. It is present along Route 30, next to Route 153, on Briar Hill and near the slate quarries. For specific locations, an online map is available at <http://caigisonline.com/pawletvt/>.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The Town of Pawlet has a volunteer Emergency Management (EM) staff of three:

- Emergency Management Director
- Emergency Management Coordinator
- Emergency Management Public Information Officer

Pawlet Emergency Management is responsible for coordinating the various components of the emergency management system: fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, public works, volunteer groups and State resources. The four phases of Emergency Management, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, are managed by the EM staff.

EM writes the majority of Hazard Mitigation Grants for the Town, which primarily involve culvert replacements.

The Town has an emergency notification phone system through Vermont Emergency Management's VT Alert System.

The volunteer staff should be increased in the future in order to accommodate and manage multiple day events. In addition, a more permanent location for an Emergency Operations Center should be considered.

FIRE PROTECTION

Pawlet is served by two volunteer fire departments, located respectively in West Pawlet and in Pawlet Village. All dispatch is now subsumed under the Enhanced 911 system,



described below. Both Fire departments and EMS are dispatched from Washington County, NY, Department of Public Safety. The Pawlet fire departments can call upon other Rutland, Bennington and Washington County NY departments to provide mutual aid assistance.



If, in the future, the Granville, New York water mains are extended further into Vermont and/or the villages of Pawlet and West Pawlet install municipal water supplies, provision should be included for approved hydrants. Any future housing development in the Town should provide for hydrants. If that is not possible, an adequate fire pond or access to another acceptable water supply for the fire departments should be provided. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service has information and personnel to advise landowners on pond size and construction regarding the gallonage requirements for firefighting. A major issue raised by the fire departments regards difficulties they have accessing properties due to improperly designed and constructed roads or poor road maintenance and snow removal. Improper roads may have steep grades, sharp curves, or space inadequate for turning around. The Town should consider adopting regulations to ensure that all public and private roads are constructed and maintained to allow easy access at all times by fire and other emergency vehicles.

The Pawlet Fire Department needs to consider a new location for a fire house, because its current location is in the flood plain on the banks of the Flower Brook. The location has experienced at least two major flooding events rendering it unfit as a base for emergency services.

The Town fire wardens have the responsibility for wildland fire suppression, maintaining records and enforcement of forest fire laws including issuing burn permits and issuing fire prevention tickets as required.

POLICE

Police protection is provided by two Town constables and by the Vermont State Police, currently from a headquarters in Fairhaven, contacted by calling Rutland or by dialing 911. Response time for State Police is extended because they usually must cover some distance and because State Police personnel are limited. Police protection from the Rutland County Sheriff has been tried on a trial contractual basis. The Town constables are required to complete specified hours/courses of training in order to maintain their certifications.

EMS

Emergency Medical Service is provided by the Granville Rescue Squad (Granville NY). The squad has approximately 55 members with a mix of volunteer and paid personnel. Training levels go from Basic First Aid/CPR to Paramedic level. Equipment includes 4 Advanced Life Support ambulances and 1 Basic Life Support Ambulance. They are also equipped with a bariatric stretcher, Scene Support Unit, a rescue snowmobile sled and an ATV.

ENHANCED 911

A unified system for obtaining emergency services, Enhanced 911 is now in place for the entire state of Vermont. To support this system, all roads have been given street names and all buildings have had street numbers assigned to them. Building locations are listed in a comprehensive database that emergency dispatchers use to dispatch fire, police, and emergency medical personnel. Whenever anyone dials 911 from a stationary telephone, the address of the building where the telephone is located immediately shows on an information screen at the appropriate emergency dispatch center. The dispatcher thereby knows where an emergency situation exists even if the caller is incapable of identifying the location.

HEALTH

The Mettawee Valley Family Health Center, located on route 149 in Pawlet, provides general primary care, behavioral health, and minor emergency medical services to area residents. In concert with facilities in Castleton, Brandon, Rutland and Shoreham, plus a dental clinic in Rutland, these clinics, known as the "Community Health Centers of the Rutland Region," comprise a charitable corporation governed by an independent board of directors. As a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), the Corporation is partly subsidized by federal funds. For health care clients this means sliding scale fees and full acceptance of Medicare and Medicaid. FQHC status yields readily available, affordable health care for the community and an enhanced system for delivery of health care. These clinics, in accord with purposes of the Affordable Care Act, are growing preventive care and education programs and team approaches to patient care.



Rutland Regional Medical Center and the Southwest Vermont Medical Center (in Bennington) offer major medical services within a reasonable distance of the Town. Volunteers at these medical centers often help provide transportation and other support services for patients and their families. The Granville Rescue Squad (summoned through the Enhanced 911 system) provides rapid aid and transport to people in the Pawlet community when they experience medical emergencies. Other rescue squads provide backup.

The Visiting Nursing Association & Hospice of the Southwest Region works with homebound and elderly residents. With offices in Dorset, Rutland and Bennington, the VNA provides services including, but not limited to: home health aides, long distance health monitoring, occupational therapy, palliative care and hospice care. For those in need of end-of-life care outside the home, the Haynes House of Hope in Granville, NY offers a quiet, comfortable home for the terminally ill and their immediate family.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The telecommunications market continues to change rapidly. Thus Pawlet's telecommunications structure is varied. Pawlet village and eastern Pawlet are served by VTEL, which offers both telephone and Internet services including gigabit fiber optic technology. Furthermore VTEL plans to expand their cellular network into West Pawlet by the end of the summer of 2015, allowing Internet connectivity at broadband speeds. Fairpoint Communications provides DSL Internet service to the West Pawlet area via

copper telephone wire. Comcast offers broadband Internet data transmission via cable. However, economies of scale sometimes prevent the installation of infrastructure in sparsely inhabited areas. Satellite Internet services are also available but are generally quite costly.

While the Town has cellular services from major national providers, coverage is spotty due to Pawlet's hilly terrain. This trades off against the aesthetic drawbacks of multiple looming towers. Some residents living in dead spots use technology such as microcells, fem-to-cells or cell boosters to bridge the gaps in cellular service. Should a resident need to be able to be contacted at all times, satellite based paging services cover the whole Town. Currently VTEL is building a wireless network that will bring broadband service to Pawlet and 95% of the rest of the State. It will largely make up for the spotty cell service of the major national providers.

Pawlet's fiber optic services provide download speeds that are comparable to and even superior to those of urban areas, allowing residents the employment at a distance that is increasingly available in the rapidly developing digital era.

Future Planning

The "switch building," a key element in VTEL's communication infrastructure, is located near Flower Brook and is susceptible to flood damage. To prevent a town-wide communications black-out during a flood, town officials should work with VTEL to investigate alternative sites for this critical piece of infrastructure.

TOWN ADMINISTRATION

The legislative body of the Town, its Selectboard, administers the Town, with help from the Town Clerk and the Town Treasurer. The Selectboard has recently hired an administrative assistant. Other Town officials include the Listers, the Planning Commission, the Development Review Board, the Zoning Administrator, the Auditors, and the Constables. Town highway workers are under the supervision of a foreman, who is an appointee of the Selectboard.

The Town Hall has a digital network that connects the computers in its offices and to the VTEL wide area network. This allows the Town to meet the wide variety of contemporary requirements for inward and outward communication with State offices, residents, and businesses. The next step for digital services is projection capability to support information requirements and collaboration needs for meetings of Town bodies. The Town should also consider streaming video for these meetings as an effective means of increasing citizen participation in these activities.

As the Town grows and government requirements increase in complexity digitized information systems provide an important way to address demands on Town administration and services.

INFORMATION SERVICES

In addition to the warning process required by State statute, the Town publishes a periodic newsletter, and maintains a website and various email lists to convey information to Pawlet residents.

The Pawlet Newsletter has been published three or four times a year by the Town since 2003 to encourage involvement in town activities. Approximately 1,140 copies of the newsletter are distributed free of charge to Pawlet residents and non-resident taxpayers.

News items concern mainly the activities of the town office, but also includes those of various community groups and organizations. During the past 12 years, the printed newsletter has increased in size, picked up more advertisers and developed an online presence. Publication of newsletter content is coordinated with more frequent postings to the Town's website and the distribution of "Pawlet eNews" notices to an e-mail group of about 245 members. Additionally, each issue of the newsletter can be viewed on-line at the Town of Pawlet website (<http://pawlet.vt.gov/>) or at the Rutland Regional Planning Commission website (<http://www.rutlandrpc.org/>).

The Town website offers an increasing amount of information that includes minutes of Select Board and Planning Commission meetings (as required by Vermont law effective July 1, 2014), as well as ordinances, regulations, and links to town maps. In 2014 the web site logged 6,296 unique visitors and 14,095 page views — an increase of 11 percent from the number of visits during 2013.

The GIS (Geographic Information System) for Pawlet is available online and can be viewed at: <http://www.caigisonline.com/pawletvt/>. Several layers of maps are included that give zoning information, soil information, parcel ID, abutting owner information and more.

Additional town information is available from Town Clerk Deb Hawkins. Community members are also encouraged to join Front Porch Forum, a website that helps neighbors connect by hosting regional networks of online neighborhood/town forums. Anyone can sign up for the Pawlet Wells Front Porch Forum at <http://frontporchforum.com/registrations>.

CAPITAL BUDGET

A capital budget allows for planned efficient use of limited financial resources. It can also serve as a basis for establishing impact fees, which could fund the reserve account for acquisitions or upgrades.

The Town should begin to develop a capital budgeting program. This effort should be undertaken in cooperation with other service providers such as the school district, the fire districts, the nursing associations, and the rescue squads. This budgeting program would inventory the present condition of all public facilities such as roads, the sewer plant, Town and school buildings, fire and rescue vehicles, etc. It would project and plan for replacement, maintenance, upgrading, expansion, or whatever else might be anticipated for each facility. It would estimate the cost, and devise some method of building a reserve fund gradually so that no sudden, emergency increase in taxes would occur.

Town Properties

- 1) Town Garage, 313 Danby Rd.
- 2) Garage ("equipment building"), 3307 Route 153
- 3) Wastewater Treatment Plant, 49 Railroad Ave.
- 4) Town Hall, 122 School St.
- 5) Library, 141 School St.
- 6) Gravel Pit, 2628 Route 30
- 7) Vacant Lot, 5732 Route 30
- 8) Nelsonville Cemetery, 1226 Route 153
- 9) Blossom Hill Cemetery, 420 Route 149

The Town owns a number of buildings and associated property--principally the Town Hall, located in Pawlet Village, and the Town Garage, located on the Pawlet-Danby Road, about a mile east of the Village, and the sewage treatment plant in West Pawlet.

Both the Town Hall and the Town Garage stand in need of major repairs. It is essential that the Town establish capital budgeting for the replacement of the Town Garage before it becomes a matter of emergency. Renovation of the Town Hall, chosen by the voters

over new construction, has been proceeding for several years. It is now about three quarters done, with the completion of the upstairs auditorium the last major remaining task. Besides Town monies, volunteers have obtained grants and solicited significant private funds. The Town at this point should establish a working committee to make recommendations and pursue the Town Hall renovation project to its necessary completion.

The Town has not had a program for systematic evaluation and maintenance of its buildings. Consequently, the need for substantial expenditures arises suddenly. This situation suggests strongly the need for a program of systematic attention to the Town's facilities. It also underlines the need for a capital budget.

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

School playgrounds, the Delaware and Hudson Rail Trail, fishing holes on the Mettawee, and the hiking paths on the conserved lands accessing Haystack Mountain comprise the main public facilities for recreation in the Town. The West Pawlet Fish and Game Club has a private reserve off Route 153. Just south of the Pawlet-Rupert town line is the Mettawee Valley Community Center (MVCC), a 13.5-acre site located off Route 30. A private volunteer board oversees the facility. The Board consists of three members each from Rupert, Pawlet and Dorset.

The MVCC is centered on a multipurpose recreational field that provides playing space for youth baseball and adult softball and short field soccer or football. The facility includes a volleyball court, horseshoe pits, a paddle tennis court, a playground, and picnic facilities. Future plans anticipate fire pits for the picnic area and electricity to the site. There are hopes for tennis courts, a multi-purpose building, and possibly a pond. Also envisioned are camping facilities for youth organizations such as Scouts.

Construction of the MVCC has represented significant volunteer efforts, including donations of equipment time. National Guard engineers also contributed substantial efforts of personnel and equipment. There have been substantial donations of gravel for fill and grading, as well as monetary contributions.

Other recreational opportunities in the Town include fishing, hunting, hiking, and cross-country skiing. These activities often take place on private lands with permission of the owner. Of concern to local sportsmen is the increasing amount of land that is posted and owned by persons residing out of the State. Obtaining permission to hunt and fish on lands that have previously been available has become increasingly difficult, either because the absence of the owner makes it so, or because of the reluctance of an owner who is not familiar with local attitudes and customs. This situation results in decreased recreational opportunities.



Establishment of a Town Forest could allow general public access for recreation, provide open space, and preserve significant scenic resources. Conservation acquisitions in North Pawlet by The Nature Conservancy provide a significant opportunity to establish a Town Forest. The conservation acquisitions by The Nature Conservancy that provide this opportunity are discussed in detail in *Section VI, Ecological, Scenic and Historic Resources*.

In the future, as part of approval of subdivisions, especially large ones, regulations could be adopted requiring a developer to donate a portion of land for recreational purposes, or to contribute fees in lieu of land to an open space fund.

Before future growth makes it difficult, if not impossible, provision should be made for open space and recreational needs by adopting a land use policy that supports the farming economy, and public acquisition of land for the development of recreation facilities.

Year-round residents are also posting lands to a greater extent than previously because of problems created by hunters not familiar with traditional etiquette. Those hunters and fishermen may not realize the seriousness of leaving a gate open or damaging a section of fence. Such actions cause farmers to feel they must control access in order to protect livestock and prevent substantial labor and material costs for repairs.

The Town might wish to work with State officials to promulgate hunter safety and etiquette instruction for those from out of the State who wish to obtain a hunting or fishing license.

ENTERTAINMENT AND FAMILY ACTIVITIES

For indoor entertainment, residents may turn to a local art gallery--such as the Pawlet Art Collective, Roy Egg Shop, and the Indian Hill Gallery of Fine Photography.



Pawlet Library on a Winter Evening

The Pawlet Library is also destination for family activities. The library offers reading materials, books on tape, and audio-visual media. It provides a space for classes (such as yoga, dance, Tai Chi, arts and crafts), activities for children (story time, Lego Club) and a venue for two book clubs. For more information, see the *Library* subsection of *Section VII, Education and Child Care*.

There are additional recurring events, including pancake breakfasts at both fire departments, a wild game supper at the outset of deer season at the Pawlet fire house, the Woodchuck Festival by the West Pawlet fire department in February, the annual Library book sale, fire department auctions, Art on the Green, and historical society programs. The Mettawee School also holds events for the community, particularly a Thanksgiving dinner, significantly prepared and hosted by students.

VI. ECOLOGICAL, SCENIC, AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Natural Heritage and Ecology

The Town, as a matter of policy, seeks to preserve and enhance the quality of its natural heritage and its scenic and historic resources. In addition to this section, related topics are treated in *Section III, Land Use History and Resources*, and *Section V, Utilities and Facilities*.

The Town also recognizes that the abundance of wildlife in the area depends critically on the health of the natural ecology.



Ecologically significant natural communities and habitats within the Town have been identified in a report entitled “Biological

Natural Areas of Western Rutland County,” prepared by the Nongame and Natural Heritage Program of the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The report identifies three areas of statewide significance and four of local significance in Pawlet:

Statewide

1. North Pawlet Hills
2. The Pattern
3. Pawlet Sycamore Forest

Local

4. Tadmer Hill
5. Indian Hill
6. Highgo Hill
7. Sprucetop

The report suggests guidelines for managing these areas to preserve their value. The Town should seek to keep landowners whose property includes these areas informed of their value and encourage them to observe the suggested guidelines to preserve them.

In the North Pawlet hills approximately 2,000 acres of unbroken forest survive, undeveloped and practically without impact by any human use since its beginnings after the glaciers retreated at the end of the last ice age. The forest is home to two unique natural communities, one of hickory-hop hornbeam and the other of dry elfin oak, both found on the south-facing aspects of the hills.

These unique communities also appear on the south-facing aspects of hills collectively named “The Pattern” that define the west side of the Mettawee

Valley. The Pattern also notably comprises a wilderness that extends for fifteen miles, crossed in one place only by a class 4 Town road.

Another unique forest community, this one of sycamore, lies to the southwest of River Road, the connector between Pawlet and West Pawlet.

Hunting opportunities abound, from birds to deer and even bear. Since Pawlet became the point for reintroduction of the wild turkey to Vermont more than fifty years ago, its habitat has proved ideal nurture for increasing flocks.



Besides excellent hunting, Pawlet offers many opportunities to observe wildlife. The ubiquitous margins of wood and meadow afford great variety for the bird watcher. Hawks are never absent from the summer skies, drawn along with owls and other raptors to the bountiful prey of field and wood. Ponds and wetlands attract the majestic Blue Heron. Long V's of geese cross the skies in spring and fall.

The habitat supports numerous four-footed creatures besides those that mainly interest hunters. Beaver, mink, otter, raccoons, and muskrat populate the riverine environment. An observer can also glimpse foxes, fishers, bob cats, and all the smaller land creatures. The other-worldly song of coyotes rings clear on a still night.

In order to sustain the habitat that supports its wildlife population, the Town must seek to preserve and even expand the connections between natural communities. Pawlet's connecting habitat is part of a large habitat block that extends northeast through Tinmouth and Clarendon to the Pittsford Ridge.

A connecting habitat is a land that links larger patches of habitat within a landscape, allowing the movement, migration and dispersal of animals and plants. Riparian habitat along streams and rivers, strips of forest cover between developed areas and even hedgerows/fencerows all represent potential connecting habitat.

Although connecting habitat is often associated with wide-ranging mammals (bobcats, black bears), or animals requiring a great deal of space to meet their daily needs (such as barred owls or otters), it is equally important for animals with relatively small ranges, as well as for plants. Establishing and preserving wildlife corridors allows plants and animals to colonize new habitat as climate change, succession, or other ecological processes force them to migrate. A free flow of migration is essential in the face of natural and human-made changes in order to ensure that native species have the means to interact, reproduce and maintain a robust ecosystem.

Air and View Shed

Air is ubiquitous and invisible, but it is critical to the function of life and all the natural systems of the planet, as well as the cultural and industrial capacity of humanity. As a rural town, without the substantial workplace and industrial

facilities of urban environs, Pawlet's potential for negative impact on air quality is minimal. The output of vehicles within its borders provides the primary negative impact on air quality. Some localized pockets of smoke pollution develop occasionally during the winter months from household wood burning. With respect to global climate change, methane releases incident to dairy farming may have some impact.



On the other hand, Pawlet's extensive forestation exerts a positive impact far in excess of the negative impacts just noted. Forests play a major role in cleaning air, in addition to their extremely important beneficial effects on water quality and their powerful hydrologic function.

A further significant impact on air quality is the sequestration of carbon provided by forests. Carbon

dioxide is a major driver of global climate change. Trees remove it from the air, incorporate its carbon into the very material they are made of, and return its oxygen to the air in vast quantities.

While Pawlet's forests are and have been valuable for the production of timber products, they are perhaps ultimately more valuable for their protection of the earth's environment. There are now even opportunities beginning to develop to sell carbon credits based on forestation.

It behooves the Town to keep and encourage not only its forest resource but also its agricultural lands.

In addition to how forests benefit the climate, the production of feed crops on Pawlet's extensive agricultural lands provides another means of carbon sequestration. Although some of the benefit is offset by methane release from livestock, benefit nonetheless obtains from incorporating carbon into soil by manuring of fields. Milk production by dairy cows also represents an energy gain for human sustenance that is ultimately an instance of solar gain.

Besides their climatological value, Pawlet's lands provide the important economic and aesthetic benefit of view shed that not only attracts tourism but also encourages second homes and retirement in the area. This leads to construction and maintenance opportunities for local tradespeople and also for landscapers and related businesses.

Water

Pawlet's rivers, streams, and wetlands provide wildlife habitat, recreation, natural beauty, and hunting and trapping resources. Vernal pools are important breeding and early development venues for amphibians. Pools, wetlands, ponds, and streams, both seasonal and sustained, are vitally important for a great variety of creatures that populate the ecological web.



Flower Brook is currently listed as impaired in water quality. Excessive levels of bacteria and phosphorous are found in its reaches within Pawlet Village, and possibly upstream. Also upstream high levels of erosion are found. Investigation with an eye to remediation is currently being undertaken under a State grant.

For related topics, see *Section III, Land Use History and Resources, and Section V, Utilities and Facilities,*

Conservation

Landowners, town officials and a local non-profit, Friends of Haystack, along with several conservation groups, have made a concerted and substantial effort to preserve many of Pawlet's most valuable natural and agricultural assets. The Vermont Land Trust was first on the scene. The trust began the Mettawee Valley Conservation Project (MVCP) in 1986 to coordinate the growth, management, and resource conservation activities of the towns of Pawlet, Rupert and Dorset.

Since then more than 5,510 acres of private lands, mostly forested, have been conserved in Pawlet alone, primarily with The Nature Conservancy and the Vermont Land Trust. This equals more than 20% of the town's land mass. The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board has substantially supported the Conservancy's efforts over the years.

The North Pawlet Hills Natural Area, a conserved area now of 1,444 acres, is the most significant. Friends of Haystack, <http://www.friendsofhaystack.org/> successfully conserved the summit of Haystack Mountain in 2012. This mountain, with its sheer cliffs and dramatic outcrops of slate and quartzite is the most distinctive topological feature of the Town. It is now combined with the previously conserved area to the north that encompasses Middle and Bald Mountains. These northern Taconic mountains are locally called the Three Sisters.

Besides the Haystack preserve, many of Pawlet's conserved forested lands allow public access for recreation with only some limitations.

In addition to the conserved forest lands, a substantial amount of open farmland is protected from development and associated escalating land prices, because the Vermont Land Trust holds the development rights. The Trust insures that the lands are additionally protected and dedicated to affordable agricultural use by retaining the right of repurchase at the original price they were sold to a working farmer, if that farmer chooses to relinquish them.

One means for Pawlet to extend its conservation remit would be to establish a conservation commission. In Vermont, conservation commissions are advisory bodies that exist in many towns across the state. They are established to help communities protect and enhance their natural resources. In 1977, Vermont passed the enabling legislation (24 V.S.A. 4501) to establish municipal conservation commissions. By 1996, 96 Vermont towns had conservation commissions or similar committees. Today there are just over 100 conservation commissions in Vermont.

According to State law, “A conservation commission may be created at any time when a municipality votes to create one, or, if the charter of a municipality permits it, when the legislative body of the municipality votes to create one.” This means that the Selectboard may create a conservation commission or, alternatively, voters at Town meeting may vote to create one.

Under State law, municipal conservation commissions may do things like (a) make inventories of the town’s natural resources, including lands that have agricultural, scientific, historical, educational, or important cultural value, or provide ecosystem services like groundwater recharge, storm water control, flood protection, wildlife habitat and other values; (b)

A conservation commission can focus its energies on that town’s natural resources and thereby ensure that the conservation interests of its community are being addressed. Conservation commissions can also assist planning commissions and design review boards with the review and evaluation of development proposals.

receive gifts of land for conservation purposes; (c) assist and advise the local planning commission and Selectboard on natural resource issues; (d) encourage the public’s understanding of their local environment through educational activities.

Conservation commissions do not have regulatory power as do some other bodies, like select boards or planning commissions; conservation commissions are advisory boards only.

Conservation commissions can work effectively with local planning commissions and other local, regional, and state organizations and agencies. Often, planning commissions are overburdened with the details of other town work. A conservation commission can focus its energies on that town’s natural resources and thereby ensure that the conservation interests of its community are being addressed. Conservation commissions can also assist planning commissions and design review boards with the review and evaluation of development proposals. The Vermont Association of Conservation Commissions provides important networking and resource opportunities, including grant funding and technical information.

SCENIC RESOURCES

Despite more than a century's changes, farming and quarrying remain the heart of the Town's economy and its most visible activities. Pawlet sits in the middle of one of the most geologically diverse regions of the world. The region ranges from the mountains of the Adirondacks to the White Mountains of New Hampshire,



and attracts interest of geologists globally. On the surface of Pawlet's land broad farm fields open vistas of valley against the rising hills. The height of cornstalks measures the passage of summer. Patches of bright green smaller fields punctuate the forests on the hills. Cows and sheep animate meadows, and hawks soar in the wide skies.

Old pictures of the Town reveal a landscape largely clear of forest, which had been cut for fuel and potash. The massive return of forest since the late nineteenth century testifies to Nature's resilience. The logging that once more contributes to the local economy now proceeds with care so as not to mar the landscape.

Pawlet actively seeks to preserve its rural and natural character. To support the always hard-pressed farming economy it has supported extensive conservation easements by such means as purchase and sequestration of development rights devised by The Nature Conservancy and the Vermont Land Trust.

The Mettawee River flows through many scenic vistas from southeast to northwest across almost the entire diagonal of Pawlet. One of its particularly striking scenic features is the Mettawee River gorge that extends from below Cole Bridge for approximately 1/2 mile. Button Falls in North Pawlet roars with its volume.

The Mettawee grows in size as it gathers from numerous tributaries and wetlands that support varied wildlife. It provides swimming and boating recreation, and excellent fishing. The largest tributary, Flower Brook, issues into a scenic mill pond in Pawlet Village. Flower Brook has its own large tributary, Beaver Brook.

These two, and numerous other tributaries to the Mettawee, offer many additional fishing opportunities.

Everywhere rises a backdrop of hills. Woodlawn Mountain, Pawlet's highest, lies to the east, its three peaks rising even taller across the Town line into Danby. To the west lies the long line of The Pattern. Haystack Mountain, the Town's distinctive natural emblem, rises abruptly from the valley in North Pawlet. The summit of Haystack is treeless, exposed rock that affords striking views of the Mettawee Valley and beyond. Its modest 1,919-foot summit is a relatively easy, well delineated hike through the surrounding conserved forest. The summit's views provide a reward that is very great in proportion to the effort required for hiking it.



There are unfortunately no compilations that detail Pawlet's abundant scenic resources. The Town should identify them formally to facilitate their preservation.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation has authored and issued a publication, "The Historic Architecture of Rutland County," Curtis B. Johnson, Editor, 1988, which details historic resources that the Town should preserve.

The Town of Pawlet was chartered in 1762. Although the separate villages of Pawlet and West Pawlet tried to split the Town in 1886, they remain united, together with a number of small, and still largely distinct, hamlets. Pawlet Village is the hub of the Town, located at the intersection of Routes 30 and 133 and on Flower Brook, near its confluence with the Mettawee River. West Pawlet Village, the Town's other major settlement, stands at a five-corner intersection of Route 153 and roads that lead immediately into New York State. The old roadbed of the Delaware & Hudson Railroad, converted now to a trail, runs through the West Pawlet Village center, and the Indian River flows nearby before joining the Mettawee.

The two villages and various hamlets provide varied historic interest. Both villages and the hamlet Spruce Gum, an extension of West Pawlet, are National Register designated districts. These three districts contain seventy-eight sites listed on the National Register. Over seventy sites in addition to these districts bring the Town's total to more than one hundred and fifty.

Pawlet's many pre-1850 homes offer visitors pictures of 19th century charm, while providing living shelter for their residents. The rich architectural history is displayed by well-maintained structures that exhibit a variety of styles, including Colonial, Greek Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne. This architectural landscape of exceptional beauty and diversity sits against a landscape that

varies dramatically from the broad, intensely-farmed Mettawee Valley to the abrupt hills of North Pawlet.



The Town Hall, in Pawlet Village, is a two story Victorian Italianate structure. It is on the National Register of Historic Places, and it has served Town government continuously since it was built in 1881. Though rearranged inside, its exterior is untouched. The upstairs, a large auditorium and stage, has been substantially restored recently, financed by public monies, grants and private funding solicited by volunteers. An elevator has

been added to provide accessibility, and an added fire escape has upgraded the safety conditions so the auditorium can again be used for public gatherings, which had been suspended when conditions fell below safety code.

Across from the Town Hall, on a small green, stands the former Village School. It is a Queen Anne-Colonial Revival structure, built in 1911. Superseded by a new school in North Pawlet, recent careful restoration has converted it to a beautiful Town library. The Green itself has recently been renovated and improved by the addition of granite curbing that both gives the Green aesthetic definition and prevents encroachment by parked vehicles. Parking spaces have been delineated by striping, and all the surrounding roadway is now paved, replacing roadway that was previously gravel.

Also in the Village, Mach's Market, a general store, sold items from groceries to hardware and provided an informal meeting place for the local populace is currently under renovation that will transform much of it into a brewpub. Built by Joseph Fitch in 1808, this was the first brick building erected in Pawlet. Fitch's Tavern and Inn is not only historic, but unique in construction that extends it over the Flower Brook Gorge. A portal in the center of the store allows visitors to look directly down into the Gorge to the brook below. It may be the only indoor fishing hole in Vermont. The building today remains largely as constructed in 1808. In addition to the original store and apartments, an annex holds a stone oven, organic pizza bakery. The building is currently under renovation toward the end of developing a restaurant and brew pub, plus a smaller general store area and a butcher shop.

The West Pawlet Village retains much of its character from the heyday of the slate industry. That industry had declined to only a vestige by the 1970's, impacted substantially by manufactured roofing materials. Toward the end of the twentieth century the industry greatly revived, fed by a Japanese appetite for natural building material and the consequences of the 1980's Berkeley, California

fire, which spawned regulations that shifted the high-end housing market in California from cedar shingles to fireproof, slate roofing.

The revival employs contemporary industrial methods, but the vestiges of Victorian methods remain in evidence. Although the quarry poles that supported networks of cables for hauling slate from the pits have largely rotted and fallen, the massive piles of waste slate, often carefully stacked against encroachment on roads and parts of the West Pawlet Village, remain. Quarries extend all along a twenty-five mile vein that is the largest deposit of colored slate in the world. Most are small, independent operations. The Slate Valley Museum in nearby Granville, New York has displays, exhibits, presentations, and important photographic documentation about all aspects of the history, current operations, and science of slate quarrying in the area.

Several one-room schoolhouses survive in the Town. The Braintree School on Warren Switch Road in West Pawlet, which was constructed in 1880, is on the National Register of Historic Places. The Pawlett Historical Society, founded in 1973, owns this and another one-room brick schoolhouse in North Pawlet and has renovated them extensively. The Society publishes a newsletter with articles of local interest, including winning historical essays written annually by the sixth grade school children. It arranges several programs a year for the membership and the general public.



Only two churches remain standing from those built during Pawlet's history, West Pawlet's Baptist Church from 1881 and Pawlet Village's Methodist Church from 1841. The Methodist church is Gothic Revival structure built to replace a former church that burned. The replacement church also suffered a fire that destroyed its original steeple. The Church made do with an inferior substitute steeple for many years. Years of fund-raising suppers and supportive donations allowed the Church to commission a new steeple that replicates the original one. It was finally erected in 2004.

In addition to the Town Hall in Pawlet Village and the Braintree School on Warren Switch Road in West Pawlet, the Nathan Allen House on Rt. 30 is also on the National Register of Historic Places.

Besides the history revealed in structures, several cemeteries in the Town provide historic interest.

FUTURE

The scenic beauty of the Town's environs is immediately apparent to anyone who raises their eyes to the hills or settles him or herself beside a stream. Also, the historic character of the Town is written against its scenic setting. All these resources increase steadily in worth compared to their loss from the world

beyond this precious place. It is the interest of the Town to seek ways to maintain these resources.

VII. EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE

OVERVIEW

The Town of Pawlet joined with the adjacent Town of Rupert to form the Pawlet/Rupert Union Elementary School District by Articles of Agreement, ratified November 21, 1995. A Union School Board, comprising seven members, governs the district. Members are elected to the Board by each town in proportion to its population. At the time it was established the District built a new facility in North Pawlet to school all elementary students from Pawlet and Rupert. The new school, which opened in September 1998, replaces the previous facilities in both towns.



A separate Pawlet School Board, whose purview is only the Town, oversees education for

grades 7-12. Approximately half of students in these grades attend school in the neighboring town of Granville, NY. Approximately 1/5 attend Long Trail School, a private school in Dorset. Most of the remainder are divided between Burr & Burton, a private academy in Manchester, Poultney High School, and Dorset Middle School. The rest attend schools out of the area. The Pawlet School Board subsidizes the tuition of students who choose to attend other schools at the tuition rate of Granville.

Transportation is provided by a bus company contracted by the Pawlet and Rupert School Boards. The buses serve students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12 in Pawlet and Rupert. High school students are transported to Granville and Salem, NY.

Besides K-6 education, the Mettawee School, through its principal, directs an Early Education Program. In addition to the standard means of preparing students for the elementary curriculum, the program provides special education, and it coordinates some social, medical, and dental services for its students

The Early Education Program offers an inclusive preschool program for all 3 and 4-year-old children, including those with disabilities and developmental concerns. The program offers early literacy, mathematics, exploratory science activities, and social skills education, and uses developmentally appropriate preschool practices, as defined by Federal standards for Early Childhood Education. The goal of Early Education is full preparation for students to enter kindergarten with no disparities in the skills needed for success. Once an independent program, early education for all 3 and 4 year olds, both regular and special education, is now under the direction of the Mettawee Principal. Notably, the Mettawee Community School Early Education Program is the longest continuously operating preschool-for-all program among Vermont's public schools.

Special education programs include individualized educational plans for students with disabilities. Services are provided by teams variously comprising teachers, teacher assistants, a learning specialist, a speech and language pathologist, parents, occupational and physical therapists and other support personnel.

There are annually varying numbers of homeschooled students in the school district. The school extends opportunities for them to participate in some academic activities and sports, as well as offering these students social opportunities.

The school reaches out to the larger community in various ways, always



encouraging community residents to visit and especially to attend special events. Its premiere event is the annual Thanksgiving dinner, to which students invite grandparents and other important persons in their lives. Parents serve the dinners, and the entire school engages in the preparations. The school also holds luncheons for the community's seniors.

The school engages an important partnership with the local volunteer fire departments of Pawlet, West Pawlet, and Rupert to build the students' awareness of the departments' functions and educate the students about safety.

Most recently, the school has partnered with Pawlet's emergency management to help the students learn emergency programs and procedures, and the school has become an emergency Red Cross shelter.

FACILITIES

The school facility, which still maintains its new appearance, is located in North Pawlet on Route 153, close to its intersection with Route 30. It is a one story, wood frame structure with 14 classrooms for grades Pre-K through 6. It includes a combination gymnasium and auditorium that seats 600 people, a music room, library with computer center, an art room, and a modern kitchen. The kitchen provides a breakfast and a hot lunch program. Fifty-six percent of students currently qualify for lunch at no cost.

Technology

The School endeavors to provide students and teachers with the technology that has become essential for contemporary education.

The School has a fiber optic, extremely fast connection to the Internet and the World Wide Web. Because this fast connection allows students to work with cloud applications, the school can afford to purchase inexpensive devices that effectively provide the same capabilities that previously required expensive devices with costly resident software. Consequently, each student in grades 3-6 has his or her own computer. Every classroom has an iPad, and the kindergarten, first, and second grade classrooms each have 3-5 iPads.

There is an iMac desktop in each classroom to facilitate large projects and printing. Each classroom has a projector and cameras to use in conjunction with it to facilitate sharing work between students and teachers

The School currently has three interactive whiteboards, with plans to acquire an additional one each year, until all 14 classrooms have them.

There is publically accessible Wi-Fi throughout the School.

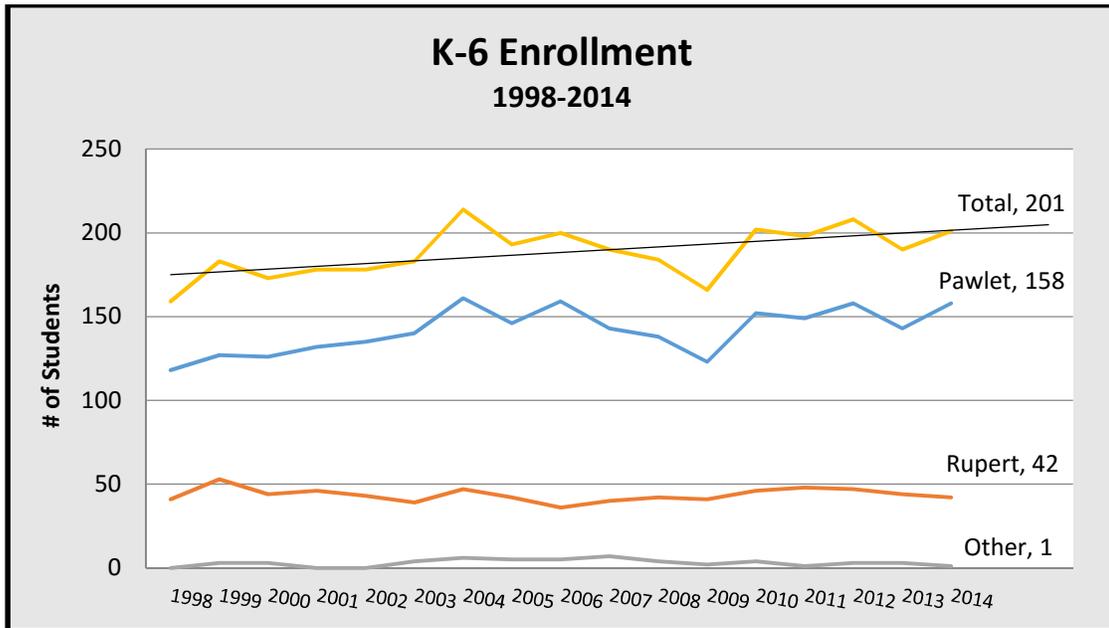
Digital technology in the school not only facilitates the traditional aims of education, but it also serves the purpose of developing the students' digital literacy, a skill that has become critical in our contemporary culture and promises even greater importance in the future.

Digital literacy also facilitates use of the Internet, which opens up the world in a manner only dreamed of even a few decades ago. The relative isolation of a small rural community historically limited its students' experience. Radio and television provided a window to look out on the world, but the interactive possibilities of the Internet open that window and allow experience to flow out as well as in.

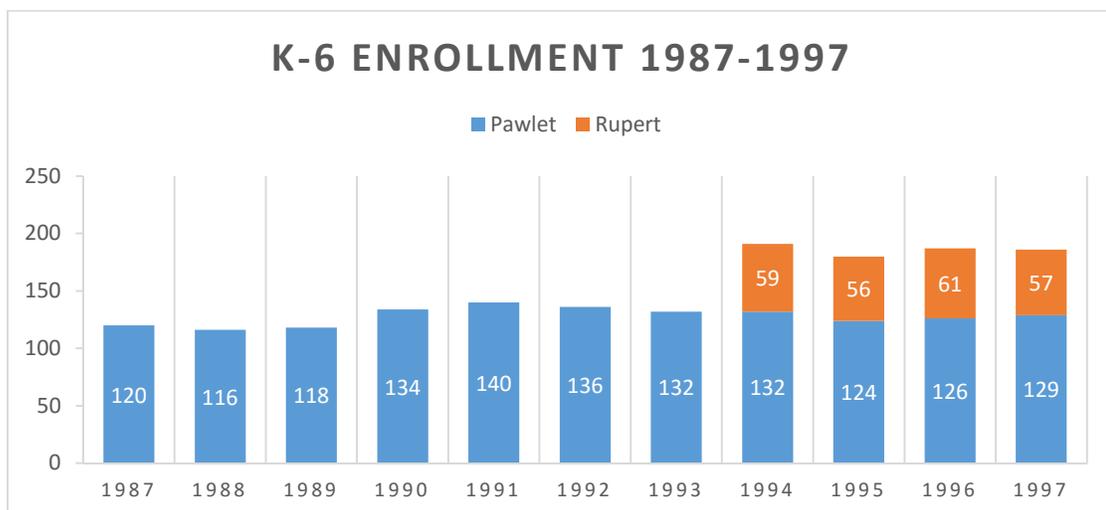
As for the central technology of traditional education, the School has an extensive library and a very active librarian, who especially activates that technology for the students in the school.

ENROLLMENT K-6

The following chart shows K-6 enrollment for the School since 1998, the first year students from both Pawlet and Rupert both attended. Occasionally students from outside Pawlet and Rupert are enrolled in the Mettawee School. 56% of the student enrollment qualifies for free lunch.



The following chart shows some of the history of K-6 enrollment for Pawlet and then for Pawlet and Rupert combined in the years between ratification of the Articles of Agreement and the opening of the new school facility.



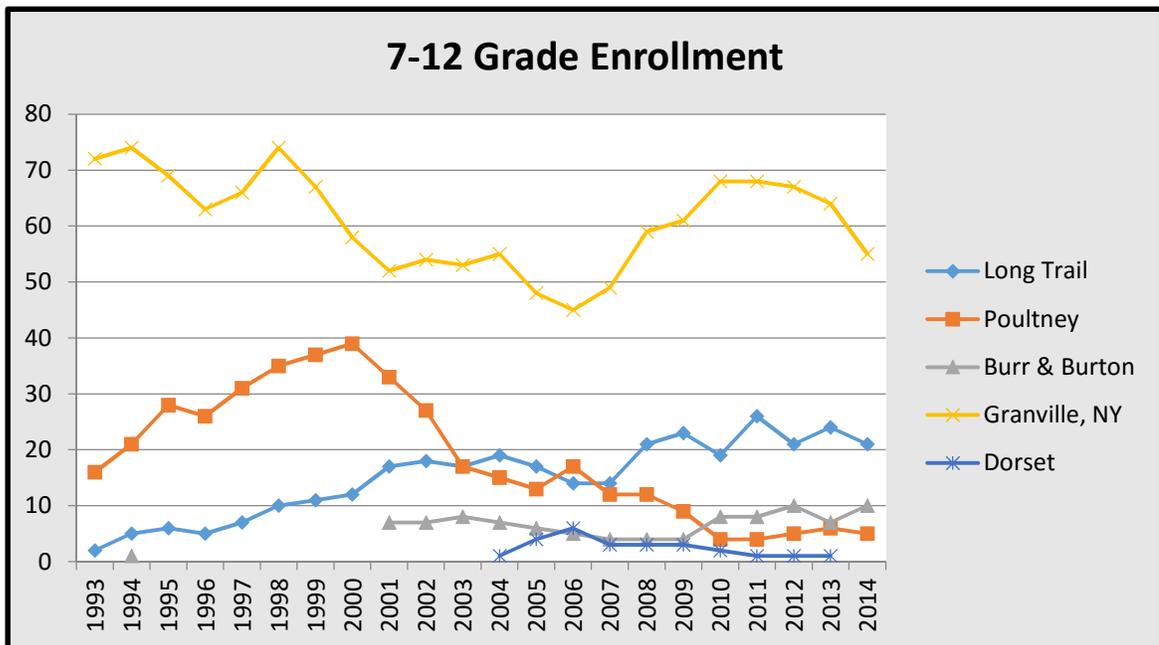
ENROLLMENT 7-12

Students in grades 7-12 for both Rupert and Pawlet attend a variety of mostly local high schools. Granville, New York is the designated high school for Pawlet, and Salem, New York is the designated high school for Rupert. The following chart shows the numbers of Pawlet students in the variety of schools they attend.

In terms of percentage, as noted previously, approximately 54% of students in grades 7-12 attend school in the neighboring town of Granville, NY.

Approximately 20% attend Long Trail School, a private school in Dorset.

Approximately 14% are divided between Burr & Burton, a private academy in Manchester, Poultney High School, and Dorset Middle School. The rest attend schools out of the area.



CHILD CARE

In addition to its Early Education program and in response to a scarcity of child care providers in the community, the Mettawee Community School has begun an After School Program as a safe and supportive extension of the school day. The professional staff has developed a comprehensive curriculum for introducing students to new and rewarding experiences after school. Time is allocated for children to work on school assignments, participate in fine/gross motor activities and socialize in a structured social setting. A state-licensed program, the Mettawee Community School After School Program, is committed to providing the requisite structure so students learn to make positive, healthy choices.

The program is available to students in grades K-6. The program begins at 2:30 and ends at 5:30. A daily snack and recess break is provided. The After School

Program is open on all full school days and follows the school wide rules. Fees are as follows:

Daily (2:30-4:00 p.m.) \$8.00, (2:30-5:30 p.m.) \$10.00

Weekly (2:30-4:00 p.m.) \$40.00, (2:30-5:30 p.m.) \$50.00

Families may enroll by the week or by the day. Program fees are due, along with the enrollment form, in advance of the day/week a child will be attending the program. Subsidies are available to qualified families upon application.

SCHOOL SUMMARY

- Enrollment
 - Elementary school enrollment has been trending up since 1998.
 - The total number of Pawlet students enrolled in middle or high school (grades 7-12) has risen slightly from 95 in 1993 to 107 in 2014.
 - Since 2010 the proportion of Pawlet students attending Granville has declined.
 - Long Trail School has shown the greatest proportionate increase.
 - Poultney High School has greatly decreased in proportionate enrollment.
- Ongoing concerns for the School:
 - Encouraging the Town to publicize openness to visits by parents and other community residents.
 - Develop the partnership with emergency management.
- Fully implement function as a Red Cross shelter. An emergency generator is substantially funded, but more is needed through donation or otherwise.

PAWLET PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Pawlet Public Library is in Pawlet Village, housed in the Town's former school there. Built in 1911, the school closed its doors in 1998 when the Mettawee Community School commenced operation. Soon afterwards the Town undertook to move the Library from its small quarters in the Town Hall to the adjacent former school building. The building was redesigned in 2000 and renovation commenced in the following year, restoring the original, pleasing aesthetic. The redesign and renovation were funded by both public and private funds. The community provided additional goods and services. The building reopened as the Library in 2002, and the Library was officially designated as the municipal library in 2009 by the voters of Pawlet.

The library recently went from a four to five star rating in *Library Journal's* annual rating of top libraries in the nation. It is currently one of only two libraries in the state of Vermont with that honor. That honor is based on high combined per capita outputs, including visits, circulation, public access computer use, and program attendance.



The library is governed by an independent Board, elected by the Town. It employs its own librarian. It is financed by the Town and its own sources, including private funds and its outstanding annual book sale. It benefits from the activities of many volunteers.

independent Board, elected by librarian. It is financed by the

The library offers books, DVDs, eBooks, use of computers, a fax machine, printer, and one-on-one technology assistance to help residents use their own digital devices. The library hosts a variety of classes and activities, including Story Time, Pre-School Art & Music, Hullabaloo dance, Tai Chi, Bone-builders, Mommy & Me fitness, Summer Reading, and two book clubs.

For the future the role of the library as a Wi-Fi hot spot might support development of a sort of incubator for digital entrepreneurs.

PAWLET SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Pawlet is relatively unique in having a private endowment fund, originally established by a civic-minded resident, which provides scholarship assistance for adult residents. The Pawlet Scholarships Committee provides grants for any post-high school education, including college and vocational training. Recent high school graduates, as well as adults of any age from Pawlet are eligible. Awards are made annually. Grants from the fund have been awarded not only to help with tuition for college, but also auto repair school, computer science training, baking school, and training in herbal remedies.

The fund is administered by an independent board of directors. The Committee supplements its endowment by sponsoring an annual dinner event, traditionally on Ground Hog Day, and an art show and sale, held annually on Labor Day weekend.

OTHER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

A variety of volunteer organizations in Town offer additional programs, such as the Oxbow Mountain 4H Club of Pawlet, the Pawlett Historical Society, Haystack Hustlers Seniors, and others.

FUTURE CONCERNS

The last session of the Vermont Legislature passed a bill, signed by the governor that seeks to facilitate consolidation of school districts. The Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union is exploring this possibility. Such a consolidation could result in the loss of Pawlet's designation of Granville middle and high schools for those students.

VIII. ENERGY

OVERVIEW

This section describes current and projected energy use patterns and suggests how Pawlet can best encourage energy conservation and efficiency, as well as suitable alternative technologies. It also discusses the relationship between energy, land use, and development patterns.

The Town of Pawlet is committed to facilitating energy efficiency improvements as a top priority. The second major energy goal is to apply suitable renewable energy technologies, as called for in the State's Comprehensive Energy Plan. Such renewables should be implemented only in ways that minimize adverse impacts on public health, safety, welfare, historic and planned pattern of development, environmentally sensitive areas, and the town's most highly valued natural, cultural and scenic resources – particularly its agricultural lands.

Pawlet Energy Group

Pawlet has a Town Energy Coordinator appointed by the Select Board, who leads the five-member Pawlet Energy Group. The group has been meeting monthly since 2010 and offering educational programs for residents, facilitating home and municipal building energy improvements and recently completed, with Efficiency Vermont, a streetlight study that will result in very significant energy cost savings to the Town. The energy group also recommended that the Town adopt the PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) program in 2015, which was approved by the voters in the March Town Election that year. The activities and minutes of the Pawlet Energy Group are posted at the Town Web site <http://pawlet.vt.gov/town-offices/energy-group/>.

Statewide Trends

Statewide the energy landscape is shifting rapidly toward cleaner and more plentiful energy. Although nearly one-quarter of all energy presently consumed



comes from renewable sources, Vermont remains a net importer of energy – primarily from petroleum sources.

Vermont’s Comprehensive Energy Plan sets ambitious goals of providing 20% of the state’s electricity needs with renewable energy sources by 2017 and 90% of energy needs across all sectors from renewable resources by 2050. The state also established a statutory goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 50 percent by 2028 and 75 percent by 2050.

The economics of many renewable energy projects are affected by state and federal incentives, tax credits, and mandates. Consequently public policy decisions determined outside the Rutland Region will play an important role in the size and type of renewable energy facilities developed in Pawlet.

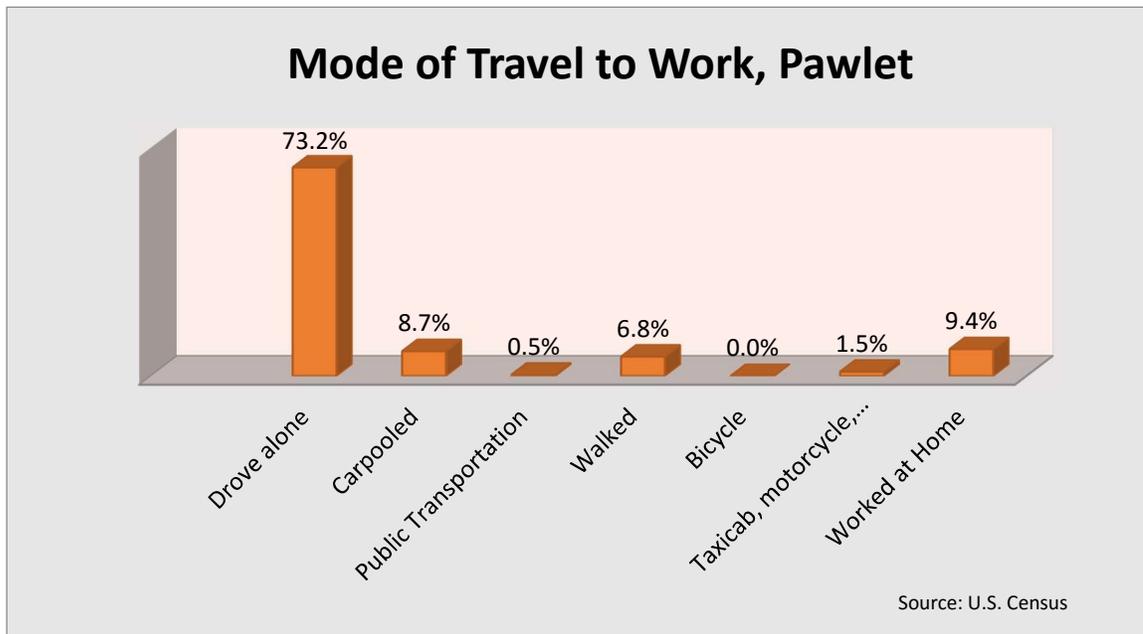
For additional information on statewide trends, see the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan (http://publicservice.vermont.gov/publications/energy_plan) and the Rutland Regional Plan (<http://rutlandrpc.org/rutlandregionalplan.php>).

CURRENT ENERGY PROFILE OF PAWLET

As in other nearby communities, most of the energy consumed in Pawlet is for transportation and home heating.

Transportation

According to the U.S. Census (2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates), 73% of Pawlet residents drive alone to work, have an average commute of 22 minutes, and 23% of them work outside Rutland County. Other than carpooling, there are no viable alternatives to driving to work alone. There are no Park and Ride lots in the town and only very limited public transportation.



The energy required for transportation can be reduced by promoting the use of more fuel-efficient vehicles, developing compact village centers that attract public transportation and encourage other modes of travel, such as bicycle and pedestrian, and supporting the continued implementation of Vermont's "Complete Streets" legislation passed in 2011. Advanced vehicle technologies, such as plug-in hybrid electric cars, offer significant energy-savings potential as well.

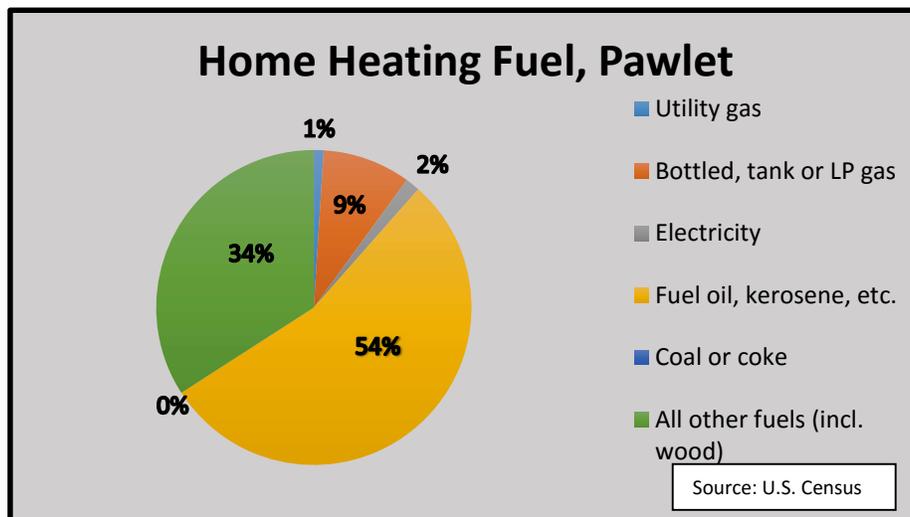
Compact development reduces vehicle miles traveled by 20-40% compared to suburban development (*Growing Cooler*, Urban Land Institute). And the recent advent of fiber optic, high speed Internet service, now installed more widely throughout Pawlet, will also help by making it possible for more residents to work at home. Fiber optic technology has not yet come to West Pawlet, however.

With regard to energy used for transportation, the Town of Pawlet should:

- Encourage compact development patterns.
- Support alternate modes of transportation, such as walking, bicycling and public transportation.
- Promote ridesharing via the Town website and social media such as Facebook and Front Porch Forum. Go Vermont, a web-based service, facilitates ridesharing (<http://www.connectingcommuters.org/>).
- Work to provide more public parking in the Pawlet Village center.
- Consider how to reduce the fuel consumption of its municipal vehicles.

Home Heating

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, fuel oil heated 54% of all homes in the Town of Pawlet, significantly less than the rate for Rutland County which is 66% fuel oil-based.



In November 2008 an informal group of concerned residents conducted a fuel-use survey of area residents who were using the Pawlet Food Pantry. The energy profile of the total 28 respondents shows a similar pattern: oil – 40%,

kerosene – 19%, wood – 11%, wood pellets – 11%, electricity – 11%, gas – 8%.

With regard to energy for individual home heating, the Town should continue to promote opportunities for home energy improvements and alternative fuel sources. The Pawlet Energy Group is focusing on such opportunities as a top priority.

Electricity

The prices for electricity in Pawlet have been relatively stable over the last 20 years, at rates comparable to the rest of New England. Even so, electricity rates for residential, commercial and industrial uses in Vermont are 32-46% higher than the national average (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2014).

The utility Green Mountain Power (GMP) provides electricity to Pawlet. GMP has a total of 84 miles of distribution lines in Pawlet. Most of GMP's power is currently purchased through long-term contracts with Hydro-Quebec, and the long-term viability of these contracts is uncertain.

As a result of federal, state and local tax incentives, some homeowners in Pawlet have installed solar photovoltaic systems for electricity. The Town is also considering the feasibility of placing community solar arrays in suitable areas in its under-utilized industrial zone, such as abandoned slate quarries in West Pawlet that are now owned by the Town.

ENERGY PROJECTIONS, SUPPLY AND DEMAND

The Town's projected energy demand, which will be affected by its demographic trends, will continue to represent a significant expense for the average resident in the coming decades – even with improved efficiency and shifts to alternative fuels.

As explained more fully in the Economic Development Section, Pawlet has witnessed a steady rate of population growth since 1970, with an overall increase of 25%. While the number of households has also increased during that period, the average size of a household has declined. Older people tend to live on fixed incomes, and the largest age group for Pawlet residents is now 45-64. The problem is exacerbated by a relatively high poverty rate, 13% of all families.

Also relevant is the condition of homes in Pawlet. Older buildings are generally less energy efficient, and many of Pawlet's homes are of older building stock, as are its municipal buildings. Older buildings do offer significant opportunities for energy improvements, such as insulation, improved glazing, and other weatherization measures. Several programs and financing incentives are available to encourage energy efficiency, thanks to Efficiency Vermont, NeighborWorks of Western Vermont and others. The Town should continue to explore and promote these resources to minimize its overall consumption of energy and reduce the burden of energy costs for its residents.

For example, the Town Hall, built in 1881, has undergone some energy improvements, as has the Library, which dates back to the early 1900's. Many

residents are taking similar measures for their homes and supplementing weatherization improvements with alternative energy sources, such as solar panels and heat pumps.

RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES: FEASIBILITY, PERMITTING AND PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Alternative energy in the form of renewable sources, such as appropriately sized and sited solar or wind systems, can provide significant amounts of reasonably priced, clean energy well into the future. Pawlet supports the use of renewable energy provided it fits with the character of the town and its natural environment, and is supported by the community through a collaborative siting process.

Relevant Renewable Energy Technologies

Solar – Solar energy, the most commonly used source of renewable energy, can be thermal or electric. Solar thermal for heating water, a cost-effective way to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, works well in Vermont. Photovoltaic (PV) solar systems capture sunlight and generate electricity. Vermont's total installed PV capacity is small compared to larger states, but Vermont is already one of the top 10 states for PV on a per capita basis. The State offers incentives for net-metering (selling excess solar electricity back to the utility grid). Federal tax incentives provide up to 30% of the cost of PV systems through 2016.

Siting issues over solar generators have arisen in the Rutland Region because of the proliferation of solar, particularly utility-scale and commercial PV systems, and the lack of meaningful community involvement or benefits.

The Town supports residential solar PV installations, especially roof-mounted panels that do not impact land use. Community-scale arrays would only be suitable for siting in the Town's under-utilized industrial zone, as explained more fully in Section III, Land Use History and Resources.



Wind – Wind power has become economically viable in some places. The turbines come in various sizes for on-site electricity for homes, businesses, schools and communities; utilities use larger-scale systems to add power to the grid. Such utility systems are typically sited on mountain ridgelines. But these areas are visually prominent, host-sensitive habitats for plants and wildlife, and are home to the headwaters of some of the region's most pristine waters. Noise and health problems have become major issues for neighbors of the three large operating wind projects in northern Vermont. Proposed projects have been withdrawn due to opposition in towns north and east of Pawlet, along the Taconic Range.

The Town of Pawlet does not have any suitable sites for ridgeline wind towers and consequently cannot support such large-scale systems. Small-scale installations for

private residential use might be feasible, depending on site-specific considerations.



Hydropower – The gravitational force of flowing water can be directed through a spinning turbine to generate electricity. In-state hydropower provides some of Vermont’s cheapest electricity, and, along with out-of-state hydro – most notably from Quebec – accounts for a substantial portion of Vermont’s energy portfolio.

In the Pawlet Village Center, water from the Mill Pond dam on Flower Brook has been used to supply

power to Mach’s General Store. That generator was operational from 1983 until 2003. The feasibility of reinstating that and starting up other community scale hydro projects should be investigated, given the prevalence of potential hydropower sites in Pawlet.

Geothermal – Geothermal energy takes advantage of the heat from the earth or air. A heat pump circulates water to extract and upgrade this heat and distribute it throughout a building. The now-cooled water is returned to the earth or air to be re-warmed. The system is reversed in the summer to provide cooling. Air source heat pumps are being found to be more cost-effective in Vermont than ground-source heat pumps, which are much more expensive to install.

The Town should encourage homeowners to consider using heat pumps as a source of clean, low-cost energy. These systems can be retrofitted to existing homes or incorporated into new structures. Efficiency Vermont and Green Mountain Power both offer important heat pump programs.

Woody Biomass – Biomass refers to the use of a wide variety of organic material, such as wood, grass, dedicated energy crops, sewage sludge and animal litter. One in six Vermont homes uses wood products as its primary heating source. In Pawlet, that ratio is even higher, with about 30% of homes using some form of wood heat, including pellets, chips, and firewood. This will likely continue to be a significant source of thermal energy for the Town, which should work with the energy group and fire departments to promote safe and clean combustion practices.

Biogas – Biogas technologies derive energy from sources of methane gas, such as human sewage, animal manure, and food wastes. These wastes are processed in an anaerobic digester, and the resulting methane gas is collected and used to power natural gas engines and generate electricity. Methane digesters are in the early stages of adoption, and a few systems are installed on some large farms in Vermont. The Deer Flats Farm in West Pawlet did participate in Green Mountain Power’s “Cow Power” program for a few years, but its methane digester is no

longer in use. Given the prevalence of dairy farms in Pawlet, biogas could represent an important option.

State Assistance for Renewables

To assist small-scale and community renewable energy projects, Vermont has a Clean Energy Development Fund and a feed-in tariff for small renewable energy facilities. The feed-in tariff, called the Standard Offer, guarantees owners of small renewable installations a specific price for their power and requires electric utilities to buy all power offered until a statewide cap is reached. Standard offer contracts are often in place and locked into a location before host towns and neighbors learn about of the project. Pawlet urges developers to meet with the town before finalizing project locations.

Since 1998, the Vermont Public Service Board has issued “Certificates of Public Good for Interconnected Net Metered Power Systems,” permitting electrical utility customers in Vermont to generate their own power using small-scale renewable energy systems. In the net-metering program any excess power generated that is not used by the customer is fed back to the utilities, and customers are credited on their next monthly bill. This program is also available to farmers generating up to 150 kilowatts. Group net metering is also allowed, so that neighborhoods can join together to install one renewable energy facility benefitting several residences. Group net metering is important because not everyone has a good south-facing site for PV. Siting, however, must take into account the conditions stipulated under *Solar Siting in Section III, Land Use and Related Resources*.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION

Policy and Goals

The Town considers energy conservation and efficiency a top planning priority, since it is always more cost-effective to conserve than produce energy. The importance of energy efficiency is reflected in Vermont’s planning statutes, which require an energy plan be adopted as part of a municipal plan. Efficient use of energy has significant cost and health benefits and also helps the Town conserve its scenic landscape and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Energy efficiency measures have direct economic and health benefits to communities. Approximately \$0.80 of every dollar spent on energy efficiency remains in Vermont, while approximately \$0.80 of every dollar spent to purchase energy leaves the state.

The health and comfort benefits of energy conservation are quite significant. Buildings that are properly insulated and ventilated are more comfortable and have better indoor air quality, with fewer health problems as a result. And by lowering the use of fossil fuels, we are releasing less pollutants into our environment and lowering our carbon impact.

Major goals for the Town of Pawlet in regard to conservation and efficiency are to:

- Improve efficiency in municipal buildings, facilities and operations
- Maximize local access to available regional, state and federal programs
- Improve fuel efficiency of municipal vehicles
- Promote town-wide transportation efficiency
- Support building efficiency in the private sector.

Programs and Resources

The Pawlet Energy Group represents the most significant resource for shaping a cost-effective and environmentally sensitive future for the Town. The Energy Group should coordinate its activities with the Planning Commission and the Select Board and also stay aware of the support offered by various regional and state organizations, such as Efficiency Vermont, NeighborWorks of Western Vermont, Button-Up Vermont, and the Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network.

The Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program should be adopted by the Select Board and publicized to area residents. It is administered by Efficiency Vermont and allows homeowners to invest in home energy improvements through a special assessment tied to the property. The creation of a PACE district is the first step in making this program available in the municipality. In 2015 Pawlet voters decided to make Pawlet a PACE district.

INTEGRATING ENERGY, LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION

Land use patterns significantly affect energy consumption. Pawlet has two village centers separated by about 6 miles, with little compact development. Pawlet's rural, low density settlement patterns contribute to the area's reliance on private cars for most travel. Transportation is a leading source of energy consumption.

The Town's current Unified Bylaws allow for higher densities in the village center and encourage planned unit developments, which require that buildings be clustered for more efficient uses of land and energy resources.

Single family structures are generally less energy efficient in northern climates, due to the number of outside walls per dwelling unit. Multi-family structures, with more common interior walls, provide greater thermal integrity against the elements. The Town should promote a greater mix of single and multiple unit structures to improve energy efficiency on the municipal level.

Supporting compact, mixed-use development surrounded by rural open areas and working lands also maintains the traditional land use pattern that residents and visitors associate with the history and character of the town. Maintaining large tracts of healthy forests and productive farmland not only provides the contrast with the built environment, but ensures long term access to local food supplies and forest products.

IMPLEMENTING THE ENERGY PLAN FOR PAWLET

The Town of Pawlet is committed to facilitating energy efficiency improvements as a top priority. The second major energy goal is to facilitate the application of suitable renewable energy technologies.

Recommendations for the Town:

- The Pawlet Select Board should confirm its support of the policies and recommendations outlined here and work with the Pawlet Energy Group to make Pawlet a place where energy resources are used so as to minimize consumption, cost, and environmental impact.
- Address gaps in its current understanding of local energy use patterns, and the extent of alternative systems in place, such as solar panels, electric cars, heat pumps.
- Develop effective outreach programs for educating residents about important energy programs and resources, including PACE, NeighborWorks of Western Vermont, Efficiency Vermont and Green Mountain Power.
- Adopt the policy recommended in *Section III Land Use, History, and Resources* regarding the siting of non-residential solar arrays and other potential energy-related installations. In the past few years, an increasing number of developers of such systems have approached the Energy Group, Planning Commission, and Select Board, and a consistent policy is very important. Presently, the ultimate authority rests with the Public Service Board, which must take into account the applicable Town Plan.
- Lead by example by making town buildings and other facilities energy efficient and seeking ways to make the municipal vehicles more fuel-efficient. Research how to encourage the use of energy-efficient design when applications are made for new residential and commercial buildings within the town.
- Evaluate the feasibility of roof-top solar panels for the Mettawee Community School.
- Regarding land use support compact, mixed-use development surrounded by rural open areas and working lands and maintaining large tracts of healthy forests and productive farmland.
- Encourage more energy-efficient modes of transportation by promoting ridesharing, walking, biking and public transportation and increasing public parking in the Pawlet Village Center.

Recommendations for the Pawlet Energy Group:

The Pawlet Energy Group should develop a comprehensive list of energy-related programs and standards to be implemented over the next five years and present this list to the Select Board by December 31, 2015. This list should include priorities, specific timelines, and any resources required such as allocation of town monies.

The energy group should also continue to network with other town energy groups and attend relevant regional and statewide events, such as the annual Vermont Energy & Climate Action Network (VECAN) meeting, and other climate change conferences.

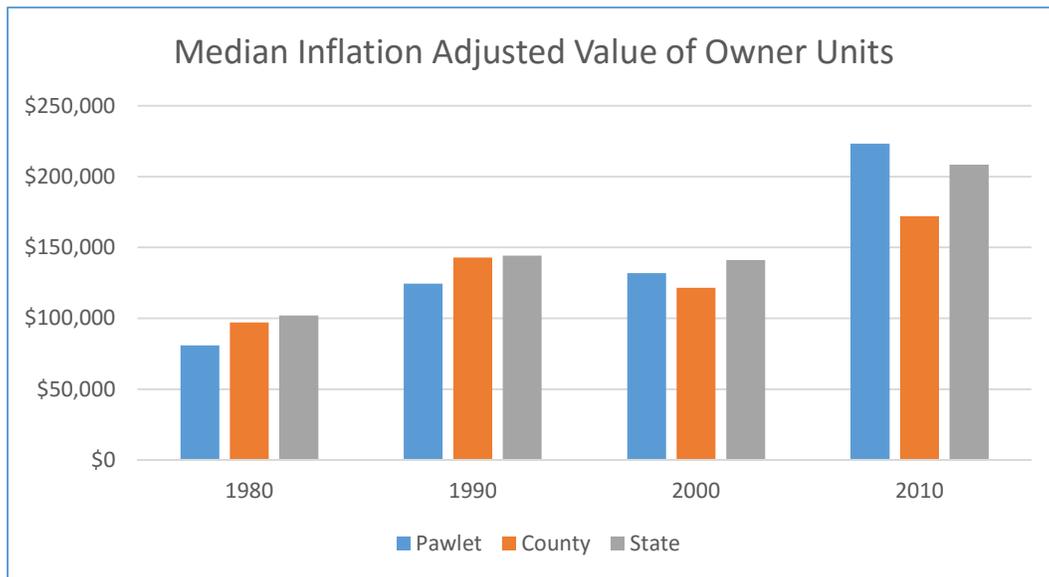
IX. HOUSING

Housing should be considered in terms of value, cost, and availability.

HOUSING VALUES

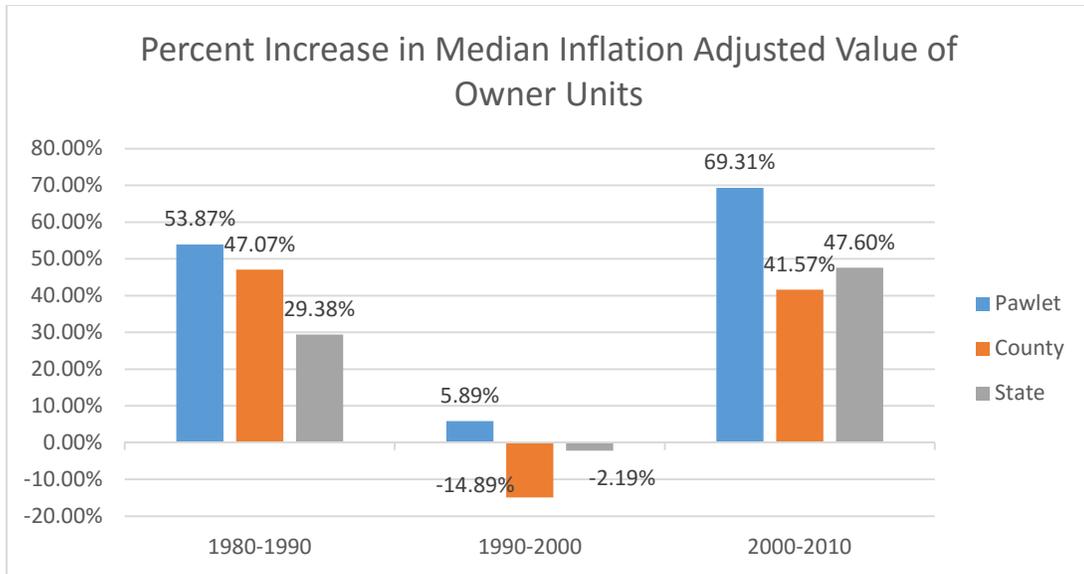
The chart below shows that the inflation adjusted median value of owner-occupied housing in Pawlet now exceeds the value in both Rutland County and the State for the first time since 1980.

(The data for the charts in this section is drawn from the US Census. It should be noted, however, that because Census values are only estimates, their usefulness is mainly for the purpose of comparison.)



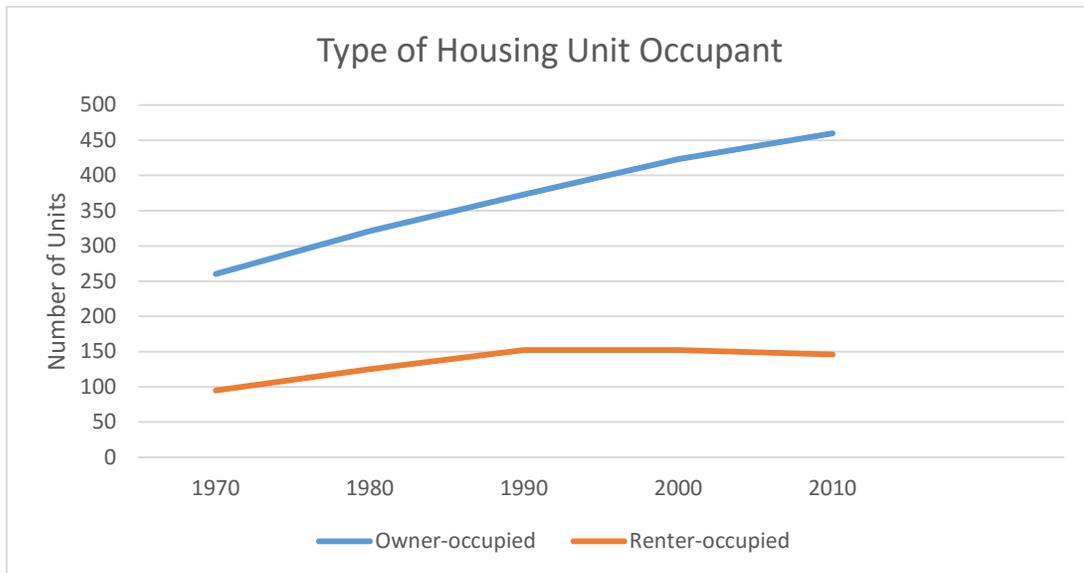
The chart below shows that the median inflation adjusted value of owner housing units in Pawlet has increased at a significantly greater rate in the decade 2000-2010 than either the County or State. This adds notably to the information about housing unit value shown in the above chart.

The growth of housing value in Pawlet is both greater and faster than for both the County and State for the period 1980-2010.



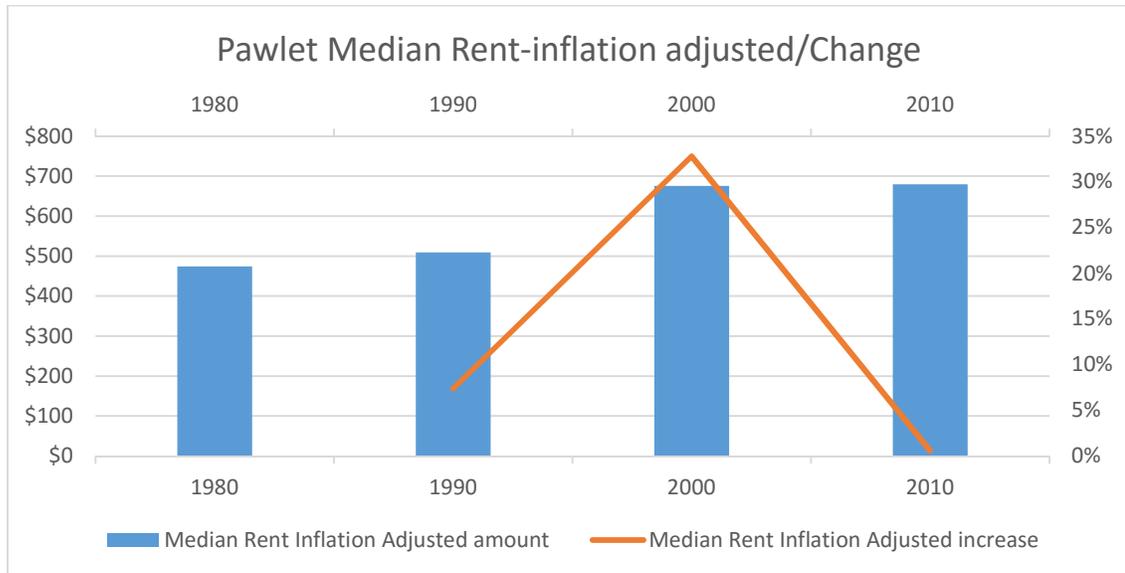
NUMBER AND AVAILABILITY OF HOUSING UNITS

The number of owner-occupied housing units in Pawlet has increased steadily since 1970. The number of renter-occupied units increased more slowly from 1970 to 1990, but then since then has suffered a slight decrease.



The median rent in Pawlet increased dramatically (33%) between 1990 and 2000, but negligibly between 2000 and 2010, as indicated in the chart below. It is notable that although the number of rental units has not changed in the last decade, the median rent has not increased, which implies a balance between

supply and demand. This is even more notable, given that the rental vacancy rate in the 2010 Census was zero.



The following table shows the proportion of housing units in Pawlet that are rental vs. owner-occupied.

Type of Housing Unit	number	percentage
Occupied housing units	650	100%
Owner-occupied	507	78%
Renter-occupied	143	22%

Another perspective on housing is provided by the length of time that people have lived in housing units, indicated by the table below. The table shows that people tend to stay in their housing units for rather long times. Calculation based on the table shows that 49% of householders have been in their units since 1999.

YEAR HOUSEHOLDER MOVED INTO UNIT		
Occupied housing units	598	598
Moved in 2010 or later	69	11.50%
Moved in 2000 to 2009	236	39.50%
Moved in 1990 to 1999	94	15.70%
Moved in 1980 to 1989	98	16.40%
Moved in 1970 to 1979	37	6.20%
Moved in 1969 or earlier	64	10.70%

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The question of housing affordability in Pawlet is complicated by the demographic and value trends of the last decade.

One approach to estimating the affordability of housing is in relation to median income. Median income data is represented in two charts in *Section XI Economic Development*.

The following table reports data shown in the chart “Pawlet Median Income-Inflation Adjusted:”

Median Income-Inflation Adjusted to 2010		
	Family	Household
1980	\$35,795	\$33,588
1990	\$45,798	\$38,939
2000	\$54,134	\$50,484
2010	\$56,765	\$46,130

Federal guidelines define affordable housing as housing that costs a household no more than 30% of its monthly income. Calculated for a month, the 30% guideline for the household median income is \$1,153. Adding percentages of housing costs from the following table gives the result that 39.8% of owner households and 69.3% of renter households pay less than \$1,000 per month in housing costs.

MONTHLY HOUSING COSTS	owner	renter
	Less than \$100	0.00%
\$100 to \$199	0.00%	0.00%

\$200 to \$299	4.30%	0.00%
\$300 to \$399	4.10%	3.50%
\$400 to \$499	2.00%	3.50%
\$500 to \$599	9.70%	18.20%
\$600 to \$699	5.10%	19.60%
\$700 to \$799	4.10%	12.60%
\$800 to \$899	6.90%	11.90%
\$900 to \$999	3.60%	0.00%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	26.00%	8.40%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	15.40%	2.80%
\$2,000 or more	18.70%	0.00%

Substantial numbers of owner and renter households, therefore, pay less than 30% of their income for housing, from a median income point of view. Of course, the match between median income levels of households and levels of housing costs is not exact.

Another approach to estimating the affordability of housing looks at monthly housing costs as a percentage of household income for different levels of income. The following table provides a basis for that approach. It shows what percentage of household income was paid for housing at each range of income, and what different percentages of households in each range paid.

For an example to explain the table, it shows that 19.6% of the renter households in Pawlet had an income in the range \$20,000 to \$34,999. The table then breaks the households in that range down to show that no renter households with income in that range paid less than 20% of their monthly income for housing, 3.5% of renter households in Pawlet had income in that range and paid less than 20-29% of their monthly income for housing, and 16.1% of renter households in Pawlet had income in that range and paid less than 30% or more of their monthly income for housing.

MONTHLY HOUSING COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS	owner	renter
	Less than \$20,000	14.40%
Less than 20 percent	1.00%	0.00%

20 to 29 percent	1.40%	0.00%
30 percent or more	12.00%	13.30%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	9.30%	19.60%
Less than 20 percent	2.20%	0.00%
20 to 29 percent	1.40%	3.50%
30 percent or more	5.70%	16.10%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	16.60%	11.90%
Less than 20 percent	6.50%	7.70%
20 to 29 percent	3.00%	4.20%
30 percent or more	7.10%	0.00%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	23.90%	17.50%
Less than 20 percent	3.60%	17.50%
20 to 29 percent	9.30%	0.00%
30 percent or more	11.00%	0.00%
\$75,000 or more	33.10%	10.50%
Less than 20 percent	26.60%	10.50%
20 to 29 percent	4.90%	0.00%
30 percent or more	1.60%	0.00%

Determination of whether adequate affordable housing exists in Pawlet is made difficult because the criteria for affordable housing is only a percent of household income, but that does not specify a dollar income level. The question can be asked on the basis of the above table whether the situation that approximately 15% of the housing available for both owners and renters with household incomes below the median is an adequate amount. Obviously, other factors need to be considered that depend on the attitudes of people in the Town.

Figures for percentage of households for the brackets in the respective columns do not add up to 100% unless we make the following addition to the table. The addition shows that 7.7% of renter households in Pawlet had zero or negative income and 19.6% of households in Pawlet paid no cash rent. This impacts the question of affordability, in ways that cannot be determined from the data.

	owner	renter
Zero or negative income	2.8%	7.7%
No cash rent	(X)	19.6%

Despite whether one thinks that there seems to be adequate or inadequate affordable housing in Pawlet, some demographic and related factors that may notably affect Pawlet's population and growth can be considered:

- The construction of a new elementary school has made Pawlet more attractive to families who would previously have chosen Dorset or Manchester on the basis of school quality. Additionally, the impact of the recently implemented Act 60 is anticipated to equalize educational quality between towns.
- The September 11, 2001 terrorist disaster has spurred an exodus of a wealthy population from the New York City area that has particularly affected Southern Vermont.
- Pawlet real estate values are beginning to approach those of Dorset and Manchester and diverge from Rutland County.
- The age structure of Pawlet, Rutland County, the State, and the Country is undergoing a dramatic shift due to aging population.

It seems prudent in respect of these points that the Town should attend earnestly to its ordinances, regulations, infrastructure, and capital structure in order not to be overwhelmed demographic and related changes.

The trend to smaller household size, along with changes in age structure and other changes to household composition and distribution holds greater significance for the Town than does population growth by itself.

Once, the numbers of children made educational services a singular focus for the Town. Now that focus has increasing competition from other municipal and personal services that are required by smaller households and older residents.

Smaller households, for instance, tend to have more vehicles per capita, which results in more miles driven per capita and more wear and tear on highways. Older households tend to require more social services, but tend to feel tax burdens more heavily. These burdens can require them to liquidate land holdings, leading in turn to development, greater population density, and increased impact on environmental quality. In the final turn, greater density tends to require increased taxes, in the classic, vicious cycle of development.

In order to address these circumstances, the Town would need to attend to its regulatory tools and other means to insure availability of affordable housing as development proceeds.

The Town of Pawlet does not have the direct means to create affordable housing, say by building it. The cost of doing so would raise taxes considerably on such a small tax base as the Town has. Nor can the Town establish a rent control program. The Town has done about all it can by the indirect means of allowing accessory apartments and multifamily dwellings in appropriate zoning districts under approved conditions. The next question would be whether to relax density requirements, a question which is beyond the consideration of this Plan

but could be taken up by the Planning Commission in respect to the Unified Bylaws.

X. FLOOD RESILIENCE

Pawlet's flood resilience plan is designed to:

- Protect the citizens, property and economy, and the quality of the Town's natural resources by addressing flood risks.
- Ensure the Town is able to recover from flooding quickly, in a manner that improves flood resilience.
- Encourage development in Town that does not worsen flooding.
- Restore natural river functions.

Pawlet is committed to updating flood hazard areas and river corridor designations and enhancing floor area regulations and also identifying other lands as necessary to prevent flooding. The Town's Unified Bylaws will be modified to include specifications for reducing storm water runoff volumes and velocities that can increase flood damage. The Town will also continue to emphasize emergency preparedness and planning, related education and outreach, as well as the coordination of the various local groups involved in these efforts.

Flooding is Vermont's most frequent and costly type of natural disaster, specifically inundation and flash flooding. Inundation happens when water rises onto low lying land. Flash flooding is a sudden, violent flood which often causes fluvial erosion, also known as stream bank erosion.

Vermont is experiencing more frequent and severe flooding, and this trend will persist. Since 1960, average annual precipitation has increased 5.9 inches; almost half of this change in rainfall has occurred since 1990.

The Agency of Natural Resources lists the major initiatives, programs, and assessments regarding climate change undertaken by the State agencies, departments and institutions

http://www.anr.state.vt.us/anr/climatechange/Vermont_Initiatives.html.

Prominent is the 2014 Vermont Climate Assessment (VCA), <http://vtclimate.org/>. It is the first state-scale climate assessment in the country and speaks directly to the impacts of climate change as they pertain to our rural towns, cities and communities, including impacts on Vermont tourism and recreation, agriculture, natural resources and energy.

According to the Assessment, precipitation will continue to increase, particularly in the winter months. The Vermont Climate Assessment (VCA) paints a vivid picture of a changing climate in Vermont and calls for immediate strategic planning to sustain the social, economic and environmental fabric of our state.

Because precipitation will likely occur in shorter, more intense bursts, it will tend to run off the land rather than filter into it. Records across Vermont show that “flashy flows” are increasingly common in the State’s rivers. The expected increase in precipitation during the winter may lead to added snowmelt and flooding in the spring.

MAPPING AND ASSESSING FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

Maps are required to meet the new state requirement of identifying flood hazard and fluvial erosion areas and designating areas to be protected. Because the methods of mapping inundation and fluvial erosion corridors differ significantly, two types of maps are needed: the existing flood hazard maps and river corridor maps.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) was created by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to address inundation hazards. Flood insurance rates are based on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) or Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMs), which delineate areas of the floodplain likely to be inundated during a flood. These are identified as Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs), specifically those with a 1% annual chance of flooding. The term “100-year flood” is sometimes used in this context but is considered misleading. The more technically accurate term “1-percent-annual-chance flood” is now used by most federal and state agencies and by the National Flood Insurance Program. Town participation in NFIP is voluntary. It’s important to know that in Vermont, two thirds of flood damages occur outside of federally mapped flood areas.

Vermont’s River Corridor and Floodplain Management Program, developed by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, delineates areas subject to fluvial erosion. River corridor maps take into account the fact that rivers are by nature dynamic. A certain amount of erosion is natural when Pawlet floods because of the town’s terrain and frequent storms. Furthermore, development in the river corridor and stream channel engineering over time have increased channel instability. Such management practices may create the illusion of stability – but when engineered channels are tested by a high flow, such as a flood, stability cannot be maintained. Special mapping and geomorphic assessments can identify fluvial erosion hazard areas along rivers, which allows for a more comprehensive definition of high hazard areas

Stream Geomorphic Assessments in Pawlet

Several bodies of water in Pawlet have been analyzed according to protocols for stream geomorphic assessments (SGA) recommended by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. The purpose of these studies is to determine river and stream alterations because they affect water flows and could potentially lead to future flood damage. Phase 2 SGAs have been conducted of the Mettawee River Watershed, including the Mettawee River, Indian River, and Beaver and Flower Brooks.

The SGAs for the Mettawee River and Flower Brook suggest potential remediation actions that could reduce the risk of future flood damage, including: restoring buffer areas, reducing sediment loading, improving roadside ditches, re-orientating culvert crossings, excluding livestock from direct access to stream channels, changing cropping practices to reduce direct runoff, and addressing the high concentration of paved road surfaces and roof tops in the vicinity of the mill and gorge. For more information, see <https://anrweb.vt.gov/DEC/SGA/finalReports.aspx>.

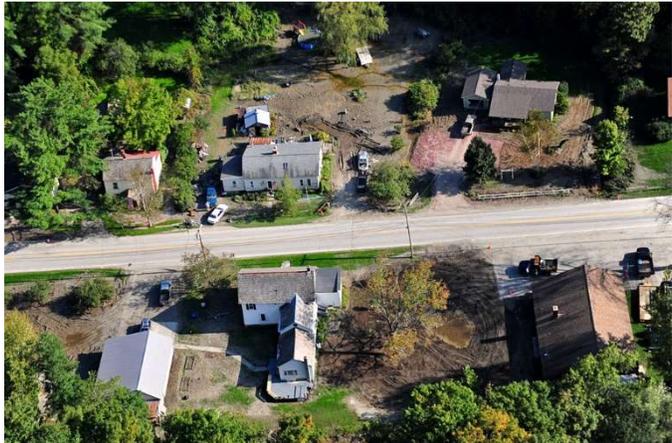
River corridor assessments help communities decide how to best protect, manage, and restore watershed resources. In 2013, the Town of Pawlet adopted river corridor protection by protecting the Special Flood Hazard Area and Fluvial Erosion Hazard (FEH) zones from new encroachments in its Unified Bylaws. Since then, statewide River Corridors have been made available that cover more streams in town and include a 50' setback on small streams (those with a watershed of less than two square miles). The town will include the new River Corridors in an upcoming update of its Unified Bylaws. River Corridors and FEMA Flood Hazard Areas (FEH) of the Town of Pawlet are designated in the Future Land Use map included in this Town Plan.

HISTORY OF FLOODING IN PAWLET

According to the Town's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, Pawlet tends to experience significant flooding at least once every 3 or 4 years. In January 1996, county-wide flooding resulted in a FEMA disaster declaration, with \$38,577 in damages in Pawlet. In January of 2000, severe storms led to a federally declared disaster that caused \$38,624 in damages in Pawlet. More recently Tropical Storm Irene devastated Vermont in late August of 2011; the Town of Pawlet received \$318,600 from FEMA due to damages from flooding and fluvial erosion for that disaster.

Lessons from Tropical Storm Irene

An emergency preparedness meeting called by the Pawlet Select Board in September 2011 identified several issues in the wake of flooding from Tropical Storm Irene. In addition to Select Board members, that meeting was attended by representatives from the two volunteer fire departments, the Highway Department, Pawlet Health Officer and members of the general public. The major problem areas identified during that debriefing were:



- Need for improved radio communication for the fire departments and the Highway department.
- Location of Pawlet Fire House in flood zone.
- Traffic control, communication with public, people coming out to look instead of staying home and being in the way of the emergency crews. Town needs to invest in road closed signs and more cones for traffic control.
- Need for a Red Cross Shelter; the West Pawlet Fire Department is the only shelter in town and isn't accessible to everyone. (The Mettawee Community School has now also been designated a shelter. It has acquired the major portion of funds needed to purchase a generator and is pursuing the remainder.)
- Need for emergency management director to coordinate activities during a flood event.

Since that meeting, the Town has appointed an Emergency Management Director who has updated the Town's emergency operation plan and procured better radio equipment. Efforts to improve and upgrade culverts have continued, as the Town continues to apply for funding through the Better Back Roads grant program.

Pawlet Roads Vulnerable to Flooding

Flood-related road damage typically occurs on narrow and steep roadways, low-lying roads that follow a frequently flooded waterbody, or road segments near curves in the river.

Specific problem areas in Pawlet are:

- VT Rt. 133—erosion behind firehouse.
- VT Rt. 133—flooding over road for over ½ mile where Flower Brook runs alongside road. Creates access problems and dangerous travel conditions.
- Mill Pond—floods Pawlet village center.
- VT Rt. 149—Mettawee River floods over road. Creates access problems and dangerous travel conditions.
- River Road—Mettawee River floods over road at the intersection with Route 153, which creates access problems and dangerous travel conditions.
- VT Rt. 153—flooding over road in several areas.
- West Pawlet Village—5 homes flooded along TH 19.
- Sawmill Road—road and bridge damage caused by flooding.
- Tadmer Road – repeatedly damaged roadway; one culvert still needs upgrade to eliminate flooding risk.



Lands that Minimize Flooding

Riparian buffers reduce flood hazards and stabilize stream banks, attenuate floods, provide aquatic and terrestrial habitat and wildlife corridors, filter runoff, absorb nutrients, and shade streams to keep them cool. Wetlands also prevent flood damage and are a vital component for maintaining the ecological integrity of land and water. In addition, upland forests also moderate flood impacts and attenuate flood impacts. Steep slopes, on the other hand, can be a detriment during flooding by amplifying water volume and velocity in rivers and streams.

Because impervious surfaces prevent the infiltration of water into the soil, these man-made surfaces exacerbate flooding by increasing the amount and velocity of storm water runoff, particularly in areas where these surfaces are prevalent.

The Poultney Mettawee Natural Resources Conservation District has been working with the Town to help stabilize stream banks and address issues related to storm water runoff. This work has included planting trees along Flower Brook and working to improve infiltration of storm water into soils. Pawlet recognizes the value of having protected areas for water “calming” to minimize future flooding. There is one such area at the confluence of Beaver and Flower Brooks

on conserved land. For more connections between watershed resources and flooding, see *Section VI, Ecological, Scenic and Historical Resources*.

PAWLET'S FLOOD HAZARD AREA REGULATIONS

The Town's Flood Hazard Area Regulations, updated in the town's Unified Bylaws in November 2013, meet requirements for participation in the NFIP. The land use bylaws in Article VII do not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion because they do not allow new development, fill or removal of wetlands in the River Corridor or Special Flood Hazard Area, as depicted in the Flood Plain Overlay District on the town Zoning District Map.

E-911 mapping indicates that 30 structures in Pawlet are within the SFHA (1% annual chance of flooding). These are identified on the Rutland County DFIRM dated 2008. Three critical or public structures in the Pawlet Village Center are in the SFHA or 0.2% flood hazard area, according to E-911 mapping: the Town Hall, Firehouse, and Vermont Telephone Company switch building.

NFIP Participation

The Town of Pawlet received a flood hazard boundary map in June of 1974. The Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) and Flood Insurance Study were first published in September of 1978, and Pawlet joined the National Flood Insurance Program in 1978. The Rutland County DFIRM became effective in August 2008. The hydrology and hydraulics were updated in the DFIRM.

As of January 2015, there are 12 flood insurance policies through the NFIP covering \$2,819,300 in value for properties in Town. Flood insurance is available for any structure in town regardless of previous losses or location. The cost of flood insurance premiums rises in areas identified at a high-risk level.

Pawlet qualifies for an Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF) rate of 17.5% (the highest rate) for post-disaster funding.

LOCAL HAZARD MITIGATION AND EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLANS

The Pawlet Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) was adopted in 2011 as an Annex to the Rutland Region All-Hazards Mitigation Plan. The LHMP identifies known hazard issues in town and allows the Town to seek



FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance funds to reduce current risk levels. The Town of Pawlet's Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP) was adopted in March of 2015 and is reviewed annually. The LEOP encourages flood preparedness and identifies a process for response planning. Both documents can be viewed at the Pawlet Town Clerk's office; copies are also available by contacting Bob Morlino, Pawlet Emergency Management Director, robertm850@aol.com.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The Town of Pawlet knows from hard experience that becoming more flood-resilient is essential. To do so will require ongoing work and coordination within the town between the Planning Commission, Select Board, Highway Department, Emergency Management, and the West Pawlet and Pawlet volunteer fire departments. Additional regional and state resources will also be required, and the Town is committed to continuing to work with the Rutland Regional Planning Commission, the Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District, and other relevant organizations.

To this end, the Town should consider establishing a special group, such as the Conservation Commission recommended in the *Section VI Ecological, Scenic, and Historic Resources*, to serve as the local group that will coordinate and facilitate these efforts.

Some of the specific tasks and areas of concern related to flood resilience for the Town of Pawlet are outlined below.

Flood Hazard Area Mapping and Development Concerns

1. Incorporate VT ANR River Corridor mapping into Town Plan and Unified Bylaws. Identify all flood areas not designated in FEMA's maps or in the Vermont ANR's maps, but that are flooded during a weather event, as these should be added to local flood regulations.
2. Identify existing homes and businesses at serious risk of flood damage and prioritize them for mitigation actions, including elevation/relocation or purchase and demolition.
3. Prohibit new buildings and development (with the exception of wastewater treatment plants) within river corridors.
4. Prohibit building of emergency service facilities, power substations, and municipal buildings in special flood hazard areas.

Storm Water Issues

1. Complete the Town's Storm Water Master Plan and consider the need for additional storm water master planning and/or further assessment of backroads.
2. Ensure that municipal plans and Unified Bylaws include provisions for such practices as cutting back on impervious surfaces and implementing green infrastructure techniques to reduce storm water runoff volumes and velocities.
3. Explore funding sources for storm water management, such as the creation of a storm water utility.
4. Use the Phase 2 geomorphic assessment of the Mettawee River and Flower Brook to reduce the risk of future flood damage, with measures such as: buffer restoration, reducing sediment loading, improvement of roadside ditches, re-orientation of culvert crossings, excluding livestock from direct access to stream channels, changes in cropping practices to reduce direct runoff, and addressing the high concentration of paved road surfaces and roof tops in the vicinity of the mill and gorge.
5. Develop more consistent, accurate and thorough identification of wetlands areas through the use of best available data and the adoption of updated maps.

Coordination and Outreach Efforts

1. Continue to work with first responders, Pawlet Emergency Management, and the highway department to plan improved emergency response capacity (operations, training, and equipment) during natural disasters, as identified in the Local Emergency Operations Plan.
2. Establish and sustain a flood hazard area education and outreach effort to support flood damage mitigation and better insure community residents and property for future flood damage.
3. Pursue federal buyouts funds for future disasters.
4. Advise the State of Vermont, as a matter of record, of serious state highway flooding that has occurred and potential state highway flooding hazards in the Town of Pawlet.

XI. REGIONAL AND SURROUNDING TOWN COMPATIBILITY

REGIONAL PLAN COMPATIBILITY

This Plan is extensively compatible with the Rutland Regional Plan. Some differences of emphasis occur, mainly due to the more rural and agricultural character of Pawlet compared to the urban and suburban parts of the Region, the

relative size of Pawlet's population and economy, and Pawlet's mostly residential habitation.

It shares the Regional Plan vision of providing a place where residents enjoy a high quality of life, particularly deriving the benefits of rural life and character; a place with a well-cared-for environment; and a place with a vigorous economy, particularly informed by the sorts of local business, cottage industry, and creative endeavor that enhance the rural character of the Town.

Pawlet sends representatives to the Regional Planning Commission Board and regional Transportation Council.

SURROUNDING TOWNS: WELLS, DANBY, RUPERT, DORSET AND GRANVILLE, NY

Pawlet is notable among its surrounding towns in Rutland County for its longstanding Zoning Ordinances, which have effectively moderated the Town's development. By virtue of their long standing the Ordinances inform the understanding of the Town and provide a solid basis for building the Town's future. In 2013 the Zoning Ordinance was superseded by a Unified Bylaws. Among other things, the Unified Bylaws instituted subdivision regulations that promote cluster development. The Bylaws established a Development Review Board concomitant with a change from one to ten acre Act 250 status.

This Plan shares with the plans of its neighboring Rutland County towns a concern that land use patterns maintain their rural character. The territories on both sides of the borders Pawlet shares with these towns notably exhibit continuity of rural character.

Pawlet has direct road connections with Wells and Danby. The Wells connection is mostly via State Route 30, but a Town road in North Pawlet provides a shortcut across a bow in Route 30, which makes it subject to an excess of traffic.

The road connection between Pawlet and Danby is of much greater concern, however. The towns connect to each other via a heavily used road maintained by each town.

In the year 2001 the state located a traffic counter on the Danby part of the road. Counts indicated that between 9.4% and 11.4% of all vehicles were trucks. All but a very small amount of that truck count is necessarily through traffic, so the count is also an index for truck use on the Pawlet part of the road. The intensity of traffic on the road can be seen by noting that the State average for truck use on that class of road in the year 2000 was 5.7%. Truck traffic on that road is thus about double the State



The largest underground marble mine in the world is just over the border, in Danby.

average for a road of its class. More recent differential counts on Route 133 in Pawlet also provide a rough index that confirms the heavy traffic on the Pawlet-Danby Road. The severity of truck wear on that road can be gauged by noting that by transportation engineering rule of thumb the impact of one truck on road wear is more than the combined impact of thousands of cars. The provenance of this road is a major mutual concern for both towns.



The Bennington County towns of Rupert and Dorset, adjacent to Pawlet, share in their plans a concern for maintaining rural character in land use patterns. The territories on both sides of the borders Pawlet shares with these towns do notably exhibit continuity of rural character.

Rupert and Pawlet are visually seamless agriculturally in the Mettawee Valley and on the western part of their border. In between they share a range of forested hills.

Rupert and Pawlet now share a union school district for their elementary students.

Very little agriculture survives in Dorset: It has become heavily residential. The scarcity of land remaining for development has shifted significant potential for development north to Pawlet. Only a small part of Rupert separates Pawlet from Dorset along the region's main highway, Route 30.

The border Pawlet shares with Granville, NY, is partly in agricultural use, partly industrial use, and partly the border abuts the Village of Granville. The industrial use areas of both towns largely share contiguous border areas, as do the agricultural areas. Presently there are no significant cross border use discrepancies between the two towns. Granville, in New York State, however, looks to a different set of planning and development guidelines than Vermont. The situation consequently holds some potential for difficulty and therefore merits attention.



Relationships between Pawlet and Granville share a long history. Granville has traditionally been a market center for Pawlet. That role has changed with the development of modern transportation, but it is still an immediate source for many needs of Pawlet residents, such as groceries, hardware, pharmacy, and automotive. It also provides elements of

agricultural infrastructure important for Pawlet, including farm equipment and supplies and veterinary services.

Pawlet avails the services of the Granville Rescue Squad and provides it financial support in annual resolutions by Pawlet's voters. Granville secondary schools have been Pawlet's designated secondary schools for decades, although an increasing percentage of Pawlet students have enrolled in other schools during the last few years.



Pawlet is a member of the Solid Waste Alternative Communities, but Pawlet has no transfer station itself. Residents use the Washington County transfer station in Granville for recycling and on a pay and throw basis for trash.

Pawlet has longstanding mutual aid agreements with Granville and Vermont towns.

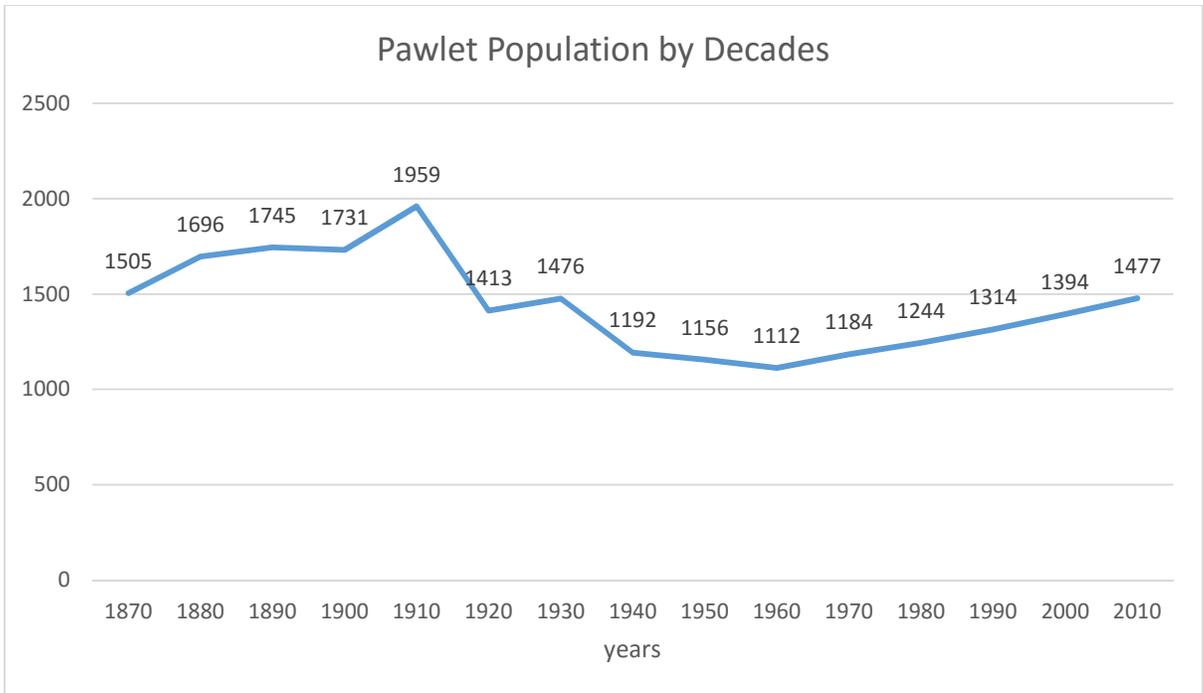
XII. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Pawlet is a small, rural community with an economy that has traditionally focused on agriculture, quarrying, and trade. The traditional economy is only a part of the current one, which comprises a broad service sector and significant employment of residents commuting to work outside the Town, and telecommunicating to work from home.

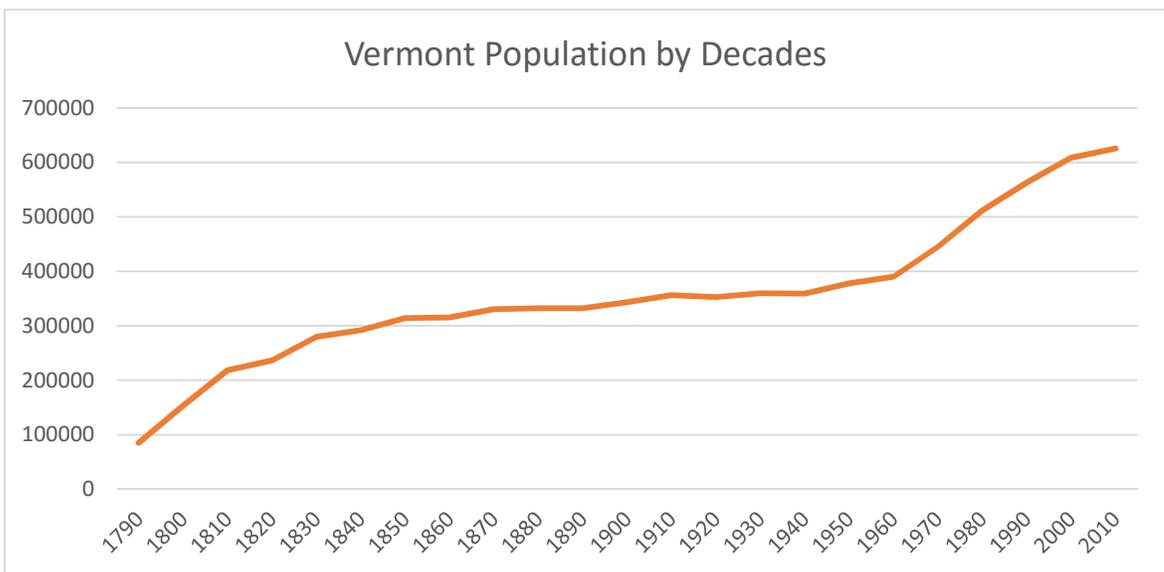
The most basic consideration of Pawlet's economic development begins with population and its characteristics, including age structure. Next come considerations of employment and income.

POPULATION

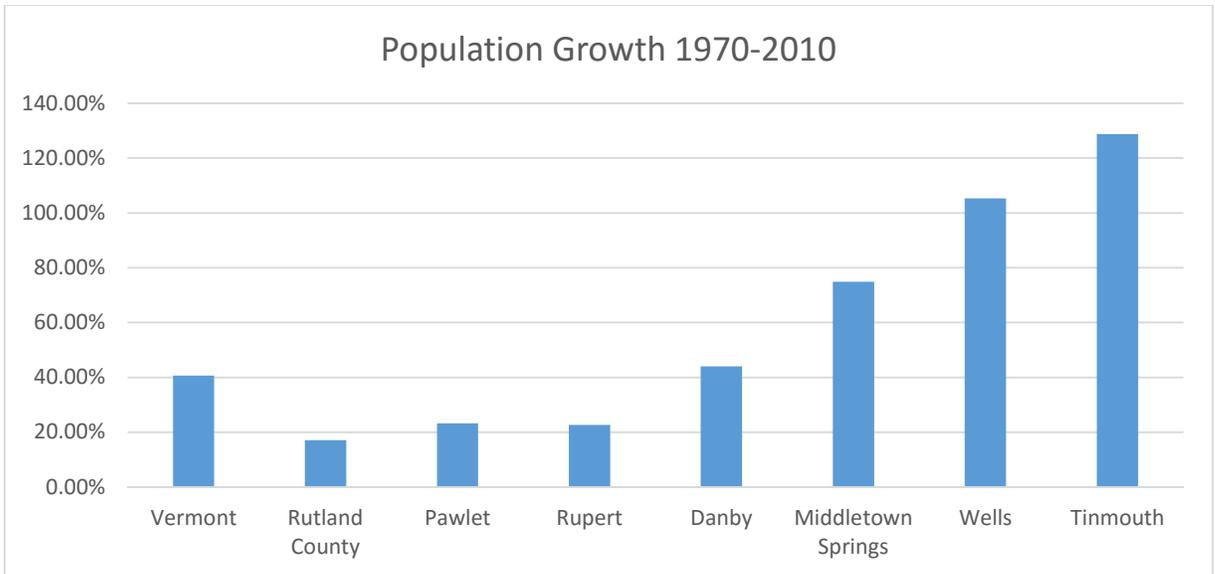
The population of the community is charted below from after the Civil War until the 2010 US Census. The most dramatic change occurred between 1910 and 1920, when the population declined precipitously from 1,959 people to 1,413 in this single decade. Population continued to decrease, although more gradually, to a low in 1960 of 1,112. Since 1960 the population has increased at a relatively steady rate.



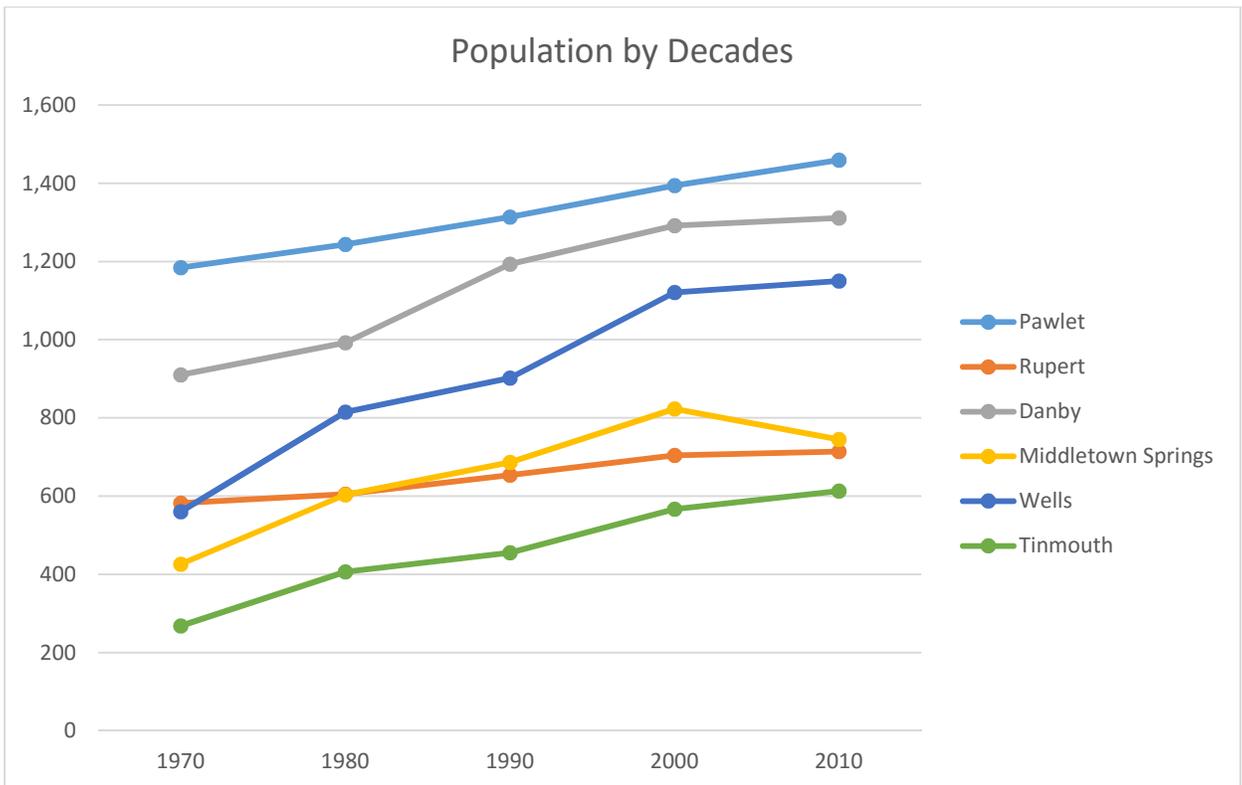
Pawlet's growth is erratic historically compared to the state of Vermont as a whole (shown below), but its steady increase since 1960 parallels the State's growth. In the last decade, however, Pawlet's population has grown slightly faster than the State's.



The next chart compares population growth from 1970 to 2010 in Rutland County, the State of Vermont, Pawlet, and its surrounding towns:

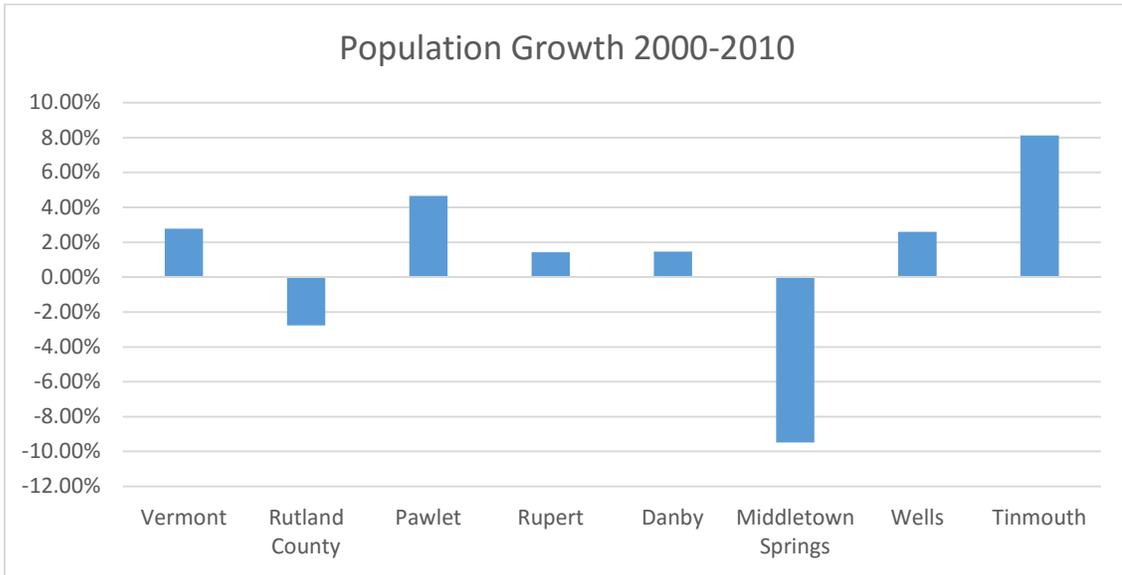


The following chart compares the population numbers of Pawlet and its surrounding towns, breaking the populations down by census decades. Since 1970 at least, Pawlet has always been the largest of the surrounding towns:

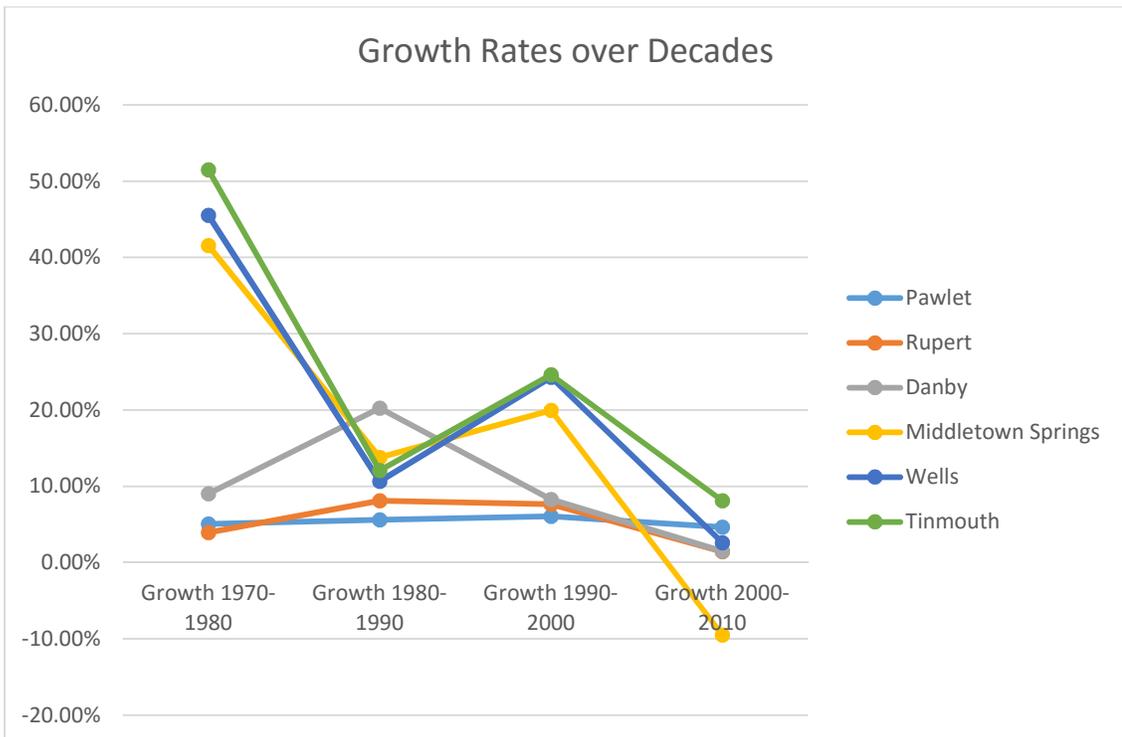


Over the period 1970-2010 Pawlet has grown slightly faster than Rutland County as a whole, but slower than the state as a whole and notably slower than its

immediately surrounding Vermont towns, except for Rupert, the only surrounding town not in Rutland County. Over the last decade, however, Pawlet has grown faster than all its surrounding towns, except for the much smaller Tinmouth, faster than Vermont, and faster than Rutland County as a whole, whose population has decreased. The adjacent town of Middletown Springs has notably decreased. Details are in the following chart:



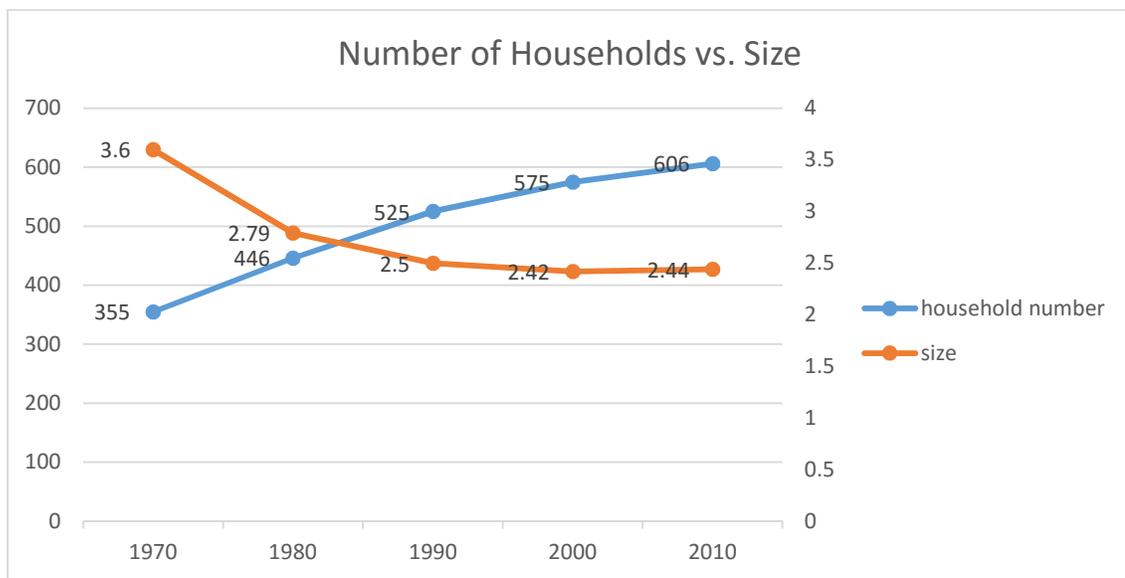
The next chart compares population growth rates for recent decades between Pawlet and its surrounding towns:



Of all the surrounding towns, the rate of population growth since 1970 has been the steadiest for Pawlet. Most of the other towns have experienced significant fluctuations in growth rates.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Changes in household composition modulate population impacts. The decrease in household size, shown in the following chart, is one factor that contributed to growth in the number of households over and above the growth of the population. The leveling out of household size over the past couple of decades suggests that the increase in households now begins to parallel population growth.



Some infrastructure and other needs the Town has to service tend to grow in proportion to the number of households, not simply in proportion to population numbers. A four-person household, for instance, may have only two vehicles, but a two-person household may also have two vehicles. Ultimately therefore, a two-person household may require practically as much from Town in terms of roads, other infrastructure, and services as a four-person household. On the other hand, the decline in household size tends to indicate a decline in the population of children and perhaps an increase in the number of adults living with their children. These phenomena reflect an aging demographic.

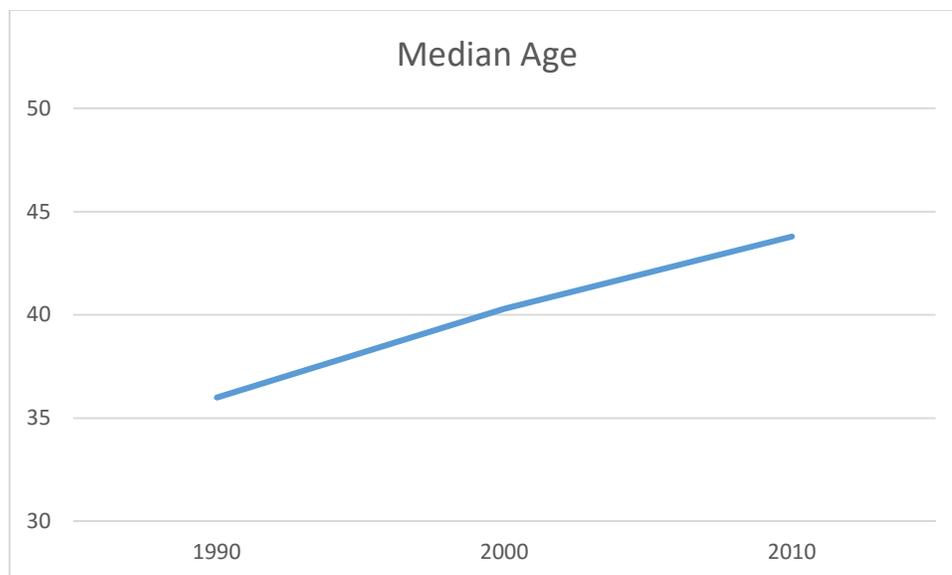
Summing up Pawlet Growth:

- Steady growth since 1960.
- Surrounding towns' growth is erratic.
- Possible factors:

- No zoning in Danby, Middletown Springs, or Wells.
 - Weak zoning in Tinmouth until recently.
 - State mandated septic rules have become strong in the last two decades, whereas previously only Rupert had strong septic rules.
 - Pawlet has had extensive valley farms vs. mainly hill farms in surrounding towns. Hill farms were economically less viable and therefore more apt to succumb to residential development.
 - Quality of schools.
 - Varying proximity to Rutland or Manchester.
- Household size modulates population impact.

AGE STRUCTURE

The following charts show the trends of age structure in the Town.

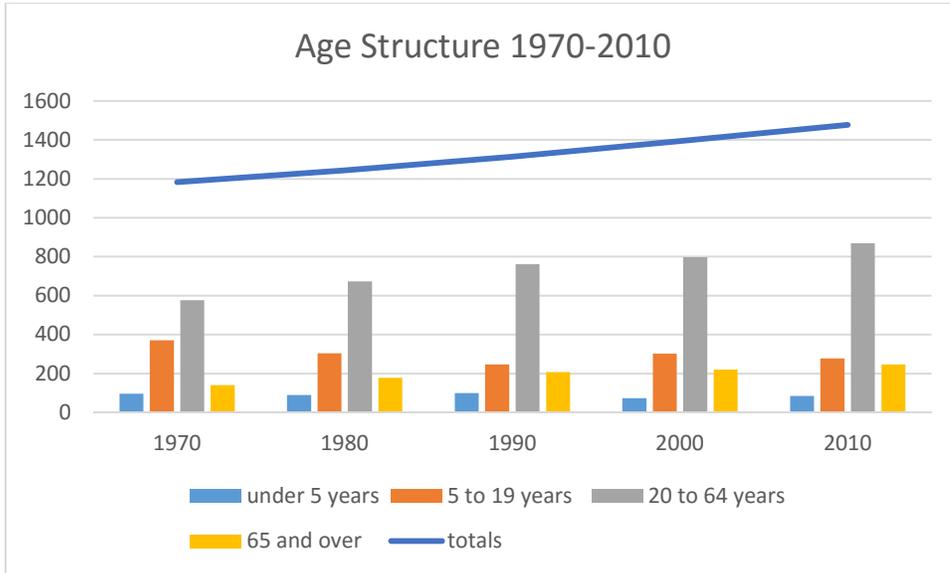


In 1990 half of the population was 36 years or younger. In 2010 the younger half of the population was 44 years or less. The increase has been steady.

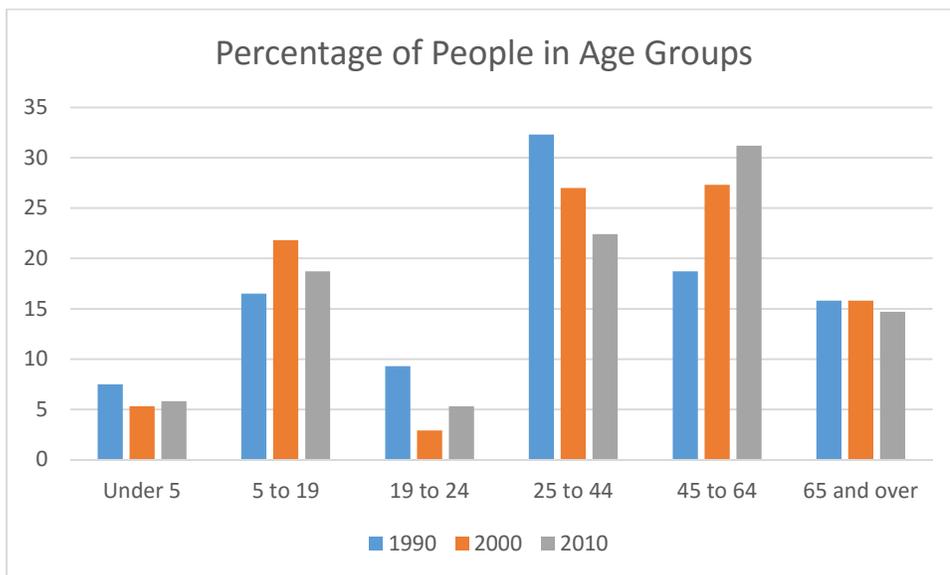
The following chart shows the population by age groups. Even though the population has grown, the numbers of children under age 19 has decreased. The group of adults ages 20-64 has grown at approximately the same rate as the total population as has the group of adults 65 and over. Thus, Pawlet's population increase over this period has been in terms of adults, not children.

Interestingly, the way the census is tallied has changed over recent decades, because of the demographers' awareness of the aging population. In 1970 it was

thought sufficient simply to tally those over age 65 in one group. That group has become not only larger in numbers, but it has become larger in numbers that are older, and the numbers in the oldest age groups have become demographically significant, particularly because their needs are greater than younger people.



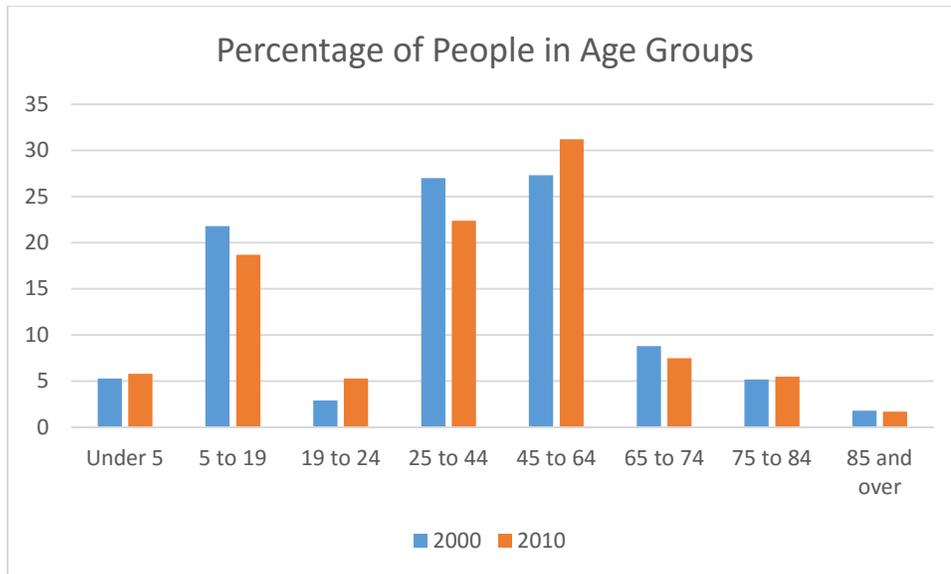
By 1990 the census was counting people over 80 separately from those 65-79. Beginning in 2000, the census broke the tally down into five year increments. We don't need to get as small as five year increments, however. Grouping people by ages 65-74, 75-84, and 85 and older we can see trends clearly. The five year increments also allow us to see the middle group of adults more clearly.



We can clearly see that over just twenty years the makeup of the middle group of adults has turned upside down. In 1990 its biggest portion was under 45 and now it is over 45.

Economically, this represents a significant change in the composition of the potential workforce and those who conduct volunteer activities in the Town from younger to older.

If we look at the census for 2000 and 2010 with its finer discrimination, we can get a more detailed picture of the elderly population as well as its relation to the younger.



The above chart is limited to 2000 and 2010, because the 1990 census only discriminated age 80 and over. That figure, however, was only 3.1%. It has approximately tripled since then.

Pawlet's trends are in many respects similar to national ones, which suggest

- Senior households are on track to nearly double in the next 15 years.
- By 2030, the aging baby boomer population will expand the number of households with folks aged 65 and up nationally to 46 million, from 25.8 million in 2010.

Although the elderly are generally more healthy and robust than they were four decades ago, they generally require more in the way of medical and social services. Also, there are significantly more elderly and especially very elderly. Their needs can impact many of the circumstances that the Town needs to consider when planning, especially transportation and access.

But this is not to cast a negative light on the older population, for their age and experience offer benefits. They often have a longer perspective on the Town's

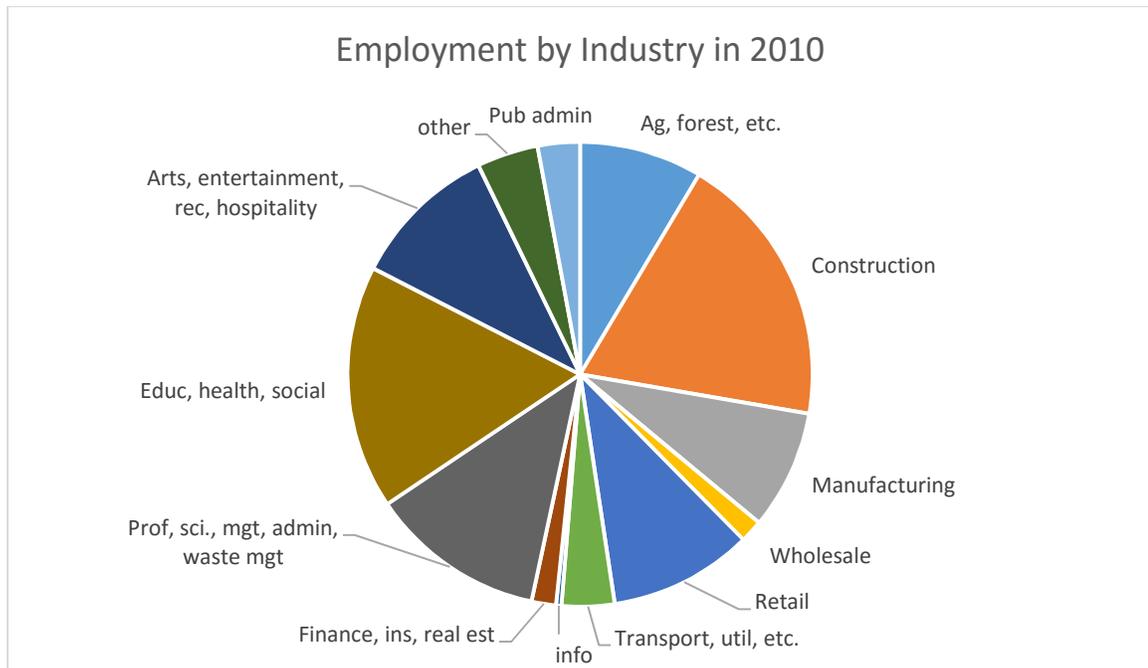
history and an increased sense of civic responsibility. The Town might avail that sense, for instance, by making meetings video accessible.

The growth of the senior population may have some positive effects for the local construction trades. With many seniors choosing to stay in their homes, remodelers will be busy, focusing on making homes safer and easier to navigate. Among such projects: Making doorways and showers wheelchair accessible; lowering cabinets in kitchens and bathrooms; and installing brighter lighting and exterior ramps.

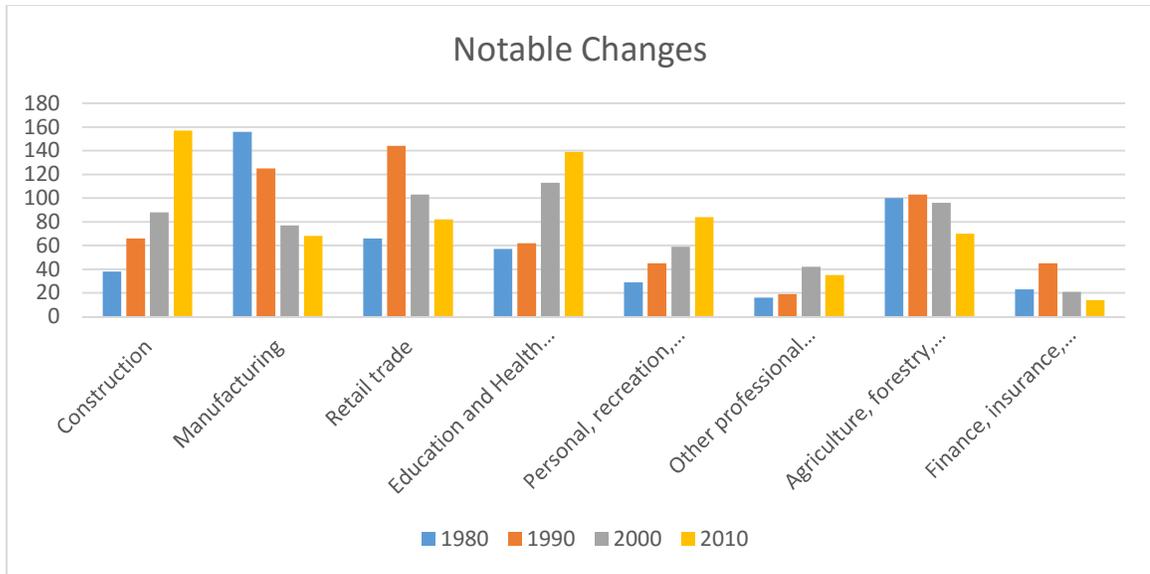
Regarding services, growth in numbers of residents with limited mobility is apt to produce increased need for transportation to medical appointments, shopping, and other destinations.

EMPLOYMENT

The following chart shows numbers relatively of people employed in various sectors of industry.



The next chart illustrates notable changes in the numbers of Pawlet residents employed in various sectors of industry over the last four census counts. The categories used by the census have changed to some extent over the decades, but the picture remains relatively accurate regarding those sectors most relevant for Pawlet.



One major change, however, is not reflected in the chart. The census has added the category, “Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services.” It necessarily draws from some of the previously enumerated categories, but there is no way to determine how they feed into it. The main thing to note in considering Pawlet’s economic development is that the new category largely reflects mental, rather than manual labor, and so generally requires more education. It is of a piece with growth in the Education and Health Care sector.

The overall employment numbers for Pawlet are robust, as shown in the following table:

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Employed	430	552	688	688	819
Unemployed	n/a	31	34	21	42

The unemployment rate for Pawlet in 2010 was 4.9% of the labor force, which was considerably below the national average.

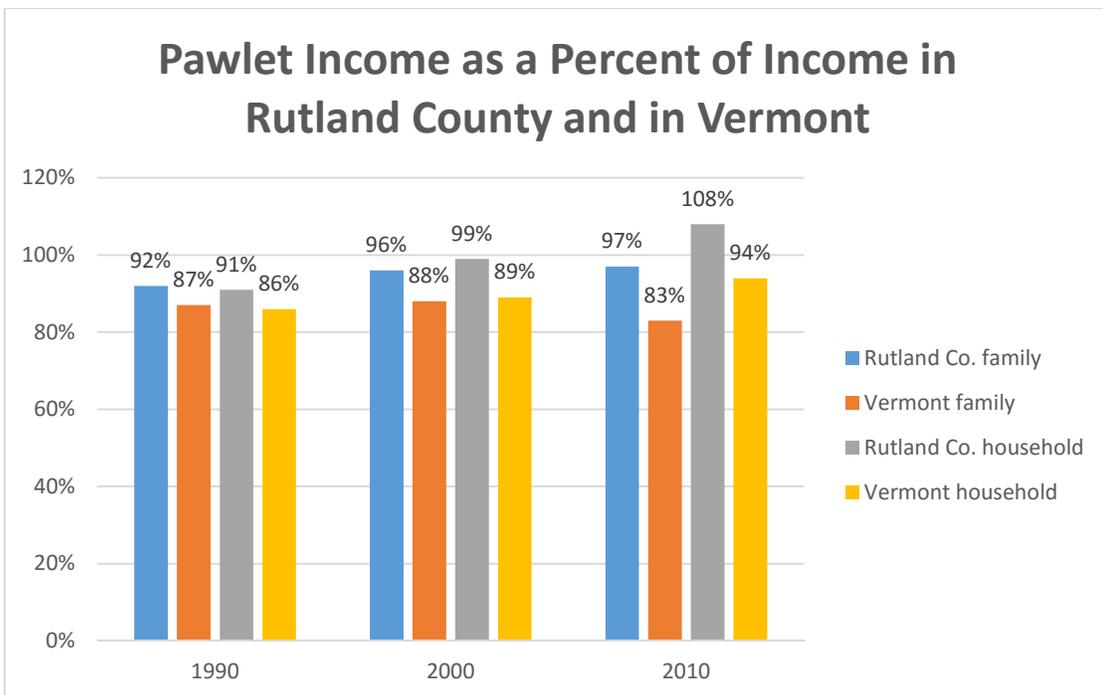
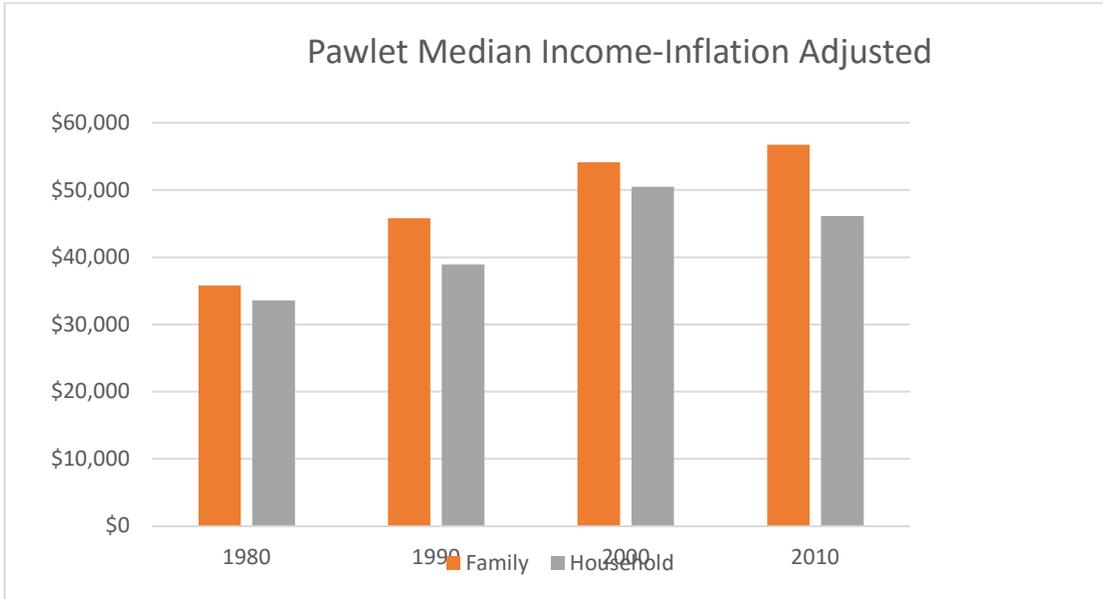
The civilian labor force numbered 861 out of a population over age 16 of 1250, so 819 people were employed and 42 were unemployed.

15% of the Pawlet workforce works at home.

INCOME

The following chart shows median income, inflation adjusted to 2010 value, for Pawlet families and households over four decades. The change from a growth

trend may reflect aftereffects of the Great Recession, but it is not within the present scope to engage the relevant analysis. The change in differential between family and household income probably reflects changes in household composition. The import of the chart is best understood by looking to the second chart below, which indicates what the percent of income in Pawlet is in comparison to that in the County and State.



Notable in the above chart is the continuing increase in Pawlet income as a percent in comparison to County income for both family and household, and in comparison to the State for household. Especially notable is that in 2010 Pawlet household income exceeds County income.

PERSPECTIVES

Factors concerning the economy of Pawlet can be discussed from two perspectives, internal and external. Externally, Pawlet's economy looks immediately to the surrounding region for employment and business opportunities. The Internet opens up small places to the larger world, however. It makes it easy to advertise without spending the large sums that traditional print and broadcast require. People who would never know to search out Pawlet can



come upon it as an easily discovered consequence of search that discovers something about Pawlet that satisfies a unique interest of theirs. Thus it behooves residents of Pawlet with entrepreneurial ambitions to pursue internet and digital literacy to cast their net for some of the unique interests that abound unsatisfied in urban environments. Well more than twenty-five million people live within a day's

drive of Vermont and many more can reach it by other transport. Pawlet is especially favored by nearby frequent commercial air service.

With its new developments in agriculture Pawlet is in a very favorable position to leverage the interests of students who are drawn by ecological interest to nearby Green Mountain College and to take advantage of the national recognition it draws.

The main large-scale production in Pawlet consists in dairy products and various forms of slate. The principal service that extends beyond the Town is afforded by two trucking companies. The market for all these and the forces that affect them extend well beyond the region. Pawlet, as a geographically isolated town, has little or no influence regarding external economic factors, even though most of its residents' incomes depend on them or on such government transfer payments such as Social Security. Nonetheless, Pawlet can get beyond some of these constraints by thinking creatively about the digital future.

The internal economic development for Pawlet is largely dependent on the initiative and ingenuity of residents.

Internal to the Town are restaurants and general stores and auto repair. Other businesses and employment include self-employed tradespersons, construction and excavation and weatherization contractors, landscapers, loggers, and numerous cottage industries, including weaving, pottery, cabinetry, handcrafted

specialty lampshades, jewelry, and sewing. Professional services are delivered by attorneys, foresters, counselors, acupuncturists, real estate brokers, photographers, chiropractors, and others. There are also numerous commercial activities that are facilitated by the development of the digital/electronic/computer realm and its Internet manifestations. They include illustration, graphic design, publishing, and video production.

Besides dairy cows, beef, sheep, goats, and alpacas are raised. There are small vegetable farms, seasonal maple syrup operations and niche activities that add value to farm products, including cheese-making and specialty foods.



Pawlet's natural conditions provide a fertile environment for developing new agricultural endeavors. One of the major prospects for Pawlet's agricultural future is the development of value-added operations.



Consider Bardwell Farm is exemplary. It has been making nationally award winning cheeses for the past dozen years and employs over 20 full and part time local people. Its direct operation is now making 100K pounds of cow and goat cheese annually. Plus its own livestock, it is keeping two

bovine dairies in operation by sourcing. With its own operations, sourcing, and cooperative marketing support of other businesses it is supporting numerous families.

Pawlet's agricultural activities provide opportunities for agri-tourism. Pawlet has not been a tourist destination in the recent past as have been nearby lakes and seasonal resorts. Perhaps because of this it has not had inns or other such accommodations. Developments such as Air B-n-B potentially address this lack, as well as make small Bed and Breakfast operations possible, which could dovetail with agri-tourism developments. Air B-n-B itself has begun to provide significant added income for Pawlet and nearby residents. It also brings new kinds of tourists to the Town, who while looking for activities off the regular tourist track, serendipitously discover the vistas of the Mettawee Valley.

Air B-n-B is an important example of business development profoundly facilitated by the Internet, which has become a dramatic means of disintermediation and delocalization of commercial and other enterprise. Pawlet is in now a



unique position to take advantage of the Internet, because VTEL's deployment of gigabyte optical fiber provides connectivity with speeds greater than can be had in many urban and suburban areas in the US.

The high degree of digital connectivity provided by fiber optic is very attractive to people who desire to live in a rural environment and work over the Internet. It can also provide employment opportunities for residents who wish to develop effective skills for operating in the digital world, which opens enormous opportunities for work. It also allows freelancing with skills people already have.

The major requirement for successful work in the digital realm is education. Fortunately, the Internet provides access to proliferating educational and training opportunities. While these opportunities can readily be pursued from home, shared society can provide encouragement for people engaging them. By fully developing its connectivity the Library could provide a supportive incubation space, especially if it were to undertake some coffee house functions. This could add to the service the library currently provides by offering meeting space to local groups.



The major stimulus for business and economic development is creativity. Fostering creativity is facilitated by bringing people with ideas that can promote commerce together. Pawlet cannot accomplish this on the scale of population dense location, but it could promote creativity by looking for ways to bring together its business people, its creative people, its not-for-profit people, its educators, and others who could provide ideas and interactive stimulation.

The Town can immediately work to develop a comprehensive listing of businesses and other endeavors in Pawlet to feature on its Web site, with links in turn to Web sites of those businesses and endeavors, as a means of enhancing the economic climate of the Town and promoting the Town's presence in the larger world of tourism and potential clientele.

Village Centers

Pawlet Village and West Pawlet are currently designated as Village Centers by the State of Vermont, as authorized by 24 V.S.A. §2793(a).

Village Center designations can be used to protect and enhance the characteristics of areas valued by the community. The Town can use the designation as one means of managing economic growth to ensure the future of its tax base and quality of life. Effective use depends on residents organizing into groups to hatch ideas and carry them to fruition. A supportive attitude toward such endeavors by the Town bodies and officers can be an important means of helping them succeed.

Village Center designations need to be renewed every five years. The Planning Commission must pay attention to these terms and work with the Regional Planning Commission to ensure they do not lapse.

The West Pawlet Village center suffered a blow when its general store was destroyed by fire a few years ago, and the rebuilding effort failed despite support from residents, leaving only a partially completed new construction. An attempt to repair this situation could provide economic stimulus to West Pawlet. The recent development of a combined small store and B-n-B and an



out-of-the-home prepared food business offer means to fill the gap and more. The Town must consider the importance of nourishing such endeavors, especially at their beginning stages, as important to economic development.



Pawlet Village has lost a general store to business exigencies, but there are plans well underway to repurpose much of the building that housed it into a brew pub. A second nearby general store still operates successfully, and there are two other restaurants nearby, as well as a few other businesses.

The main constraints on development in the Pawlet Village center are the lack of sewer infrastructure and severely limited parking. A current investigation under the auspices of The Poultney-Mettowee Conservation District holds promise of addressing the wastewater situation in Pawlet Village. An initiative by the Town to analyze and develop proposals for parking could be a helpful spur for Village development.

SUMMARY

Pawlet's population growth and growth rate has been steady and moderate over the last four decades. Surrounding town's growth rates have been erratic. The number of its households have grown, only slightly slowing down since 1990.

The household size dropped significantly from 1970 to 1990, but has leveled off since. This has created a comfortable trajectory for development.

Demographically there has been a dramatic increase in the median age of the population, from 36 in 1990 to 44 in 2010. This reflects national trends, except they have been held down by immigration. Lacking this, the worry for Pawlet is a decrease in the number of residents in their prime working years.

Employment has shifted most notably from manufacturing to education, health, and personal services, but the unemployment rate has remained substantially below state and national rates.

Inflation adjusted income, which increased for both households and families from 1980, in 2010 has not grown for families and leveled off for households. Over three decades family income has grown compared to Rutland County and is now 97% of the County average, but it stands at only 83% currently compared to the State. Household income, however, has grown as a percentage of both, currently at 94% of State and 108% of County medians.

Most of the economic data suggests Pawlet is doing relatively well, but a number of issues pointed up in this Plan point up the need to keep working on various fronts so that Pawlet will keep abreast of its needs and move effectively forward in the face of an ever more rapidly changing economic and demographic environment. Some critical issues:

- Maintain the character of the Town that makes it attractive to new residents, in terms, at least, of its school, its community nature, and its aesthetic.
- Provide an economic climate that encourages and grows the sort of small businesses, trades, and occupations, that have thrived in the Town and leverage past success to promote new endeavor.
- Preserve the Town's agricultural heritage and encourage development of new agricultural endeavors.
- Foster economic development by seeking ways to bring together Pawlet's business people, its creative people, its not-for-profit people, its educators, and others who could provide ideas and interactive stimulation.
- Promote business opportunities afforded by the fiber optic infrastructure.
- Develop a comprehensive listing of businesses and other endeavors in Pawlet to feature on its Web site, with links in turn to Web sites of those businesses and endeavors, as a means of enhancing the economic climate of the Town and promoting the Town's presence in the larger world of tourism and potential clientele of the Town's offerings.
- Keep Village Center designations current.
- Investigate design possibilities for providing more parking access in Pawlet Village.

- Improve sewer infrastructure in Pawlet Village.
- Address the difficulty of the abandoned, partially rebuilt general store in West Pawlet Village.