

## II. GOALS

This chapter enumerates a number of goals which are deemed important for the Town of Sandgate. Some of the goals may be realized by continuing to pursue current policies and directions; others may only be attained with new policies, regulations, investments, or other strategies. Each goal, however, will remain important and relevant for the town over the next several years. Subsequent chapters will detail specific policies and actions which will facilitate the attainment of these goals.

### 2.1 Maintain an effective planning process.

Effective and responsible decision-making should be promoted through reliance on a coordinated, comprehensive planning process and policy framework. The planning process should be premised on the notion that residents of Sandgate should have the primary responsibility for shaping the town's future direction. Citizens should be encouraged to serve on town boards or commissions, attend public meetings and hearings, and otherwise actively participate in the local planning process.

Although the town is geographically rather isolated, activities and developments in nearby areas can affect Sandgate, and because few products or services are available locally, residents of Sandgate continually interact with other nearby communities. Moreover, many people who do not live in Sandgate enjoy the plentiful resources of our town. Cooperation with neighboring towns and the Bennington County Regional Commission is important to ensure that any intermunicipal and regional issues are effectively addressed.

### 2.2 Effectively manage future growth and development.

Relatively few areas in Sandgate are well-suited to most land development activities. The town should regulate and direct new development to achieve the following objectives:

- \* limit sprawl and discourage development that would result in excessive costs to the town;
- \* provide opportunities for a reasonable level of continued growth in both primary and seasonal housing units;
- \* preserve the town's rural character and valuable open spaces;
- \* avoid soil erosion, ground water contamination, and damage to other important natural resources.

To maintain the quality of Sandgate's unique rural character, the town must recognize the importance of aesthetic values. New developments and any public facilities should be sited and designed to be harmonious with the surrounding rural landscape.

### 2.3 Identify and protect important natural resources and historic features.

Sandgate derives much of its appeal from the high quality of its abundant natural resources. Protection of these resources will contribute to maintaining a high quality of life for residents.

Special areas, including significant natural and fragile ecological areas, important features of the landscape, scenic roads, waterways, views, and historical, educational, cultural, and scientific sites should be identified and measures taken to preserve them for the enjoyment of current and future residents of the town.

A variety of streams, wetlands, ponds, forests, agricultural soils, and important wildlife habitats are present in Sandgate. These areas should be protected from incompatible development or use because they provide valuable recreational and economic opportunities, and help maintain the quality of the environment. Existing measures that are designed to ensure their protection should be evaluated and modified if necessary.

Sandgate relies on safe and clean ground water for much of its domestic water supply. Ground water recharge areas must, therefore, be protected from incompatible development and contamination.

Air quality is a natural asset of great value to Sandgate. Activities, whether local or beyond the town's boundaries, that would degrade air quality should be discouraged.

#### 2.4 Maintain and enhance recreational opportunities.

Many outdoor, natural resource based recreational activities are available in Sandgate. Cooperation with other communities may help to provide access to organized recreational facilities and activities that are not available in Sandgate.

#### 2.5 Support appropriate economic activities.

Because of its remote location and environmental constraints, the type of economic development that is appropriate in Sandgate is quite limited. Forestry, agriculture, outdoor recreation, and closely related businesses have historically been important in Sandgate and should be encouraged in the future. Opportunities for small home-based businesses should also be supported; improved information services may contribute to the success of some such enterprises.

#### 2.6 Encourage efficient energy use.

The town's land use pattern, individual developments, and infrastructure should promote energy efficiency and conservation. In addition, sound proposals to develop renewable energy resources should be pursued.

#### 2.7 Plan for, finance, and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services.

Public facilities and services are critical to the well-being of Sandgate, and are necessary to support future growth and development. The local road system is of particular importance to the town. Emphasis should be placed on the maintenance and improvement of existing roads; certain segments of Class 3 town roads that are in poor condition and that do not serve any existing

development may need to be reclassified (to Class 4) so that the town is not confronted with excessive maintenance costs in the future.

The adequacy of other public facilities and services should be assessed to determine whether any improvements are needed. Consideration should be given to schools, communication systems, health care services, fire and police protection, solid waste disposal, and other public and quasi-public services. Cooperation with other towns should be pursued when appropriate.

Public capital investments should be planned to meet significant needs and coordinated so that excessive tax burdens are avoided.

2.8 Ensure access to good educational opportunities for all residents.

Because Sandgate has not operated a local school in many years, access to educational facilities for townspeople is somewhat complicated. Children have been able to receive a good education by attending schools in nearby towns. A quality education should continue to be available to residents at costs not excessive to the town's taxpayers.

2.9 Actively encourage a high quality of life for residents of the town.

The underlying goal of Sandgate's planning effort is to ensure a high quality of life for all residents through economic, environmental, and community planning. Particular emphasis should be placed on the availability of safe and affordable housing for all residents, the provision of necessary services, and the maintenance of a clean, healthy, and aesthetically pleasing environment.