

INTRODUCTION

Overview

The Town Plan of Lincoln is intended to guide Lincoln's future growth and development. It is intended both to protect the Town's most important community assets and to assure an individual's freedom to control his/her own property in ways that do not infringe on the rights of his/her neighbors. The Plan attempts to preserve and improve the Town's desirable characteristics, recognizing that change is inevitable in any community that is to remain vital and alive.

From a legal perspective, the Plan is the foundation upon which the Town's development by-laws, ordinances and capital plan are based, and it represents the Town's viewpoint on development before State environmental boards in Act 250 hearings. Public discussions are held on the Plan so that it and the resulting by-laws and ordinances may reflect the best forward thinking of the Town and also be acceptable to the majority of the Town's residents. The Plan must be readopted every five years, although it may be amended at any time by due process.

In the development of this Plan, every effort has been made to insure that exclusionary or discriminatory language was not included, and that the Plan is compatible with the plans of adjacent communities and regional planning efforts.

Goals

The Town Plan of Lincoln is intended to provide a blueprint for the future that will address issues of economic and population growth, housing, natural resource preservation, and the quality of life. The Plan hopes to maintain the best elements of Lincoln's past while providing for the needs and desires of the Town's residents in the future.

The Plan acknowledges that existing town facilities and services place limits on economic and population growth. Although expansion and improvement of public facilities and services may be planned, the substantial costs involved necessitate a controlled rate of growth. The scale of Town services and the physical characteristics of the area tend to discourage large-scale commercial and industrial development; therefore, the Plan encourages smaller-scale cottage industries as the most realistic option for economic growth.

Hand in hand with economic growth, the Plan encourages a moderate rate of growth in housing. Grouping houses in such a fashion as to maintain open land and blending them into the natural surroundings are encouraged. Consideration of the optimum use of any parcel of land prior to development is recommended. A diversity of housing types that accommodates the needs of all residents (young and old, rich and poor) is desired. The Plan seeks to foster housing that is safe and affordable for all Lincoln residents.

While growth is expected and moderate growth is encouraged, the Plan recognizes Lincoln's considerable natural resources and seeks to preserve them. The Plan calls for the protection of wetlands and other wildlife habitat, as well as responsible forest and agricultural uses. Growth and development must occur in ways that protect air and water quality and encourage energy conservation. Recreational uses must balance residents' needs and the needs of the natural environment appropriately.

Finally, the Town Plan of Lincoln seeks to preserve the rural character of the area. The Plan wishes to continue the historic settlement pattern of development that consists of compact population centers separated by rural countryside. The Plan seeks to preserve a diversity of land usage within the town, maintaining open land and scenic views, varied agricultural and forestry uses, all within an environment that is healthy, safe, and enjoyable, as well as economically viable.

Implementation

Inherent in the planning process is the difficulty of achieving a balance between individual rights and the public good. In an effort to strike this balance, the plan contains numerous elements which are *encouraged*, rather than required. The equitable use of by-laws and ordinances is another method available to the Town as a way to implement this Plan. In addition, the Town's capital budget addresses some of the fiscal implications of the Plan.

The current Plan will be given further substantive review within the next few years, at which time the relationship of this Plan to the surrounding towns and the region will be considered in greater depth.

LAND USE

The Town is very interested in the way land is utilized, and for this reason has created two districts which allow for similar, but not identical uses: a "Village District" and an "Outlying District". As mentioned under the Plan goals, these districts continue the historic settlement patterns of compact population centers separated by rural countryside. Referring to the enclosed *Existing Land Use* and *Village District and Flood-Plain Areas* maps and the following text will help interested parties to make informed decisions as to whether their proposed use is in harmony with this plan.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Scenic and Natural Areas

Lincoln has a variety of scenic and natural areas that contribute to its character and beauty. The intent of the Plan is to help people become aware of these areas so that they may be maintained and even enhanced for the enjoyment of future generations.

The enclosed *Important Resource Areas and Wildlife Habitat* map indicates locations of important natural resources and wildlife in the Town of Lincoln. Sites labeled "*natural heritage sites*" refer to locations of threatened and endangered species. Areas above 2,500 feet elevation are also significant and often particularly fragile. They are vulnerable to man-made hazards ranging from Long Trail hikers and mountain bikers to high concentrations of acid rain. The Green Mountain Club places restrictions on the use of the Trail during the spring months. The Town supports efforts such as these to protect natural areas.

Lincoln also has many scenic vistas that are enjoyed by our citizens and tourists alike. It is the policy of the Town to encourage roadside clearing so as to maintain these views wherever possible. Citizens are encouraged to continue their efforts to keep meadows free from brush, allowing views of mountains and valleys. Areas that offer views from one side of the valley across the river to the other side are particularly enjoyable. Elder Hill Road looking south, York Hill Road looking northeast, West Hill Road looking east, Quaker Street looking east, and Lincoln Gap Road looking west, all are examples of this type of vista. Other areas of particular scenic significance are "the Tunnel" at the north end of Quaker Street and the riverbank environment throughout its run.

Citizens are encouraged to site houses and roads so as to blend in with the landscape whenever possible or practical. Setting driveways along existing hedgerows, for instance, will enhance the possibility of future agricultural use of an open area and add to the overall beauty of Lincoln.

Wildlife and Fisheries

The Town recognizes the importance of natural ecosystems to the character and economy of the area. The Plan encourages protection of wildlife habitats, and especially significant fisheries, breeding grounds, deer-yards and wetlands.

The Town encourages efforts to improve the fish habitat of the New Haven River and its tributaries. Current town policy is to preserve the water quality of the river.

Development should not occur within deer wintering areas. Within 500 feet of a deer area, development requires consultation with the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife. We suggest consulting the various maps available in the Town Offices and double-checking with the Fish and Wildlife Department.

The Town encourages preservation of bear habitat. Most of the breeding grounds are located within the National Forest and we hope that Forest Service Policy will continue to protect these areas.

Water Resources

Water is an essential resource. The results of a Town of Lincoln survey revealed that townspeople believe water quality to be the most important issue for future town planning.

Water resources are substantial and plentiful in Lincoln and deserve protection. Some existing risks and potential hazards to the quality of water resources in Lincoln include toxic waste, septic systems, field run-off, fuel storage tanks, salt shed, road salt on the main road along the river, illegal dumping, solid waste, trash (on-site dumps), pesticides, oil, auto repair, erosion, and insufficient setbacks. Other threats to water quality may well exist. The goal of the Town Plan is to maintain or improve the present level of water quality in Lincoln.

Ground Water -

The State has adopted groundwater protection rules and strategies. The rules address, among other things, classification, management, and mapping. Nevertheless, not much is known at this time about the specifics of Lincoln groundwater. It is not known where the important aquifers are located or what the quality of the groundwater is at present and what is the best way in which to manage and protect the groundwater in Lincoln. This Plan supports the gathering of information on the locations, sources, and the quality of groundwater and methods and regulations for protecting and, if necessary, restoring groundwater quality to acceptable levels.

The State has a list of drilled wells in Lincoln with location mapping and information on each well. The State has specific standards for drilling and construction adopted pursuant to 10 VSA Chapter 48, which include reference to groundwater protection. Many residences in Lincoln

rely on shallow dug wells for water, and these are generally more prone to contamination from surface waters.

Surface Water -

The New Haven River is a well known fishing and swimming river, and as such, is enjoyed for recreation by many. For these purposes this Plan supports efforts to keep this river and its feeder streams as clean as possible. To this end, the Town Plan supports information gathering about its current status and supports regulations that would maintain or improve its recreational value and ecological stability.

The State Water Quality Division presently specifies three classes of surface waters: Class A, Class B, and WMZ (waste management zone). The surface waters of Lincoln are classified primarily as Class B, with the exception of a Class A watershed area which serves as a source for the Bristol municipal water system.

The Town Plan acknowledges and encourages water quality monitoring efforts of volunteer citizens' groups, such as the New Haven River Anglers. Since 1993, the Anglers, (under the auspices of River Watch Incorporated) have collected and analyzed water samples throughout the summer periods. In general, the data indicates generally good water quality, with the exception of occasional high concentrations of E-coli bacteria. These contaminations can pose serious health problems for recreational users of the river. For this reason, the Plan calls for continued monitoring and analysis of possible sources of the contamination, including natural sources such as beaver dams, agricultural sources, and human sources (septic systems).

Additional threats to the surface waters in Lincoln include streambank destabilization, removal of riparian (streambank) vegetation, and flow regulations. The protection and restoration of the streambanks is particularly important for maintaining a healthy river ecosystem. A related issue is the potential damage and traffic hazards which can result from unsafe or overcrowded parking adjacent to the river. The Town should identify potential areas of overuse and seek to implement regulations or rules to ensure both streambank preservation and public safety.

Lincoln recognizes a special responsibility to maintain the quality of the New Haven River for the benefit of its citizens and the citizens of communities downstream. The stewardship of the New Haven River must be shared by all communities through which it flows. The Plan encourages coordination of the various towns in their information-gathering efforts. As a guide for such efforts, the Planning Commission uses the New Haven River and Middle Otter River Resource Book, prepared in June 1996 for the Addison County Regional Planning Commission.

Wetlands -

The importance of wetlands to the environment is well established. The Town supports State regulations that aim to protect wetlands and assure development in a responsible manner. Any land development planned near sensitive wetland areas must be in compliance with any applicable State and Federal regulations.

Floodplains -

For the benefit of landowners in floodplain areas, the Town requires that development in those areas occur under the appropriate Federal guidelines. Since the Town's regulations require compliance, landowners are eligible to participate in the Federal flood insurance program. The Federal guidelines assure that development does not adversely affect the flow of floodwater and that development and construction be done in a way that will minimize potential hazards.

Soils and Slopes

Lincoln's soils are quite varied. Low areas along the river are primarily gravel and many plateaus and hills that rise above the river are sand; both types drain well. On the hillsides, where much farming has occurred over the years, are soils generally very specific to a small area. One hundred feet can make a significant difference in determining good or bad soils for a particular use. Given the diversity of soils, the Town encourages that land use be compatible with the type of soil in a given area. Cropping should be done in a way that maintains those soils that are good for agricultural uses.

The State Environmental Protection Regulations are used in Lincoln to guide the design of septic systems. As the town is mainly residential with no public sewer, the greatest threat to the soils and ground water is from private septic systems. The town is open to alternative systems within certain limits. In the development of a group of homes, a shared system is often more efficient both in cost and in the amount of land encumbered. When considering business uses, the Town should evaluate the potential for contamination of the ground by hazardous substances either from the regular course of business or from an accident.

Given Lincoln's mountainous nature, slopes are also a major component of the way land is used. Most areas too steep for agriculture remain forested. Current sewage disposal technologies require grades of no more than 20% for site location. Steep driveways should be avoided to promote traffic safety and to allow access by emergency vehicles.

Erosion is a concern when there is development along a sloping area. The stability of the soils in such areas should be considered and dealt with appropriately. If runoff from a project is possible, erosion control measures should be instituted, as required by the State of Vermont in Act 250.

Gravel and sand banks in many areas of town lend themselves to the extraction of those materials on a small scale, in keeping with the traffic limitations of our roads. Such local projects could ease the cost burden of road maintenance and other projects by keeping hauling expenses low. Sand and gravel extraction is defined as a Conditional Use, and as such its development is controlled by §§580, 730 and 734.3 of the Town's current Zoning Regulations.

Agriculture and Forest Lands

While the Town of Lincoln can be described as a growing rural community of single family dwellings, its character is most dramatically shaped by its agricultural history and the large tracts of National Forest land that lie along its southern and eastern boundaries. The contemporary agricultural landscape consists of vegetable gardens, hay fields in various stages of retreat to brush and woodland, the occasional country estate of a gentleman farmer and a few truck farms producing berries, beans, pumpkins or seasonal vegetables destined for roadside stands in the valley. There are numerous maple sugaring operations in the Town, while wood lots and Christmas tree farms round out the commercial agricultural picture. The Town of Lincoln also owns two separate wood lots of 104 and 170 acres each.

The major historical usage to which the grazing and pasture land was once put has for all intents and purposes relegated itself to the occasional small flock, gaggle, herd or team raised for supplemental income, or as an avocation. Such uses seem to provide for a fairly stable population of small crops, livestock and pets with no apparent trend visible toward growth or extinction as of this writing. The pastoral result is significant, however, when viewed in the context of a town nestled within the Green Mountain National Forest and bordering the Bristol Cliffs Wilderness Area, all located within a day's drive of several major cities. The trend toward recreational uses and increasing development as a bedroom community means that relevant public policy should be geared toward preserving the rural and small agricultural uses which have inspired so many to settle here in the first place. Small, and especially home-based businesses associated with horses for hire, bike and cross-country ski rental, etc., should be encouraged whenever possible. Trail development and options for use by local citizens of all ages should also be encouraged.

The Forest Service administers the protection, maintenance and operation of the aforementioned acreage (11,015 acres in 1996) and pays the Town of Lincoln a total of 75¢/acre (\$8,255 in 1996), the sum of the "payment in lieu of taxes" (PILOT) amount and a fund based on 25% of the revenue of the National Forest activity nationwide which includes campground receipts, mineral royalties, timber sales and special use permits. Recreational uses of Forest Service lands in the Lincoln area consist of hunting, hiking, camping, fishing, cross-country skiing, snow-mobiling, mountain biking and A.T.V. use, the last carefully restricted to certain areas. Any plan to develop National Forest land in Lincoln for downhill skiing use would be extremely unlikely to survive the State of Vermont Act 250 permit process and the Forest Service currently has no interest in adding any such uses to the Green Mountain National Forest in the Lincoln area..

Only 10% of the land area of Vermont is public land, and most of that is at high elevations with steep slopes, so although Lincoln has adequate access to this resource, it should be noted that there is no excess of such land in the region. Periodically, small sections of private

land become available for sale to the Forest Service, and these are evaluated for their ability to consolidate a ragged boundary or provide a unique or desirable asset to the Forest. Such proposed sales must receive the approval of the Town Selectboard, in accordance with the provisions of Title 1 V.S.A. §554. The Selectboard should evaluate each proposed sale on a case by case basis. Any short-term loss of revenue to the Town may be offset by the intangible benefits to the residents of the Town provided by an improved public resource.

New England is one of two small places in the world which have the mixture of hardwood species necessary to create the spectacular fall foliage displays to which residents of Lincoln have become accustomed. As a source of year-round recreation, wildlife cover, drinking water, and scenic reward, Lincoln's forests cannot be over-rated in terms of their importance to the Town and its people.

Energy

Energy conservation is essential for the protection of the broader environment in which Lincoln is located. As energy prices rise, conservation can play an increasingly important role in the local economy. Many choices are already available to individuals and businesses, and a variety of new choices of suppliers and services may become available as the electric utility industry is re-structured. To promote economical and sustainable energy decisions, the Plan supports efforts to raise public awareness of energy issues.

The Town encourages the incorporation of renewable energy and other conservation techniques in the design of projects. The people of Lincoln have voted to exempt from property taxes structures whose sole purpose is the utilization of renewable energy resources. Several small projects for harnessing energy for private use have been established in recent years. They include low head hydro, wind, and solar applications. These can be economical, especially in remote locations. Designs for making use of passive solar energy are the most common.

The Plan encourages citizens to take advantage of utility programs offering design assistance or financial incentives for the use of energy-efficient technologies. Homebuilders are encouraged to obtain energy ratings before construction begins, in order to maximize cost-effective efficiency measures and reduce long-term energy costs.

Recycling is also an important component of energy conservation, and is encouraged for efficiency and to reduce the effect of landfills on the landscape.

PUBLIC RESOURCES

Transportation

In 1996, Lincoln's roads consisted of:

- (a) 0.0 miles of State or Federal highway
- (b) 0.0 miles of Class 1 highway
- (c) 17.04 miles of Class 2 highway
- (d) 36.15 miles of Class 3 highway
- (e) 6.06 miles of Class 4 highway

totaling 59.25 miles of public roads, all of which have recently have been assigned official names in connection with the statewide 9-1-1 Enhanced Emergency Telephone System program. The main access road in and out of Lincoln is Town Highway #1 (*West River Road*), a narrow paved road that winds uphill alongside the New Haven River beginning at the intersection with Vermont Route 116 in Bristol. About two miles past the center of the village, Town Highway #1 turns to gravel and heads south to Ripton as *Ripton Road*. The Planning Commission recommends that any additional access to Town Highway #1 be discouraged or at least cost-shared. In addition, enforcement of posted speed limits is highly encouraged.

Town Highway #2 (the *Lincoln Gap Road*) and Town Highway #3 (*Downingville Road*) are two prominent secondary roads. The former runs east from Town Highway #1, climbs steeply up to the Lincoln Gap in the Green Mountains and crosses to the town of Warren. The extreme grade and narrow width of this road limit its capacity and usefulness. During the winter months, the upper part of the road is officially closed. Town Highway #3 runs northeast from Town Highway #4 (*Quaker Street*) to South Starksboro and Vermont Route 17, which crosses the Appalachian Gap to the towns of Irasville and Waitsfield. All three of these roads are classified as State Aid Class 2 highways. Roads other than the three mentioned above receive less traffic. Even so, maintenance costs on all Town highways, whether heavily-traveled or not, are increasing.

Requests for more roads or upgrading of existing roads may increase as the population of Lincoln grows and more houses are built. By the same token, new or improved roads may quicken development, which in turn creates the need for more improvements. Current Town policy is to not upgrade Class 4 roads. If traffic volumes increase significantly (particularly on

Town Highway #1), major improvements may need to be made to increase safety. However, the Plan encourages the preservation of the rural character of Lincoln's roads.

Residents need to be aware that school bus routes may not be extended to new areas because of School Board policy. New residents must also be aware that the reality of Vermont winters is such that not all roads will be passable at all times of the year. "Mud season" creates potential access problems, particularly relative to property security, fire protection and medical emergency.

Lincoln should consider gradual improvements to its transportation system in anticipation of continued development and growth. While rural public transit and ride sharing may slow increasing road usage somewhat and should be encouraged, it seems likely that traffic counts will continue to rise.

The cost and nature of improvements to Lincoln's roads and bridges will require suggestions from all concerned citizens.

Facilities and Services

The Town owns the following facilities:

- (a) The Town Offices building,
- (b) The Town garage and salt shed,
- (c) The Town landfill - including a capped and monitored site, transfer station and recycling center,
- (d) A one-acre parcel where the sand pile is located,
- (e) A 170-acre woodland parcel,
- (f) A 104-acre woodland parcel, and
- (g) Under a different branch of Town government (i.e.: the School Board of Directors), the Lincoln Community School and playground.

The Town also owns the following pieces of equipment:

- (a) One 1995 Mack truck,
- (b) One 1988 International truck,
- (c) One 1987 grader,
- (d) One 1979 backhoe,
- (e) One 1991 front end loader,
- (f) Truck attachments: plows, blades, sanders and a rake,
- (g) Office equipment: copier, computer, typewriter, and
- (h) One base radio and two mobile units.

The past five years have been a period of making improvements to the Town's facilities. Enlargement of the Lincoln Community School was completed in Fall 1991. The addition allows for the building to accommodate K-6 under one roof with a capacity of 150 students. As of the

96/97 school year, there are 112 students enrolled at the Lincoln Community School. Junior and Senior high school students may attend Mount Abraham Union High School, located in Bristol.

The Town landfill was closed and capped by State law in the Fall of 1993. It continues to be monitored by a procedure for which the Town must budget annually. The remaining landfill area is still used as a transfer station and recycling center. Garbage is removed by private hauler and sent to the Addison County Solid Waste District, of which Lincoln is a member.

The Lincoln Town Offices are used heavily both during the business day and at night for meetings by the various Town boards. This is a small, single-level building which seems cramped of late and consideration is being given to increasing its size. There has been preliminary talk of co-housing the Lincoln Library here as well, but this would entail further study. The Town garage and salt shed are old buildings that are in disrepair and functionally not up to current standards. The site, while convenient, is very limiting and likely will not allow for upgrading the existing buildings. For this reason, the Town may need to search for a new location.

The two Town woodland parcels are not under active management. These parcels should be managed. Whatever resources are present should be utilized in a sustainable manner for the Town's benefit. For recreational purposes, the woodland parcels are accessible by Town roads.

The Town has neither a public water supply nor public sewer system. There presently appears to be no need for such public services. A public sewer system might be a consideration in the coming years, particularly in the more densely settled areas of Town, and specifically Lincoln Center and West Lincoln where there are older houses with marginal disposal systems on small lots adjacent to the river.

In addition, Lincoln is fortunate enough to be served by the following facilities not owned by the Town:

- (a) The Lincoln Volunteer Fire Department,
- (b) The Cooperative Preschool,
- (c) The Red Cedar School,
- (d) The Lincoln Sports recreational area,
- (e) Burnham Hall (including the Lincoln Library),
- (f) The United Church,
- (g) The Weathervane apartments, and
- (h) The Historical Society.

Lincoln is served by an all-volunteer Fire Department consisting of a Fire Chief, two assistant Chiefs and 21 active members. Services are provided to properties located on maintained roads, plowed out and passable by emergency vehicles.

Burnham Hall is occasionally crowded, but generally seems able to handle the Town's need for meeting space. The United Church recently completed a new addition, and Weathervane United owns and manages three apartment buildings for elderly residents.

The Town currently owns no developed recreation areas. The playground recently constructed adjacent to the Lincoln Community School was built as a volunteer effort on school land, and is appropriate for grade-school-aged children. Residents from Lincoln, as well as the surrounding area, rely on the two municipal woodlots, Lincoln Sports, National Forest, the New Haven River, and available private land for various forms of outdoor recreation. The multi-purpose room in the school addition is the only indoor sports recreation facility in the Town.

Although Lincoln Sports is a private organization, it serves the recreation needs of the Town with conveniently located facilities and organized recreation programs. Anyone can join by paying a small annual membership fee. The property (which includes a ball field, tennis and volleyball courts and a sliding area) is open for all to use at no charge. The Long Trail and the National Forest roads are also developed to provide outdoor recreation. The Plan encourages all citizens to use outdoor recreation areas with respect and care for the natural environment, to preserve it for future residents of and visitors to Lincoln.

Organizations providing special services to Lincoln residents (in addition to those listed above) include:

- (a) Several fire departments in the area (primarily Bristol, Starksboro, Ripton) provide back-up and mutual aid assistance to Lincoln's department on an as-needed basis.
- (b) Lincoln has no police force; therefore the Town contracts for limited services on an as-needed basis from the Addison County Sheriff's Department in Middlebury. The State police also provide services as requested in Lincoln. (If Lincoln's population grows, there may be additional need for services such as are currently supplied by the Addison County Sheriff's Office.)
- (c) Neighborhood Watch, a citizen volunteer organization formed in 1993 to augment the security of the community.
- (d) The Bristol Rescue Squad, a volunteer organization located in Bristol, provides emergency services to the Town of Lincoln. (The Lincoln "arm" of the Bristol Rescue Squad is called Lincoln First Response.)
- (e) The Lincoln Library, though physically located in the Town, receives service from the State library system in the form of loaned books intended to expand the range of reading material in the Library. The Library is still seeking more spacious quarters. Also of concern at the present location is the tendency of the river to rise in the Spring and flood the basement of Burnham Hall.
- (f) Porter Medical Center in Middlebury provides emergency and medical services and nursing home care to Lincoln residents.

Other organizations listed in the Town's Annual Report and providing services to Lincoln Residents include:

- (a) Addison County Community Action Group in Middlebury,

- (b) John W. Graham Emergency Shelter Service, Inc., in Vergennes,
- (c) Counseling Service of Addison County in Middlebury,
- (d) Addison County Home Health Care Agency, Inc., in Middlebury,
- (e) Addison County Hospice in Middlebury,
- (f) Champlain Valley Agency on Aging in Burlington,
- (g) Elderly Services and Retired Senior Volunteer Program in Middlebury,
- (h) Parent/Child Center in Middlebury,
- (i) Community Health Services in Middlebury, and
- (j) Vermont Adult Learning (formerly Adult Basic Education).

Registered child day care and care of the elderly are areas where Lincoln residents may wish to see expanded services. Otherwise, most necessary services appear to be provided, assuming residents have available transportation to the major service areas. Rural public transportation services are available to all residents of Addison County by calling Addison County Transit Resources in Middlebury.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Balanced economic development is important to the well-being of any town. Some of the same attributes which give Lincoln its rural mountain character also limit its potential for commercial and industrial development. There are no State highways or even paved through roads that serve the Town, effectively making Lincoln a dead end for commercial transportation. The mountainous nature of the terrain does not easily accommodate large-scale facilities. In addition, Lincoln lacks Town water and sewer services.

Commercial businesses must rely on traffic from townspeople (most of whom work out of town and are easily serviced by businesses in larger centers) and vacationers. Industrial businesses must deal with the issues of transportation and available workforce.

It is in the best interest of the Town to encourage businesses appropriate to the character of the Town. Historically, small towns were quite self-sufficient in providing both necessary goods and a variety of jobs. Lincoln has a general store, repair shops, contractors, and other professionals who provide goods and services to the population.

Most of Lincoln's "industry" consists of smaller home-grown businesses. The most prevalent type is the craftspeople who often expand beyond being a "home occupation" and take on employees. The Lincoln Pallet Mill is the last mill along the New Haven River, a waterway which once supported many mills.

Lincoln's current practice of not specifying commercial and industrial zones frequently allows people to start a business and expand it without the necessity of relocating, at great expense, as districting can require.

The latest technologies are creating opportunities for more people to live where they wish and work out of their homes by communicating and transacting business by phone, fax, and computer. Businesses located in Lincoln provide jobs that help to reduce the number of people who must commute long distances to work. They also tend to be jobs that can be taken by people who find distant or full-time jobs impractical. Part-time and flex-time jobs benefit people who find rigid 40-hour schedules difficult. Additional daycare facilities would also help families with children.

POPULATION AND HOUSING

People

Population

-

Lincoln is a small residential community in Addison County. In 1960, there were 481 residents in Lincoln. In 1996 the population exceeded 1,000 residents. Much of this growth occurred in the 1970's, after which a more modest growth rate was experienced (see **Table 1**).

Despite its remote location, Lincoln remains an attractive community whose population is growing. Distance from work centers is a drawback but many don't seem to mind when balancing that with other quality of life issues.

Table 2 shows Lincoln residents' travel times to workplaces compared to those of others in the region. Although this data is somewhat old, it is helpful in understanding the Town's dynamics. It appears that many residents travel considerable distances to their places of employment; indeed, more than one-half of Lincoln's workers travel more than 30 minutes one way to their workplaces. This indicates that some residents will make an unusual effort to live in Lincoln.

Elderly

Residents -

As the general population ages, the proportion of persons over age 65 is expected to increase in all regions. There is no reason to expect that Lincoln will differ from this trend. Although the data in **Table 3** show an actual decrease in the percentage of the population over 65 since 1960 (14.8% to 10.5%), this trend is not expected to continue. The data show the actual number of elderly to be increasing.

With the increase in the older population, certain problems have come to the forefront. Financially, property taxes and other living expenses often become too much for those on fixed incomes who live in their old homesteads. Also, with people being more transient, the elderly are often left without family members nearby to help with various tasks as frailties inherent to aging set in.

The point often comes when the individuals cannot operate their homes without outside assistance.

There are many levels of needed assistance, ranging from odd jobs to live-in companions to temporary “apartments”. For these reasons, it is the policy of the Town to support residents and their assisting organizations in their efforts to maintain independence.

Lincoln has one non-profit housing organization - Weathervane United, Incorporated - which maintains ten apartment units for occupancy by elderly persons. The units are located in three buildings in the center of the Town, close to the general store and the church. There is a waiting list for vacancies. Weathervane Outreach also helps by serving the needs of seniors throughout the community.

Table 1: POPULATION DATA			
		LINCOLN	REGION
	1960 Population	481	--
	1970 Population	599	23,728
	1980 Population	870	28,784
	1990 Population	974	32,304
Projections:	1995 (low-high)	1,000 - 1,037	34,141 - 35,545
	2000 (low-high)	1,041 - 1,113	35,695 - 38,456
Average annual growth:			

1970-1980	4.5%	2.1%
1980-1990	1.2%	1.2%
1990-1995	0.5% - 1.3%	1.1% - 2.0%
1995-2000	0.8% - 1.5%	0.9% - 1.6%

SOURCE: Information provided by the Addison County Regional Planning Commission from U.S. Census Bureau and VT Health Department data (1990).

Table 2: TRAVEL TIME TO WORK
(Percentage of workers in Town population)
One-way travel time, minutes

TOWN	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-60	60+
Lincoln	15.3	13.6	12.9	53.6	4.7
Bristol	27.6	25.3	16.0	26.4	4.7
Middlebury	44.3	33.5	13.7	4.4	4.1
Addison County	31.8	29.9	15.6	18.8	3.8

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau data (1990).

Table 3: AGE DISTRIBUTION

CENSUS YEAR	0-4	5-19	20-64	65+	TOTAL
1960	54	117	239	71	481

1970	60	183	283	73	599
1980	73	218	484	95	870
1990	74	208	590	102	974

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau data (1990).

Housing

Housing Stock -

According to the latest census data, in 1990 there were 367 housing units occupied on a regular basis, 121 seasonally or occasionally used, and 28 vacant. This made the total number of available housing units in the Town of Lincoln 516 in 1990. This figure is roughly similar to local grand list data. The census indicated that there were 17 multi-unit properties in the Town in 1990.

Lincoln’s tax base is heavily reliant on residential property. The most recent grand list, effective April 1, 1996, indicated that there were 692 parcels in the Town of Lincoln, with taxable property values broken down as follows:

Residential.....	61.4%
Vacation	13.2%
Farm	0.4%
Forest.....	3.5%
Industrial/Utility.....	0.3%
Commercial.....	1.2%

Other 20.0%

and ownership of the properties as follows:

In-town resident 71.3%

Out-of-town, in-state..... 9.3%

Out-of-state 16.1%

Corporations..... 3.3%

The Town’s population, number of houses, and average family size are inter-related. Average household size has been decreasing in Lincoln and the region but the trend appears to be leveling off (see **Table 4**). This means that increases in population will be more directly proportional to increases in housing than in the past.

All of the indicators to date suggest that Lincoln will continue to experience modest growth in its housing stock, caused primarily by population growth. Since growth is expected to occur in Lincoln, key housing considerations are affordability and geographic distribution.

Affordable Housing -

Throughout Vermont, increases in family income have been unable to keep up with the escalating price of housing. Lincoln is no exception to this dilemma. Although the average household income in Lincoln has more than doubled from 1980 to 1988 (see **Table 5**), it still remains considerably below the county average.

Table 4: AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE
(Persons per household)

CENSUS YEAR	1970	1980	1990	2000
Lincoln	3.57	2.87	2.65	2.69
Addison County	3.40	2.91	2.68	2.51

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau and Vermont Health Department data (1990).

Table 5: AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME
(Per annum)

TOWN	1980	1985	1988
Lincoln	\$10,837	\$17,646	\$23,852
Bristol	15,755	22,833	30,913
Middlebury	14,241	21,780	24,950
Ripton	16,348	17,691	27,817
Starksboro	13,825	17,934	22,903
Addison County	14,940	21,077	27,235

SOURCE: VT Department of Taxes (1990)

In 1985, the average home price (fair market value, single family residence on less than 6 acres) for Vermont was \$56,698. In Addison County the average was \$54,757, ranging from \$30,328 in Granville to \$68,109 in Cornwall. Lincoln's average home price was \$41,364. Only four county towns were lower.

At the same time the housing price affordable to the average household income was \$46,519. Since Lincoln's average home price was approximately \$5,000 less than this figure, the general affordability of Lincoln's housing may have been somewhat better than in other Addison County towns.

From 1985 to 1988, the county-wide average home price rose 62% to \$88,647. In the same period, incomes only rose 35% in Lincoln and 29% in the county.

Obviously, there are a number of households with below average incomes which are experiencing difficulty finding affordable housing in the town of their choice. Finding affordable housing is also difficult for individuals on a fixed income.

For these reasons it is the Town's policy that affordable housing in Lincoln should be supported, particularly if it is designed to fit the needs of Lincoln's residents. It is also desirable that such units not be concentrated in any particular area of the Town.

Settlement Patterns -

Considerable concern has been expressed about the continuing loss of agricultural land and particularly the conversion of open land to residential land. Most of the growth in the past thirty years has occurred outside of the historic settlement areas in the Town. It is the policy of the Town to encourage growth to occur in the existing settlement areas. Higher priority should be given to preservation, renovation, or restoration of existing structures than to new development. Projects proposed in sensitive regions should have lower priority and be subject to additional approval criteria.

Historical Structures

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Lincoln has a long and varied history. There is little physical evidence of that history left except for the many old houses that are still in use. Most of the remnants of Lincoln's history as a logging and mill town have burned, washed away, or simply fallen into ruin.

According to the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation's "Historic Sites and Structures Survey" (available from the Lincoln Historical Society), Lincoln currently has 62 sites listed. It is pleasing to note that many of these structures have received face-lifts and fresh paint recently. Citizens are encouraged to maintain the traditional look of their homes.

Several of the large barns that used to exist in the Town have been demolished, no doubt due to the high cost of maintenance. The Town encourages efforts to maintain these structures and keep them in place.

Lincoln has an Historical Society that maintains a museum and an accompanying barn. Their efforts promote understanding and appreciation of Lincoln's heritage.

Growth

Lincoln continues to experience the fairly consistent growth rate it has seen over the past few years. There has been no large-scale development proposed, and yet the needs of landowners and those who wish to live in the Town have apparently been satisfied. Factors that influence the growth rate include availability and suitability of land and prevailing economic conditions.

The transfer of ownership of the larger parcels of land in Lincoln would present the most immediate possibility of large-scale development. It is in the best interest of the Town to encourage a rate of growth consistent with the Town's ability to accommodate change.

While the expansion of the school building has provided space for more students, an increase in the school population necessitates an increase in staff and other school services. General Town operations and facilities are currently at or near their capacity, with planned improvements anticipating the continuation of the steady pace of growth we have experienced in the past.

In order to prevent too great or too sudden an influence on the growth or character of the Town of Lincoln, the Town's current zoning regulations stipulate that no one person, corporation or association is permitted to increase the number of housing units in the Town by more than two (2) units per calendar year, or the number of lots by more than six (6) lots per calendar year. Special provisions have been made to allow the affordable elderly housing projects that enhance the general welfare of the Town.