

**TOWN OF HIGHGATE**  
**Planning Commission Mtg.**  
**Joint meeting with Village Core Master Plan Committee**  
**June 16, 2020 @ 6pm**

**Approved Minutes**

***NOTE: All actions taken are unanimous unless otherwise stated.***

ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE / PHONE CONFERENCE / IN-PERSON MTG.

**JOIN ZOOM MEETING**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3726187919>

**JOIN BY FREE CONFERENCE CALL**

DAIL IN NUMBER    425-436-6365                  ACCESS CODE                  188557

**I.     CALL TO ORDER**

Luc Dupuis opened up the meeting @ 6:02pm. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, changes to open meeting law allowed for this meeting to take place by various means: video / phone / in person.

**Planning Commission Board Members:** Luc Dupuis (video); Tom Conley (in person); Ken Thompson (video); Bruce Ryan (phone); Scott Bessette (video)

**Village Core Master Plan Committee Members:** Evangeline LaRocque (phone); Steve LaFar (in person); Woody Rouse (in person); Richard Noel (video); Mary Laroche (in person); *absent – Clarence Miller*

**Town of Highgate Staff:** Heidi Britch-Valenta – Town Administrator & Planner (in person); Wendi Dusablon – Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk (video)

**Public / Other:** Greta Brunswick, NRPC (video); John Kiernan, Otter Creek Engineering (video); Lynnette Claudon, ANR (video)

**II.    VCMP UPDATE ON WASTEWATER STUDY AND SUPPORT SERVICES – Greta Brunswick, NRPC & JOHN KIERNAN, OTTER CREEK ENGINEERING**

Greta Brunswick, NorthWest Regional Planning and John Kiernan, Otter Creek Engineering participated via Zoom video. Greta shared a power point presentation that included background information on the Village Core Master Plan property and what the study is intended to do. The presentation gave an overview as well as a refresher on where things stood before COVID-19 had us shelter in place for a few months. The complete presentation is included as part of these minutes as an attachment at the end. Greta shared results from the survey, which had about a 15% return rate and gave us some good information. She also shared a project timeline for the Highgate Village Core Master Plan wastewater and water feasibility study. These documents are also included as attachments to these minutes. John Kiernan also had a map to share with regard to potential wastewater disposal sites nearest to our village

center and another map with private wells shown that are greater than 50 gallons per minutes in Highgate Center. Both of these maps he shared are included as attachments to these minutes as well. There was discussion on the town owned property off Mill Hill and Lamkin Street, behind the (current) Lamoy house. This property has been known as the Griswold property or the Steele property in the past. Other properties highlighted on the maps were also discussed as well, one owned by Mr. Wright and another where the Transfer Station is located. The rail trail is an impediment to go north, so if we are not able to cross that section, there was also discussion on the ag fields behind the Highgate Recreation facility. From John's perspective looking in all directions the area is very flat which gives us a lot of flexibility and potential. The school was discussed and the possibility of connecting in there. Unfortunately, that wastewater system was pre 1986 when the indirect discharge rules came about so that system is grandfathered in for a particular use. A conservative estimate for a multi-use commercial situation on the VCMP property would require 1500-3000 gallons per day capabilities. Test pits were discussed and when those would come into play. As part of the study, test pits will be done on one or two sites. The town will provide an excavator for test pits at the targeted sites. Decisions need to be made whether a centralized or community water source would be helpful in addition to or in lieu of a wastewater system. The state has a GIS data base of wells and there was conversation concerning well shields. For water systems, in general, you want large tracks of land that are well protected and that don't have potential sources of contamination. All of these systems are very expensive to build and generally on the wastewater side they are more expensive to maintain. Water systems are generally easier to maintain. There was discussion about other possible options for wastewater and water onsite at the VCMP property. All the info is very promising. Greta quickly ran through the proposed schedule going forward. The next VCMP meeting is proposed for July 28<sup>th</sup> for the 60% draft review. With regard to the survey, we did only receive a 15% response rate, but the info was helpful and representative from John's perspective. They are trying to connect with the school and also with McCuins as key businesses in our area. John welcomes historical information like what Richard Noel shared earlier about the creamery and the pipe still in place. Email any historical information to Heidi and she will forward it to John. Richard also shared that McCuin's water source is on the other side of the tracks behind the hockey rink. Anyone that was connected to it has been removed, so only their business and personal properties are still connected to it currently. Greta will wait and see about any outreach and we still don't know what is happening with the McCuin's 100-year celebration event this summer. Evangeline is familiar with some systems in the village, mostly related to her family and with the store and the (now) Desorcie's brick house. Heidi mentioned the August election and that being a possible outreach opportunity. Steve LaFar lives just outside of the village and spoke about his water system and capabilities. John would be interested in hearing more from Steve on that. Greta touched on the questions from the survey and put together the info for review. It is hard to say if the next meeting for VCMP on July 28<sup>th</sup> will be via Zoom or in person or a combination like tonight.

**III. VCMP – PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT DESIGN PLANNING FUNDS –  
USDA RURAL BUSINESS PLANNING FUNDS & USDA RBDG  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING FUNDS**

The town was awarded two USDA Rural Business Development grants. One is geared towards the VCMP property which is a \$30,000.00 grant to begin doing more planning and public outreach to find out what people really want to see on the VCMP property once we know what can be supported there. We received notice that we are eligible and so far have met the criteria. It now goes to environmental review which should be a breeze because it is a planning grant and not construction. It will then be scored and Heidi is fairly positive we will be awarded. This isn't certain so we can't start spending yet. We can begin to think about the RFP and the scope of work is in the packet. This would create an RFP to hire a consultant to do something similar to what we did with BUILD. We would have public input sessions and figure out what people want to see on that property. The VCMP and PC will start to overlap quite a bit at this point. The other Rural Development grant is for the Highgate Economic Development Planning. It is not specific to the VCMP project but could involve it. These are more funds to hire a consultant to work with the PC in conjunction with the DRB and VCMP to find out what kind of strategies should be implemented to create sustainable funding for any infrastructure that is created for future growth. We will look at impact fees and tax increment financing (TIF) and a growth district in the area of the airport. This will all help us to be at an advantage with any growth coming down the pike. Both are Rural Business Development grants. One is an opportunity grant the other is an enterprise grant. The town match would be covered with in-kind hours for Heidi's administrative time and also with volunteer hours from boards carrying the projects forward. No cash outlay is needed, which is always nice! These are not a definite, but we are in the running and Heidi is very hopeful.

#### **IV. OTHER BUSINESS & UPDATES**

- There will be a final hearing on June 18<sup>th</sup> at the Selectboard Meeting on the airport infrastructure grant. This is a requirement of this grant. A summary of what we received for funds, what we did with the funds, and a project summary are in the packet. This was a \$45,000.00 grant and we were required to put in \$15,000.00 as the town's match. We were able to claim \$4,356.00 for Heidi's administrative time. Franklin County Economic Development gave \$1,000.00 and Jim Harrison wrote a check for \$9,644.00. The Town of Highgate did not have to put in any cash. Money was primarily spent to hire Aldrich & Elliott for the engineering plan to extend water and sewer from MVU to the airport and to hire an economist to tell us the potential impact of the investment. Both of these reports can be found on the town's website [www.highgatevt.org](http://www.highgatevt.org). As a continuation of that grant the Selectboard had her apply for the Northern Borders Regional Commission grant for funding the construction of the line from MVU to the airport. The potential funding breakdown is in the packet. The project is \$3.4 million with the potential for us to receive \$2.72 million with a local match of \$680,000.00, minus any local funds. Jim Harrison is prepared to add a local match of \$200,000.00 which leave us \$480,000.00 to commit as a town. This would be put to a public vote, likely in November, for local investment of the matching funds to see if people are ready to do this project.
- Lisa Hango and Charen Fegard (FRA-5 Representatives) are always looking out for Highgate. In particular, they have made AOT aware of issues at

Route 207 and Brosseau Road. Richard Noel noted that he was in a Zoom meeting last week and AOT is definitely aware of it.

- Woody Rouse added that Mr. Harrison is in the process of an 8-lot subdivision with the DRB on his property adjacent to the airport. He has completed sketch plan review so far.

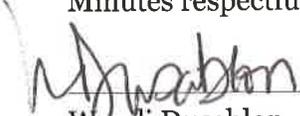
**V. OLD BUSINESS**

- Motion by Bruce Ryan to nominate Luc Dupuis as Chair of the Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Tom Conley. There were no other nominations – **APPROVED.**
- Motion by Bruce Ryan to nominate Tom Conley as Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Ken Thompson. There were no other nominations – **APPROVED.**
- Motion by Bruce Ryan to approve the PC minutes from May 19, 2020, as written. The motion was seconded by Ken Thompson – **APPROVED.**
- The next PC meeting is July 21<sup>st</sup> @ 6pm. The next VCMP meeting is July 28<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm. The two boards will plan to meet again jointly in August. The PC meeting in July will focus on an RFP for the planning grant and hopefully we will know more about a final award on that. We can meet in person and spread out, or if people aren't comfortable, we can also add Zoom as an option.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

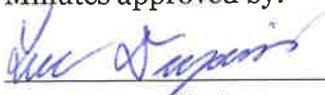
Motion by Bruce Ryan to adjourn the joint meeting of the Planning Commission and Village Core Master Plan Committee @ 7:44pm. The motion was seconded by Tom Conley – **APPROVED.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

 \_\_\_\_\_ Town Clerk & Public Meetings Clerk  
Wendi Dusablon

8/5/20  
Date

Minutes approved by:

 \_\_\_\_\_, Planning Commission  
Luc Dupuis, Chair

8/27/20  
Date

Minutes approved by:

 \_\_\_\_\_, Village Core Master Plan Comm.

8-17-2020  
Date

# HIGHGATE VILLAGE CORE WASTEWATER AND WATER SUPPLY SOLUTIONS

FEASIBILITY STUDY

GUIDED BY THE HIGHGATE VILLAGE CORE STEERING COMMITTEE

FUNDED BY A VT DEG WASTEWATER PLANNING ADVANCE AND A VT MUNICIPAL PLANNING GRANT



# CONTENTS

- BACKGROUND AND INTENT FOR THE STUDY
- WHAT WILL THE STUDY DO?
  - HOW MUCH IS THERE? (CAPACITY)
  - WHERE CAN IT GO? (DISPOSAL OPTIONS)
  - HOW CAN WE GET IT THERE? (CONVEYANCE OPTIONS)
  - WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO WITH IT? (TREATMENT OPTIONS)
  - HOW WILL BE PAY FOR IT? (FUNDING OPTIONS)

## BACKGROUND AND INTENT

The Town is studying **wastewater and water supply solutions** for Highgate Center with a VT wastewater planning advance and a 2020 municipal planning grant. The study will:

- **Identify** cost effective and appropriately scaled solutions for Highgate Center.
- **Ensure** solutions are protective of public health and safety.
- **Prioritize** solutions that will service the vision for development and growth in Highgate Center, including the village core property specifically.

# WHY DO A WASTEWATER & WATER SUPPLY STUDY?

- Explore a need or opportunity to help properties address well or septic issues together at a reduced cost.
- Assess whether individual on-site wastewater treatment and water supply is limiting development potential in the village, including on the Village Core Property.
- To see if there is a pattern of poor conditions that may be impacting the quality of water supply in your neighborhood.

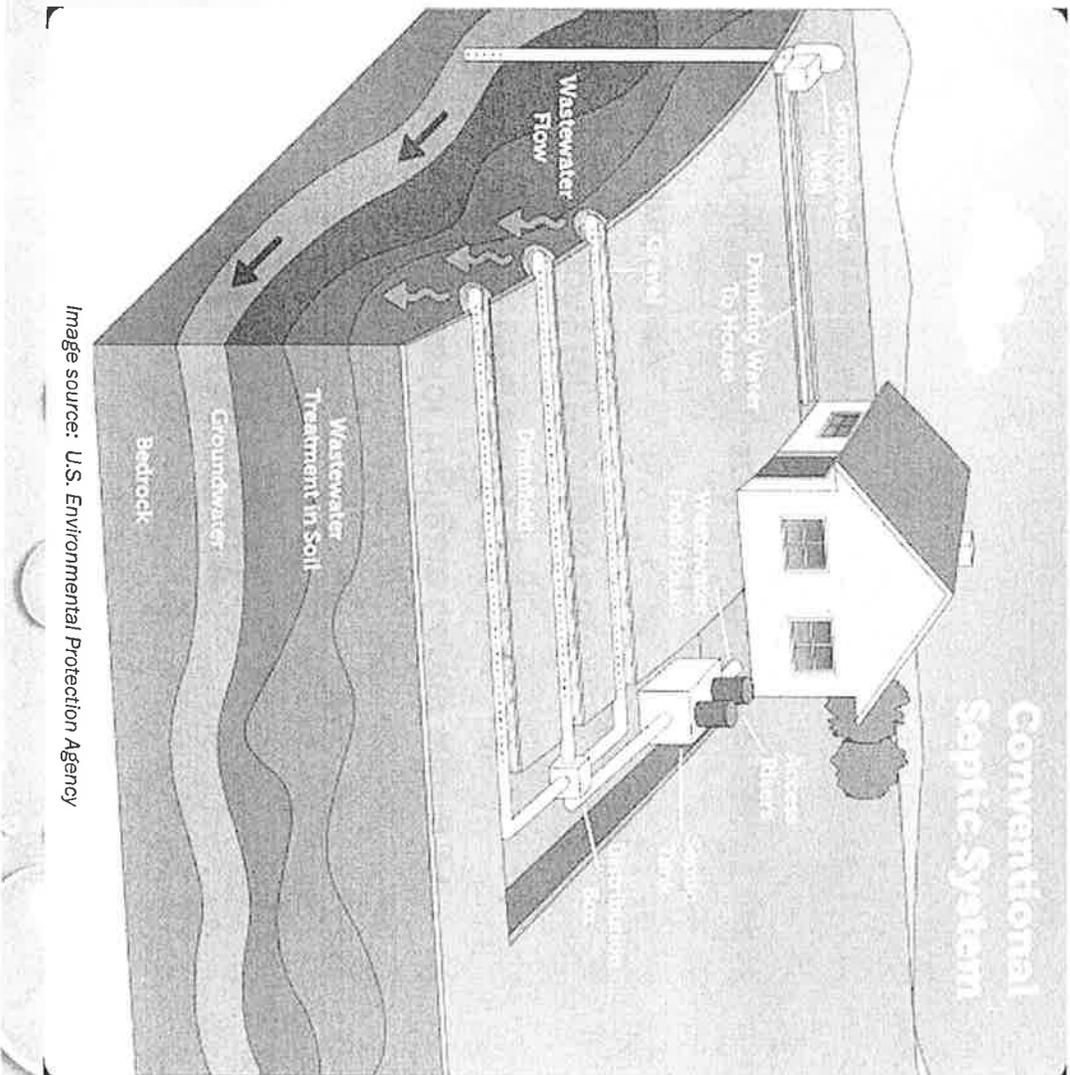
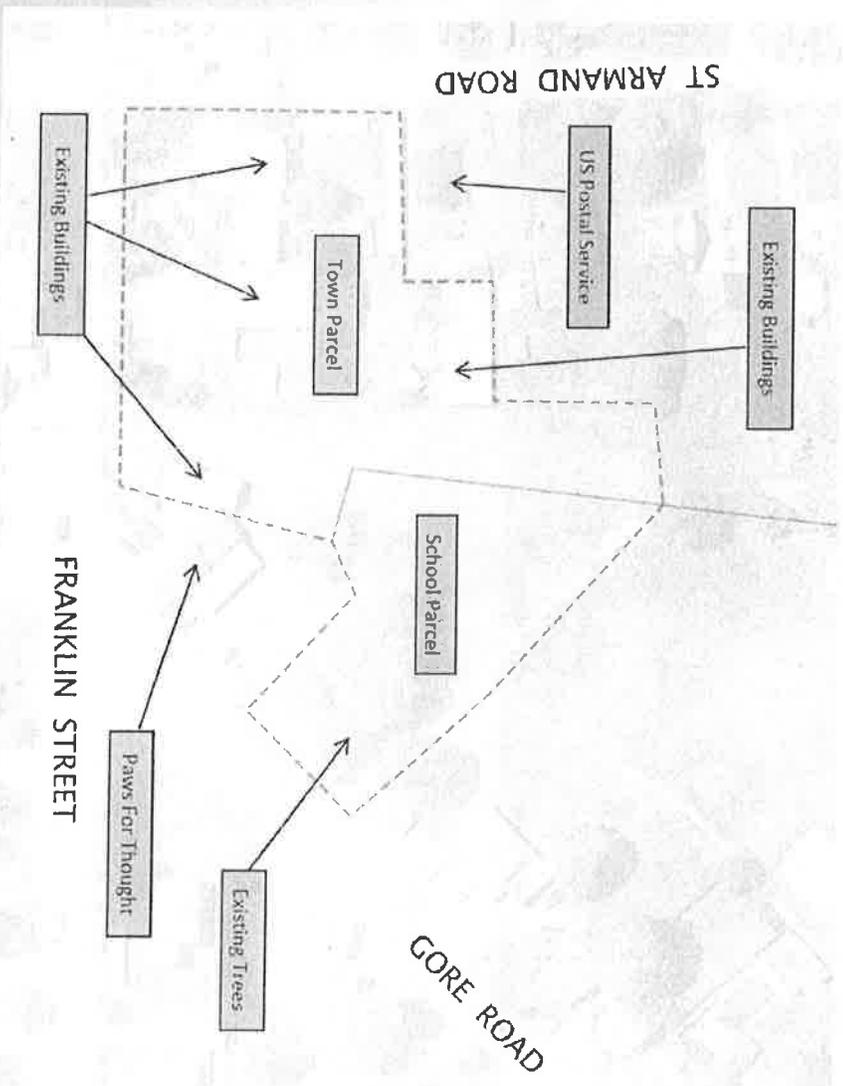


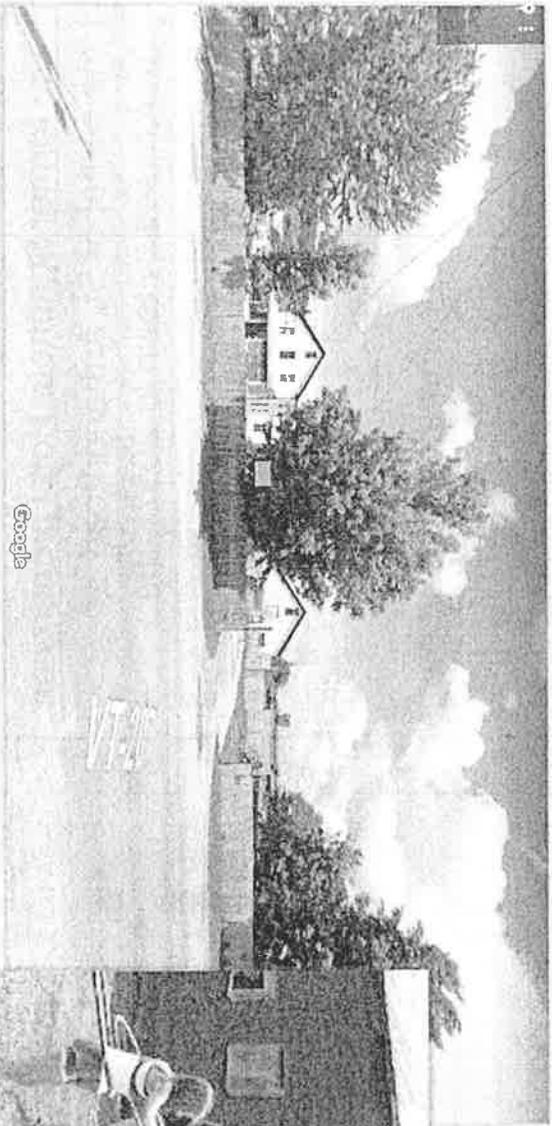
Image source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

# WHAT IS THE VILLAGE CORE?

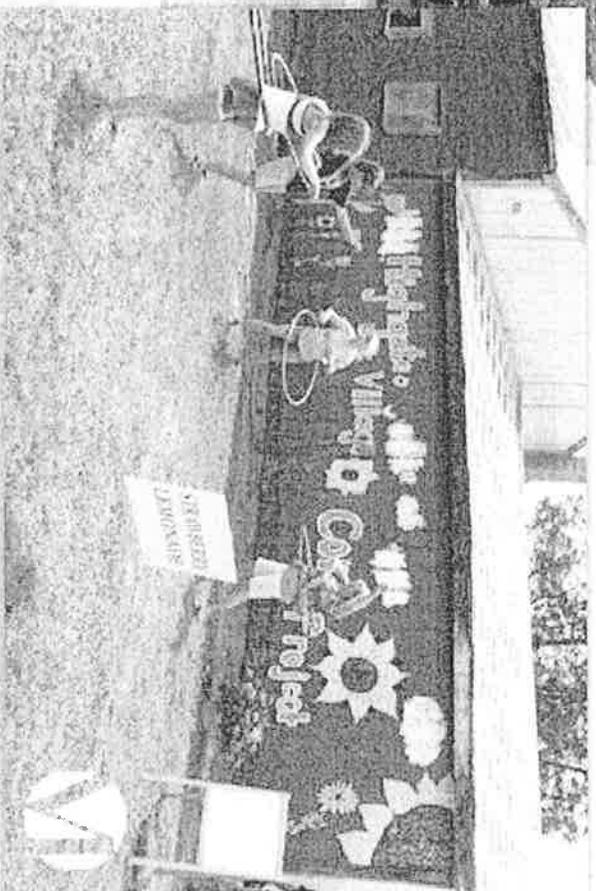
- The former Stinehour Hotel property on the corner of St. Armand Road (purchased by town in 2017), the abutting old highway garage parcel and a portion of school owned property designated for community use. Total acres: 2.14 Acres.
- Opportunity for community to lead the development and revitalization of a key property in the center of the village
- Planning and development of the property has been charged to the Village Core Master Plan Committee.



# VILLAGE CORE PHOTOS



Google map screen shot prior to taking down the fence.



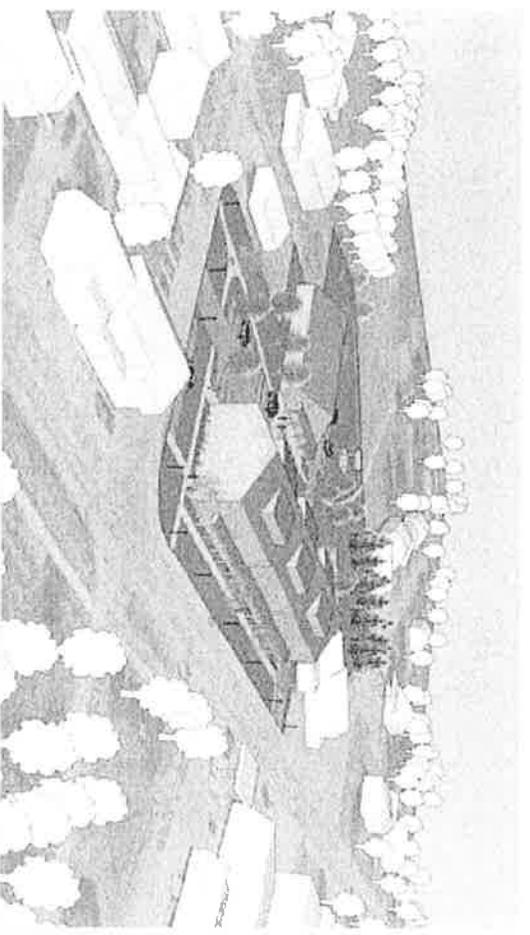
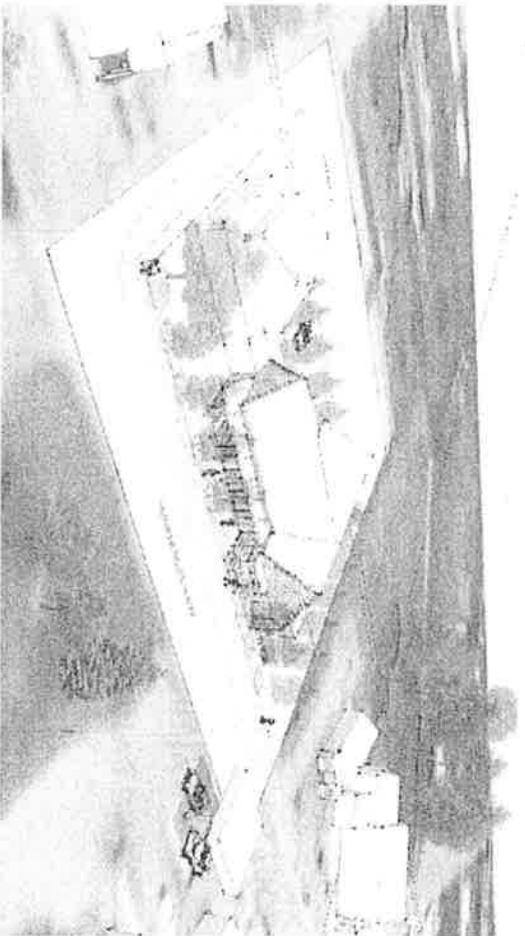
2019 community celebration. Photo credit: St. Albans Messenger

## VILLAGE CORE VISION

**"Growth is destined to happen. How that growth affects the character and quality of life in the Town is the concern of every resident of Highgate." – Highgate Town Plan**

- Relocate the library to better serve all generations of community, incorporate children's space & multi-purpose community space
- Attract an establishment that includes food service (in whole or part). Advertise site and vision to local businesses as potential for expansion or relocation.
- Consider the cost/benefit of restoring the former Stinehour Hotel (either entirely or in part) versus new construction.

## VILLAGE CORE VISION



- These plans are concept alternatives from the 2018 Library Feasibility Study by GbA and the 2019 Master Plan by Centerline. They are **NOT** final designs.
- The community has not selected a final alternative and the layout and building design is likely to change. What do you think about these designs? The Village Core Steering Committee welcomes input.

# PRE-DEVELOPMENT PLANNING STEPS

## HISTORIC CONSIDERATIONS

- Should the former Stinehour Hotel building be razed or restored? All or in part?
  - Should the architectural style match historic character or be more modern?
  - Are there archaeological considerations onsite?
  - The Town has received funding to complete a historic assessment of the building to start to answer these questions.
- Note:** Access to federal funding may require certain historic and archaeological preservation steps.

## WASTEWATER AND WATER SUPPLY

- There is limited space onsite to manage wastewater and provide water supply while also achieving the desired buildout.
- Are there opportunities off-site?
- Will other businesses and residents in the village also benefit from community treatment and supply?
- If there are wastewater and water supply opportunities in Highgate Center, how much will it cost and how will we pay for it?
- This wastewater and water supply solutions project will start to answer these questions.

## BROWNFIELDS

- Environmental assessments have identified some minor surficial soil contamination along with asbestos and lead in the buildings.
- The site will require some cleanup prior to/during redevelopment.
- There are federal funding resources available to help with these costs.

## OTHER

- Finalize concept site plan
- Architectural schematic design
- Preliminary Engineering
- Design, engineering and permitting for library
- RFP for development of commercial space

**Note:** This list is not final or exhaustive.

# APPROACHES TO WASTEWATER TREATMENT

## Centralized

- Collection network (many homes)
- Central treatment facility(ies)
- Discharge (surface)
- Significant infrastructure investment

## Decentralized

- Individual or small group of homes or combination
- In-ground collection and treatment (septic) systems that vary in size
- Discharge (sub-surface)
- Funding for design and construction solutions implemented through a variety of means to reduce costs.

# WHAT WILL THIS STUDY DO?

## IDENTIFY NEEDS

EVALUATE ALTERNATIVES TO ADDRESS NEEDS

PRESENT 2-3 SCENARIOS THAT COULD ACHIEVE GOALS



# Highgate Wastewater & Water Supply Solutions Study Area

Based on Growth Center Concept Boundary from 2017 Highgate Town Plan  
Please complete a survey if you are located within or adjacent to the study area



## HOW MUCH IS THERE? (CAPACITY)

- DETERMINE HOW MUCH WASTEWATER CAPACITY IS NEEDED
  - Review of planning studies
  - Conduct Property Surveys (in process)
  - Review of Existing properties with Permits
  - Discussions with target property owners

# WHERE CAN IT GO? (DISPOSAL OPTIONS)

## IDENTIFY SITE(S) WITH POTENTIAL

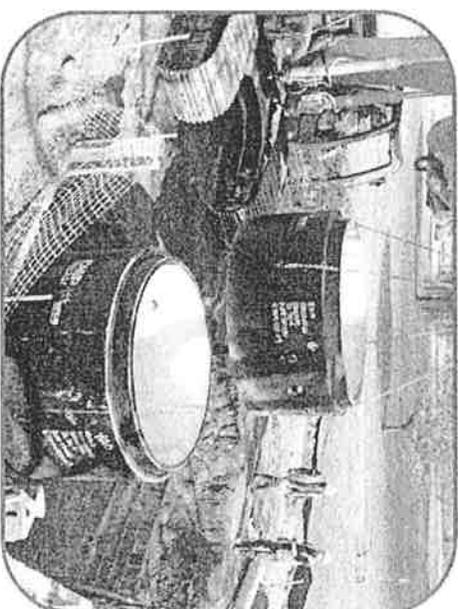
- Identify Large tracts in close proximity to village  
Review soils mapping
- Preliminary discussions with willing property owners
- Targeted field work/test pits

## REVIEW POTENTIAL METHODS OF DISPOSAL

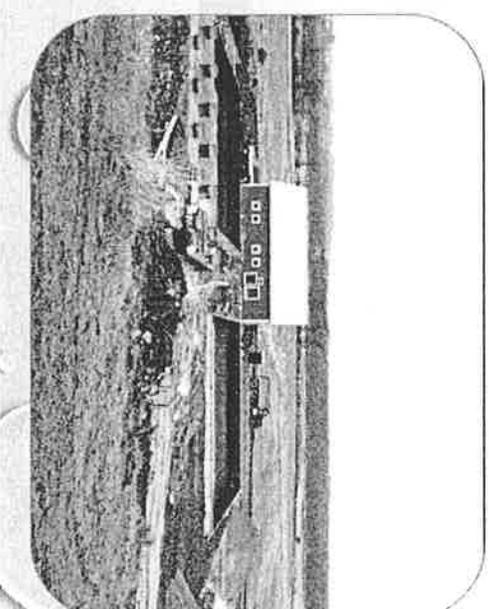
- In-ground subsurface disposal (one large or multiple smaller leachfields)
- Mound system(S)
- Spray disposal (similar to snowmaking operations)

## ALTERNATIVE TO WASTEWATER SYSTEM

- The study will also look at the potential for a community water system as a solution by eliminating the threat of area septic systems contaminating wells



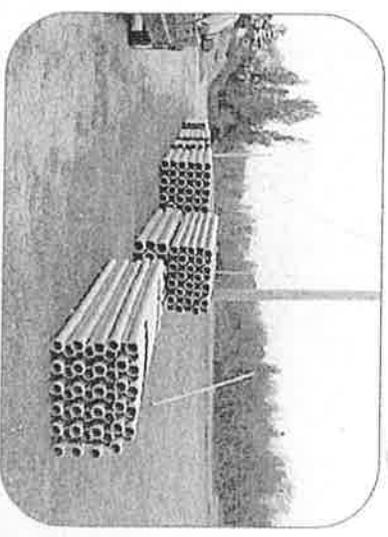
Wet Well (above) Spray Field (below)



# HOW CAN WE GET IT THERE? (CONVEYANCE OPTIONS)

## IDENTIFY ALTERNATIVES TO CONVEY WASTEWATER TO DISPOSAL SITES

- WILL DEPEND ON LOCATION OF DISPOSAL SITES, AND TOPOGRAPHY
- Standard Gravity sewers and pump stations
- Septic tank effluent pumping (STEP)
- SOME DISPOSAL OPTIONS REQUIRE TREATMENT
  - Primary (septic tanks) – likely all that is need in Highgate Village
  - Secondary (lagoons, package treatment units)
  - Tertiary (advanced treatment) for re-use



All options will require a network of piping and pump stations



# HOW WILL WE PAY FOR IT?

## TYPICAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR CONSTRUCTION

- Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (CWSRRLF) – loan with subsidies
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development – grant/loan package

## HOW TO PAY FOR ONGOING EXPENSES?

- Typically, all costs are borne by customers using the service
- Some communities contribute a small portion of debt service through a local option tax or grand list tax, to support services provided in the village center



## QUESTIONS?

**For more info:**

Greta Brunswick, Project Manager at [gbrunswick@nrpvcvt.com](mailto:gbrunswick@nrpvcvt.com), 524-5958.

John Kiernan, Project Engineer at [kiernan@ottercrk.com](mailto:kiernan@ottercrk.com), 382-8522.

Heidi Britch-Valenta, Town Administrator at [hvalenta@highgatevt.org](mailto:hvalenta@highgatevt.org), 868-4922

**Website:** <https://www.nrpvcvt.com/highgate-wastewater-water-study>

The Village Core Steering Committee meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month at 6:30PM (please visit [www.highgatevt.com](http://www.highgatevt.com) for COVID-19 related changes)

# Highgate Village Core Wastewater and Water Feasibility Study

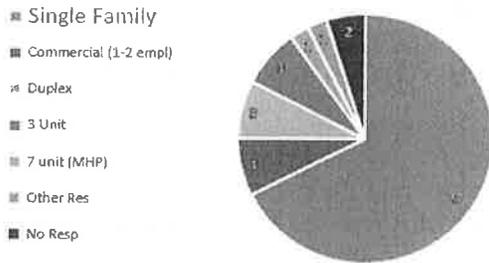
## PROJECT TIMELINE

ACTIVITY	START	END	NOTES
Kick-off Meeting	1/28/2020		Review Schedule, Scope of Work and Communications Plan
Steering Committee Meeting	2/25/2020		Review plan for community outreach. <u>Deliverables</u> : draft survey, draft informational flyer, planning analysis.
Town Meeting	3/3/2020		Kickoff survey. Informational flyers available.
Survey	3/3/2020	3/31/2020	Survey Open. Copies mailed to residents and businesses. Online link sent out to email lists and front porch forum. Advertised at the library with computer station to complete it.
<del>Public Informational Meeting and Steering Committee Meeting</del>	<del>3/24/2020</del>		<del>Presentation on intent of project and survey, opportunity for public to learn about project and survey.</del>
Survey Follow-up	6/2020	6/2020	Follow up with key respondents.
<del>Steering Committee Meeting</del>	<del>4/29/2020</del>		<del>Review survey results. <u>Deliverables</u>: survey summary</del>
Steering Committee Meeting	6/16/20		Review presentation, schedule update and survey results. 30% Draft Review.
Steering Committee Meeting	7/28/2020 <del>7/14/2020</del>		60% Draft Review. Meeting advertised to broad stakeholders and interested parties.
Tabling Outreach	?		Table display at McCuins 100-year event. Opportunity to learn more about project.
Steering Committee Meeting	8/25/2020		Meeting for document review/discussion as needed.
Steering Committee Meeting	9/29/2020		90% Draft Review.
Public Meeting/ Community Celebration	TBD		Public meeting in late summer/fall to advertise final project.

# Highgate Wastewater Solutions Community Survey Results Summary

**Response Rate: 15%**

Responses by Property Type



## Village Concerns, Plans and Ideas for the Future

What survey respondents like best about Highgate Center:



What survey respondents are concerned about in Highgate Center:



## Survey respondents want to make Highgate Center better by:



## Capacity/Concerns on Water and Wastewater Systems:

- Septic capacity/function and water supply have not limited what most (85%) property owners can do with their property.
- A better septic system does is not a prominent concern for most property owners. For those that are (6 survey respondents), replacement cost, ability to sell and potential for enforcement are concerns.
- Property owners are more interested in the benefits of improved water supply (1/3 of respondents) rather than improved septic, although the majority of residents are not concerned overall (72%). For those that are concerned (11 survey respondents), water quality, replacement cost and ability to sell are top concerns.
- Residents are interested in information and support about septic systems in the following areas:
  - How State rules apply to property (7 respondents)
  - How much a replacement system would cost and how to pay for it (7 respondents)
  - How well my system is working (6 respondents)
  - How to maintain my system (4 respondents)
  - What alternatives are available (4 respondents)

## Wastewater System Summary

- Most respondents have a general knowledge about the condition of their wastewater system. Many are unsure about details.
- Just over half of systems are older than 2007. The age of ¼ of systems unknown.
- Most septic tanks are 1,000 gallons.
- 65% systems get pumped every 3 – 5 years, 19% get pumped every 6 – 10 years.
- The majority (over 80%) of respondents have never had any issues with their system.

## Water Supply System Summary

- Most respondents have a drilled well water supply system located on their property.
- ½ of respondents do not have any water treatment. 26% use a filter.

- Most have never had any contamination issues; a few have.
- No one has ever run out of water.
- 14 respondents are interested in free water quality testing, 4 would like more information

Do you have any other thoughts, concerns, or comments you would like to share about wastewater or water systems in Highgate Center?

- Good drainage
- Almost all sand
- Close proximity to other systems
- I'm happy with mine.
- Do not need a wastewater plant.
- Effective for large developments
- Waste of time and money.
- Would like to see a wastewater treatment plant
- I prefer well water
- I am sure there are some that need a central system, but mine is ok, no problems.
- I think it is a great idea.
- Close attention to creating any additional runoff should be paramount; as well as potentially reducing existing village core runoff.
- I would like to see better water and septic options.
- Excellent soils with capacity for residential development. Need municipal water and sewer for commercial and industrial growth.
- Refuse to drink chlorinated water!



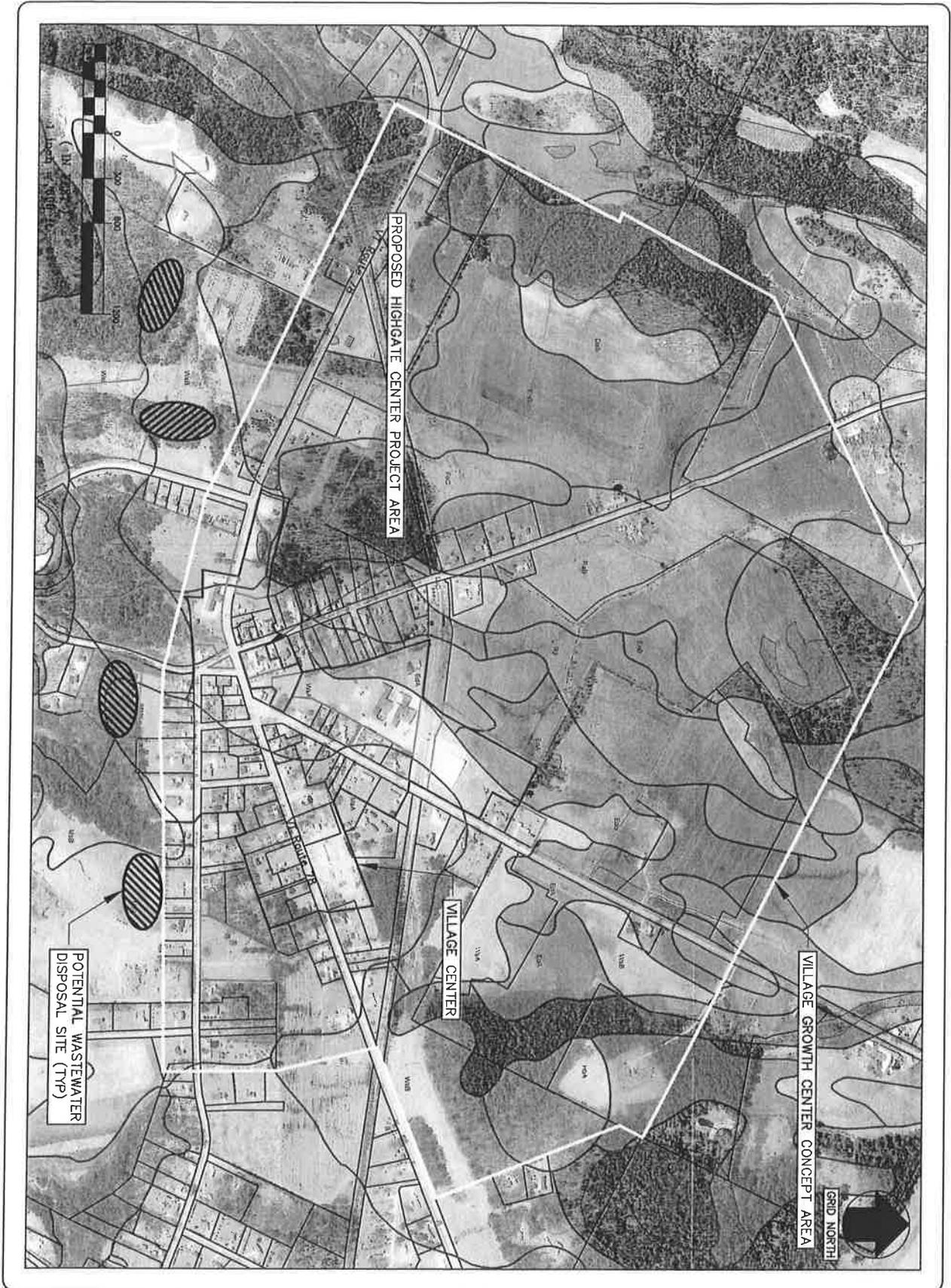
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VMS - 1984, Wells, Metadata, Auxiliary, Sphere  
© Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, June 16, 2020

DISCLAIMER: This map is for general reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise representative of the actual conditions on the ground. The user assumes all responsibility for the data on this map. THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION.



- LEGEND**
- Parcel (standardized)
  - Parcel (non-standardized)
  - Roads
    - Interstate
    - Principal Arterial
    - Minor Arterial
    - Major Collector
    - Minor Collector
    - Local
  - Not part of function Classification System
  - Stream/River
  - Town Boundary

**1: 24,717**  
In = 2000 ft  
1cm = 247 meters  
**NOTES**  
Map created using ANR's Natural Resources Atlas



DATE ISSUED:	6/18/2020
DRAWN BY:	RR
CHECKED BY:	JK
SCALE:	1"=600'
PROJECT NO.:	978.001
TITLE:	VILLAGE AREA
SHEET NO.:	<b>1</b>
REF. DRAWING:	PD2019

**TOWN OF HIGHGATE  
COMMUNITY WATER  
AND WASTEWATER  
FEASIBILITY STUDY  
HIGHGATE, VERMONT**

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**OTTERCREEK  
ENGINEERING**

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