

To: Castleton Development Review Board  
From: Wayne Pickett, John teRiele, John Gillan, Brenda Fleming, Emilio Rosario, Marley Rosario, Katy Culpo, and ALL others included on Signature Pages  
Date: June 7, 2022  
Re: Planned Unit Development Permit application for a 99 unit Senior Living Facility (Parcel ID #09-01-11)

We come before the Development Review Board tonight to request the DRB reject the Hale & Hale project at this time, for three reasons – 1) too much missing and inconsistent information, 2) transparency and trust, the Town’s public records are a mess, and 3) failure of the project to further the goals of the Castleton Town Plan. We have done our due diligence and come before you with facts tonight. There is much information in this document, and we know others have come to speak. We will highlight the main points.

**Reason #1 - There is TOO MUCH MISSING or INCONSISTENT** information to know if this is in the best interest of Castleton residents. This project has been promoted and supported by the Castleton Town Manager, Zoning Administrator, past Select Boards and Planning Commissions as affordable senior housing that is going to bring lots of high paying jobs to Castleton, bring in tax revenue and save tax payers money. In emails received from the Town Manager, it is clear there is pressure on all Town Boards and Commissions to push this project forward.

We are providing you detailed information on affordable senior housing AND projected school and municipal tax revenues AND all those high paying jobs. We also directly align our concerns with the Castleton Town Plan language.

**a) Affordable Senior Housing**

Is this “Affordable Senior Housing”?

Both the Castleton Town Plan and the Rutland County Needs Assessment identify affordable senior housing as a priority, and the Castleton Town Manager, Zoning Administrator, past Select Boards, and Planning Commissions have used this data point to advocate for support of the Sand Hill Senior Living Project. We challenge the premise that this project is affordable senior housing and note that no or little information has been provided by Hale & Hale on affordability. (I have not been able to get this info. I specifically asked this question at the Oct 2021 DRB meetings, and I reached out via email to Zak Hale 4/27/22 after he mentioned income guidelines at 4/25/22 Select Board meeting in response to Mary McIntyre’s inquiry regarding demand on local food shelves. There is no specific information on income guidelines on the Berlin Chestnut Place website.)

Defining “affordable housing” - From the 2018 Castleton Town Plan, page 38  
“Affordable housing is an average price new home or older home in good condition that a person with an average income ought to be able to buy or rent. In order to be considered affordable, housing costs should be no more than 30%-35% of a household’s income. For rental housing this includes: rent & utilities (fuel for heat, hot water, and cooking; electricity for lights; water and sewer charges; and trash removal). For home ownership this includes: mortgage (principal and interest), taxes, and property insurance.”

While Hale & Hale have not provided costs or income guidelines, their “sister” facility in Berlin, Chestnut Place is private pay (no Medicare/Medicaid/subsidized) and has minimum income guidelines.

What is posted on Chestnut Hill’s website are the rates below:

- Independent Living Studio or One Bedroom starting at \$2,300 per month
- Assisted Living Studio or One Bedroom starting at \$4,800 per month
- Memory Care Studio starting at \$7,800 per month

Using the formula of housing costs should be no more than 30-35% this converts to annual incomes as follows:

- Independent Living Studio or One Bedroom annual income of \$78,880
- Assisted Living Studio or One Bedroom annual income of \$164,571

- Memory Care Studio annual income of \$267,428.

From the VT Department of Taxes, Rutland County's average VT Adjusted Gross Income in 2020 is \$57,255 per return filed. With 35% maximum for housing, that's \$1,670/month for affordable housing.

**Conclusion – This project does NOT support the Castleton Town Plan guidelines for affordable housing.** In fact, our analysis raises the question of need for expensive luxury senior housing in Castleton, as well as in Rutland County. Are there local data and/or assessments supporting the need for high end expensive senior housing? That is what this project is!

**(From 2018 Castleton Town Plan, pages 40-41- underlined areas for emphasis.)**

**HOUSING GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS**

*Goal*

*Provide a variety of housing options that meet the needs of diverse social and income groups and is located conveniently to employment, services, retail centers, and educational and recreational facilities. A sufficient supply of quality housing is necessary for any community that expects to have strong, healthy families and a stable workforce.*

**Policy 1** *Collaborate with not-for-profit housing organizations, government agencies, private lenders, developers and builders in pursuing options and meeting the housing needs of local residents.*

*Programs*

❖ *Establish working relationships with the Rutland County Community Land Trust, NeighborWorks of Western Vermont and Housing Vermont.*

**Policy 2** *Ensure that individuals with special housing needs, including the elderly, those with physical or mental disabilities, single parent households, as well as low and moderate-income households are able to attain suitable and affordable housing.*

*Programs*

❖ *Locate affordable and special needs housing in areas with access to appropriate services.*

**Policy 3** *Maintain and promote the historic character of housing in Castleton.*

*Programs*

- ❖ *Encourage home ownership and property upkeep efforts of Castleton residents.*
- ❖ *Ensure that new and rehabilitated housing is constructed to meet safety and sanitary minimum standards and coordinated with existing public services (water, sewer, and transportation networks).*
- ❖ *Maintain a detailed inventory of the condition of Castleton's historic housing units.*

**Policy 4** *Enable our aging citizens to remain within the community by providing differing types of housing options.*

*Programs*

❖ *Promote the development of commercial or private senior housing*

**Note:** This project does NOT maintain and promote the historical character of housing in Castleton AND again we challenge the premise that our Castleton aging residents will be able to afford to live here.

**b) Increased School and Municipal Tax Revenue**

Is the Sand Hill Project going to save individual tax payers money and bring a windfall of tax revenue to Castleton? Supporters of this project have promoted that it will. According to a letter dated July 21, 2021 from the Castleton Select Board to the DRB in support of this project, and I quote -

“If, as anticipated, the project costs approximately \$17M, the Town would realize significant property tax revenue from it. Conservative estimates indicate new annual revenue of \$300,000 soon after construction is completed, a total that would grow appreciably over time.” (7/21/21 Memo to DRB from Select Board Members)

This is factually incorrect, and we don't know if correct tax revenue #'s have ever been formally provided to the DRB. So we have that for you tonight. We also bring to the DRB's attention, page 51 of the Castleton Town Plan Economic Development Goals, Policies, and Programs, which BEGINS with the Goal statement, quote “Maintain a sound fiscal balance for the town...” – fiscal balance meaning town money earned exceeds town money spent. So let's look more closely at school and municipal taxes.

**First, School Tax** - School Taxes represent over 67% of our property taxes. I asked Cheryl Scarzello, how this project would benefit Castleton residents' school taxes; in short she said

“With the passage of Act 60 and then Act 68 the State of Vermont funds education at the state level rather than the local (town) level. This means that changes in a town's grand list do not affect the education tax rate for a town. Municipal tax rates still depend on a town's grand list. So to answer your question, a development in the Town of Castleton does not have a direct impact on the education tax rate for a Castleton taxpayer.

Below are the email questions I sent & her response

Question:

*Dear Ms. Scarzello,*

*I'm hoping you might be able to help us understand how the Castleton Town School Tax rate would be affected by an increase in Castleton's grand list for a planned unit development with a construction cost of \$17,000,000 -- for ease of this example, please assume the town assessment will also be \$17,000,000, how would Castleton's homestead education tax change? In short, how much money would this project save the voters of Castleton for school taxes?*

*Thanks,*

*Katy Culpo*

Response:

*Dear Dr. Culpo,*

*With the passage of Act 60 and then Act 68 the State of Vermont funds education at the state level rather than the local (town) level. This means that changes in a town's grand list do not affect the education tax rate for a town. Municipal tax rates still depend on a town's grand list. **So to answer your question, a development in the Town of Castleton does not have a direct impact on the education tax rate for a Castleton taxpayer.** I suppose it may have an impact at the state level when the legislature is looking at setting the yields (homestead and non-homestead), but the yield (which is one of several components of the education tax rate) is the same for every taxpayer depending on whether you are a residential or non-residential property owner.*

*Please feel free to give me a call. It might be easier to explain on the phone rather than through an email.*

*Best regards,*

*Cheryl*

**Bottom line – Individual tax payers will save no money on their school tax payments.**

**Second, Municipal Tax** – Municipal tax revenues vs. municipal costs is a serious consideration for the Town of Castleton. As stated in our Town Plan Economic Development section (pg. 48), “Like many other municipalities in Rutland County, Castleton derives most of its revenue from the taxation of local property in order to support municipal services.”

So how exactly will this property impact municipal tax revenue? Municipal tax is based on town's grand list and according to the Town's tax stabilization policy the full municipal tax will not be received for 5 years. It is unclear how and what the PUD will be assessed at, but the Select board has assumed 17 million construction costs – if that were the case, based on the Proposed municipal taxes (next yr) are \$0.4938, per the town report page 9 BEFORE Tax Stabilization (TSA) of \$83,946. However, the first 4 years town revenues would be as follows:

- Yr 1 town would collect 20% or \$16,789,
- Yr 2 40% or \$33,578,
- Yr 3 60% or \$50,367
- Yr 4 80% or \$67,156
- Yr 5 100% or \$83,946

**NOTE:** If the property is assessed at a 10 million value (not 17 million construction cost) -- the taxes on yr 5 (after tax stabilization) would be \$49,380 --- or \$4,938/million of assessed value. (Current estimated value of the Berlin building is about \$7.5 million after 100% construction.)

\*\*\*Both numbers are significantly lower than the \$300,000 projected by the Select Board letter to the DRB.

The question remains... Will the increased municipal tax revenue from this privately owned for profit 99-unit senior living rental facility be more dollars than the increase it creates on municipal services and maintenance? Has this been seriously considered and calculated? Residents have brought these issues up numerous times, still no details; costs of infrastructure and costs of maintenance, water & sewer, waste water issues, roads, fire & rescue, on and on.

**Conclusion: We don't know if this project supports The Town Plan Economic Development Goal.** It is impossible to properly assess if this project fits the Castleton Town Plan (pg. 51) "maintain a sound fiscal balance for the town." Will there be a fiscal balance between increased municipal tax revenue and increased municipal costs? We don't know! We do know it is NOT going to bring in \$300,000 municipal tax revenue!

### **c) How about all those high paying jobs?**

This is not a high skilled nursing and rehabilitation center. Agreed, that type of facility would bring in high paying nursing and medical positions. The Sand Hill Project is a 99-unit high end senior living rental facility (50% independent living, 32% assisted living) with an 18 bed (18%) memory care unit. This facility will NOT require multiple highly skilled LPN/RN's to function daily. Currently, the sister Berlin facility is advertising to hire one nurse (LPN/RN – maybe they have already hired more), cooks, Resident Assistant's (LNAs, PCAs), dining servers, front desk concierge, and housekeepers. It is possible that people will relocate to Castleton for these high paying hourly positions, but it is more likely that the proposed Sand Hill Project will be hiring from the current workforce/hiring pool in Castleton and Rutland County.

This may pose a problem for the Sand Hill Project, according to the 2018 Castleton Plan, which states -

*"The ability to find qualified employees is constraining business growth across industry sectors. Employers have revealed that the availability of a trained workforce is limiting job growth. Skilled professionals set to retire are not easily replaced by the existing, younger workforce. This has resulted in some companies foregoing opportunities for expansion." (2018 Castleton Plan, pg. 51)*

**Conclusion: The Sand Hill project is NOT bringing numerous high paying jobs to the Town of Castleton, and may in fact struggle to fill many of the employment positions they will need to hire.**

**Note** – These issues are relevant to the DRB vote on this project. During a DRB meeting on 10/19/21 when DRB committee members were discussing some of the above mentioned items, the Town Manager asked DRB members why they would consider any of these factors in their decisions to approve or disapprove a project. He went on to clarify to



DRB members that their role was to only consider if proposed projects comply with town zoning regulations. Katy Culpo questioned the town manager on this at the time, feeling this was disingenuous since town entities had sent letters to the DRB supporting the project for these reasons. Now he was telling the DRB not to consider them in their consideration of the project.

This leads us to reason #2 to vote NO on moving forward with this project.

**Reason #2 – Transparency and Trust – the town’s public records are a mess!** There are incomplete and missing documents, and minutes are missing and often do not reflect actions or discussions. From the public records it is hard to tell if this is in the best interest of Castleton, the select board or developers?

The challenge here is that since this project came to fruition in June of 2017, there is concern that there has been a coordinated effort to align town documents to support the project – specifically the 2018 Castleton Plan (mentioned by Zak Hale in his 4/25/22 Due Diligence Extension Request) and the Town of Castleton Zoning Ordinances; adopted by the Select Board 2/22/2021 and 6/28/2021.

For example the purchase and sale agreement between Hale & Hale and the Town of Castleton was signed on November 23, 2020. At the following 12/8/2020 Planning Commission Meeting, according to posted minutes, the following transpired:

Bob Franzoni turned the meeting over to Jonas Rosenthal to discuss subdivision and zoning ordinance regulations.

1. Jonas handed out a new document that is to replace our old zoning ordinance document.
2. Jonas discussed a zoning change and passed out a document that was a Commercial and Industrial Market Analysis that was done in 2014 for Castleton and talked about a contract that was recently signed in which housing zoning changes must be made.
3. Jonas shared that we need to adopt zoning regulations that give rules on Planned Unit Development Standards and Planned Residential Development Standards. Castleton does not have any rules currently.
4. Jonas passed out examples of such standards from the towns of Berlin and Sunderland. Our duties are to read through the documents and highlight the ideas that we like and give them to Jonas.
5. Jonas brought our attention to the draft document dated 11/25/20 that we all received. It has the new Subdivision Regulations in it. These are updates that have been changed from the document from 1986. We will be going over these new possible amendments on Dec. 15 with the DRB. Their meeting begins at 7:00 PM via Zoom.

Planning Commission Meeting minutes, past and present, are full of zoning ordinance changes to accommodate this project.

To be clear, the Town of Castleton Zoning Ordinance document has been changed to accommodate the Hale and Hale Sand Hill Project, including a height waiver. The DRB is told to ONLY consider those zoning ordinance rules in their decisions to approve or disapprove of a project that comes before it. In fact in an email from the Town Manager, the DRB is scolded and told to think beyond “I got mine so why change” Even more insulting he writes “we are mired down due to a lack of vision and framework needed to thrive, not survive.” This may be the Town Manager’s opinion but is it the town’s?

*Email from Mike Jones to DRB 10/5/2021*

Change can oftentimes be difficult to embrace but there comes a time when change may be a required element for a community to not just survive, but thrive. The concept of, "I got mine, so why change" serves "the now", but may not be what is best for the future of a community. We have an opportunity to take a fundamental look at our community and how we serve the greatest number of residents using the resources now have, will have, or are able to access. If we are not looking at expanding drinking water, sewer services, 3-phase power, broadband Internet, and improving our roads, we will fall short when those looking to open a business move past Castleton because we are mired down due to a lack of vision and framework needed to thrive, not survive. It is my understanding that over the past couple of years we (Town) have had growth opportunities such as an assisted living facility, daycare/Early Childhood Development Center, outdoor (Drive-in) theater, and to date, nothing has passed through zoning, or the opposition to zoning. As a resident,

**We also take issue with the Town of Castleton Zoning Ordinance changes during a pandemic.** – Was a pandemic the best time to significantly change Castleton Zoning Ordinance documents since 1986? The town manager criticizes the DRB and says "we need input from the entire community" but there was no community representation in any of the four hearings – did this raise any red flags from any town officials or board members? A lack of input, during a worldwide pandemic is not a signal of consent and agreement from the citizens of Castleton.

*Email from Mike Jones to DRB 10/5/2021*

Before committees, boards, commissions to stimulate an awakening within the community. We need input from the entire community, not just from those who oppose something. This is something that has proven difficult in the past. There has to be investment in our future or we will just stagnate more and more, something that isn't very attractive to those looking for a new place to live or open a business.

**Conclusion: Due to a lack of transparency and trust regarding the process that has brought us here today, and the pressure that has been put on board members to support this project without accurate facts and information, we ask the DRB to vote NO on the Hale and Hale project.**

### **Reason # 3 - The Sand Hill Project does NOT further the goals of the Castleton Town Plan**

From our Town website it states – "The Development Review Board (DRB) is the municipal body that, when required, is authorized and delegated to uphold and interpret Castleton Zoning Ordinance and Castleton Subdivision Regulations." (Castleton Town website, DRB home page.)

The Castleton Zoning Ordinance document, further explains that,

*"The objective of the Zoning Regulation is to establish standards and policies concerning development of land which further the goals of the Castleton Plan.*

*It is intended that standards and policies established by the Zoning Regulations reflect and express a sense of community values toward Castleton's environment including the value of appearance and congenial arrangement for the conduct of farming, trade, industry, residence and other uses of land necessary to the community's well-being in so far as such values are related to the objectives of the adopted Town Plan." (Section 102: Objectives and Intent, page 5)*

This is why this Board is the Development and Review Board, not the zoning ordinance review board. It is the role of the DRB to ensure that any proposed project clearly demonstrate it is furthering the goals of the Castleton Plan AND fulfilling a checklist of zoning ordinance rules and regulations. It is 100% appropriate and expected that members of this board

consider BOTH the Castleton Plan document and the Zoning Ordinance document when making decisions on projects that come before it.

We offer many excerpts below from the 2018 Castleton Town Plan where this project does NOT further the goals of the Castleton Plan. Underlined words and phrases are for emphasis where this project does not support the plan. Comments are added in parenthesis. Most of it speaks for itself. I'm not going to read through each tonight. We have made our point. There are MANY ways this project does NOT support the Castleton Town Plan; in fact there are many instances where it is in complete opposition to furthering the goals of the Castleton Town Plan.

Pg 3 - The policies and programs stated within this comprehensive plan were developed to preserve and protect the town's assets while providing a future vision for town officials, businesses, and citizens of Castleton.

Pg. 3 - In adopting the Town Plan, citizens of Castleton may anticipate the future with the knowledge that a significant step has been taken in the development and preservation of their community.

Pg 3 - Surrounding communities promote low-density land development and continuation of resource-based uses (such as agriculture) in outlying areas and higher density and commercial uses in existing built-up areas. (A 99-unit rental building directly next to one of two operating farms in our town is the exact opposite of this!)

Pg 8 - As new development opportunities present themselves, the Town of Castleton must balance preservation of its community and character with support of opportunities for economic growth in order to sustain the town's citizens and services. (Other than CU campus there are no other 4 story buildings in Castleton, and architecturally this building has no Castleton character.)

Pg 8 – Castleton encourages planned growth and concentrated development in those areas of the town which provide for higher density and which can provide the necessary infrastructure to more readily support development than more rural sections of town. (This would not include Sand Hill Road!)

Pgs 9-10

## LAND USE AND GROWTH GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

### Goal

Provide for the development that fits the character of existing development, functions in an efficient and coordinated fashion and supports the vitality of the community.

Proposed land use patterns are intended to accommodate future growth in harmony with the natural capabilities of the land and the ability of the town to adequately provide municipal services. Castleton's scenic and natural resources are among the town's primary assets. The unspoiled mountain peaks and ridgelines are a community asset of inestimable value: dollars and cents value to the town's economic enterprise, and emotional value to each Castleton citizen's sense of place, our home.

Pg10 – Policy 2

Encourage orderly and attractive development of commercial uses. (This building is too big, not attractive, does not fit)

Pg 10 – Policy 3

Maintain and protect the quality and character of historic settlement patterns. (unprecedented building size!)

- ❖ Encourage future residential development to be concentrated where community facilities and services are currently provided

Pg 10 - Policy 4

Preserve agriculture, scenic resources and open space.

25 - Primary agricultural soils are depicted on Castleton Natural Resources Map 2. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has classified Vermont's soils into four categories with respect to their potential for agriculture – highest, good, low and limited. NRCS recommends that highest and good categories qualify as primary agricultural soils as defined in Act 250. As is the case with most Vermont towns, there are a number of active farms in Castleton sustaining families and making an important contribution to the economy and the culture of the town. (Again, why are we putting a 99-unit rental building on a residential street next to one of two functioning farms in the Town of Castleton?)

Pg 33 - Open Space and Scenic Resources

In the course of planning for Castleton's future, it is important that the presence of high quality open space and scenic resources, broad scenic areas as well as scenic landmarks, are recognized and the integrity of such resources is preserved. Scenic resources have aesthetic, historical, and economic value. Siting of future construction as well as community facilities and infrastructure should always consider the potential impact on the aesthetic qualities of the community and preserve the undisturbed integrity, wherever possible, of Castleton's quality scenic and open space resources.

You get the point! I didn't even include the parts that cover protecting prime agricultural lands. While this project has been promoted as supporting the Castleton Town Plan, there are MANY ways it does the exact opposite!

**Conclusion: While we know the permit application for a 99 unit Senior Living Facility will meet the zoning ordinance checklist, we challenge that this project does NOT further the goals of the Castleton Plan. We further challenge that this project is in many ways in complete opposition to the goals of the Castleton Plan – for example preserving scenic and open space resources and aesthetic qualities of the community.**

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In conclusion, we are asking the Development Review Board to say “no” to this project once and for all for these reasons:

1. Too much information is missing or inconsistent. (Hopefully we have clarified some of it.)
2. There has been a lack of transparency, which has created a lack of trust in the process that has gotten us to where we are today.
3. The project does not further the goals of the Castleton Town Plan.

On behalf of the many citizens of Castleton who have signed in support of this letter, we thank you for the time and consideration you give our concerns.

Respectfully Submitted to the Castleton Development Review Board.

DRB Vote "NO" on Sand Hill Project May 17, 2022 - Signatures of Support

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Abutting Property Owners

Print Name	Address	Signature
Katy Culpo	511 Sand Hill Rd	Katy Culpo
Paul Culpo	511 Sand Hill Rd	Paul D. Culpo
Mary Lee Harris	825 Sand Hill Rd	Mary Lee Harris
Brenda L Fleming	825 Sand Hill Rd	Brenda L Fleming
Kevin Fleming	Sand Hill Rd	Kevin Fleming
William L Harris	825 Sand Hill Rd	William L Harris
Amanda Stockwell	864 Sand Hill Road	Amanda Stockwell
<del>Emilio Rosario</del>	<del>318 Sand Hill Road</del>	<del>Emilio Rosario</del>
<del>Marley Rosario</del>	<del>318 Sand Hill Road</del>	<del>Marley Rosario</del>
Jessica Steele	454 Rt 4A	Jessica Steele
Robert Steele	454 Rt 4A	Robert Steele
Louise Cousineau	53 Preston	Louise Cousineau
Mary Wertz	1099 Main St	Mary Wertz
Sid Wertz	1099 Main St	Sid Wertz
Sherry Blodgett	174 Suncrest Terrace	Sherry Blodgett
Laura DesJardins	1234 Sand Hill	Laura DesJardins
Charles Madsen	174 Suncrest Ter	Charles Madsen













**To: Castleton Select Board**  
**From: John teRiele, resident Castleton**  
**Date: May 23, 2022**  
**Re: Reconsider Support for Sand Hill Project Permit #8177 – Alignment with Town Plan and Alma Gibbs Donchian Foundation Mission**

I am requesting the Select Board re-evaluate their support of Sand Hill Project Permit #8177. As proposed this project is not aligned with the Castleton Town Plan or the mission of the Alma Gibbs Donchian Foundation.

From the July 21, 2021 Select Board letter of support sent to the Development Review Board, point 4, 6 and 7 state the following:

4. This parcel was given to the Town on 12/21/1996 by then Castleton State College, now Castleton University, for the express purpose of economic development.
6. Three successive CSU/CU presidents, Presidents Wolk, Scolforo, and Spiro, have all expressed their enthusiastic commitment to the planned collaboration.
7. Both the Castleton Planning Commission and members of the Town's Community Development and Economic Revitalization Advisory Committee have supported the project.

I do believe that past CU presidents and past board members would be in support of this project as originally conceived – affordable senior living, enhance the tax base, lower the tax rate, and bring in high paying jobs. But I question if past presidents and board members would support this project as it is currently being proposed. We know this is NOT affordable senior living as defined in our Town Plan, will not bring in lots of high paying jobs. This is high end expensive senior living that most average Vermonters cannot afford. Further, we still don't know if this project will enhance our tax base and lower tax rates, AND if the increased municipal tax revenue will cover the increased municipal costs.

While the Town Plan does state as a housing policy goal to “Enable our aging citizens to remain within the community by providing differing types of housing options” (p. 41), and recommends programs that “Promote the development of commercial or private senior housing” (p. 41), other than that there is not much in the Castleton Town Plan that supports high end expensive senior housing in Castleton. In many ways, the proposed four story 99 unit building with its large parking lot out front is in complete opposition to the goals of the Castleton Plan – for example “fits the character of existing development” (pg 9); “scenic and natural resources are among the town's primary assets” (pg 9); Policy 4 (pg 10) “Preserve agriculture, scenic resources and open space” and “preservation of the character of surrounding properties” (pg 10-11).

At the bottom of this letter I offer many other excerpts from the 2018 Castleton Town Plan where this project does NOT further the goals set forth. Underlined words and phrases are for emphasis of misalignment. Comments are added in parenthesis, but most of it speaks for itself. I'm not going to read through each tonight, the evidence is there. Not only does this project not support the Town Plan; in fact there are many instances where it is in complete opposition to furthering the goals of the Castleton Town Plan.

Another concern I want to bring to Select Board members is the proposed projects alignment with the mission of the Alma Gibbs Donchian Foundation. From their website:

It is the primary mission of the Alma Gibbs Donchian Foundation to provide assistance to various institutions in Vermont, but not limited to Vermont. The Foundation hopes to address the following areas of concern:

- Issues affecting the elderly, particularly those "middle-income" elderly not served by other programs
- Education, particularly as it addresses hearing and/or learning impairments, or reading disabilities
- **Community preservation**
- Programs or agencies engaged in the furtherance of fundamental values, such as: self-reliance, respect for tradition, the value of work, the importance of family, the innate 'goodness' and 'uniqueness' of all persons, and the satisfaction to be derived from religious or similarly uplifting beliefs

As proposed, this project does not address housing issues of “middle-income” elderly in our community, and the proposed building is actually an assault on our community preservation. Further, our Town Plan (pg.3) also states, “In adopting the Town Plan, citizens of Castleton may anticipate the future with the knowledge that a significant step has been taken in the development and **preservation of their community.**”

Thank you for your time.

Direct excerpts from the Castleton Town Plan NOT supporting the Sand Hill Project Permit #8177

Pg 3 - The policies and programs stated within this comprehensive plan were developed to preserve and protect the town's assets while providing a future vision for town officials, businesses, and citizens of Castleton.

Pg. 3 - In adopting the Town Plan, citizens of Castleton may anticipate the future with the knowledge that a significant step has been taken in the development and preservation of their community.

Pg 3 - Surrounding communities promote low-density land development and continuation of resource-based uses (such as agriculture) in outlying areas and higher density and commercial uses in existing built-up areas. (A 99-unit rental building directly next to one of two operating farms in our town is the exact opposite of this!)

Pg 8 - As new development opportunities present themselves, the Town of Castleton must balance preservation of its community and character with support of opportunities for economic growth in order to sustain the town's citizens and services. (Other than CU campus there are no other 4 story buildings in Castleton, and architecturally this building has no Castleton character.)

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Proposed land use patterns are intended to accommodate future growth in harmony with the natural capabilities of the land and the ability of the town to adequately provide municipal services. Castleton's scenic and natural resources are among the town's primary assets. The unspoiled mountain peaks and ridgelines are a community asset of inestimable value: dollars and cents value to the town's economic enterprise, and emotional value to each Castleton citizen's sense of place, our home.

Pg10 – Policy 2  
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Maintain and protect the quality and character of historic settlement patterns. (unprecedented building size!)

- ❖ Encourage future residential development to be concentrated where community facilities and services are currently provided

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Preserve agriculture, scenic resources and open space.

Pg 25 - Primary agricultural soils are depicted on Castleton Natural Resources Map 2. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has classified Vermont's soils into four categories with respect to their potential for agriculture – highest, good, low and limited. NRCS recommends that highest and good categories qualify as primary agricultural soils as defined in Act 250. As is the case with most Vermont towns, there are a number of active farms in Castleton sustaining families and making an important contribution to the economy and the culture of the town. (Again, why are we putting a 99-unit rental building on a residential street next to one of two functioning farms in the Town of Castleton?)

Pg 29 – Impervious Surface Minimization and Site Design (entire section)

Pg 33 - Open Space and Scenic Resources  
In the course of planning for Castleton's future, it is important that the presence of high quality open space and scenic resources, broad scenic areas as well as scenic landmarks, are recognized and the integrity of such resources is preserved. Scenic resources have aesthetic, historical, and economic value. Siting of future construction as well as community facilities and infrastructure should always consider the potential impact on the aesthetic qualities of the community and preserve the undisturbed integrity, wherever possible, of Castleton's quality scenic and open space resources.

You get the point! I didn't even include the parts of the Castleton Town Plan that cover protecting prime agricultural lands. While this project has been promoted as supporting the Castleton Town Plan, there are MANY ways it does the exact opposite!

To: Castleton Select Board  
From: Wayne Pickett, resident Castleton  
Date: May 23, 2022  
Re: Re-Evaluate Town Support for Zoning Ordinance Changes and Sand Hill Project

I come before the Select Board tonight to request that you reconsider your support of the Sand Hill Project, or at a minimum take steps to assess if the residents of Castleton truly support the construction of a four story 99-unit Planned Unit Development (PUD) on Sand Hill Road. While many residents support the *concept* of an affordable senior living facility on this property and its potential for collaboration with the University and other entities in town, many have been surprised at the *size and magnitude of the building being proposed*. Other than the University, buildings this size don't exist in our small town.

The surprise was most likely the result of a global pandemic that began January 2020. Most people were in some form of lockdown by March 2020, and remained consumed by this new existence into the summer of 2021. Abutting Sand Hill Road property owners were first notified of this project by receiving a letter in the mail dated July 29, 2021 from Jonas Rosenthal – stating “RE: Notice of a Development Review Board (DRB) hearing to consider a Planned Unit Development Permit application for a 99 unit Senior Living Facility.” The DRB meeting was scheduled for August 17, 2021. This was the first notification of this project to Sand Hill Road residents, and the first opportunity for residents to raise concerns about the project. The biggest question being, “what is a PUD?”

Further muddying transparency during a pandemic are the incomplete and/or missing town documents and minutes, and the fact that existing minutes often do not reflect actions taken or details of discussions. From the public records it is hard to tell if this project is in the best interest of Castleton residents, the Select Board or the developers. COVID has been stated as and may have been a contributor to posting minutes late, or non-existent meeting minutes; it's even unclear, now, after the fact if agenda's were posted before meetings. In short, this body experienced sloppiness and violations of meeting law which illustrates the problem with ALL these changes during a pandemic and thus the lack of transparency and civic involvement on the part of our community.

In a 10/5/21 email, Mike Jones reminded a DRB member that they were responsible to the “Entire Community” not just the Sand Hill Road Residents who were opposed to the PUD. I am here tonight to ask the Select Board to do the same. While you believe you are representing the town's best interest in changing and amending the Town Zoning Ordinances, to allow for PUD's, with few restrictions - even allowing for a waiver process to give the DRB maximum flexibility, but are you really sure this is what the “entire community” wants? How confident are you that these changes are supported by the entire community? You held 4 hearings (all during pandemic lockdowns): 2 Planning Commission hearings and 2 Select Board Hearings; and no visitors or members of the public attended. Charlie Brown attended a Select Board meeting vs. the Planning Commission Hearing and was not allowed to speak on the proposed changes at that time; being told to attend the scheduled Planning Commission meeting; he then contracted COVID and could not attend the Planning Commission Hearing 2 days later.

We are asking you to follow your own guidance and advice, by asking the community if they support the zoning changes that now include planned unit development (PUD) standards and planned residential development (PRD) standards – both new additions to the Town's Zoning Ordinance document. As per Planning Commission meeting minutes 12/8/2020, both additions were the result of the purchase and sale agreement between Hale & Hale and the Town of Castleton. I am requesting the Select Board assess town support of these zoning ordinance changes through a mailed or emailed survey to the community members, or perhaps your friends at Castleton University would poll the community and see if your assumptions about community support are in fact true. And, if they are not true, and you learn the community does not support PUD's and PRD's as part of the Town's Zoning Ordinance document- what will you do?

Thank you.



**To: Castleton Select Board**  
**From: Katy Culpo, resident Castleton**  
**Date: May 23, 2022**  
**Re: Reconsider 7-21-22 Letter of Support to DRB for Sand Hill Project Permit #8177 – Inaccurate Information**

Admittedly, I knew little of town governance and structure prior to July 2021, but since receiving notification of a 99 unit PUD coming to Sand Hill Road, I have learned a lot in less than one year, and have sought technical assistance and counsel to fully understand how we have come to where we are today.

I am coming to the Select Board tonight as “the Town’s chief elected body responsible for the overall management of Town government” (from Town website) requesting that you reconsider a prior Select Board’s letter submitted July 21, 2021 to the Development Review Board (DRB) in support of the Sand Hill Project. There is too much missing or inconsistent information to know if this project is truly in the best interest of our **entire town and community**. From the July 21, 2021 Select Board letter of support (included with my statement tonight) points 8 and 9 state the following:

8. The proposed senior living facility would create fifty to seventy new jobs, some of which would be high paying.
9. If, as anticipated, the project costs approximately \$17 M, the Town would realize significant property tax revenue from it. Conservative estimates indicate new annual revenue of \$300,000 soon after construction is completed, a total that would grow appreciably over time.

This project has been promoted and supported by town officials and boards as affordable senior housing that is going to bring lots of high paying jobs, tax revenue and tax relief to the residents of Castleton. Residents have challenged these claims, even asking for more clear details from Hale Resources, the developers and town officials to no avail. Well, some of us have done our own due diligence and I am sharing information on affordable senior housing AND projected school and municipal tax revenues AND all those high paying jobs with you tonight in this letter. I will not read verbatim, as there is much detail here, and I have sourced where each item comes from. I have also directly aligned our concerns with the Castleton Town Plan language. Again, much of this is not my area of expertise, and I welcome factual corrections from this Select Board on anything presented in this letter.

**a) Affordable Senior Housing** Is this “Affordable Senior Housing”?

Both the Castleton Town Plan and the Rutland County Needs Assessment identify affordable senior housing as a priority, and town officials and board members have used this data point to advocate for support of the Sand Hill Project. We challenge the premise that this project is affordable senior housing and note that no or little information has been provided on affordability. (I have not been able to get this info. I specifically asked this question at the Oct 2021 DRB meetings, and I reached out via email to Zak Hale 4/27/22 after he mentioned income guidelines at 4/25/22 Select Board meeting in response to Mary McIntyre’s inquiry regarding demand on local food shelves. There is no specific information on income guidelines on the Berlin Chestnut Place website.)

Defining “affordable housing” - From the 2018 Castleton Town Plan, page 38 states:

“Affordable housing is an average price new home or older home in good condition that a person with an average income ought to be able to buy or rent. In order to be considered affordable, housing costs should be no more than 30%-35% of a household’s income. For rental housing this includes: rent & utilities (fuel for heat, hot water, and cooking; electricity for lights; water and sewer charges; and trash removal). For home ownership this includes: mortgage (principal and interest), taxes, and property insurance.”

While Hale Resources and developer Brad Dousevicz have not provided costs or income guidelines, their “sister” facility in Berlin, Chestnut Place has rates posted. It is private pay (no Medicare/Medicaid) and has minimum income guidelines.

What is posted on the Chestnut Place website are the rates below:

- Independent Living Studio or One Bedroom starting at \$2,300 per month
- Assisted Living Studio or One Bedroom starting at \$4,800 per month
- Memory Care Studio starting at \$7,800 per month

Using the formula of housing costs being no more than 30-35% this converts to annual incomes as follows:

- Independent Living Studio or One Bedroom annual income of \$78,880
- Assisted Living Studio or One Bedroom annual income of \$164,571
- Memory Care Studio annual income of \$267,428.

From the VT Department of Taxes, Rutland County's average VT Adjusted Gross Income in 2020 is \$57,255 per return filed. With 35% maximum for housing, that's \$1,670/month for affordable housing; 30% is 1,432/month. The average Vermonter cannot afford to live in this proposed facility.

**Conclusion – This project does NOT support the Castleton Town Plan guidelines for affordable housing.** Low and middle income Vermonters can't afford to live here. In fact, our analysis raises the question of need for an expensive senior living 99 unit PUD in Castleton, as well as in Rutland County. We have seen no local data and/or assessments supporting the need for this high end expensive senior housing.

I'm also concerned that this project is not aligned with the Alma Gibbs Donchian Foundation's primary missions of addressing "issues affecting the elderly, particularly those 'middle-income' elderly not served by other programs" and "community preservation." I challenge that this four story 99 unit expensive senior living facility is serving "middle-income" elderly, and the size and magnitude of this building is not "community preservation."

**(FYI - From 2018 Castleton Town Plan, pages 40-41- underlined areas for emphasis.)**  
**HOUSING GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS**

**Goal**

*Provide a variety of housing options that meet the needs of diverse social and income groups and is located conveniently to employment, services, retail centers, and educational and recreational facilities. A sufficient supply of quality housing is necessary for any community that expects to have strong, healthy families and a stable workforce.*

**Policy 1** *Collaborate with not-for-profit housing organizations, government agencies, private lenders, developers and builders in pursuing options and meeting the housing needs of local residents.*

**Programs**

❖ *Establish working relationships with the Rutland County Community Land Trust, NeighborWorks of Western Vermont and Housing Vermont.*

**Policy 2** *Ensure that individuals with special housing needs, including the elderly, those with physical or mental disabilities, single parent households, as well as low and moderate-income households are able to attain suitable and affordable housing.*

**Programs**

❖ *Locate affordable and special needs housing in areas with access to appropriate services.*

**Policy 3** *Maintain and promote the historic character of housing in Castleton.*

**Programs**

- ❖ *Encourage home ownership and property upkeep efforts of Castleton residents.*
- ❖ *Ensure that new and rehabilitated housing is constructed to meet safety and sanitary minimum standards and coordinated with existing public services (water, sewer, and transportation networks).*
- ❖ *Maintain a detailed inventory of the condition of Castleton's historic housing units.*

**Policy 4** *Enable our aging citizens to remain within the community by providing differing types of housing options.*

**Programs**

❖ *Promote the development of commercial or private senior housing*

**Note:** This project does NOT maintain and promote the historical character of housing in Castleton AND again I challenge the premise that our Castleton aging residents will be able to afford to live here.

## **b) Increased School and Municipal Tax Revenue**

Is the Sand Hill Project going to contribute to responsible economic growth that would enhance the tax base, lower the tax rate, and serve the town's purposes? Supporters of this project have promoted that it will, including the 2021 Select Board, but we have yet to see any true financial analysis. The Castleton Town Plan Economic Development Goals, Policies, and Programs (pg. 51) section BEGINS with the Goal statement, "Maintain a sound fiscal balance for the town..." – fiscal balance meaning town money earned exceeds town money spent. So let's look more closely at school and municipal taxes as a result of this project.



**First, School Tax** – School taxes represent 67% of our property taxes. I asked Cheryl Scarzello (Slate Valley Union Director of Finance), how this project would benefit Castleton residents' school taxes; in short she said

“With the passage of Act 60 and then Act 68 the State of Vermont funds education at the state level rather than the local (town) level. This means that changes in a town's grand list do not affect the education tax rate for a town. Municipal tax rates still depend on a town's grand list. So to answer your question, a development in the Town of Castleton does not have a direct impact on the education tax rate for a Castleton taxpayer.

**Bottom line – Castleton tax payers will save no money on their school tax payments.**

FYI - Below are the email questions I sent & her response

Question:

*Dear Ms. Scarzello,*

*I'm hoping you might be able to help us understand how the Castleton Town School Tax rate would be affected by an increase in Castleton's grand list for a planned unit development with a construction cost of \$17,000,000 -- for ease of this example, please assume the town assessment will also be \$17,000,000, how would Castleton's homestead education tax change? In short, how much money would this project save the voters of Castleton for school taxes?*

*Thanks,*

*Katy Culpo*

Response:

*Dear Dr. Culpo,*

*With the passage of Act 60 and then Act 68 the State of Vermont funds education at the state level rather than the local (town) level. This means that changes in a town's grand list do not affect the education tax rate for a town. Municipal tax rates still depend on a town's grand list. So to answer your question, a development in the Town of Castleton does not have a direct impact on the education tax rate for a Castleton taxpayer. I suppose it may have an impact at the state level when the legislature is looking at setting the yields (homestead and non-homestead), but the yield (which is one of several components of the education tax rate) is the same for every taxpayer depending on whether you are a residential or non-residential property owner.*

*Please feel free to give me a call. It might be easier to explain on the phone rather than through an email.*

*Best regards,  
Cheryl*

**Second, Municipal Tax** – Municipal tax revenues vs. municipal costs is a serious consideration for the Select Board's support of this project. As stated in our Town Plan Economic Development section (pg. 48), “Like many other municipalities in Rutland County, Castleton derives most of its revenue from the taxation of local property in order to support municipal services.”

So how exactly will this project impact municipal tax revenue? Municipal tax is based on a town's grand list and according to the Town's tax stabilization policy the full municipal tax on this property will not be received for 5 years. It is unclear how much the Sand Hill Project PUD will be assessed at. The Select board used the 17 million construction cost value in their letter of support to the DRB. The current estimated value of the exact same Berlin building with an underground parking garage is about 7.5 million after construction. Let's consider both values based on the proposed municipal taxes (next yr) are \$0.4938, per the town report page 9 BEFORE Tax Stabilization (TSA). For the first 5 years town revenues would be as follows:

**17 million construction cost**

Yr 1 town would collect 20% or \$16,789,  
Yr 2 40% or \$33,578,  
Yr 3 60% or \$50,367  
Yr 4 80% or \$67,156  
Yr 5 100% or \$83,946

**7.5 million assessed value (similar to Berlin building)**

Yr 1 town would collect 20% or \$7,405,  
Yr 2 40% or \$14,811  
Yr 3 60% or \$22,216  
Yr 4 80% or \$29,622  
Yr 5 100% or \$37,028

\*\*\*Both numbers are significantly lower than the \$300,000 projected in the 7-21-21 Select Board letter to the DRB supporting this project.

The question remains... Will the meager increase in municipal tax revenue from this privately owned for profit 99-unit high end senior living PUD bring in more dollars than the increase it creates on municipal services and maintenance? This needs to be seriously considered and calculated. Residents have brought these issues up numerous times, still no details or clarifications; costs of infrastructure and costs of maintenance, water & sewer, waste water run off issues, roads, fire & rescue, on and on.

**Conclusion: We don't know if this project supports The Town Plan Economic Development Goal.** It is impossible to properly assess if this project fits the Castleton Town Plan (pg. 51) "maintain a sound fiscal balance for the town." Will there be a fiscal balance between increased municipal tax revenue and increased municipal costs? We don't know! We do know this project is NOT going to bring in \$300,000 municipal tax revenue as stated in the 7-21-21 Select Board letter.

**c) How about all those jobs?** "...senior living facility would create fifty to seventy new jobs, some of which would be high paying." (7-21-21 Select Board letter to DRB)

This is not a high skilled nursing and rehabilitation center. Agreed, that type of facility would bring in high paying nursing and medical positions. As proposed in Permit #8177, The Sand Hill Project is a 99-unit high end senior living PUD facility (50% independent living, 32% assisted living) with an 18 bed (18%) memory care unit. This facility will NOT require multiple highly skilled LPN/RN's to function daily. Currently, the sister Berlin facility is advertising to hire one nurse (LPN/RN – maybe they have already hired more), cooks, Resident Assistant's (LNAs, PCAs), dining servers, front desk concierge, and housekeepers. It is possible that people will relocate to Castleton for these high paying hourly positions, but it is more likely that the proposed Sand Hill Project will be hiring from the current workforce/hiring pool in Castleton and Rutland County.

This may pose a problem for the Sand Hill Project developers according to the 2018 Castleton Plan, which states -

*"The ability to find qualified employees is constraining business growth across industry sectors. Employers have revealed that the availability of a trained workforce is limiting job growth. Skilled professionals set to retire are not easily replaced by the existing, younger workforce. This has resulted in some companies foregoing opportunities for expansion." (2018 Castleton Plan, pg. 51)*

**Conclusion: The Sand Hill project is NOT bringing numerous high paying jobs to the Town of Castleton, and may in fact struggle to fill many of the employment positions they will need to hire.**

To wrap up, I hope the current Select Board members will seriously reconsider Sand Hill Project Permit Application #8177. While many Castleton residents agree there is a need for affordable senior housing, and that this plot of land would make a good fit for such housing, the project being proposed by Hale Resources and developer Brad Dousevicz is just TOO MUCH for our Town, and TOO MUCH for rural residential Sand Hill Road. Possibly the developers could propose a building in size and scope that fits within our Town Plan rather than plopping their Berlin facility into our Town.

This Select Board is responsible for the fiscal management of our Town, and I am asking the Board to seriously reconsider the July 21, 2021 Letter of Support submitted to the DRB for this project.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Attachment Included: 7-21-2021 Select Board Letter to DRB

I ask the DRB to reject this facility at this time. A rural small town location is not the place for a 99 room 4 story facility. It is more fitting in an urban area as is the Berlin facility which is located in a commercial area with a hospital close by as well as other services that the residents would likely utilize. The developer mentions that van service is available to take residents where they need to go but how many of us would willingly give up the freedom to drive or walk to go where we need?

The close access to a hospital is important to the residents of a Senior Facility especially the assisted living and memory care residents. In a stroke the sooner treatment is provided the better the chance of minimizing the impact.

This is not the type of development that fits in Castleton.

Thank you,

Wayne Pickett

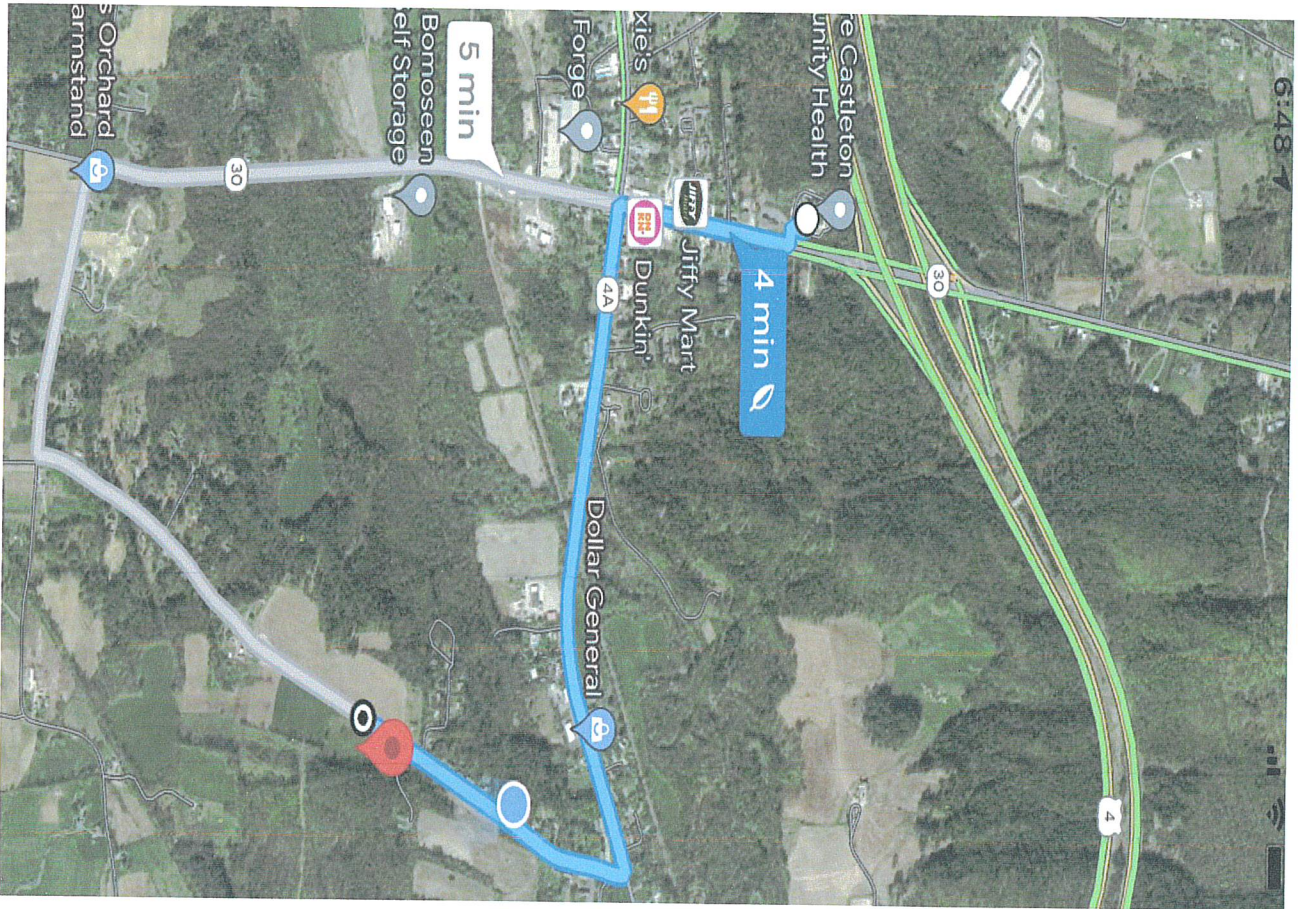




Berlin Facility in a commercial location with access to shopping, Walmart Superstore and Berlin Mall within a short walk. Safe walking within the Mall.  
 Hospital .6 miles, a short drive, approximately 4 minutes.







Castleton location is a quiet rural road with family homes and an active dairy farm. No easy access to shopping or other services. Closest medical facility is the Castleton Express Care. The closest hospital, Rutland Regional, 15 miles away.

PAT



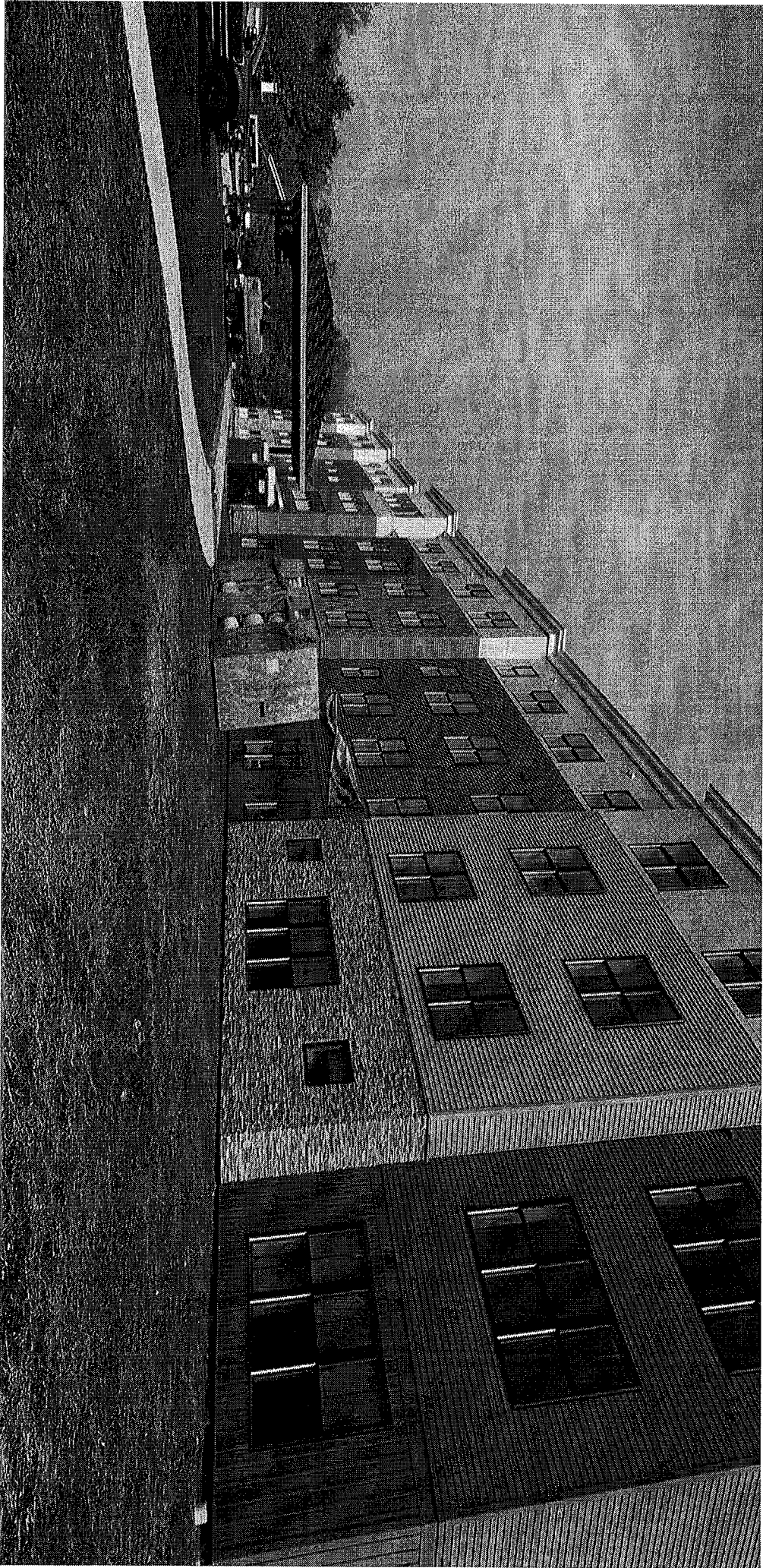
# Presentation to Castleton DRB Regarding Sand Hill Rd Project

John teRiele Jr

6-7-2022



# Berlin Facility





# Purpose: address specific points of 7/6/2021 Selectboard letter of support for this project

1. As you are likely aware, the Town of Castleton owns the Sand Hill Road Property (parcel#0901-11) on which Hale Resources proposes to build a 99-unit senior living facility.
2. As owner of the property, the town of Castleton is a co-applicant along with Brad Dousevich, of Dousevich Inc., which represents Hale Resources.
3. Hale Resources has entered into a purchase and sales agreement with the Town for purposes of acquiring parcel #0901-11
4. This parcel was given to the Town on 12/21/1996 by then Castleton State College, now Castleton University, for the express purpose of economic development.
5. The project, as proposed, would create strong programmatic linkages between several Castleton University academic majors and activities and services at the senior living facility.
6. Three successive CSU/CU presidents, Presidents Wolk, Scoloro, and Spiro, have all expressed their enthusiastic commitment to the planned collaboration.
7. Both the Castleton Planning Commission and members of the Town's Community Development and Economic Revitalization Advisory Committee have supported the project.
8. The proposed senior living facility would create fifty to seventy new jobs, some of which would be high paying.
9. If, as anticipated, the project costs approximately \$17M, the Town would realize a significant property tax revenue for it. Conservative estimates indicate new annual revenue of \$300,000 soon after construction is completed, a total that would grow appreciably over time.

*He doesn't think it's strong - where is proof*

*Revenue to town, \$16,800 income*

*clear not true - no evidence*

*Revenue 1.5 million  
\$10K to town*

*Maybe 50K benefit*



1. As you are likely aware, the Town of Castleton owns the Sand Hill Road Property (parcel#0901-11) on which Hale Resources proposes to build a 99-unit senior living facility.
  2. As owner of the property, the town of Castleton is a co-applicant along with Brad Dousevicz, of Dousevicz Inc., which represents Hale Resources.
  3. Hale Resources has entered into a purchase and sales agreement with the Town for purposes of acquiring parcel #0901-11
- Due to the Town of Castleton being a co-applicant, our group believes it is difficult for the Select Board to act in the best interests of the Castleton citizens and be a development partner at the same time.
  - We note that there was an alternate piece of property, the old miniature golf course, for sale at the same time. Why were other locations not being considered?
  - We present this information to you today, hoping the DRB will complete needed fact-finding and review this project objectively for its value to the community.
  - The momentum of this project seems to be pushing aside legitimate concerns. The DRB in in position hear these concerns and act on them.





9. If, as anticipated, the project costs approximately \$17M, the Town would realize a significant property tax revenue for it. Conservative estimates indicate new annual revenue of \$300,000 soon after construction is completed, a total that would grow appreciably over time.

- This statement has been thoroughly debunked. The Select Board has admitted it was inaccurate.
- While there will be school taxes paid by the project upon completion, the additional revenue will not reduce the local school tax rate or school tax payments. It also will not provide additional revenue to Slate Valley Unified School District due to Vermont's school tax system.
- There is a debatable local tax revenue depending on the assessed value of the property.
- Based upon the Town's tax stabilization rates:
  - Tax revenue (approximate) based on \$17M assessed value:
    - Yr 1 town would collect 20% or \$16,789
    - Yr 2 40% or \$33,578
    - Yr 3 60% or \$50,367
    - Yr 4 80% or \$67,156
    - Yr 5 100% or \$83,946



9. If, as anticipated, the project costs approximately \$17M, the Town would realize a significant property tax revenue for it. Conservative estimates indicate new annual revenue of \$300,000 soon after construction is completed, a total that would grow appreciably over time.

- Now something even more realistic
- The developer's Berlin Property which the Castleton design is a replica of is assessed for \$7.5M
- Based on the Town's tax stabilization rates
  - Tax revenue (approximate) based on \$7.5 M assessed value
    - Yr 1 town would collect 20% or \$9,900
    - Yr 2 40% or \$19,750
    - Yr 3 60% or \$29,600
    - Yr 4 80% or \$39,500
    - Yr 5 100% or \$49,400
  - Likely the assessment is between these estimates, given the value of Berlin, likely on the lower end of the range.
  - Will this \$50k revenue meet the additional costs this building will burden the town with.



4. This parcel was given to the Town on 12/21/1996 by then Castleton State College, now Castleton University, for the express purpose of economic development

The Economic Development Covenant in the Quitclaim Deed transferring the property states:

“The Sand Hill Property shall be held, developed, used, occupied, leased, sold and/or conveyed by the Town of Castleton to provide for and/or promote the general public good and welfare by providing one or more building sites, with associated sitework, landscaping, roads, parking, walkways, public and private utilities and other infrastructure for commercial, industrial, or educational development that will create employment and/or education opportunities for residents of Castleton, students at Castleton-area educational institutions, and residents of the communities in the Castleton area, and economic, educational and/or entrepreneurial opportunity for emerging, growing or establishing business and industry.”

- There are many ways to effectively use this property. We do not believe this project is a good use for the property it does not fit its' surroundings, it does not comply in many ways with the Town Plan, and it is aesthetically ugly.
- We also do not believe this development meets the stated primary mission of the Alma Gibbs Donchian Foundation. The entity which originally conveyed the property to Castleton University. More detailed information on this topic will be provided to the DRB.



4. This parcel was given to the Town on 12/21/1996 by then Castleton State College, now Castleton University, for the express purpose of economic development.

A clause from the “Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees Resolution” regarding this project.

“Whereas, the Select Board intends to use the property for purposes that would in general promote the public welfare. These uses could be anything that would have a net effect of improving the quality of life for citizens of Castleton, including attracting quality businesses and possible educational opportunities for students...”

- We note the Selectboard, at the time this parcel was acquired, intended a broad array of possible uses for this property. Statement 4 feels like a hint that their options are limited, and they needed to take advantage of this specific opportunity. We do not believe that is the case.





5. The project, as proposed, would create strong programmatic linkages between several Castleton University academic majors and activities and services at the senior living facility.

- While there are academic majors at Castleton University that may have a linkage to this facility no details on how these experiences may work has been shared.
- We believe this facility will likely have few nurses on staff since the similar Berlin facility has only advertised for one RN to date. Since nursing students can not do clinical hours unless under the supervision of an RN, opportunities would be few and far between. We note the developer has been unwilling to share staffing information.
- Without specific information supporting statement 5 we ask the DRB to disregard it completely as it seems to lack merit.



6. Three successive CSU/CU presidents, Presidents Wolk, Scoloro, and Spiro, have all expressed their enthusiastic commitment to the planned collaboration.

- None of these individuals are Castleton residents and therefore their endorsement of lack there of should have little weight.
- While we have great appreciation for the leadership role they played at Castleton University, we do not believe they are involved in the project in any way.
- Do we really know if these people would support a high-end senior living facility and a four-story building? Regardless their opinion is irrelevant and should not influence the DRB decision.
- We believe the DRB should give no weight to this broad statement of support from people not living in our community.



7. Both the Castleton Planning Commission and members of the Town's Community Development and Economic Revitalization Advisory Committee have supported the project.

- **The Town of Castleton website states the following:**

"The Planning Commission carries on a continuous review of the Zoning Ordinance, initiates proposals for amendments as required, and receives and evaluates proposals for amendments from others. The Commission serves as a guide and counsel to other agencies of Castleton government in matters relating to the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Commission is also responsible for reviewing and updating the Castleton Town Plan every five years."

- **Nowhere in this statement is the Planning Commission empowered to review and cast support or approval for an individual project.**



7. Both the Castleton Planning Commission and members of the Town's Community Development and Economic Revitalization Advisory Committee have supported the project.

- I have personally reviewed all CDERAC meeting minutes, there is no language supporting this project. [It is possible that individual member(s) of the committee were supportive]
- Referencing CDERAC's name is an exaggeration to support this project.
- If the Castleton Planning Commission has expressed support for this project; it has overstepped its authority. It should not be taking a position on an individual project.
- Review of the project is the job of the DRB.
- We believe the DRB should give no weight to statement 7 for the reasons stated.





8. The proposed senior living facility would create fifty to seventy new jobs, some of which would be high paying.

- Staffing questions have gone unanswered in both this forum and at the Selectboard.
- How many jobs will be created?
- Will the jobs be full time with benefits or something else?
- What is a high paying job? No one has defined this.
- How many high paying jobs?
- We ask the DRB to investigate these facts of statement 8 which impact this project's compliance with the town plan.



## Conclusions

- There is little in the letter that should be considered factually in support of this project.
- Detailed backup materials will be provided for your consideration pertaining to the items discussed.
- You are the only Town body remaining with the ability to objectively review this project and do what is right for Castleton.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CONSIDERATION

PAT

**ARTICLE I: ENACTMENT, OBJECTIVES, PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

**Section 101: Enactment**

In accordance with the Vermont Planning and Development Act, 24 VSA 117, hereinafter referred to as the "Act", there are hereby established Zoning Regulations for Town of Castleton which shall be known and cited as the "Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Castleton".

**Section 102: Objectives and Intent**

The objective of the Zoning Regulation is to establish standards and policies concerning development of land which further the goals of the Castleton Plan.

It is intended that standards and policies established by the Zoning Regulations reflect and express a sense of community values toward Castleton's environment including the value of appearance and congenial arrangement for the conduct of farming, trade, industry, residence and other uses of land necessary to the community's well-being in so far as such values are related to the objectives of the adopted Town Plan.

It is the intent of these Zoning Regulations to provide for orderly community growth and to further the purposes established in the Act, Section 4302.

**Section 103: Purpose and Scope**

The purpose of this Regulation is for the promotion of the health, safety, or general welfare of the community by establishing regulations and conditions governing the erection and use of buildings, other structures and use of land and natural resources.

**ARTICLE II: ESTABLISHMENT OF ZONING DISTRICTS AND ZONING MAP**

**Section 201: Establishment of Zoning Districts**

The Town of Castleton hereby establishes the following Zoning Districts:

See Article III for uses permitted in each district; see Article IV for dimensional requirement of each district.

R 20	Residential 20,000 sq. ft.	CC	College Campus
R 40	Residential 40,000 sq. ft.	IND	Industrial
RR2A	Rural Residential 2 Acres	RC	Recreation Commercial
RR5A	Rural Residential 5 Acres	VC	Village Commercial



To: Castleton SB  
From: Zak Hale  
Date: 5/23/2022

Please see highlighted section of the Town Plan that gave me the idea for the Senior Care Facility on Sand Hill Road.

It is not that I chose the land for this project. While attending Castleton University I wanted to assist in economic development in the town. This piece of land had been for sale for 9 years and so I wanted to increase the Town's revenue by purchasing the land, developing it, and putting a for profit business on it to generate tax revenue.

The highlighted sections of the Town Plan that follow this letter, the economic development covenant on the property's deed, and other housing and economic development studies, are what gave me the idea for this project.

Zak Hale





## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

### VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITY

The Castleton Town Plan is a framework and guide for reaching community goals. The policies and programs stated within this comprehensive plan were developed to preserve and protect the town's assets while providing a future vision for town officials, businesses, and citizens of Castleton.

The Plan should be a basis for community programs and decision-making. For example, it should influence the town's budget and capital expenditures, community development efforts, and natural resource protection initiatives. As required by law, it should also serve as a foundation for local land use controls such as zoning, subdivision, and health regulations. In terms of its significance in relation to State land use controls and growth policy, the Plan plays a key role. Vermont's Act 250 includes a provision for a review procedure through which all applications for a subdivision and development must pass. Furthermore, the Plan should be given full effect in all appropriate regulatory proceedings, such as Act 250, and Title 30, Section 248.

#### **Statutory Authority and Requirements**

The Castleton Town Plan is an integral part of the regional and statewide planning process. In adopting the Town Plan, citizens of Castleton may anticipate the future with the knowledge that a significant step has been taken in the development and preservation of their community.

Town Plan preparation is guided by the Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act, "The Act". The Castleton Town Plan was prepared in conformance with all of the requirements in the Vermont Statutes.

#### **Public Participation and Preparation of the Castleton Town Plan**

Planning for the future is a continuing activity and should reflect new data, laws, technologies, planning concepts, and the changing needs and desires of the community. The Castleton Planning Commission has the responsibility for the preparation of the Town Plan. The Plan must be updated and readopted on an eight-year basis according to Vermont State Statutes.

Work began on the current update in 2016. In the course of developing the Plan, the Castleton Planning Commission and Town contracted for technical assistance with the Rutland Regional Planning Commission. The Planning Commission held public forums in order to obtain input from the public.

#### **Regional Coordination**

This plan recognizes that Castleton does not exist in isolation from the region and will be affected by what happens in the surrounding municipalities. The relationship between this plan and the development trends and plans for the surrounding area and the *Rutland Regional Plan* has been considered. For purposes of this Plan, the surrounding area includes the Towns of Fair Haven, Benson, Hubbardton, West Rutland, Ira, Poultney and Pittsford.

Review of the land use plans of surrounding communities suggests that the future land use pattern promoted by this Plan is generally compatible. Surrounding communities promote low-density land development and continuation of resource-based uses (such as agriculture) in outlying areas and higher density and commercial uses in existing built-up areas. Sensitive areas (such as flood plains) are also identified and targeted for conservation, as they are in Castleton.

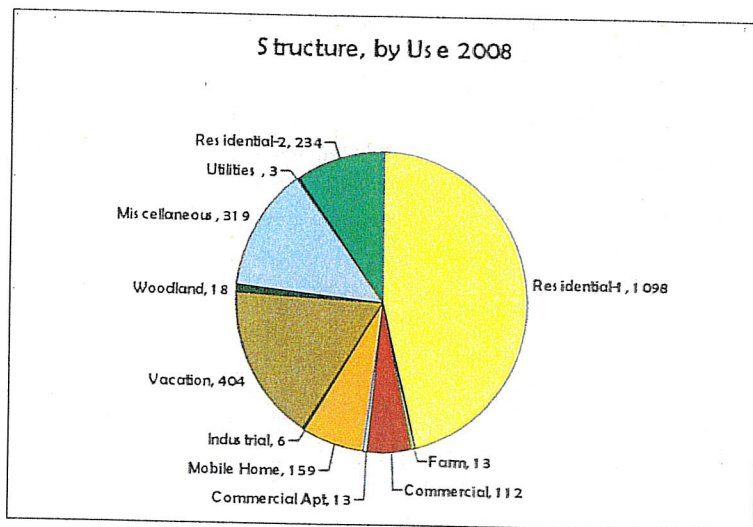


## LAND USE AND GROWTH

As new development opportunities present themselves, the Town of Castleton must balance preservation of its community and character with support of opportunities for economic growth in order to sustain the town's citizens and services. The Future Land Use Map, designating the boundaries of each district, is located at the end of this section.

### Land Use Districts

The Land Use Districts, defined in the following paragraphs, are a guide for the growth and development of the Town of Castleton. The nine land use districts in Castleton are: Residential 20,000 sq. ft., Residential 40,000 sq. ft., Rural Residential 2 acre, Rural Residential 5 acre, Village Commercial, recreation/Commercial, Industrial, Water Source Protection and Flood Hazard. These land use areas provide for a variety of residential, commercial, and recreational opportunities for the future while considering local environmental constraints as well as existing land use patterns. Castleton encourages planned growth and concentrated development in those areas of the town which provide for higher density and which can provide the necessary infrastructure to more readily support development than more rural sections of town.



Source: 2000 US Census; VT Dept. of Taxes

### Residential 20,000 Sq. Ft.

The Residential 20,000 sq. ft. district in Castleton is essentially the Castleton Village area described above. This area is built-out and contains the vast majority of Castleton's historic structures, municipal service buildings, and cultural amenities. Should additional land become available for development in the future through the acquisition of privately held parcels, changes in state land use regulations, or through other means, the residential 20,000 sq. ft. district's compact development pattern and municipal infrastructure make it among the most suitable areas for future development.

### Residential 40,000 Sq. Ft.

The residential 40,000 sq. ft. district includes nearly the entire shoreline of Lake Bomoseen as well as a contiguous tract of land south of Hydeville and Castleton Corners and a smaller area east of Route 30 south of the Corners. While doubling the minimum lot size of the Castleton Village area, the 40,000 sq. ft. district does promote development of moderate density suitable to these areas close proximity to commercial enterprises and transportation corridors of moderate to heavy traffic.



- of the character of surrounding properties.
- ❖ Support use-value taxation, cluster subdivision techniques and other methods of conserving agricultural land and open space.
- ❖ Encourage the inclusion of greenbelts and common land areas in subdivision design.

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

Community facilities and services are provided by the municipality for the health, benefit, safety, and enjoyment of the general public. High quality services and facilities such as schools, highway maintenance, police and fire protection, solid waste disposal, and town government administration have a significant effect on the local quality of life as well as the community's ability to accommodate development and grow in an orderly and appropriate manner. Careful planning is essential for community facilities and services in order to meet local health, safety, and welfare needs and community goals for future growth. If the facilities are at capacity, further development may strain them, causing financial burdens and environmental problems. The Castleton Town Plan shall promote and encourage the development of an integrated and efficient utilities infrastructure system to provide the services required by both commercial users and residents.

### **Castleton Free Library**

The Castleton Free Library, a two story building located on Main Street, was established in 1897 by a group of interested citizens; it was incorporated in 1916. The Castleton Free Library currently has a five-member board of trustees, a Library Director (also serving as the children's librarian), a librarian in charge of the adult collection, and about 10 dedicated volunteers without whom the library would be unable to provide the high quality service that it does. The Castleton University Library is also available to Castleton residents.

### **Post Offices**

There are three post offices within town boundaries serving Castleton residents: The Castleton Post Office, Bomoseen Post Office and Hydeville Post Office.

#### **Castleton Post Office**

The Castleton Post Office is located at 576 Main Street. As of this writing the office had no plans for expansion or relocation.

#### **Bomoseen Post Office**

The Bomoseen Post Office is located at 63 Route 4A West in the Castleton Four Corners area. The office has no plans for expansion or relocation in the foreseeable future.

#### **Hydeville Post Office**

The Hydeville Post Office is located at 912 Route 4A West. The office building was renovated in 1998/99 and there are currently no plans for expansion or relocation of the facility.

#### **Castleton Community Seniors**

Castleton Community Seniors Inc. (CCS) is a very active group that organizes a wide variety of activities and events year-round for people of all ages. Formed in 1998, one of the group's primary activities has been the development of a community center at the Historic Old Homestead building. A gift from the Alma Gibbs Donchian Foundation, the Castleton Community Center is located on Route 4A between Castleton Village and the Castleton Four Corners area.



Where municipal water is available, the rating is 7; areas outside of hydrant protection are rated at 9. Isolated areas are rated as unprotected.

### **Mutual Aid**

The Castleton Volunteer Fire Department is a member of the Rutland County Mutual Aid Association. Membership enables the Castleton FD to call for members and equipment from towns in Rutland County should the need arise. Castleton's fire chief considers mutual aid agreements as a significant resource and is comfortable with the department's ability to meet present and future residential needs largely because of the existence of mutual aid agreements.

### **Castleton Highway Department**

The Castleton Highway Department is located at 273 Staso Road and is staffed with four (4) full time employees and one (1) vehicle mechanic. The Department is responsible for the maintenance and improvements to approximately 72 miles of town roads, which include paving, guardrail installation, bridge repairs, signage, plowing, sanding & salting, tree & brush removal from the right of way, dust control and assist other town departments. The Department has an approved budget of \$1.1 million for fiscal year 2016-17.

### **Wireless Telecommunications Facilities and Services**

Vermont towns and cities may regulate wireless telecommunications facilities for aesthetic and environmental reasons, but may not regulate their siting, construction and modification on the basis of potential radiation effects relating to health and interference. Traditional tools: planning, adopting reasonable bylaws, and relying on aesthetics, safety concerns (other than radiation) and character of the neighborhood provide communities with the best tools to regulate the location of wireless telecommunications facilities.

The Town of Castleton is committed to the protection of the quality of its aesthetic, natural, historic, and cultural resources as well as, above all else, the health, safety and welfare of Castleton residents. Given this paramount commitment, the Castleton Development Review Board will closely scrutinize all telecommunication tower and facility applications. The DRB will utilize all means at its disposal to ensure that the applicant is in compliance with all applicable federal, state and local requirements and can adequately demonstrate the necessity for siting of the telecommunications facility in the Town of Castleton.

### **Wastewater**

#### **Existing system**

Town sewer is available to approximately 714 parcels or 1,100 users. The sewer service extends throughout the Main Street village center; along most of Route 4A and Route 30 north of the Four Corners including the senior housing project and part of the east shore of Lake Bomoseen; and, to much of Sand Hill Road. Some areas of the town are serviced by privately owned sewer lines.

Castleton's Waste Water Treatment Facility underwent a significant capacity upgrade in 1999. The system has a designed capacity of 540,000 gallons per day and utilizes state-of-the-art technology to process and disinfect the daily flow of effluent. The treatment plant operates as an Enterprise Fund in that it is funded and supported by users.

The collection of waste is handled by a main pumping station located on Main Street. Smaller stations are located in Hydeville, on Prospect Point Road, on Route 4A near the Iron Lantern Restaurant, at Sucker Brook, on South Street and at the Elementary School. The Town owns and maintains 62 grinder pumps on Route 30 north of the Four Corners.





required on projects adjacent to surface waters that go through the Act 250 land use permit review process, but for most development activity, buffer protection depends on local level decisions.

Towns have a clear legal authority under state statute to regulate riparian buffers. A buffer requirement could be included as a district standard, and the setback and buffer distance could vary depending on the nature of the district. The Agency of Natural Resources recommends a buffer zone width of 50-100 feet for streams and 100 feet for lakes, with greater or lesser widths possible.

### **Air Quality**

Air quality has a great impact on the quality of life and the ecology of an area. Due to relatively low emission densities and relatively favorable meteorological conditions, ambient concentrations of locally generated pollutants are relatively low in Vermont by national standards. However, the Air Pollution Control Division has reported the Rutland area's particulate matter levels to be among the highest in the state, while 24 hour sulfur dioxide levels are higher than the Burlington areas. Nitrogen dioxide levels are comparable to or lower than other parts of Vermont. Overall, the Rutland Region's air pollution levels have not violated EPA standards for air pollutants. Town's like Castleton can help to maintain and improve air quality by promoting the use of public transit and carpooling, enforcing prohibitions on the burning of trash, and protecting forest resources, which can help to filter out a number of potentially harmful pollutants.

### **Open Space and Scenic Resources**

In the course of planning for Castleton's future, it is important that the presence of high quality open space and scenic resources, broad scenic areas as well as scenic landmarks, are recognized and the integrity of such resources is preserved. Scenic resources have aesthetic, historical, and economic value. Siting of future construction as well as community facilities and infrastructure should always consider the potential impact on the aesthetic qualities of the community and preserve the undisturbed integrity, wherever possible, of Castleton's quality scenic and open space resources.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS**

### **Agriculture and Forestry**

#### **Goal**

Protect Castleton's farm and forest resources for future generations to enjoy.

Clean air and water, as well as intact forests and working farms are essential to the health and quality of life of all living things that inhabit a community

#### **Policy 1**

Maintain and improve the quality of important soils, such as agriculture and forestry soils, when considering the future development of the town.

#### **Programs**

- ❖ Discourage development in areas of important agricultural and forest soils.
- ❖ Preserve farm and forest lands and maintain the working landscape through conservation, agricultural easements, and land acquisition.
- ❖ Promote the use of acceptable soil erosion control measures in development of slopes in excess of 8%.
- ❖ In zoning bylaws, adopt a Fluvial Erosion Hazard Overlay District (as explained on p 29) and/or River Corridor protections to ensure that development in hazard areas is reasonably safe and



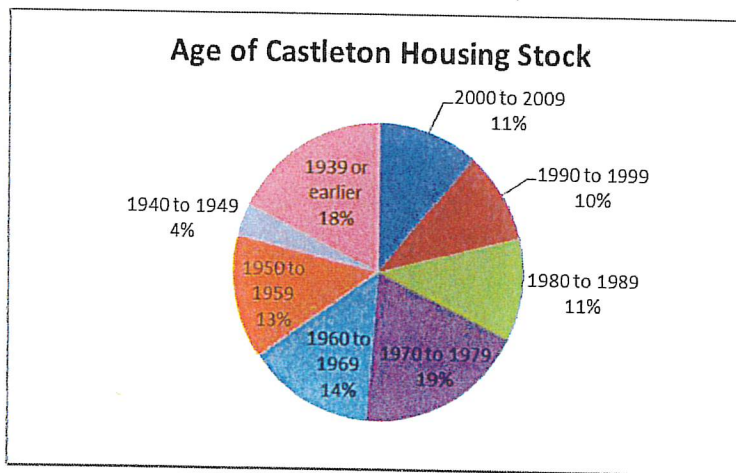
housing, is becoming an increasingly critical concern. A 2009 report by the National Low Income Housing Coalition entitled *Out of Reach*, found that in order for Vermonters to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment, including utilities and without paying more than 30% of income on housing, a household must earn \$3,046 monthly or \$36,553 annually.

According to the 2009 “Between a Rock and a Hard Place” report published by the Vermont Housing Council and Vermont Housing Awareness Campaign, the State of Vermont has the tightest rental housing market in the nation. The rental vacancy rate was 3.5%. The homeownership vacancy rate was 1.6%, the fourth lowest in the nation.

Homeownership in Vermont is also difficult for many credit-worthy households due to the high up-front costs of purchasing a home and the increase in median home sales prices in recent years. Castleton’s housing situation is influenced by the presence of Castleton University. In addition to the needs of permanent local residents, there is a demand amongst the student population for affordable rental units creating a larger market for rental housing than would be otherwise expected in a town of Castleton’s size.

### Existing Conditions

#### Age of Housing



According to the 2014 Census, 18% of Castleton’s 2,216 total housing units were built before 1939, indicative of the historic nature of many homes in Castleton, particularly Castleton Village. However, with 1,467 housing units added since 1960, and the particularly significant growth during the housing boom of the ‘80s (562 units added), the majority of homes in Castleton are less than 50 years old. Figure 12 provides an overview of housing development in Castleton since 1939.

Source: 2014 ACS

#### Housing Stock and Occupancy Status

The total number of housing units in Castleton has increased from 2,026 in 1990 to 2,216 in 2010, a total of 190 units overall. 1,171 of Castleton’s 1,617 total occupied units (72%) were owned in 2010 while 446 were rented (28%). The number of seasonal homes in Castleton has decreased from 577 in 1990 to 497 in 2010, but still represents a substantial 22 percent of the town’s housing units.

	2000	2010
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	2107	2216
<b>Total Occupied Units</b>	1550	1617
Owner Occupied	1123	1171
Renter Occupied	427	446



... 0 bedroom unit†	\$12.44 or \$25,962 annually	\$14.71
... 1 bedroom unit†	\$13.71 or \$28,613 annually	\$16.07
... 2 bedroom unit†	\$17.38 or \$36,272 annually	\$20.68
... 3 bedroom unit†	\$21.65 or \$45,814 annually	\$25.95
... 4 bedroom unit†	\$26.40 or \$55,097 annually	\$30.87
<b>Housing wage as % of state minimum wage (\$9.15), 2015</b>		
... 0 bedroom unit†	136%	161%
... 1 bedroom unit†	150%	176%
... 2 bedroom unit†	190%	226%
... 3 bedroom unit†	237%	284%
... 4 bedroom unit†	289%	337%

Castleton has publicly-assisted housing with limited subsidies. Castleton Meadows on Route 30, run by Eastpoint Properties, shelters 41 elderly individuals. Parson's Hill on Route 4A, provides housing for 12 low-income families and had a 20-year subsidy that expired in 2002, with five-year renewable periods thereafter.

### **Impact of Castleton University**

Castleton University affects the town's current and future housing inventory in several ways. For the 2015-16 academic year the enrollment was 2246 students (1955 undergraduate and 291 graduate). 1100 students were housed on campus. Thus, with on campus student housing at a premium, many students must either commute or rent apartments off campus. As a result privately owned residential dwellings have been turned into rental units by their owners to accommodate the overflow. In some instances this has taken affordable housing off the market. Coupled with faculty housing requirements, the need for off campus student housing continues to put pressure on the town's ability to provide affordable permanent housing.

## **HOUSING GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS**

### **Goal**

Provide a variety of housing options that meet the needs of diverse social and income groups and is located conveniently to employment, services, retail centers, and educational and recreational facilities. A sufficient supply of quality housing is necessary for any community that expects to have strong, healthy families and a stable workforce.

### **Policy 1**

Collaborate with not-for-profit housing organizations, government agencies, private lenders, developers and builders in pursuing options and meeting the housing needs of local residents.

### **Programs**

- ❖ Establish working relationships with the Rutland County Community Land Trust, NeighborWorks of



Western Vermont and Housing Vermont.

### **Policy 2**

Ensure that individuals with special housing needs, including the elderly, those with physical or mental disabilities, single parent households, as well as low and moderate-income households are able to attain suitable and affordable housing.

#### **Programs**

- ❖ Locate affordable and special needs housing in areas with access to appropriate services.

### **Policy 3**

Maintain and promote the historic character of housing in Castleton.

#### **Programs**

- ❖ Encourage home ownership and property upkeep efforts of Castleton residents.
- ❖ Ensure that new and rehabilitated housing is constructed to meet safety and sanitary minimum standards and coordinated with existing public services (water, sewer, and transportation networks).
- ❖ Maintain a detailed inventory of the condition of Castleton's historic housing units.

### **Policy 4**

Enable our aging citizens to remain within the community by providing differing types of housing options.

#### **Programs**

- ❖ Promote the development of commercial or private senior housing.

## **RECREATION, HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Recreational opportunities, high quality historic resources and cultural activities are among the principal elements that contribute to the quality of life in a community. A town's historic and cultural resources are often integrally linked as history informs culture and many cultural activities in Vermont communities' center around historical appreciation or remembrance. So too are cultural activities, such as visiting the Higley House Museum or touring a town's historic sites, recreational past-times as valuable to a community as its hiking trails or most popular swimming hole. Well-maintained historic buildings, located in cohesive recognizable districts, are not only attractive; they are good for business.

Numerous studies indicate that many people choose to visit Vermont because of its rich history and the unique local flavor and well-preserved ambiance of its towns and villages. Castleton residents echoed this sentiment in public forums and agreed that the town should explore all available measures to protect historic buildings and structures. Castleton is fortunate to be well endowed with countless recreational opportunities, historic resources, and cultural amenities as well as residents who recognize their important contribution to the community's overall quality of life.

### **Recreation**

Castleton residents have many outdoor recreational opportunities available within a short walk, bike or drive including downhill and cross country skiing, swimming, boating, fishing, hundreds of snowmobile, hiking and biking trails and several excellent golf courses. Additionally, Castleton's close proximity to Rutland City





- ❖ Maintain regular communication with the VTrans District Transportation Administrator as to the condition and maintenance requirements of Castleton's transportation infrastructure.
- ❖ Continue to Participate in the Rutland Region Transportation Council's efforts to prioritize transportation infrastructure projects in the region.

### **Policy 3**

Improve safety of existing roads and highways.

### **Programs**

- ❖ Dedicate a portion of the town's annual budget for the maintenance and improvement of Castleton's bridges.

### **Policy 4**

Plan future network improvements to maintain existing compact land use patterns and contain development within established centers with surrounding working lands.

### **Programs**

- ❖ Enforce existing specifications for road construction and maintenance.
- ❖ Consider access management when reviewing all new development proposals.

### **Policy 5**

Work in cooperation with the state to improve roads to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian uses as well as explore options for recreational trails.

### **Programs**

- ❖ Consider bicycle and pedestrian safety and uses when upgrading existing roads.

### **Policy 6**

Consider options for the improvement of public transit service in Castleton to better meet the needs of all current and potential users.

### **Programs**

- ❖ Conduct quality of service interviews with passengers on "The Bus" on several days over a period of a few months.
- ❖ Discuss the quality of public transit service at town meeting.
- ❖ Encourage use of passenger rail service at the Castleton Rail Station.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Economic development, despite the challenges in a small community such as Castleton, is an important part of a town's planning goals. Economic development is the process by which the community sets out to improve the *climate* for retaining old and attracting new businesses that support jobs and sustain tax revenues. Like many other municipalities in Rutland County, Castleton derives most of its revenue from the taxation of local property in order to support municipal services. While the town budget is small and the town services are limited, they are no less affected by local, regional and national economics. Castleton, like other Vermont communities, will need to be more active in managing economic growth to ensure the future of its tax base and quality of life.



### **Commercial Activity in Castleton**

Castleton has a strong visitor economy particularly in the summer months when recreational activities revolving around Lake Bomoseen reach their peak. The presence of approximately 2000 full time students at Castleton University also helps support a healthy retail and restaurant economy in town. Castleton has had land available for light industrial development in recent years, but has been unable to attract significant interest from the business community to develop the land.

Economic amenities within Castleton include the educational institutions, Lake Bomoseen and the unspoiled beauty of the Town's unique landscape, especially the undeveloped mountain peaks and ridgelines, and the attractiveness of the town for tourism, slate quarries, and small businesses. Castleton University is the largest employer. It also provides the town with numerous cultural and recreational opportunities.

Lake Bomoseen is Castleton's most significant visitor attraction. Maintaining the quality of the Lake's water and the desirability of the shoreline and surrounding area are priorities. Vacation (second-home) property represents a large proportion of Castleton's total fair market real estate value.

Industrial properties in Castleton include:

- ❖ Vermont Unfading Green Slate Company
- ❖ Hadeka AA Slate Company
- ❖ Camara Slate
- ❖ Glenbrook Realty Partnership (Hubbardton Forge)
- ❖ Rutland Marble and Granite
- ❖ Ellis Inc.
- ❖ Micro Components
- ❖ Morton Building Supplies
- ❖ Browns Quarried Slate
- ❖ Browns Auto Salvage

Most of the town's numerous small businesses are involved in service and retail oriented operations. There are fourteen eating establishments while the largest lodging operation has a capacity of approximately 120.

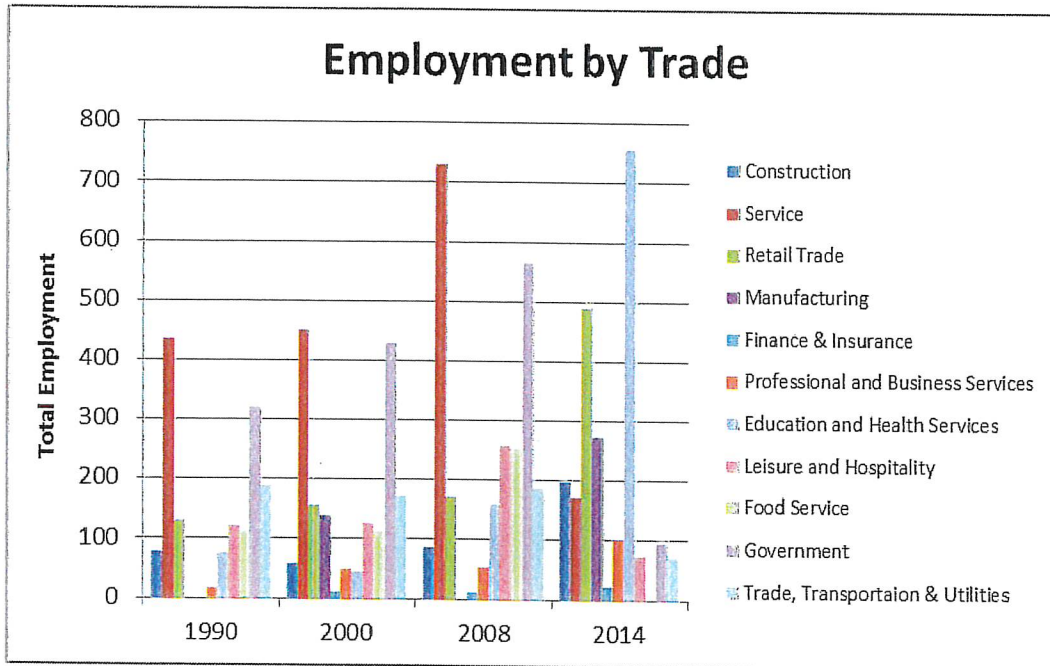
### **Castleton University**

The largest employer in town and situated within walking distance to the village area. The University has a significant impact on the economic well-being of the town because of the size of its student body, its faculty and the visitors it attracts. Local businesses that serve the needs of this potentially diverse population thrive. By its very presence, the University affords the community with educational and cultural opportunities that might not otherwise exist in the town. Additionally, both students and faculty provide volunteer services to the local schools, recreational activities and other organizations within the town. The University also makes its facilities available for use by community members or groups whenever possible, minimizing in many instances the need for private or public development of these same facilities.

### **Employment Activity in Castleton**

Figure 19 provides an overview of employment activity in Castleton. As the figure indicates, overall employment in Castleton continued to grow throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Service and Government (which includes Castleton University) are the two largest employment trades and have grown steadily since 1990. Leisure and Hospitality and Food Service also contain a large share of employment activity in town and have grown steadily since 1990. All other trades have maintained their numbers or grown slightly except manufacturing.



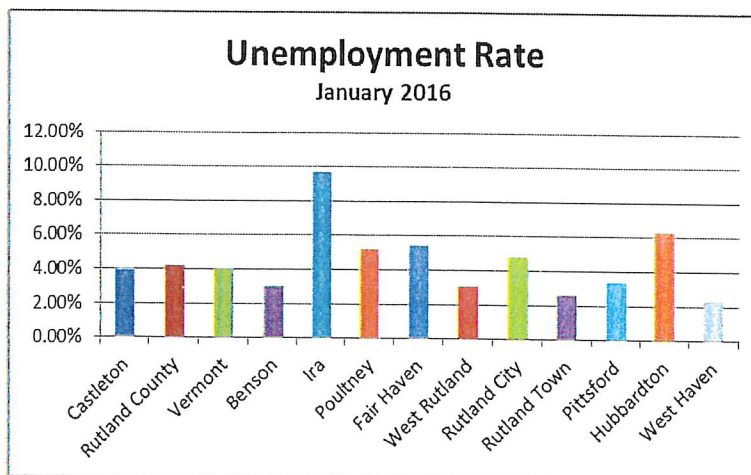


Source: U.S. Census, 2014 ACS

The estimated Median Household Income (MHI) in Castleton was \$50,561 in 2008. This is a 7.8% increase from the 1999 MHI of \$39,615. Castleton's MHI is above the Rutland County amount of \$46,558, however, below the State of Vermont amount of \$52,104.

### Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate in Castleton has remained relatively consistent with the state and regional trends over the past decade. For the last three years, however, Castleton's unemployment rate has been consistently above the rates of both Rutland County and the State. As of December 2009, Castleton's unemployment rate was 9.0% compared to the County rate of 8.2% and State of Vermont rate of 6.6%. Currently, only Rutland City (10.2%), West Rutland (12.1%) and Fair Haven (10.4%) have higher unemployment rates in the Region.



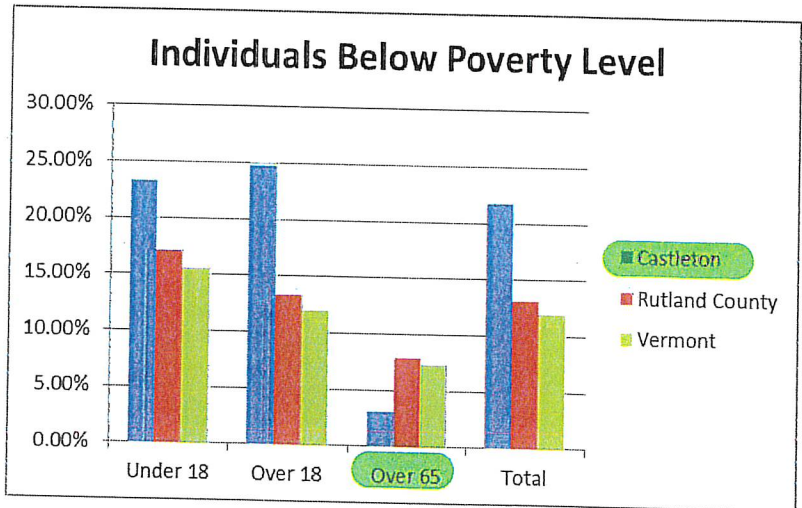
Source: VT Department of Labor

### Poverty Status

The poverty threshold, or poverty line, is the minimum level of income deemed necessary to achieve an adequate standard of living. The percentage of residents in Castleton living below the poverty line in 2007 was 9.8%, compared to 10.9% in Rutland County and 9.4% in the State of Vermont. Source: City Data.org. Figure 21 depicts the 2014 US Census Poverty figures by age group.



Source: US ACS, 2014



### Economic Development Challenges facing Castleton

- The ability to find qualified employees is constraining business growth across industry sectors. Employers have revealed that the availability of a trained workforce is limiting job growth. Skilled professionals set to retire are not easily replaced by the existing, younger workforce. This has resulted in some companies foregoing opportunities for expansion.
- The town's topography and extensive hills and mountain network place limitations on which areas can appropriately handle growth. In addition, there is a tension between the need for new development and the desire to maintain the rural character of the area.
- The loss of Castleton's two Village Center Designations hurts private property owners in those areas as they are unable to access tax credits for site redevelopment. The town will pursue re-designation of the Castleton Corners and Historic Village areas and the addition of a new Village Center Designation for the Hydeville area. These are shown on the Future Land Use Map.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

### Goal

Maintain a sound fiscal balance for the town, encourage reasonable, functional, orderly development of facilities, utilities and services, and encourage the growth of the "informal economy" including home occupations, local artisans, craftspeople, and seasonal businesses, especially tourism and the vacation and retirement home markets; and also expanded commercial development.

The town remains well suited for professional offices seeking a quiet, scenic location in close proximity to Rutland. The town's many natural and recreational amenities and close proximity to New York State, the Canadian border, Vermont's largest ski resort as well as the presence of Castleton University, make the area very attractive for the continued expansion of the visitor economy. The cost of the provision of services for new or expanding businesses must be made based on the available tax revenues and reasonable public and private investment.

### Policy 1

Support existing businesses and industry.





### **Programs**

- ❖ Support the Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce and Castleton's Economic Development Committee, REDC, RRPC
- ❖ Re-apply for Village Center Designations in the Castleton Corners and Historic Village areas.
- ❖ Pursue a new Village Center Designation for the Hydeville area.

### **Policy 2**

Encourage growth and a balance of small, locally-owned businesses and light industry to stimulate the local tax base and improve local employment opportunities.

### **Programs**

- ❖ Collaborate with the Rutland Economic Development Corp to find new businesses for the community.
- ❖ Encourage hotel/motel development
- ❖ Approve tax stabilization agreements.
- ❖ Develop an industrial park.
- ❖ The town should take advantage of the GMP economic development initiatives.

### **Policy 3**

The rate of growth should not exceed the ability of the residents of the town to pay for necessary services and facilities.

### **Programs**

- ❖ Encourage businesses to locate in Castleton that will help reduce the tax burden and provide local employment.

### **Policy 4**

Public investments should further the purposes of this plan in providing for orderly and fiscally responsible growth.

### **Programs**

- ❖ Utilize the Town Plan and implementation program as a reference manual to help guide economic growth and development in a manner that benefits all sectors of the community.

### **Policy 5**

Diversification of the economic base is a primary concern of local government. Economic development should be pursued so as to provide maximum economic benefit with minimum negative environmental impact.

### **Programs**

- ❖ Maintain the scenic and recreational attractiveness of the area.
- ❖ Service the shores of Lake Bomoseen with town sewer wherever possible in order to protect this significant natural resource and expand services that support the visitor economy.
- ❖ Explore options to recruit businesses to occupy space vacated by companies that have recently relocated or plan to do so in the near future.
- ❖ Expand hotel/motel and entertainment uses on Lake Bomoseen and other areas in Castleton
- ❖ Encourage the following types of industries: technology, sustainable products, light manufacturing and light agriculture.



June 7, 2022

Please accept this as my letter of opposition of the permit for the 99 Unit Senior Living Facility to be located on Sand Hill Road, Castleton, Vermont.

This residential area which already has a serious driving hazard is not the best location for this type of facility.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betty Moyer".

Betty Moyer  
119 Blue Cat Lane  
Castleton VT 05735

For Slayba letter  
written testimony



the preceding five years. In fact, “74% of employers believed that rental housing affordability in Rutland City had gotten “somewhat worse” or “much worse” during that time.”

A majority of employers also wanted to see development of new market-rate rental units (52% rating this strategy as “important” or “very important), new condos (63%), and downtown housing options (60%) were highlighted as high need areas.

A majority of employers hiring new workers – 54% - believe that housing costs impact their ability to recruit new workers.” The report went on to say that “43% of employers hiring new workers reported that issues with the quality of housing in the City of Rutland are creating issues for them to attract new workers.” And “30% of employers felt that housing costs are creating issues for them to retain workers.”

This data was confirmed when we (CEDRR) conducted a meeting of area employers including Casella Waste, Killington Resort, Rutland Public Schools, GE Aviation and Rutland Regional Medical Center. The data is consistently confirmed as we entertain questions from individuals and families as they take advantage of our concierge service through our Regional Marketing Initiative. The first question we get is about housing. The first and hopefully only discouraging words they hear about our Region are about housing.

There is demand for housing at all levels. The solution is to increase the supply. The solution is in our control to resolve.



**Lyle Jepson**

Executive Director Email :

[lyle@rutlandeconomy.com](mailto:lyle@rutlandeconomy.com)

Office: (802) 773-2747

Cell : (802) 345-3590



Public comment: Town of Castleton Development Review Board - Tuesday, June 7, 2022.

At a recent meeting of area executives, the Executive Director of Southern Vermont Council on Aging announced that she was leaving what she called her "forever job for her forever home." She spent a full year looking for a home that met her needs and was unable to do so. Therefore, she is leaving Rutland County.

My name is Lyle Jepson and I am the Executive Director of the Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR). You have undoubtedly heard about housing needs from an employer perspective. The need is real. This is not a build it and they will come project. People are visiting and want to stay, but they can't find a place to live. People want to come here to work and enjoy our quality of life but there is no place to go.

I am here to specifically speak to the issue of housing. Any housing related development, whether it be high end, market rate or affordable, will free up availability throughout the spectrum of need. I will reinforce what you have already heard and what you already know. Rutland County needs additional housing stock. Based upon age alone, we have a growing problem.

Data from a 2020 Vermont Housing Needs Assessment by the Vermont Housing Finance Agency indicated that Rutland County's housing stock is older than the state-wide average. Approximately, 30% of Rutland's housing stock was constructed before 1940 compared to 26% state-wide. Only 6% of Rutland's housing stock was constructed from 2000-2010, compared to double that figure state-wide. Creation of new housing stock is even less thereafter. New housing is not being brought on-line.

The housing supply in Rutland County is declining over time. Housing stock has decreased 1% from 2010-2017. Growth has been relatively stagnant since 1980. Add to this the recent trend of short-term rentals. From 2015 to 2019 short-term home rental listings in Rutland County rose 10-fold from 108 to 1,112, in essence taking them off the market for long-term availability.

These two trends combined have contributed to increased rental costs. In 2020, 3,372 Rutland County renters paid more than 30% of their income for housing with another 1,694 paying 50% or more of their income for housing. We need to increase the supply to help combat high costs.

There are funds being made available for low-income Vermonters. That is great news. We are in despite need of workforce and market rate options for our Rutland County population. Again, **"Any housing related development, whether it be high end, market rate or affordable, will free up availability throughout the spectrum of need."**

A report was prepared by I Squared Community Development Consulting, LLC in July 2019, specifically for Rutland City. In that report, employers believe that rental housing affordability had gotten worse over



Special Exemptions

By Name For All Parcels Main District

Parcel SPAN	Exemption	Real Value	Assessment	
			Special less Exempt	Spec. Exemption
242100015.S BROWNS AUTO SALVAGE 129-040-12733	Solar	66,000 UE Nonhmstd Homestead	66,000 0	0 0
252000026.S CASTLETON GLC SOLAR LLC 129-040-12714	Solar	154,400 UE Nonhmstd Homestead	154,400 0	0 0
445000022. CASTLETON HOUSING, LLC 129-040-12145	Qualified Housing	1,445,700 CA Nonhmstd Homestead	137,341 0	1308,359 0
445000058.1 HARVEY HOUSE LTD 129-040-10940	Qualified Housing	455,000 CA Nonhmstd Homestead	45,500 0	409,500 0
445000033. PARSONS HILL PARTNERSHIP 129-040-11689	Qualified Housing	814,300 CA Nonhmstd Homestead	81,430 0	732,870 0
435000040. RUTLAND COUNTY COMMUNITY LAND TRUST INC 129-040-11952	Qualified Housing	96,500 R1 Nonhmstd Homestead	8,038 0	88,462 0
080100003.2 SANDLOT SOLAR LLC 129-040-12104	Solar	758,600 UE Nonhmstd Homestead	655,000 0	103,600 0
090100013.S STASO ROAD SOLAR LLC 129-040-12732	Solar	510,100 UE Nonhmstd Homestead	510,100 0	0 0

Special Exemption Totals

Type	Homestead	Nonhomestead
Ski Lifts & Snowmaking	0	0
Whey Processing	0	0
Vermont Yankee	0	0
Qualified Housing	0	272,309
Solar	0	1,385,500
Wind	0	0
Other	0	0
-----		
Total Real Prior to Exemptions	4,300,600	
-----		
Total Exemptions	0	1,657,809
-----		
Grand Lists After	0	2,642,791

Google verification  
code  
G-2645-95





## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

### VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITY

The Castleton Town Plan is a framework and guide for reaching community goals. The policies and programs stated within this comprehensive plan were developed to preserve and protect the town's assets while providing a future vision for town officials, businesses, and citizens of Castleton.

The Plan should be a basis for community programs and decision-making. For example, it should influence the town's budget and capital expenditures, community development efforts, and natural resource protection initiatives. As required by law, it should also serve as a foundation for local land use controls such as zoning, subdivision, and health regulations. In terms of its significance in relation to State land use controls and growth policy, the Plan plays a key role. Vermont's Act 250 includes a provision for a review procedure through which all applications for a subdivision and development must pass. Furthermore, the Plan should be given full effect in all appropriate regulatory proceedings, such as Act 250, and Title 30, Section 248.

#### **Statutory Authority and Requirements**

The Castleton Town Plan is an integral part of the regional and statewide planning process. In adopting the Town Plan, citizens of Castleton may anticipate the future with the knowledge that a significant step has been taken in the development and preservation of their community.

Town Plan preparation is guided by the Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act, "The Act". The Castleton Town Plan was prepared in conformance with all of the requirements in the Vermont Statutes.

#### **Public Participation and Preparation of the Castleton Town Plan**

Planning for the future is a continuing activity and should reflect new data, laws, technologies, planning concepts, and the changing needs and desires of the community. The Castleton Planning Commission has the responsibility for the preparation of the Town Plan. The Plan must be updated and readopted on an eight-year basis according to Vermont State Statutes.

Work began on the current update in 2016. In the course of developing the Plan, the Castleton Planning Commission and Town contracted for technical assistance with the Rutland Regional Planning Commission. The Planning Commission held public forums in order to obtain input from the public.

#### **Regional Coordination**

This plan recognizes that Castleton does not exist in isolation from the region and will be affected by what happens in the surrounding municipalities. The relationship between this plan and the development trends and plans for the surrounding area and the *Rutland Regional Plan* has been considered. For purposes of this Plan, the surrounding area includes the Towns of Fair Haven, Benson, Hubbardton, West Rutland, Ira, Poultney and Pittsford.

Review of the land use plans of surrounding communities suggests that the future land use pattern promoted by this Plan is generally compatible. Surrounding communities promote low-density land development and continuation of resource-based uses (such as agriculture) in outlying areas and higher density and commercial uses in existing built-up areas. Sensitive areas (such as flood plains) are also identified and targeted for conservation, as they are in Castleton.

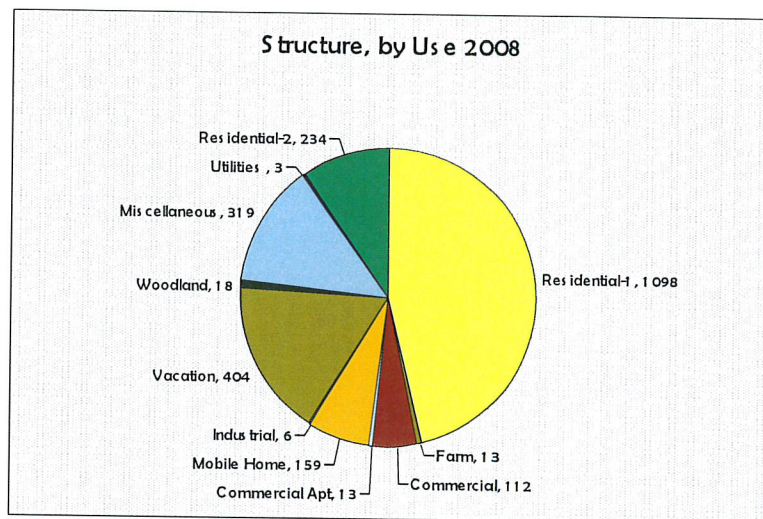


## LAND USE AND GROWTH

As new development opportunities present themselves, the Town of Castleton must balance preservation of its community and character with support of opportunities for economic growth in order to sustain the town's citizens and services. The Future Land Use Map, designating the boundaries of each district, is located at the end of this section.

### Land Use Districts

The Land Use Districts, defined in the following paragraphs, are a guide for the growth and development of the Town of Castleton. The nine land use districts in Castleton are: Residential 20,000 sq. ft., Residential 40,000 sq. ft., Rural Residential 2 acre, Rural Residential 5 acre, Village Commercial, recreation/Commercial, Industrial, Water Source Protection and Flood Hazard. These land use areas provide for a variety of residential, commercial, and recreational opportunities for the future while considering local environmental constraints as well as existing land use patterns. Castleton encourages planned growth and concentrated development in those areas of the town which provide for higher density and which can provide the necessary infrastructure to more readily support development than more rural sections of town.



Source: 2000 US Census; VT Dept. of Taxes

### Residential 20,000 Sq. Ft.

The Residential 20,000 sq. ft. district in Castleton is essentially the Castleton Village area described above. This area is built-out and contains the vast majority of Castleton's historic structures, municipal service buildings, and cultural amenities. Should additional land become available for development in the future through the acquisition of privately held parcels, changes in state land use regulations, or through other means, the residential 20,000 sq. ft. district's compact development pattern and municipal infrastructure make it among the most suitable areas for future development.

### Residential 40,000 Sq. Ft.

The residential 40,000 sq. ft. district includes nearly the entire shoreline of Lake Bomoseen as well as a contiguous tract of land south of Hydeville and Castleton Corners and a smaller area east of Route 30 south of the Corners. While doubling the minimum lot size of the Castleton Village area, the 40,000 sq. ft. district does promote development of moderate density suitable to these areas close proximity to commercial enterprises and transportation corridors of moderate to heavy traffic.





- of the character of surrounding properties.
- ❖ Support use-value taxation, cluster subdivision techniques and other methods of conserving agricultural land and open space.
  - ❖ Encourage the inclusion of greenbelts and common land areas in subdivision design.

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

Community facilities and services are provided by the municipality for the health, benefit, safety, and enjoyment of the general public. High quality services and facilities such as schools, highway maintenance, police and fire protection, solid waste disposal, and town government administration have a significant effect on the local quality of life as well as the community's ability to accommodate development and grow in an orderly and appropriate manner. Careful planning is essential for community facilities and services in order to meet local health, safety, and welfare needs and community goals for future growth. If the facilities are at capacity, further development may strain them, causing financial burdens and environmental problems. The Castleton Town Plan shall promote and encourage the development of an integrated and efficient utilities infrastructure system to provide the services required by both commercial users and residents.

### **Castleton Free Library**

The Castleton Free Library, a two story building located on Main Street, was established in 1897 by a group of interested citizens; it was incorporated in 1916. The Castleton Free Library currently has a five-member board of trustees, a Library Director (also serving as the children's librarian), a librarian in charge of the adult collection, and about 10 dedicated volunteers without whom the library would be unable to provide the high quality service that it does. The Castleton University Library is also available to Castleton residents.

### **Post Offices**

There are three post offices within town boundaries serving Castleton residents: The Castleton Post Office, Bomoseen Post Office and Hydeville Post Office.

### **Castleton Post Office**

The Castleton Post Office is located at 576 Main Street. As of this writing the office had no plans for expansion or relocation.

### **Bomoseen Post Office**

The Bomoseen Post Office is located at 63 Route 4A West in the Castleton Four Corners area. The office has no plans for expansion or relocation in the foreseeable future.

### **Hydeville Post Office**

The Hydeville Post Office is located at 912 Route 4A West. The office building was renovated in 1998/99 and there are currently no plans for expansion or relocation of the facility.

### **Castleton Community Seniors**

Castleton Community Seniors Inc. (CCS) is a very active group that organizes a wide variety of activities and events year-round for people of all ages. Formed in 1998, one of the group's primary activities has been the development of a community center at the Historic Old Homestead building. A gift from the Alma Gibbs Donchian Foundation, the Castleton Community Center is located on Route 4A between Castleton Village and the Castleton Four Corners area.



Where municipal water is available, the rating is 7; areas outside of hydrant protection are rated at 9. Isolated areas are rated as unprotected.

### **Mutual Aid**

The Castleton Volunteer Fire Department is a member of the Rutland County Mutual Aid Association. Membership enables the Castleton FD to call for members and equipment from towns in Rutland County should the need arise. Castleton's fire chief considers mutual aid agreements as a significant resource and is comfortable with the department's ability to meet present and future residential needs largely because of the existence of mutual aid agreements.

### **Castleton Highway Department**

The Castleton Highway Department is located at 273 Staso Road and is staffed with four (4) full time employees and one (1) vehicle mechanic. The Department is responsible for the maintenance and improvements to approximately 72 miles of town roads, which include paving, guardrail installation, bridge repairs, signage, plowing, sanding & salting, tree & brush removal from the right of way, dust control and assist other town departments. The Department has an approved budget of \$1.1 million for fiscal year 2016-17.

### **Wireless Telecommunications Facilities and Services**

Vermont towns and cities may regulate wireless telecommunications facilities for aesthetic and environmental reasons, but may not regulate their siting, construction and modification on the basis of potential radiation effects relating to health and interference. Traditional tools: planning, adopting reasonable bylaws, and relying on aesthetics, safety concerns (other than radiation) and character of the neighborhood provide communities with the best tools to regulate the location of wireless telecommunications facilities.

The Town of Castleton is committed to the protection of the quality of its aesthetic, natural, historic, and cultural resources as well as, above all else, the health, safety and welfare of Castleton residents. Given this paramount commitment, the Castleton Development Review Board will closely scrutinize all telecommunication tower and facility applications. The DRB will utilize all means at its disposal to ensure that the applicant is in compliance with all applicable federal, state and local requirements and can adequately demonstrate the necessity for siting of the telecommunications facility in the Town of Castleton.

### **Wastewater**

#### **Existing system**

Town sewer is available to approximately 714 parcels or 1,100 users. The sewer service extends throughout the Main Street village center; along most of Route 4A and Route 30 north of the Four Corners including the senior housing project and part of the east shore of Lake Bomoseen; and, to much of Sand Hill Road. Some areas of the town are serviced by privately owned sewer lines.

Castleton's Waste Water Treatment Facility underwent a significant capacity upgrade in 1999. The system has a designed capacity of 540,000 gallons per day and utilizes state-of-the-art technology to process and disinfect the daily flow of effluent. The treatment plant operates as an Enterprise Fund in that it is funded and supported by users.

The collection of waste is handled by a main pumping station located on Main Street. Smaller stations are located in Hydeville, on Prospect Point Road, on Route 4A near the Iron Lantern Restaurant, at Sucker Brook, on South Street and at the Elementary School. The Town owns and maintains 62 grinder pumps on Route 30 north of the Four Corners.





required on projects adjacent to surface waters that go through the Act 250 land use permit review process, but for most development activity, buffer protection depends on local level decisions.

Towns have a clear legal authority under state statute to regulate riparian buffers. A buffer requirement could be included as a district standard, and the setback and buffer distance could vary depending on the nature of the district. The Agency of Natural Resources recommends a buffer zone width of 50-100 feet for streams and 100 feet for lakes, with greater or lesser widths possible.

### **Air Quality**

Air quality has a great impact on the quality of life and the ecology of an area. Due to relatively low emission densities and relatively favorable meteorological conditions, ambient concentrations of locally generated pollutants are relatively low in Vermont by national standards. However, the Air Pollution Control Division has reported the Rutland area's particulate matter levels to be among the highest in the state, while 24 hour sulfur dioxide levels are higher than the Burlington areas. Nitrogen dioxide levels are comparable to or lower than other parts of Vermont. Overall, the Rutland Region's air pollution levels have not violated EPA standards for air pollutants. Town's like Castleton can help to maintain and improve air quality by promoting the use of public transit and carpooling, enforcing prohibitions on the burning of trash, and protecting forest resources, which can help to filter out a number of potentially harmful pollutants.

### **Open Space and Scenic Resources**

In the course of planning for Castleton's future, it is important that the presence of high quality open space and scenic resources, broad scenic areas as well as scenic landmarks, are recognized and the integrity of such resources is preserved. Scenic resources have aesthetic, historical, and economic value. Siting of future construction as well as community facilities and infrastructure should always consider the potential impact on the aesthetic qualities of the community and preserve the undisturbed integrity, wherever possible, of Castleton's quality scenic and open space resources.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS**

### **Agriculture and Forestry**

#### **Goal**

Protect Castleton's farm and forest resources for future generations to enjoy.

Clean air and water, as well as intact forests and working farms are essential to the health and quality of life of all living things that inhabit a community

#### **Policy 1**

Maintain and improve the quality of important soils, such as agriculture and forestry soils, when considering the future development of the town.

#### **Programs**

- ❖ Discourage development in areas of important agricultural and forest soils.
- ❖ Preserve farm and forest lands and maintain the working landscape through conservation, agricultural easements, and land acquisition.
- ❖ Promote the use of acceptable soil erosion control measures in development of slopes in excess of 8%.
- ❖ In zoning bylaws, adopt a Fluvial Erosion Hazard Overlay District (as explained on p 29) and/or River Corridor protections to ensure that development in hazard areas is reasonably safe and



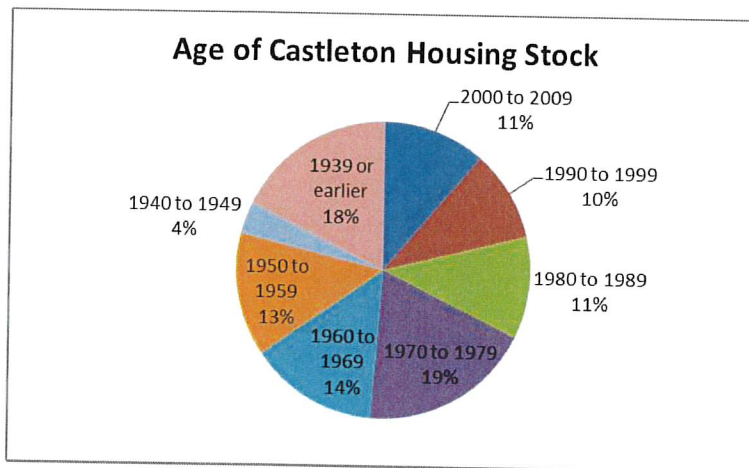
housing, is becoming an increasingly critical concern. A 2009 report by the National Low Income Housing Coalition entitled *Out of Reach*, found that in order for Vermonters to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment, including utilities and without paying more than 30% of income on housing, a household must earn \$3,046 monthly or \$36,553 annually.

According to the 2009 “Between a Rock and a Hard Place” report published by the Vermont Housing Council and Vermont Housing Awareness Campaign, the State of Vermont has the tightest rental housing market in the nation. The rental vacancy rate was 3.5%. The homeownership vacancy rate was 1.6%, the fourth lowest in the nation.

Homeownership in Vermont is also difficult for many credit-worthy households due to the high up-front costs of purchasing a home and the increase in median home sales prices in recent years. Castleton’s housing situation is influenced by the presence of Castleton University. In addition to the needs of permanent local residents, there is a demand amongst the student population for affordable rental units creating a larger market for rental housing than would be otherwise expected in a town of Castleton’s size.

### Existing Conditions

#### Age of Housing



According to the 2014 Census, 18% of Castleton’s 2,216 total housing units were built before 1939, indicative of the historic nature of many homes in Castleton, particularly Castleton Village. However, with 1,467 housing units added since 1960, and the particularly significant growth during the housing boom of the ‘80s (562 units added), the majority of homes in Castleton are less than 50 years old. Figure 12 provides an overview of housing development in Castleton since 1939.

Source: 2014 ACS

#### Housing Stock and Occupancy Status

The total number of housing units in Castleton has increased from 2,026 in 1990 to 2,216 in 2010, a total of 190 units overall. 1,171 of Castleton’s 1,617 total occupied units (72%) were owned in 2010 while 446 were rented (28%). The number of seasonal homes in Castleton has decreased from 577 in 1990 to 497 in 2010, but still represents a substantial 22 percent of the town’s housing units.

	2000	2010
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	2107	2216
<b>Total Occupied Units</b>	1550	1617
Owner Occupied	1123	1171
Renter Occupied	427	446





... 0 bedroom unit†	\$12.44 or \$25,962 annually	\$14.71
... 1 bedroom unit†	\$13.71 or \$28,613 annually	\$16.07
... 2 bedroom unit†	\$17.38 or \$36,272 annually	\$20.68
... 3 bedroom unit†	\$21.65 or \$45,814 annually	\$25.95
... 4 bedroom unit†	\$26.40 or \$55,097 annually	\$30.87
<b>Housing wage as % of state minimum wage (\$9.15), 2015</b>		
... 0 bedroom unit†	136%	161%
... 1 bedroom unit†	150%	176%
... 2 bedroom unit†	190%	226%
... 3 bedroom unit†	237%	284%
... 4 bedroom unit†	289%	337%

Castleton has publicly-assisted housing with limited subsidies. Castleton Meadows on Route 30, run by Eastpoint Properties, shelters 41 elderly individuals. Parson's Hill on Route 4A, provides housing for 12 low-income families and had a 20-year subsidy that expired in 2002, with five-year renewable periods thereafter.

### **Impact of Castleton University**

Castleton University affects the town's current and future housing inventory in several ways. For the 2015-16 academic year the enrollment was 2246 students (1955 undergraduate and 291 graduate). 1100 students were housed on campus. Thus, with on campus student housing at a premium, many students must either commute or rent apartments off campus. As a result privately owned residential dwellings have been turned into rental units by their owners to accommodate the overflow. In some instances this has taken affordable housing off the market. Coupled with faculty housing requirements, the need for off campus student housing continues to put pressure on the town's ability to provide affordable permanent housing.

## **HOUSING GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS**

### **Goal**

Provide a variety of housing options that meet the needs of diverse social and income groups and is located conveniently to employment, services, retail centers, and educational and recreational facilities. A sufficient supply of quality housing is necessary for any community that expects to have strong, healthy families and a stable workforce.

### **Policy 1**

Collaborate with not-for-profit housing organizations, government agencies, private lenders, developers and builders in pursuing options and meeting the housing needs of local residents.

### **Programs**

- ❖ Establish working relationships with the Rutland County Community Land Trust, NeighborWorks of



Western Vermont and Housing Vermont.

### **Policy 2**

Ensure that individuals with special housing needs, including the elderly, those with physical or mental disabilities, single parent households, as well as low and moderate-income households are able to attain suitable and affordable housing.

#### **Programs**

- ❖ Locate affordable and special needs housing in areas with access to appropriate services.

### **Policy 3**

Maintain and promote the historic character of housing in Castleton.

#### **Programs**

- ❖ Encourage home ownership and property upkeep efforts of Castleton residents.
- ❖ Ensure that new and rehabilitated housing is constructed to meet safety and sanitary minimum standards and coordinated with existing public services (water, sewer, and transportation networks).
- ❖ Maintain a detailed inventory of the condition of Castleton's historic housing units.

### **Policy 4**

Enable our aging citizens to remain within the community by providing differing types of housing options.

#### **Programs**

- ❖ Promote the development of commercial or private senior housing.

## **RECREATION, HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Recreational opportunities, high quality historic resources and cultural activities are among the principal elements that contribute to the quality of life in a community. A town's historic and cultural resources are often integrally linked as history informs culture and many cultural activities in Vermont communities' center around historical appreciation or remembrance. So too are cultural activities, such as visiting the Higley House Museum or touring a town's historic sites, recreational past-times as valuable to a community as its hiking trails or most popular swimming hole. Well-maintained historic buildings, located in cohesive recognizable districts, are not only attractive; they are good for business.

Numerous studies indicate that many people choose to visit Vermont because of its rich history and the unique local flavor and well-preserved ambiance of its towns and villages. Castleton residents echoed this sentiment in public forums and agreed that the town should explore all available measures to protect historic buildings and structures. Castleton is fortunate to be well endowed with countless recreational opportunities, historic resources, and cultural amenities as well as residents who recognize their important contribution to the community's overall quality of life.

### **Recreation**

Castleton residents have many outdoor recreational opportunities available within a short walk, bike or drive including downhill and cross country skiing, swimming, boating, fishing, hundreds of snowmobile, hiking and biking trails and several excellent golf courses. Additionally, Castleton's close proximity to Rutland City





- ❖ Maintain regular communication with the VTrans District Transportation Administrator as to the condition and maintenance requirements of Castleton's transportation infrastructure.
- ❖ Continue to Participate in the Rutland Region Transportation Council's efforts to prioritize transportation infrastructure projects in the region.

### **Policy 3**

Improve safety of existing roads and highways.

#### **Programs**

- ❖ Dedicate a portion of the town's annual budget for the maintenance and improvement of Castleton's bridges.

### **Policy 4**

Plan future network improvements to maintain existing compact land use patterns and contain development within established centers with surrounding working lands.

#### **Programs**

- ❖ Enforce existing specifications for road construction and maintenance.
- ❖ Consider access management when reviewing all new development proposals.

### **Policy 5**

Work in cooperation with the state to improve roads to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian uses as well as explore options for recreational trails.

#### **Programs**

- ❖ Consider bicycle and pedestrian safety and uses when upgrading existing roads.

### **Policy 6**

Consider options for the improvement of public transit service in Castleton to better meet the needs of all current and potential users.

#### **Programs**

- ❖ Conduct quality of service interviews with passengers on "The Bus" on several days over a period of a few months.
- ❖ Discuss the quality of public transit service at town meeting.
- ❖ Encourage use of passenger rail service at the Castleton Rail Station.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Economic development, despite the challenges in a small community such as Castleton, is an important part of a town's planning goals. Economic development is the process by which the community sets out to improve the *climate* for retaining old and attracting new businesses that support jobs and sustain tax revenues. Like many other municipalities in Rutland County, Castleton derives most of its revenue from the taxation of local property in order to support municipal services. While the town budget is small and the town services are limited, they are no less affected by local, regional and national economics. Castleton, like other Vermont communities, will need to be more active in managing economic growth to ensure the future of its tax base and quality of life.



### **Commercial Activity in Castleton**

Castleton has a strong visitor economy particularly in the summer months when recreational activities revolving around Lake Bomoseen reach their peak. The presence of approximately 2000 full time students at Castleton University also helps support a healthy retail and restaurant economy in town. Castleton has had land available for light industrial development in recent years, but has been unable to attract significant interest from the business community to develop the land.

Economic amenities within Castleton include the educational institutions, Lake Bomoseen and the unspoiled beauty of the Town's unique landscape, especially the undeveloped mountain peaks and ridgelines, and the attractiveness of the town for tourism, slate quarries, and small businesses. Castleton University is the largest employer. It also provides the town with numerous cultural and recreational opportunities.

Lake Bomoseen is Castleton's most significant visitor attraction. Maintaining the quality of the Lake's water and the desirability of the shoreline and surrounding area are priorities. Vacation (second-home) property represents a large proportion of Castleton's total fair market real estate value.

Industrial properties in Castleton include:

- ❖ Vermont Unfading Green Slate Company
- ❖ Hadeka AA Slate Company
- ❖ Camara Slate
- ❖ Glenbrook Realty Partnership (Hubbardton Forge)
- ❖ Rutland Marble and Granite
- ❖ Ellis Inc.
- ❖ Micro Components
- ❖ Morton Building Supplies
- ❖ Browns Quarried Slate
- ❖ Browns Auto Salvage

Most of the town's numerous small businesses are involved in service and retail oriented operations. There are fourteen eating establishments while the largest lodging operation has a capacity of approximately 120.

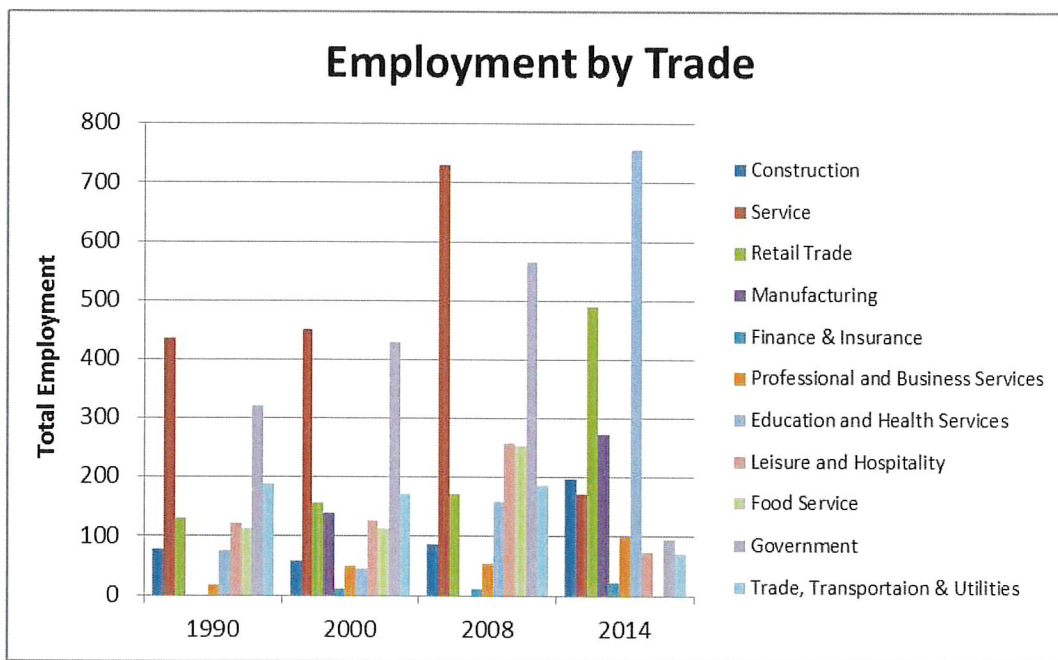
### **Castleton University**

The largest employer in town and situated within walking distance to the village area. The University has a significant impact on the economic well-being of the town because of the size of its student body, its faculty and the visitors it attracts. Local businesses that serve the needs of this potentially diverse population thrive. By its very presence, the University affords the community with educational and cultural opportunities that might not otherwise exist in the town. Additionally, both students and faculty provide volunteer services to the local schools, recreational activities and other organizations within the town. The University also makes its facilities available for use by community members or groups whenever possible, minimizing in many instances the need for private or public development of these same facilities.

### **Employment Activity in Castleton**

Figure 19 provides an overview of employment activity in Castleton. As the figure indicates, overall employment in Castleton continued to grow throughout the 1990s and 2000s. Service and Government (which includes Castleton University) are the two largest employment trades and have grown steadily since 1990. Leisure and Hospitality and Food Service also contain a large share of employment activity in town and have grown steadily since 1990. All other trades have maintained their numbers or grown slightly except manufacturing.



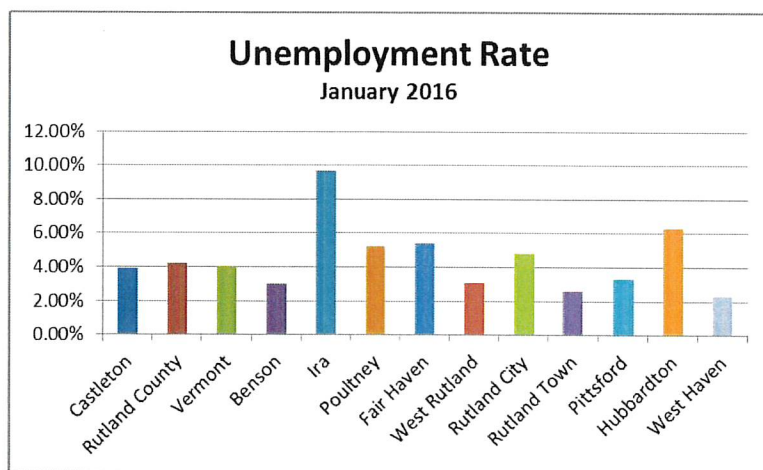


Source: U.S. Census, 2014 ACS

The estimated Median Household Income (MHI) in Castleton was \$50,561 in 2008. This is a 7.8% increase from the 1999 MHI of \$39,615. Castleton’s MHI is above the Rutland County amount of \$46,558, however, below the State of Vermont amount of \$52,104.

### Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate in Castleton has remained relatively consistent with the state and regional trends over the past decade. For the last three years, however, Castleton’s unemployment rate has been consistently above the rates of both Rutland County and the State. As of December 2009, Castleton’s unemployment rate was 9.0% compared to the County rate of 8.2% and State of Vermont rate of 6.6%. Currently, only Rutland City (10.2%), West Rutland (12.1%) and Fair Haven (10.4%) have higher unemployment rates in the Region.



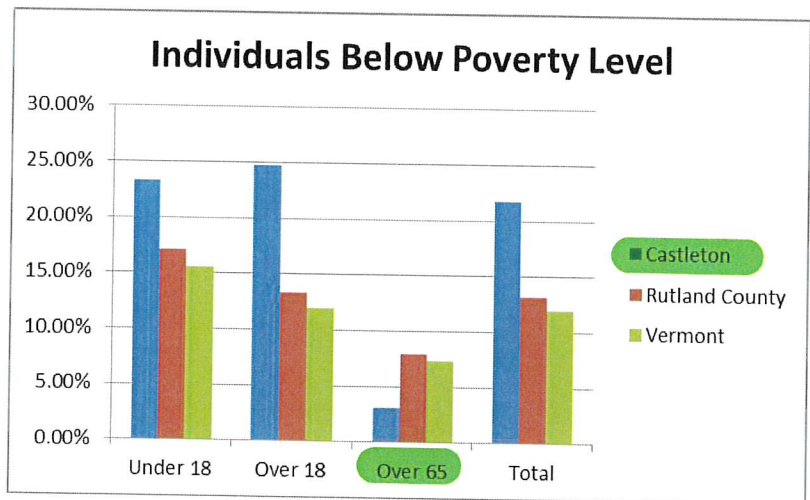
Source: VT Department of Labor

### Poverty Status

The poverty threshold, or poverty line, is the minimum level of income deemed necessary to achieve an adequate standard of living. The percentage of residents in Castleton living below the poverty line in 2007 was 9.8%, compared to 10.9% in Rutland County and 9.4% in the State of Vermont. Source: City Data.org. Figure 21 depicts the 2014 US Census Poverty figures by age group.



Source: US ACS, 2014



### Economic Development Challenges facing Castleton

- The ability to find qualified employees is constraining business growth across industry sectors. Employers have revealed that the availability of a trained workforce is limiting job growth. Skilled professionals set to retire are not easily replaced by the existing, younger workforce. This has resulted in some companies foregoing opportunities for expansion.
- The town's topography and extensive hills and mountain network place limitations on which areas can appropriately handle growth. In addition, there is a tension between the need for new development and the desire to maintain the rural character of the area.
- The loss of Castleton's two Village Center Designations hurts private property owners in those areas as they are unable to access tax credits for site redevelopment. The town will pursue re-designation of the Castleton Corners and Historic Village areas and the addition of a new Village Center Designation for the Hydeville area. These are shown on the Future Land Use Map.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

### Goal

Maintain a sound fiscal balance for the town, encourage reasonable, functional, orderly development of facilities, utilities and services, and encourage the growth of the "informal economy" including home occupations, local artisans, craftspeople, and seasonal businesses, especially tourism and the vacation and retirement home markets; and also expanded commercial development.

The town remains well suited for professional offices seeking a quiet, scenic location in close proximity to Rutland. The town's many natural and recreational amenities and close proximity to New York State, the Canadian border, Vermont's largest ski resort as well as the presence of Castleton University, make the area very attractive for the continued expansion of the visitor economy. The cost of the provision of services for new or expanding businesses must be made based on the available tax revenues and reasonable public and private investment.

### Policy 1

Support existing businesses and industry.





### **Programs**

- ❖ Support the Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce and Castleton's Economic Development Committee, REDC, RRPC
- ❖ Re-apply for Village Center Designations in the Castleton Corners and Historic Village areas.
- ❖ Pursue a new Village Center Designation for the Hydeville area.

### **Policy 2**

Encourage growth and a balance of small, locally-owned businesses and light industry to stimulate the local tax base and improve local employment opportunities.

### **Programs**

- ❖ Collaborate with the Rutland Economic Development Corp to find new businesses for the community.
- ❖ Encourage hotel/motel development
- ❖ Approve tax stabilization agreements.
- ❖ Develop an industrial park.
- ❖ The town should take advantage of the GMP economic development initiatives.

### **Policy 3**

The rate of growth should not exceed the ability of the residents of the town to pay for necessary services and facilities.

### **Programs**

- ❖ Encourage businesses to locate in Castleton that will help reduce the tax burden and provide local employment.

### **Policy 4**

Public investments should further the purposes of this plan in providing for orderly and fiscally responsible growth.

### **Programs**

- ❖ Utilize the Town Plan and implementation program as a reference manual to help guide economic growth and development in a manner that benefits all sectors of the community.

### **Policy 5**

Diversification of the economic base is a primary concern of local government. Economic development should be pursued so as to provide maximum economic benefit with minimum negative environmental impact.

### **Programs**

- ❖ Maintain the scenic and recreational attractiveness of the area.
- ❖ Service the shores of Lake Bomoseen with town sewer wherever possible in order to protect this significant natural resource and expand services that support the visitor economy.
- ❖ Explore options to recruit businesses to occupy space vacated by companies that have recently relocated or plan to do so in the near future.
- ❖ Expand hotel/motel and entertainment uses on Lake Bomoseen and other areas in Castleton
- ❖ Encourage the following types of industries: technology, sustainable products, light manufacturing and light agriculture.

