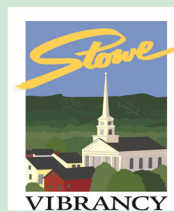




*Stowe 2020
A Vision for Stowe Village*



*The Stowe Village Vision Task Force
an affiliate of Stowe Vibrancy, Inc*



March, 2015



Stowe 2020

A Vision for Stowe Village

*“Vision”: defined by Merriam-Webster
“...something that you can imagine: a picture that you see in your mind.”*

Cover photos from the upper left:

All are contributing structures to the Stowe National Historic District

Akeley Memorial Building, 1903

Helen Day Memorial Library and Art Center, 1863

Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum, 1818

Green Mountain Inn, 1833

Stowe Community Church, 1863

March, 2015

*By The Stowe Village Vision Task Force
An affiliate of Stowe Vibrancy, Inc.*



Stowe 2020
A Vision for Stowe Village

Table of Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page Number</u>
Background	3
Purpose	4
Vision Statement	4
Exhibit 1	5
Exhibit 2	5
Methodology	7
Stowe Village- One of a Kind	8
Stowe Village Objectives and Action Plans	10
A. Enhance the Village Experience	10
B. Improve Village and Pedestrian Traffic Flow and Management	11
C. Upgrade Village Infrastructure And Management	13
D. Improve Village Residential Life	13
Next Steps: Opportunities and Responsibilities For Village Stakeholders	14
Conclusion	15
Appendices	
Appendix A: The Designated Village Center Map	
Appendix B: Stowe Village Vision Survey Summary & Results	
Appendix C: Stowe Village Vision Survey Results- Comments	

Stowe 2020

A Vision for Stowe Village

Background: The Town of Stowe commissioned a study of Stowe Village titled *The Stowe Book* in 1984. It was a comprehensive description of the Village as it then existed, with a complete inventory of its physical assets. The consultant recommended a series of upgrades that could be made to the Village. They included such major improvements as removing two gas stations, burying or relocating the Main Street utility lines, developing more convenient parking, constructing the Mayo Farm Road, and upgrading or reutilizing numerous under-improved properties along Main and South Main Streets. It articulated a clear vision for Stowe Village's future. More than three decades later many of these recommendations have been implemented. Some were accomplished by the Town, while others were done by private owners and developers. No single organization was charged with making them happen. They were simply logical, well-conceived, and compelling enough that the Town and its citizens came together to make them happen. That is the strength of a great plan...it is so logical as to be almost self-fulfilling.

But by 2007, with major improvements well under way at the Stowe Mountain Resort, and the development of substantial new commercial properties along the Mountain Road (Rt. 108), it was again time to look at the condition of Stowe Village. A consultant-developed study was again commissioned. The result was a new comprehensive report titled the *Stowe Village Vibrancy Report*. It provided a diverse series of recommendations designed to increase vibrancy in the Village. It was taken seriously by Town management and residents alike. Many of its recommendations have been implemented (i.e. start several new major Village events, emphasize the creative and performing arts, re-develop the public infrastructure such as the Memorial Park and the Stowe Arena, enhance Main Street with benches, flowers, bike racks, better landscaping, etc., and form Stowe Vibrancy, Inc.). Other recommendations remain to be implemented as resources become available (i.e. upgrade sidewalks, relocate utility lines, enhance parking, etc.), while some recommendations are probably no longer appropriate (i.e. build a Village performing arts center). As recommended in that report Stowe Vibrancy, Inc. was formed by a group of resident volunteers in 2008; it has taken a leadership role in accomplishing many of these projects. It also has taken the lead in developing this study and report.

Some have said that Stowe Village today isn't what it used to be, and never will be again. Nostalgia, however, tends to overlook the shortcomings of the past, and to glorify its strengths. But the *Stowe Book* outlined only too well the physical deterioration, functional obsolescence, and aesthetic shortcomings of the Village in the early '80s. And it stipulated a set of clear steps that could be taken to rectify problematic issues. The *Stowe Village Vibrancy Report* had a similar effect. The Village today is clearly a more organized, modern, and aesthetically attractive place than it was in earlier decades. The past thirty years have seen dramatic and, for the most part, positive changes to the Village. But there is substantial room for improvement.

Purpose: The pace of change today in the Town of Stowe in general and Stowe Village specifically, is astounding. In just the past two years the Village has had five of its most visible Main Street properties change ownership and several long-operated businesses have closed, while quite a few new businesses & restaurants have opened. Several central Village properties have undergone major renovations, and one has been completely replaced. The Town has built the new state-of-the-art Stowe Arena, reconfigured Memorial Park, and acquired Marshall Hill for winter sledding. It has been a very busy time for Stowe Village. (Exhibit 1)

Today there are immense challenges to the Village and Town resulting from its aging infrastructure, increased tourism, growing seasonal home ownership, turnover of businesses, and increased occupancy costs. There are a substantial number of highly visible vacant retail buildings in the Village. These conditions suggests that we should now revisit our *Vision for Stowe Village*, and decide what steps need to be taken to achieve its realization. Good planning demands that we proactively determine what Stowe’s residents want the Village to become, based on a common vision of this unique place. Failing to do so could leave the future of the Village in the hands of those who may not share the Town’s desire to maintain its historical authenticity, beauty and an incredibly strong sense of community.

Stowe 2020, A Vision for Stowe Village (the “Plan”) will serve as the basis for directing the work to be done by Stowe Vibrancy, Inc. over the next five years. Stowe Vibrancy will work with Town officials, residents and volunteers, businesses and others to achieve the Objectives and Action Plans outlined herein. It will enable stakeholders to best understand what Stowe Vibrancy is working to accomplish. The goals outlined herein will be updated from time to time as warranted by changing conditions. It will also serve as a good benchmark of how much progress is being made.

Vision Statement: It is important to have a concise and clearly articulated Vision Statement for Stowe Village in order for the Town’s stakeholders to be able to work together efficiently to continue to improve the Village. Or, put another way:

“If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will get you there.”

The Cheshire Cat to Alice, by Louis Carroll

Based on research from previous studies and reports, and input from more than 400 people in Town, the Task Force has developed the following new Village Vision Statement:

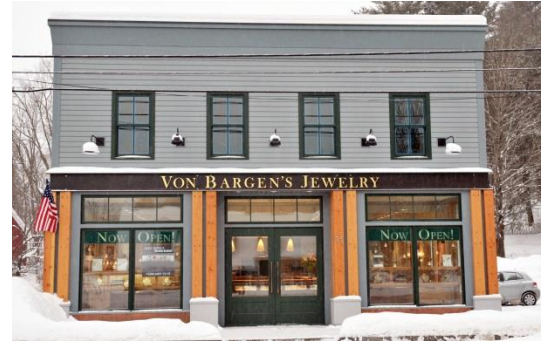
Stowe Village is and will be a place where residents live, work and socialize. It must continue to retain the character of a historic New England village. It is the Town’s community center and seat of government and a center of business and commerce. It also provides a diverse experience of cultural and recreational activities for our residents and the multitude of visitors drawn to the Town of Stowe’s world-class year-round destination-resort amenities.

The Village today surely has room for improvement. Exhibit 2 shows a few of the significant number of opportunities presently available in the Village. The accomplishments of their leasing and improvement, plus the many other steps recommended in this report, would have a very substantial impact on the quality of life, efficient operation and management, appearance, and vibrancy of the Village.

Stowe 2020 A Vision for Stowe Village
Exhibit 1: Village Improvements in the Past Two Years



Redevelopment: Ferro Jewelers & Plate Restaurant Building
 101 Main Street



New Construction: Von Borgen's Jewelry
 61 South Main Street



Under Redevelopment: "The Painted Lady" Residential
 148 Main Street



New Retail: Wildflowers Designs
 Straw Corner Shopping Center



Redevelopment: Crepes by Heinz Restaurant
 56 South Main Street



Developed by the Town: The New Stowe Arena
 Memorial Park



Under Construction: Village Walk Condominiums
 288 South Main Street



Acquired by the Town: Marshall Hill Sledding Hill
 Memorial Park

Stowe 2020 A Vision for Stowe Village
Exhibit 2: Properties with Lease/Improvement Opportunities



**Under Redevelopment: Retail Lease opportunity
Former Hardware Stowe: 151 Main Street**



**Lease opportunity: Former Lackey's Store
101 Main Street**



Retail Lease Opportunity: 25 Main Street



Retail Lease Opportunity: 132 Mountain Road



**Retail Lease Opportunity
100 Main Street**



**Restaurant/ Retail Opportunity: Butler House
128 Main Street**



**Restaurant Opportunity: Former Blue Moon Restaurant
35 School Street**



**Restaurant Opportunity: Former Santos Restaurant
311 Mountain Road**

Methodology: This report has been developed by the Stowe Village Vision Task Force (the “Task Force”), a creation of Stowe Vibrancy, Inc. The Task Force is made up of eleven local volunteers who have broad backgrounds and experience in the fields of engineering, finance, retailing, planning, construction, architecture and management. The Task Force solicited the involvement and input of literally hundreds of Village stakeholders: residents, second homeowners, business leaders, and public officials. The result is this Plan, which seeks to transition to the new vision of Stowe Village by the year 2020, a vision that balances the interests of the Town’s many constituents. The Plan outlines four Objectives to create the envisioned Village, while providing specific recommendations (“Action Plans”) on how to achieve them.

The first major step in this project was to create an assessment of Stowe Village¹ at this time. What are its strengths (to be retained and enhanced) and what are its shortcomings (to be remediated)? How can its strengths be exploited while its shortcomings are reduced, minimized, or eliminated? What are the Town’s priorities for these changes? This was no small task, given the complexity of this small yet highly cultured, extremely athletic, rural and historic Vermont community village, which is also one of the best-known and most frequently visited destination resorts in the Northeastern United States.

Next, the Task Force developed an online survey to test the opinions of Stowe’s residents, business owners, and non-resident homeowners. Approximately 350 survey respondents weighed in with their thoughts about what the Village is like, and what it should be (Appendices B and C). The most commonly-repeated such themes are reflected in this report.

The third step entailed hosting a series of four highly publicized and well-attended focus groups for residents, non-resident homeowners, and business owners and operators. They were held from December, 2014 through February, 2015. These fact-finding sessions enabled the Task Force to gain additional insights into the opinions of these stakeholders, and their respective visions for Stowe Village’s future.

Finally, all of this information was collated, compared to the new Stowe Town Plan (which is also currently in preparation), and research was done as to the viability and practicality of each idea and concept gathered. The Task Force then decided which recommendations, in the form of Objectives and Action Plans, would likely have the greatest impact on achieving the *Vision for Stowe Village*. This document summarizes what the Task Force has determined to be the collective vision of what Stowe’s residents would like Stowe Village to be by the year 2020. It outlines those characteristics that we would like to retain from the current Village, while seeking to enhance those areas that need improvement.

¹ For this report Stowe Village is consistent geographically with the Designated Village Center as defined by the State of Vermont to include the area bounded approximately by the Stowe Arena on the east, the intersection of Cemetery Road and Route 100 on the North, Commodores Inn on Route 100 on the south, and Dump Road on the Mountain Road (Route 108). See Appendix A

Stowe Village-One of a Kind: Stowe Village is the quintessential example of a quaint traditional New England village. It is also the heart of one of the best-known and most diverse destination resorts in New England. It is, therefore, unlike almost any other Town in the northeastern United States. This broad dichotomy is what appeals to many of us who live here. We love the traditional small-town New England-community lifestyle, and all that comes with it. But we also enjoy the vast array of amenities that come with living in a major destination resort. These two competing characteristics create tremendous challenges and not infrequent tensions in the Town's operation, management and development. This conundrum can only be successfully navigated by listening carefully to Town residents and business owner's, through excellent capital and operational planning, and by means of an extremely efficient allocation of finite resources.

Located virtually at the geographic center of the Town of Stowe, Vermont, Stowe Village has most of the characteristics of a traditional New England village: time-honored yet diverse architecture, professional community services, residential life, educational and cultural facilities, and numerous recreational amenities. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a National Historic District. As the center of the Town government, it hosts Town Offices, public services, the United States Post Office, banking, business services, plus cultural and recreational facilities. While it would seem as though planning for the future of the Village should not be particularly challenging, further analysis shows that it is a complex proposition. The Village's wide variety and number of major physical assets, the density of its properties, its aging infrastructure, and its immense swings in visitor population, result in challenges that only good planning, well-designed physical improvements, and excellent management can successfully balance.

Our several months of fact-finding, probing, and study have resulted in a vast amount of data, and no limit to the number of opinions about the Village- both positive and negative. A consensus emerges, however, about the current character of the Village, regardless of whether one is querying local residents, second homeowners, or business leaders. Input from all of these groups, including more than 400 individuals, resulted in the following collective view of its current status:

Perceived strengths of the Village:

- Historically authentic New England village
- Physically charming and on the National Historic Register
- Compact and comfortable, very walkable
- Several good restaurants
- Strong sense of a village community
- Stowe Area Association Information Center
- Helen Day Art Center
- Diverse mix of residential types & uses
- Stowe Community Church
- Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum
- Stowe Historical Society
- The Stowe Free Library
- Stowe Elementary School
- Four large parks around the Village
- Trailhead to the Recreation Path
- Stowe Arena
- Memorial Park recreation facilities
- United States Post Office
- Municipal Services
- Akeley Building Town Hall and Theater
- Shuttle in the winter
- Great seasonal events
- Several new businesses in the Village
- Several recently renovated properties
- Locally-owned and family-operated businesses

Perceived shortcomings of the Village:

- A need for more outdoor dining and cafes
- Not enough retail shops, and the broad dispersion of those that are there
- Shops and businesses including Town facilities close too early
- Vacancy of several highly visible centrally located properties.
- Unattractive visual clutter and safety hazards from the morass of utility lines and deteriorating utility poles on Main Street
- Main Street is empty at night
- Condition and incompleteness of sidewalks
- Several physically deteriorating properties
- Shuttle runs only in the winter
- Too few picnic tables and benches
- Zoning bylaws need review
- Several prominent vacant storefronts
- Poor directional & informational signage
- Traffic management and control
- Cost of rent, taxes, and business operation
- Parking availability and management
- Limited public transportation and no convenient park-and-ride lots
- Residential vacancies on second floors
- Limited street entertainment and vendors
- Not enough residential life and pedestrian traffic especially in the evenings
- No bike lanes and limited bike racks
- Too few Main Street events and too little activity
- Difficulty finding trained & capable employees
- Lack of collaboration and physical connectivity (when the shuttle isn't running) with the Mountain Road Village and Stowe Mountain Resort
- Cell phone, cellular data, and internet service is inconsistent and not state-of-the-art

Stowe Village Objectives and Actions Plans: The Task Force received considerable support in the Stowe community for the concept of implementing an updated and comprehensive program to improve the Village. The result was the formulation of the Plan's four Objectives outlined below. The Action Plans within each Objective are specific tasks recommended to realize them. Some are easy and inexpensive. Others will take substantial time and resources. If a significant number of the Action Plans can be accomplished, there can be a major positive impact on Stowe Village.

- A. Enhance the Village Experience:** While the Village has several well-established and interesting stores, the retail offering in the Village is nonetheless very limited. It is inadequate to achieve the critical mass necessary to meet the expectations of today's shoppers. It should, however, remain authentically Vermont and be uniquely interesting. The retail mix must provide an array of products sufficient to satisfy the regular daily needs of local residents, and also be compelling enough to entice our seasonal visitors to experience it. Likewise, while the Village also has several very fine dining establishments, it would benefit from more casual eating opportunities, including take-away food, street vendors with quick snacks, outdoor café-style seating, and picnic settings.

Action Plans for this Objective are:

1) Add more unique retail stores:

- a. Determine what types of retail offerings are missing that would be compelling and practical.
- b. Identify empty or underutilized spaces in the Village, and meet with their owners to develop ideas for the space re-development and utilization.
- c. Identify prospective tenants locally and regionally and solicit their interest.
- d. Investigate the zoning bylaws to determine what changes will improve this situation.
- e. Investigate ways to reduce the high cost of Village occupancy.
- f. Assist motivated property owners in considering the sale of their properties as condominiums to facilitate owner-occupied properties.
- g. Assure that as much vacant space as possible becomes retail.
- h. Emphasize the special qualities of the Vermont brand.
- i. Meet and collaborate with local real estate professionals periodically to enlist their help.
- j. Make this information accessible online and distribute it to prospective tenants.
- k. Consider hiring a retail expert to assist in the effort through a community action grant.

2) Improve access to and visibility of retail establishments:

- a. Most of the Village's existing retail businesses are unique and interesting, and this asset needs to be capitalized upon and publicized.
- b. Consider forming a Village Merchants' Association to coordinate retail efforts, operations, marketing, and event activities.
- c. Expand operating hours, especially on weekends and during holiday/vacation and high tourist-visitation periods.
- d. Develop a Main Street Beautification Program, including street light banners, attractive and consistent flower pots and plantings, and encourage property owners to decorate and light their buildings in a consistent way.
- e. Investigate ways that businesses can implement better and more-exciting signage.
- f. Develop a program to encourage local residents to stop and shop in the Village.

- 3) **Attract Additional Lively Eating and Socializing Venues:**
 - a. Consider allowing street carts and kiosks in selected locations in the Village.
 - b. Encourage existing restaurants to have live entertainment.
 - c. Work at creating a buzz about evening activities in the Village.
 - d. Provide convenient and visible sitting places and walkways for people to enjoy food and social activities in the Village.

- 4) **Communicate better to locals and visitors what is available in the Village and Town:**
 - a. Develop a public relations program, online and/or in print, to improve the visibility of Village businesses and connectivity to other parts of Town.
 - b. Provide easy online access to a high-quality paper and online retail map and links to Village businesses.
 - c. Locate or develop a database for periodic public relations and marketing e-blasts of events and activities in the Village and Town.
 - d. Enhance the historical Village identity signs with the age and brief history of each contributing structure to the National Historic District.

B. Improve Vehicle and Pedestrian Traffic Flow and Management: Improve the Village experience by reducing heavy and noisy vehicle traffic, and install traffic calming measures by working with local and regional experts and authorities.

Action Plans for this Objective are:

- 1) **Upgrade and, as necessary, relocate sidewalks and crosswalks:**
 - a. Work with the Town to finalize the sidewalk-layout design on Main Street.
 - b. Replace all sidewalks, beginning with the central Main Street area, from Mac's Market to Parsonage Park.
 - c. Investigate improving curb cuts and bump-outs to enhance safety and to comply with accessibility requirements.
 - d. Install a sidewalk on School Street next to the library and The Xpress.
 - e. Consider a different and more permanent surface treatment for crosswalks, and find ways to make them more visible in all seasons.
 - f. Continue to work with the Town to identify areas in the Village where more/better sidewalks and crosswalks should be installed or existing sidewalks should be relocated.
 - g. Improve pedestrian access to the Recreation Path Parking, including the long-promised stairway.
- 2) **Reduce the amount of unnecessary traffic that is passing through the Village:**
 - a. Work to develop ways to manage the continuing growth in traffic to and from Stowe Mountain Resort.
 - b. Develop an informational and signage program that will assist visitors and employees destined for Stowe Mountain Resort in understanding and using alternative routes.
 - c. Enhance the West Hill/Rt. 100 and Rt. 100/Moscow Road intersections.
 - d. Work with major employers to identify alternative parking, carpooling, and shuttle opportunities.

3) Improve and Enhance Village Parking and Walking Alternatives:

- a. Enhance and expand existing parking lots and on street-parking availability.
- b. Identify and build or expand close-in gateway parking opportunities, especially the Recreation Path parking lot, the Elementary School parking lot, business lots on the Mountain Road, the Mayo Farm, and along Route 100 south and north of the Village.
- c. Continue to explore expanding the existing Recreation Path parking lot, including seasonally, the possibly of using the adjacent lowlands on both sides of the West Branch River.
- d. Develop maps and public information programs to promote the parking and shuttle programs.
- e. Investigate appropriate changes to the parking-related zoning bylaws.
- f. Continue to explore the cost and feasibility of building a parking garage in the Village, especially behind the Stowe Community Church.
- g. Consider acquiring privately-owned property adjacent to the Recreation Path parking lot to expand the number of parking spaces.
- h. Work with GMTA and the State to encourage workers passing through the Village to use park-and-ride services.

4) Implement regular and reliable transportation options for the Village and Town:

- a. Develop a public transportation strategy and plan to serve residents, seasonal and year round employees, and visitors, adjusted seasonally to accommodate the substantial variation of needs during the year.
- b. Increase availability of the Mountain Road Shuttle during non-winter peak tourist periods.
- c. Improve the transportation connectivity of the Village with the Mountain Road Village and Stowe Mountain Resort.
- d. Consider installing bus stop shelters at key locations throughout the Village and Town with info centers therein.
- e. Implement a community information program for shuttle drivers so they are well-informed about Stowe's Village and Town amenities.
- f. Consider re-implementing a fun trolley-type service for a short loop within the Village connecting to new gateway parking lots.
- g. Consider extending the Recreation Path to Stowe Mountain Resort.
- h. Consider allowing installation of a bike share system.
- i. Enhance bike lanes to and within the Village.
- j. Install more conveniently located bike racks.

5) Improve traffic management and flow in and around the Village:

- a. Consider employing traffic officer direction during peak tourist seasons, especially at the Main Street/Mountain Road intersection.
- b. Review traffic patterns to consider options for one-way streets.
- c. Develop a better and more appropriate parking option for tour buses, perhaps collocated with a gateway parking lot and trolley shuttle stop(s).(Intermodal transportation center).
- d. Provide easier access and better parking for the Stowe Arena.

6) Promote and participate in major highway-improvement programs outside of the Village.

- a. Work closely with Stowe Mountain Resort and the State of Vermont to coordinate transportation to, from, and within Stowe.

b. Participate in the design and implementation of the reconstruction of Route 100 to Waterbury.

c. Take full advantage of the Vermont Scenic Byway program.

d. Study and implement traffic-calming measures on the major arteries close to the Village.

e. Consider installation of roundabouts, traffic lights, or other traffic-management measures at the Route 100/West Hill Road and the Route 100/Moscow Road intersections.

C. Upgrade the Village Infrastructure and Management: The Village needs to be beautiful and well managed, with a state-of-the-art infrastructure that matches the quality expectations of its residents, second homeowners, and visitors from around the world. The following Action plans seek to improve safety, enhance aesthetic appeal, while adhering to Stowe's historical authenticity.

Action Plans for this Objective are:

- 1) Continue to develop the plan to relocate the unsightly morass of overhanging utility lines in the central Village to behind the Main Street properties, and implement it if feasible.
- 2) Review, update and improve public areas, small parks, flowers beds and pots, seasonal decorations, and public conveniences (benches, bike racks, etc.).
- 3) Provide continued improvement of cell phone, cellular data, and internet services throughout the Village and Town to state-of-the-art service levels for all residents, visitors and businesses. This can be a major economic development driver.
- 4) Provide free Wi-Fi service with access to a Stowe App in public buildings and retail businesses in the central Village and in other key locations in Town.
- 5) Install lighting on the Akeley Memorial Building portico and cupola.
- 6) Upgrade exterior lighting on the Helen Day Memorial Library and Art Center tower.
- 7) Upgrade, enhance visibility of, and publicize, the many Village public parks and recreational facilities.
- 8) Install street lights on the northeast side of Main Street matching those on the other side.
- 9) Implement an attractive seasonal banner program for all street lights.
- 10) Repair, replace, and maintain sidewalks, steps, roadways, and crosswalks.
- 11) Operate the Town and Village in a manner that serves its residents, second homeowners, and tourists efficiently and conveniently, including delivery of municipal and Town Office services with operating days and hours that are responsive to their changing needs.

D. Improve Village Residential Life: Provide opportunities for existing and new Village residents and visitors to benefit from a more active Village.

Action Plans for this Objective are:

- 1) Encourage a traditional mix of diverse commercial and residential uses within the Village, giving strong emphasis to retail uses on the sidewalk level, with residential and commercial office uses on the upper floors.
- 2) Encourage existing property owners with deteriorated or underutilized space to improve their properties, and to provide more residential rental opportunities within the walking Village.
- 3) Consider implementing an ordinance for the maintenance of deteriorated buildings, to assure a minimum standard is maintained, especially for historically significant properties.
- 4) Identify development opportunities available to renovate and infill residential units within the Village, and promote them.
- 5) Consider zoning changes that would encourage residential development or renovation.

- 6) Encourage all Village residents and businesses to light their front porches or doors in the evening.
- 7) Determine if it is possible to develop more affordable housing.
- 8) Develop better communications programs for Village residents.
- 9) Encourage Village organizations to have more well-coordinated evening activities.
- 10) Encourage Main Street property owners to coordinate seasonal decorations and plantings.

Next Steps: Opportunities and Responsibilities for the Village's Stakeholders: The primary value of a project like this is that it can stimulate ideas, involvement, and action. Virtually all of the Objectives outlined herein, and their respective Action Plans, will require the involvement of numerous individuals and/or groups to make them happen. Private-Public partnerships will be needed. Existing organizations will need to collaborate. New organizations, formal or informal, may need to be formed. Public and private resources will be needed.

Here are several of the specific ways each of the stakeholders in the Town of Stowe can participate in assuring that the Objectives outlined herein can be realized:

1. **Town Residents & Non-Residential Homeowners:** Join Town organizations, commissions, and attend meetings to make your opinions known. Get informed and involved. Support the important Action Plans by involving yourself in their accomplishment. Shop in the Village to support local merchants and restaurants, especially during slow seasons. Attend local arts and culture events, and take your friends, relatives, and visitors along. Spread the word!
2. **Town Management and Employees:** Work closely with Village residents, organizations and businesses to enliven and beautify the Village. Continue to make available the Local Option Tax for improvements to the Village. Provide extra support services on holidays, at events, and during peak tourist times. Conform service delivery to peak activity hours and days when appropriate. Make services and public meetings convenient for all, especially non-resident homeowners. Be informed of what's going on in the Village (and Town).
3. **Village Businesses:** Work together to coordinate programs, events and activities. Consider forming a Village Merchants' Association. Extend business hours and publicize them. Increase your numbers. Put energy into Village beautification and revitalization. Get to know each other and work together to achieve the Objectives outlined herein.
4. **Town Businesses:** Support efforts to create physical, social, and economic connectivity, among the Village, Mountain Road Village, and Stowe Mountain Resort. Support each other. Get informed and involved in what's going on. Send visitors to the local businesses and events for an afternoon, day, dinner, event, or whatever. Tout the Village as a big asset of the Town.
5. **Stowe Vibrancy, Inc.:** Stowe Vibrancy will use this report as a template for much of what it will work on over the next five years. It will work closely with all of the Town's stakeholders and many other organizations and individuals in implementing whichever Action Plans are feasible, constantly testing whether they remain appropriate. It will work with the Planning Commission to assure the Village is covered adequately in the Town Plan.
It will draw upon the Town's incredible diversity of people and resources to make Stowe Village an even better place by 2020, and beyond. Stowe Vibrancy will also periodically update this document's Objectives and Action Plans, as appropriate, to make it a living document that remains an important and viable tool.

Conclusion: During the four months that the Stowe Village Vision Task Force has been working on this project, its members have been constantly reminded of the passion and fondness that all of Stowe’s stakeholders have for the Town of Stowe and Stowe Village. Hundreds of people have spent their time and energy expressing their heartfelt feelings for the Town, and providing suggestions and ideas for the improvement of the Village. Virtually every one has indicated that the Village is a tremendous asset to the Town, and is worthy of their support in making it an even more vibrant, beautiful, and important thread in the fabric of the Town of Stowe. The Task Force is deeply appreciative of the involvement for those who have weighed in and participated in this effort! Now the hard work begins...

Respectfully Submitted, March, 2015: The Stowe Village Vision Task Force:

Ken Biedermann
Michael Diender
Lisa Hagerty
Brian Hamor
Tom Jackman
George Lewis

Jacqueline Mauer
Scott Noble
Heidi Scheuermann
Ed Stahl
Arnold Ziegel

Approved by the Board of Directors of Stowe Vibrancy, Inc. on March 10, 2015

Appendices:

- Appendix A: The Designated Village Center Map
- Appendix B: Stowe Village Vision Survey Summary & Results-Graphs
- Appendix C: Stowe Village Vision Survey Results-Comments

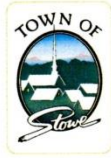
Acknowledgements:

Photo Credits: The photos in this report have been provided by:

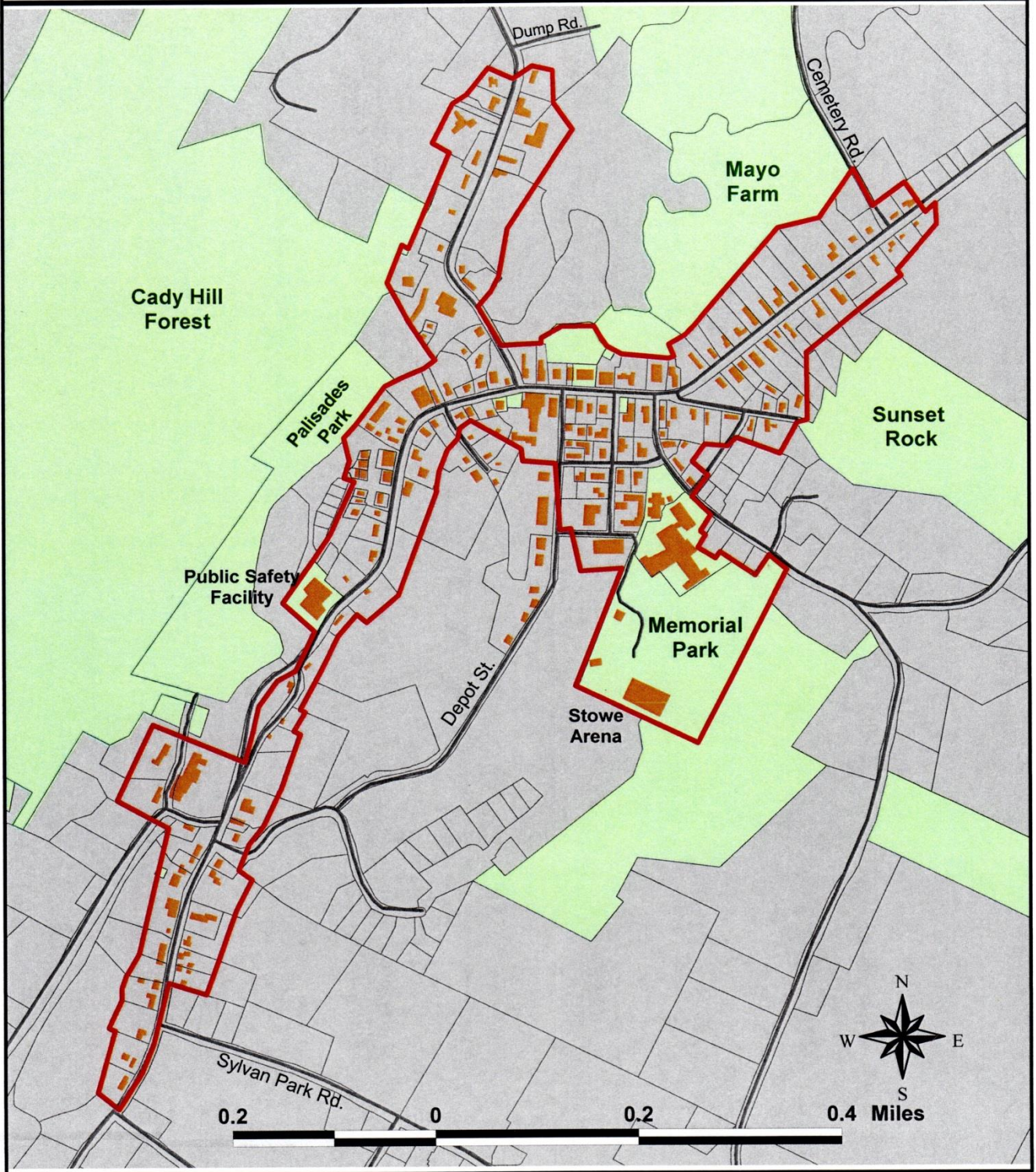
- The Green Mountain Inn: Ampersand, Inc.
- The Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum: Gristmill Construction
- All other photographs: Scott Noble/Thenoblestudio

Printing: The UPS Stowe, Stowe, Vermont

Editing: Keith Morrill, Little City Editing



Stowe Designated Village Center



Appendix A

Stowe 2020
A Vision for Stowe Village
Appendix B: Survey Results

Purpose and Methodology: The Task Force wanted to obtain as many opinions and Village improvement ideas as possible during its three and one-half months of study. Not everyone interested in this study was able to be personally interviewed or able to attend the four focus group meetings held by the Task Force. Therefore, one such vehicle used to access a broader sampling of townspeople was an on-line survey made available to all Stowe residents, business owners and operators, and non-resident homeowners. Using the online survey website Survey Monkey, the Task Force obtained a substantial amount of additional input and Village improvement suggestions. Its availability was well publicized in the *Stowe Reporter*, and in online communications such as Facebook and e-blasts. The response was excellent.

The Survey: Consisting of 18 questions, the non-scientific survey sought to obtain the opinions of as many diverse stakeholders of the Village as possible. With 349 completed surveys, the Task force believes that it achieved its objective of obtaining a large sample of opinions by many diverse stakeholders about the Village.

The first series of nine questions obtained demographic data about the respondents, and their connections to Stowe and Stowe Village. The result was that it reached a wide range of people in many different age groups, property ownership situations, and widely varying circumstances. This was the objective.

The next series of questions dealt with the respondents perceptions of the Village; some of the questions were multiple choice, while others were open-ended.

The final few questions dealt with suggestions as to what could be improved, what projects currently under consideration are worthwhile, respondents were asked to cite examples of other communities that we might strive to emulate, at least in part.

Results: The Task Force gained a tremendous base of information from which to develop this report. The answers to the objective multiple choice questions follow in this Appendix. The answers to the open-ended, subjective questions follow in Appendix C. Overwhelmingly the response was two-fold: 1) The respondents care deeply about the Village, and think it is important to the Town; and 2) They want to see the Village supported by the Town, and improved.



Pro Sign Up Sign Up FREE Sign In

Village Vision Task Force Survey 2015

Survey Results

Question Summaries Data Trends Individual Responses

349 responses

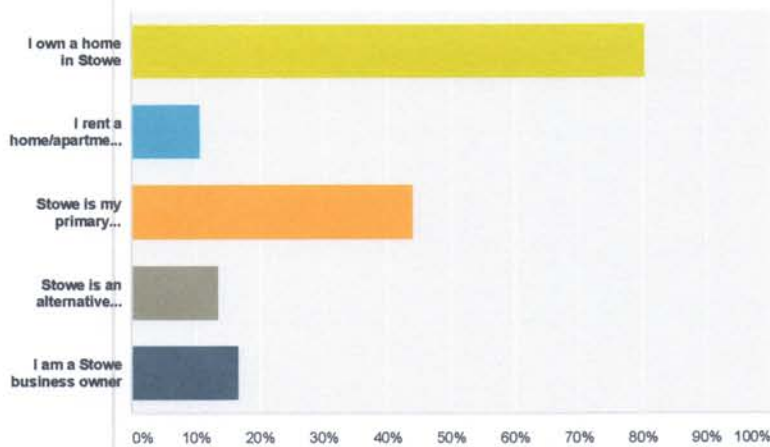
89 days (December 15, 2014 - now)

19 views

Q1

Check any of the following statements that are true:

Answered: 340 Skipped: 9



Answer Choices	Responses
I own a home in Stowe	80.29% 273
I rent a home/apartment in Stowe	10.59% 36
Stowe is my primary residence	44.12% 150
Stowe is an alternative residence for me	13.53% 46
I am a Stowe business owner	16.76% 57
Total Respondents: 340	

Comments (52)

Need insights? SurveyMonkey has dozens of expertly-designed survey templates. Sign up FREE or Learn more

Q2

Please let us know how young you are!

Answered: 347 Skipped: 2

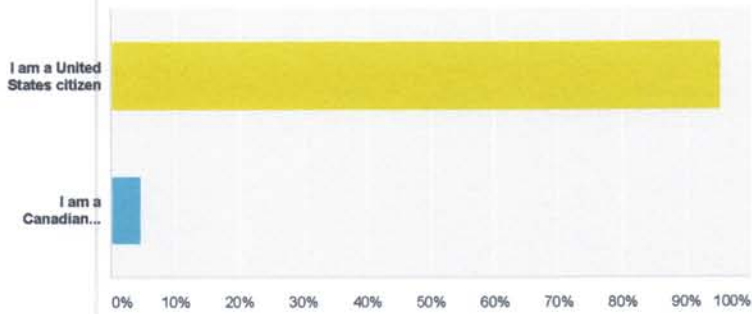


Answer Choices	Responses	
Under 30	2.02%	7
30 to 45	26.80%	93
46 - 60	40.92%	142
61-70	16.14%	56
Over 70	14.12%	49
Total		347

Q3

I am

Answered: 341 Skipped: 8



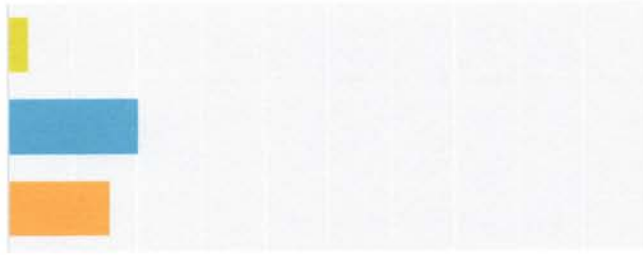
Answer Choices	Responses	
I am a United States citizen	96.31%	325
I am a Canadian citizen	4.69%	16
Total		341

Comments (6)

Q4

I have owned or rented a home in Stowe for (how long)

Answered: 345 Skipped: 4



Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than 1 year	3.19%	11
1 to 5 years	20.29%	70
6 to 10 years	15.94%	55
More than 10 years	49.28%	170
I grew up in Stowe	8.12%	28
N/A I am a business owner but do not live in Stowe	3.19%	11
Total		345

Q5

Check all answers that apply to you:

Answered: 345 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Responses
I was born in Stowe	6.65% 23
I am a native Vermonter	16.18% 56
I visited Stowe in my younger years	34.39% 119
My family has always come to Stowe	12.72% 44
I went to College or Prep School in Vermont	21.10% 73
I come to Stowe primarily for Skiing	11.56% 40
I come to Stowe mostly in the Winter	6.65% 23
I come to Stowe mostly in the Summer	6.94% 24
I come to Stowe mostly during leaf season	4.34% 15
I come to my home in Stowe year round	23.70% 82
I was introduced to Stowe by friends	15.61% 54
I used to visit and stay in a local hotel	17.92% 62
I used to rent a home in Stowe	14.16% 49
I plan to live in Stowe full time some day	7.23% 25
I live in Stowe full time	70.81% 245
I live in Stowe Village	13.29% 46
Total Respondents: 346	

Q6

Check all answers that apply to you when you are in Stowe

Answered: 345 Skipped: 4



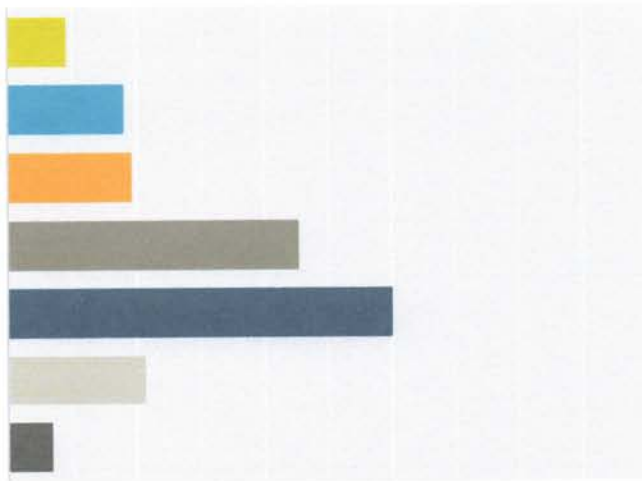
Answer Choices	Responses
I live alone	12.17% 42
I live with a partner	58.23% 194
I live with children under 18 in the home	36.23% 125
I live with elderly parents/family members in my home	4.64% 16
My grown children often visit my home in Stowe	28.99% 100
My grown children and grandchildren often visit my home in Stowe	14.78% 51
I often have houseguests who like to visit me in Stowe	59.71% 206
I am proud to share my Stowe life with friends and family	76.52% 264
Stowe Village is fine just the way it is	13.91% 48
Stowe is fine just the way it is	13.62% 47
I'd like to see improvements, but our taxes are already too high	46.98% 162
Stowe's taxes are high but I'd still be willing to pay to make certain improvements	39.71% 137
Stowe's taxes are not high relative to my primary residence taxes	2.61% 9
Total Respondents: 345	

Comments (76)

Q7

Business owners - Check all that apply:

Answered: 88 Skipped: 261



Answer Choices	Responses
I have owned a business in Stowe for under 1 year	9.09% 8
I have owned a business in Stowe for between 1 and 5 years	18.18% 16
I have owned a business in Stowe for between 6 and 10 years	19.32% 17
I have owned a business in Stowe for over 10 years	45.45% 40
I am the business founder	60.23% 53
I bought the business from another owner	21.59% 19
I am a 2nd generation (or more) business owner in Stowe	6.82% 6
I am an owner/operator of my business	76.14% 67
My business operates in a location that I lease	26.14% 23
My business operates in a location that I own	61.36% 54
I am a landlord to other businesses in Stowe	10.23% 9
My business is in Stowe Village	25.00% 22
My business is in the lower Stowe Village	12.50% 11
My business is on Maple Street	5.68% 5
My business is on the Mountain Road above Weeks Hill Road	17.05% 15
My business is on the Mountain Road between the Village and Weeks Hill Road	11.36% 10
My business is on the Mountain Road between Weeks Hill Road and Cottage Club Road	9.09% 8
My business is above Cottage Club Road	2.27% 2
My business is neither on Route 100 or Route 108	17.05% 15

Total Respondents: 88

Comments (44)

Q8

Business owners: Check all that are true

Answered: 80 Skipped: 269



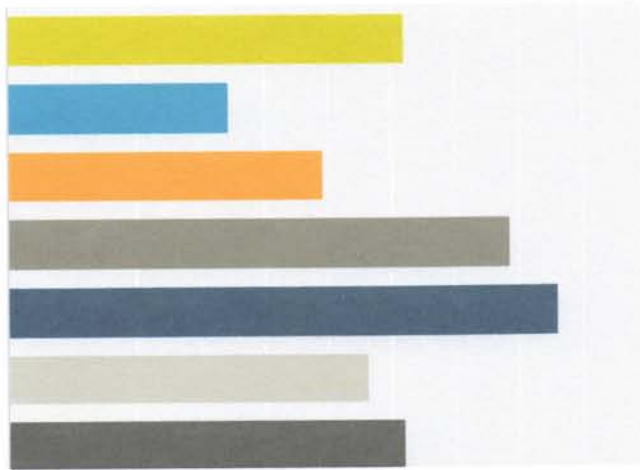
Answer Choices	Responses
I own a service business	52.50% 42
I own a restaurant	10.00% 8
I own a retail business	16.25% 13
I own a lodging business	16.25% 13
I belong to the Stowe Area Association	55.00% 44
I belong to the Lamolle County Chamber of Commerce	12.50% 10
My business is primarily tourism centric	31.25% 25
My business is primarily resident centric	32.50% 26
My business is located in Stowe but my revenues are primarily derived outside of Stowe	26.25% 21
Total Respondents: 80	

[Comments \(12\)](#)

Q9

**What do you do when you are in Stowe?
(check all that apply)**

Answered: 343 Skipped: 6



Answer Choices	Responses	
Downhill skiing	62.10%	213
Mountain Biking	34.40%	118
Nordic Skiing	49.27%	169
Hiking - Pinnacle, Sterling Pond, Hunger Mountain etc.	78.43%	269
Enjoy the Rec Path	86.01%	295
Use a gym or other exercise studio	56.27%	193
Attend live performances	62.10%	213
Golf	24.78%	85
Tennis	26.24%	90
Attend gallery openings and other arts and cultural offerings	47.81%	164
Dine Out	94.75%	325
Go out for coffee in the morning	49.85%	171
Shop	65.89%	226
Hang out and enjoy home with my family	83.09%	285
Enjoy the nightlife	29.45%	101
Work from home	44.02%	151
Work at my place of business	26.24%	90
Total Respondents: 343		
Comments (97)		

Q10

The existing guiding principle for the Village of Stowe reads as follows: "Stowe Village will be a place where residents live, work and socialize, and will forever retain its original and authentic functions as a true Vermont community. "

Answered: 324 Skipped: 25



Answer Choices	Responses
I wouldn't change a word of that!	41.36% 134
It's good but could be improved upon	19.44% 63
This is an outdated guiding principle for Stowe Village	8.64% 28
Here are some thoughts for improvement on this guiding principle:	Responses 30.56% 99
Total	324

Q11

Top three things I like about the Town of Stowe in general

Answered: 309 Skipped: 40

Answer Choices	Responses
#1	Responses 100.00% 309
#2	Responses 95.47% 295
#3	Responses 90.94% 281

Q12

What do you view as the top three strengths of Stowe Village

Answered: 292 Skipped: 57

Answer Choices	Responses
#1	Responses 100.00% 292
#2	Responses 91.44% 267
#3	Responses 76.37% 223

Q13

What do you view as the top three weaknesses of the Stowe Village

Answered: 312 Skipped: 37

Answer Choices	Responses
#1	Responses 100.00% 312
#2	Responses 87.18% 272
#3	Responses 70.51% 220

Q14

List 5 businesses/services/activities that you would like to see on or near Main Street that are not currently there.

Answered: 269 Skipped: 60

Answer Choices	Responses	Percentage	Count
#1	Responses	100.00%	269
#2	Responses	79.93%	215
#3	Responses	69.14%	186
#4	Responses	50.56%	136
#5	Responses	34.20%	92

Q15

List the top three things you do in Stowe Village

Answered: 303 Skipped: 46

Answer Choices	Responses	Percentage	Count
#1	Responses	100.00%	303
#2	Responses	97.03%	294
#3	Responses	85.81%	260

Q16

Think of some of your favorite resort towns other than Stowe and tell us about anything that they offer that you think would work here.

Answered: 172 Skipped: 177

Aspen (public transportation/historic preservation) Chamonix (walk everywhere & public trans from Geneva and around town) Waitsfield - retains Vermont charm & lifestyle - local population include farmers, tradespeople, professionals, ski bums, shopkeepers & restaurateurs etc. Zermatt (no cars) BUT would not want to live in any of those towns - too tourist-centric

2/24/2015 8:19 AM

Most resort towns have a mix of clothing shops, arts/crafts shops, restaurants, museums - so that you could spend a couple of hours, or an evening, in the town. Stowe has these up and down the Mountain Road but not enough in Stowe Village. Need to change the "driving" experience into a "walking" experience and to do this the town needs to create incentives and parking so that some of the Mountain Road businesses have a reason to move into the Village.

2/22/2015 8:58 PM

Both Lenox, MA, and Vergennes, VT, are fun small towns with lots of variety in both dining options and shops.

2/14/2015 1:14 PM

Having stores open till 9 pm during peak tourist times like in Kennebunkport ME

2/6/2015 11:06 PM

Jackson Hole - bars with nightly live music like the mangy moose. Or just more nightlife like book clubs at Bear Pond, library or Black Cap. Moms night out events. More matinee movies. More activities for families with very

Q17

Check all initiatives that you think should be enacted in Stowe.

Answered: 338 Skipped: 11



Answer Choices	Responses
Refurbishing the sidewalks along Main Street	42.60% 144
Lower Village Sidewalk extension and refurbishment	43.79% 148
Repairing the Rec Path from Flood Damage	71.30% 241
Extending the Rec Path to connect into Morrisville's Rail Trail	51.48% 174
Relocating and/or burying the power lines along Main Street	45.27% 153
Building a multi-tiered parking facility in Stowe Village	33.14% 112
Add parking meters to the Stowe Village area to enforce time limits on parking	7.99% 27
Deregulate minimum parking space requirements for new businesses that wish to open in Stowe Village	58.88% 199
Add street lights to the east side of Main Street	25.44% 86
Move Parks maintenance buildings to allow the Memorial Park lands to be developed to the fullest extent possible for recreation facilities, fields, skateparks, tennis, arena, Gale Center, playground etc. etc.	38.46% 130
Ban the use of plastic shopping bags in our village grocery stores	29.59% 100
Add borrow-a-bike stations all around Stowe Village and up and down the Rec Path	35.80% 121
Total Respondents: 338	
Comments (122)	

Answer Choices	Responses
Have more community block party events where the Main Street is temporarily closed	44.97% 152
Install a traffic light at the corner of the Mountain Road and Main Street	13.91% 47
Install a traffic light at the intersection of Route 100 and West Hill Road	20.41% 69
Have a traffic officer direct traffic at the Mountain Road/Main Street intersection during very busy times	28.70% 97

Total Respondents: 338

[Comments \(122\)](#)

Powered by  SurveyMonkey

Check out our [sample surveys](#) and create your own now!

Stowe 2020
A Vision for Stowe Village
Appendix C

Results from the Stowe Village Vision Survey February, 2015
The following were comments by respondents to the open-ended questions.

1. What the Village Has:

- Unique Town with a First Class Resort
- Quintessential quaint village
- Gathering place
- Small Scale – Walkable
- Entrance to Stowe
- The Community Church
- The Memorial Building
- Amazing Views
- Proximity to Recreation/Hiking/Bike Trails
- Restaurants
- Starting Point of the Rec Path
- Helen Day Arts Center
- Green Mountain Inn
- Grocery Store
- Dance Studio
- Laughing Moon Chocolates
- Shaw's General Store
- Stowe Mercantile
- Bookstore
- Stowe Area Association
- Covered Bridge – make it a destination
- Independently owned businesses (mom and pop)
- Dog Friendly
- Quiet Path
- Low Crime Rate
- Charm
- Pedestrians Access
- Elementary School
- Stowe Arena
- Post Office

2. What Other Resort Towns Have More Of:

- Nightlife
- Walkable open main street
- Shuttle service to support the town
- Large recreational park – skate park
- After dark activities other than bars
- Better winter carnivals events etc.
- Outlet for backcountry guides, fishing, hiking
- Designated offsite parking
- Indoor recreational facility a la Breckenridge with only 4000 residents
- Encourage the Mountain Road to become lodging only and retail/restaurants all in the village.
- More residential density
- Saturday Night Concept
- More Magic in the decorations of each of the seasons
- Youth Movement – don't plan around the older people – but do cater to them
- Retail only on ground level of businesses
- Aspen's mountain is financially involved in the success of the town
- Residents loyalty programs that are really strong
- Trolley Service that gives history and information about the town

3. What do you view as the top three weaknesses of the Stowe Village?

- Parking and parking regulations
- Need greater variety of interesting retail stores
- Dichotomy of Mountain Village and Stowe Village
- Village dead after 5:00 pm
- Not enough nightlife both retail and entertainment/dining to bring and keep people in interested the village
- Need more uniquely Vermont dining – local farm to table, gourmet take-out and outdoor dining

- Lack of good breakfast, lunch and outdoor/street side options
- Empty storefronts make it look more dead than it is.
- High cost of retail space
- Too many real estate offices in prime space kills window shopping
- Gale Center needs renovating
- Traffic flows and truck traffic through village
- Village should extend back towards the elementary school to give it more depth
- Sidewalks need to be extended to the lower and upper village; Shaw's to Commodores and need to be maintained better
- Not enough residential life to support the village
- Too few stores to buy necessities like a pharmacy and a news stand
- Need better signage to create better pedestrian flow and let people know what's there and what's open
- Too many businesses have moved up the Mountain Road and are no longer as unique. Average has replaced unique in terms of daily service stores.
- Need better crosswalks
- The 100/108 Intersection
- A couple more restaurants and a couple more retail spots would make a world of difference
- Visible power lines

4. **5 things I would like to see in the Village:**

- The Community Table – the Village is the place in town that you walk and feel the community. Anything that brings people together to shop, dine, chat, walk and be friendly and communal.
- Lots of People mentioned looking at the Village as including the whole town – and look to the village as being the place where we still appear to be a village because it encourages the gathering aspects of the town rather than just the functionality of the Town
- The Village is where you go when you're not in a hurry.
- The Village Center for Municipal Activity
- Bring a better version of Lackey's back – soda fountain, worldly magazines and newspapers, internet coffee shop – open until late into the evening
- Pharmacy
- General store where you can get sundries/dry goods – a better version of the old Stafford's
- Butcher
- Skate Park
- Men's clothing store
- Shoes/boots
- Co- work space for all the people who work from home
- More Specialty shops promoting Vermont products/locavore
- Artist Community space
- Healthy Food Options, juice bar, raw foods etc.
- Hot pretzel shop with year round cider both hot and cold
- Wellness education school like the Omega Institute
- Place to buy VT foods and Alcohols
- Make the Sledding hill more of an event – hot chocolate, hot cider etc.
 - Kebabs late night take out
- Dessert Bar
- Book store/café open at night/conversation gathering
- Places and Reasons to gather in the Village
- Community Recreation Center/Revamped Gale Center/indoor Recreation for kids/teens / rock climbing wall, arcade etc.
- Light the tennis courts and the basketball court for evening hours
- The “can't resist” bakery
- Excellent Italian restaurant
- Tea Shop
- NCal satellite – Pet adoption center – bring the boutique pet store down to the village with it
- Close off Main Street on “in season “ weekends. Pedestrian Mall – Farmers Market
- Mini Bryant Park in winter with outdoor skating and heated artisan food coops
- Antique Store
- Great Home Furnishing store – Mountain Rustic
- Pizza Place, burger place – easy / take out – Pie Casso satellite, blue donkey satellite
- More benches and places to sit outside
- Banners for each season
- Old Hardware Store like a mini indoor Mall of food and crafts

- Artisanal Cheese Store
- Wine Barn and Wine Store
- Encourage small businesses back towards the school – park street etc.
- More Coffee Shops and one at least that is open into the evening – not everyone drinks
- Pop ups and some street entertainment or pushcarts in the good weather
- Yoga/exercise Studio
- Nail Salon – affordable
- Bread bakery with onsite baker
- Bike, tubes, ski's, sports rental store on Main Street
- Kiosk of all that's going on that one needs tickets for – Mountain, theater etc.

5. Initiatives people would like to see:

- Fix the Recreation Path
- Deregulate Minimum Parking requirements in Village
- Undertake easy parking mitigation efforts
- Hard look at traffic movement and calming – police during rush hour but no traffic lights and parking meters
- Lackey's property – tear it down make in an Amphitheater & large town green
- Refined Signage helping residents and visitors find the gems in Stowe – all cultural assets
- Bike friendly – road and mountain
- Family friendly town, maps, resources, access, experts to help
- Lake/Pond skating in the winter and swimming in the summer
- Serious Indoor Rec building
- Divert Traffic around town
- Great Festivals for each Season – Halloween should be one of them....but create them around "off" times
- Create parking for employees
- Park and Ride
- Extend rec path loop to connect up through Moscow to do a loop around Stowe
- Park and Rec Maintenance building would also be great Amphitheater area
- Pedestrian Bridge from soccer fields to quiet path
- Become a Greener model town in all aspects a la POW (Protect Our Winters)

- Sidewalks to connect down to Shaw's
- More lodging within walking distance to the village
- More residential unit
- Better signage of where things are
- Jazz Club or adult music night club – not restaurant
- Stores that focus on an activity – glass blowing, pottery, furniture making
- Much better shuttle service
- Connect Stowe and Smugglers Notch without cars