

Tourism, Creative Economy, and Industrial/Manufacturing.

- C. Connect St. Johnsbury's downtown to visitors of surrounding area attractions.
- D. Enable re-use of historical and viable industrial, commercial, and mixed use buildings for staff housing and incubator complexes that support entrepreneurial initiatives such as artisan studios and other start-up businesses, while they reach profitability.
- E. Support comprehensive and continuous medical care to maximize health outcomes.
- F. Assess feasibility of including a percentage of site development costs as community art and /or recreation for public use.

1.6 Transportation Policy: Maintain safe, efficient, convenient, and environmentally sound transportation alternatives to in-town and intercity jobs, schools, shopping districts, and activities, and enable mass transit alternatives.

- A. Maintain safe municipal parking lots for daily and overnight parking needs.
- B. Maintain safe bicycle and pedestrian routes throughout the Town.
- C. Support funding opportunities for commuter mass transit to and through regional and state-wide towns and cities.

1.7 Energy Policy: Increase energy self-sufficiency and decrease dependency on external energy providers by stimulating the development of alternative energy sources for the Town and its residents while keeping dark-sky standards in mind.

- A. Maintain dark-sky standard and energy efficiency in parking lots and other high density lighting fixtures, while continuing to light sidewalks for pedestrian safety.
- B. Designate preferred locations for siting renewable energy fields and community energy generators.
- C. Perform energy audits on municipal buildings and make necessary improvements.
- D. Integrate Baseline measurements for state energy standards (Act 174) into the municipal dashboard as well as the municipal ordinances and bylaws.

1.8 Hazard Mitigation and Flood Resiliency Policy: Protect the natural environment and minimize risk to natural habitat, property, and people.

- A. Maintain the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan (Approved by FEMA August 8, 2016)
- B. Minimize risk to individuals and property by amending bylaws to include model standards for flood plain, river corridor and wetlands management that restrict new development and substantial redevelopment within flood hazard areas and river corridors.
- C. Maintain flood plain manager certification.

1.9 Preservation and Conservation Policy: Protect the buildings, waterways, wetlands, valleys, hillsides, and historic sites that represent our natural resources, history, heritage, and scenic beauty.

- A. Maintain and renovate the Town's historic buildings and sites.

- B. Maintain and protect our natural landscapes and historic buildings, waterways and hillsides, preserving our scenic resources.
- C. Collect and display items relevant to the history of the Town and its people.
- D. Maintain our mixed use districts and downtown designation.
- E. Continue to maintain and enhance the quality of the town's existing settlements and neighborhoods by expanding availability of tax incentives and other benefits available through state neighborhood, village and/or growth center designations for the Summerville neighborhood, the Hastings North neighborhood, the Village of East St. Johnsbury, and the Village of St. Johnsbury Center (see Downtown Area Base Map in Appendix D).

1.10 Financial Policy: Sustain service levels across all infrastructure and capital budget actions with established reserves, while stabilizing the real property tax burden of residential and commercial property owners.

- A. Stabilize property values.
- B. Continue upgrades to wastewater and water treatment facilities.
- C. Continue combined sewer overflow (CSO) elimination program.
- D. Combine sidewalk, roadwork, bike and pedestrian upgrades with all CSO projects where feasible.
- E. Combine beautification projects with all CSO projects where feasible.
- F. Evaluate and develop bridge maintenance and replacement plans.



Figure 8 St. Johnsbury Hills from Interstate 91

- Everyone has continuous access to energy.
- Everyone lives in a healthy, safe, and comfortable home.
- No one spends more than 6% of their income on energy bills.
- Those who are most impacted have the most powerful voice in decision making and receive a share of benefits.
  - Use Vermont's [Guiding Principles for a Just Transition](#) (Scoring Rubric)
  - Use [Initiative for Energy Justice Scorecard](#) (+ [Interactive PDF](#))
  - Use the [EPA Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool](#)
  - Use [UVM's Vermont Environmental Disparity Index](#)

**GOAL - Move the Region's Energy System to meet the goals of Vermont's energy and greenhouse gas reduction goals while balancing economic vitality and affordability.**

**Objective:**

*Reduce regional energy burden and fossil fuel pollution to support the State's climate and weatherization goals.*

**ACTIONS:**

- Continue and evaluate partnerships with existing utilities and other energy and conservation programs and funding sources to facilitate weatherization, fuel switching, and increased energy savings and comfort within NEK housing and other building stock.
- Decrease fossil fuel heating and increase affordable electrification by working with Energy Committees and other NEK Energy Network partners to raise awareness among homeowners, renters, landlords, developers, etc. on the benefits of fossil-fuel-free technology such as cold-climate heat pumps, advanced wood heating and geothermal systems. Examples include thermal-led combined heat and power (CHP), biomass district heating and biogas generation (capturing the methane produced by landfills or farms and using it instead of fossil fuels).
- Support upgrade and trade-out programs and incentives for retiring outdated, higher-emission, polluting wood burning stoves and boilers.
- Reduce fossil fuel consumption in the transportation sector, through Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and the electric vehicle promotion strategies outlined further in the NVDA Transportation & Land Use Plan.
- Provide assistance to municipalities when requested to enhance town plans to be consistent with Act 174 standards for the purpose of enabling municipalities the ability to gain substantial deference in the Certificate of Public Good Section 248 process. This assistance will include working with municipalities and businesses to identify natural, cultural, historic, or scenic resources to be protected from all development types, identify preferred locations for renewable energy generation facilities, and encourage "leading by example" with respect to energy efficiency for buildings and transportation and the deployment of renewable energy.
- Empower the NEK Energy Network to engage with residents and municipalities about opportunities to reduce energy burden and switch to affordable renewable energy sources. Additionally, continue to collaborate and partner with organizations (including municipalities, educational institutions, businesses, and non-profits) to help meet the State's energy and climate goals.
- Support a wide variety of renewable energy generation types, including, but not limited to, sustainable uses of biomass for heating, passive solar building design, biodigesters for electricity

generation, photovoltaic solar, agrivoltaics, small-scale wind turbines, and optimizing the energy potential for existing hydro-electric dams.

- Work with the distribution utilities on long-range infrastructure capacity planning.
- Support in-place upgrades of existing facilities, including existing renewable energy generation, storage, transmission lines, distribution lines and substations as needed to reliably serve municipalities and the region.
- Support changes in federal, state, and local policies to achieve the state of Vermont’s goals related to the Comprehensive Energy Plan, Climate Action Plan, and Environmental Justice law.
- Encourage the legislature to adopt policies and increase incentives and rebates that reduce energy burden.

**Objective:**

*Promote climate-ready and resilient buildings and communities.*

**ACTIONS:**

- Promote Vermont’s residential and commercial building energy standards (RBES/CBES) for new construction and existing buildings, including additions, alterations, renovations, and repairs.
  - Host and facilitate building science/standards training and education opportunities for local officials, zoning administrators, and relevant workforce development groups. Encourage communities with zoning to require Certificates of Occupancy. Encourage the local adoption of “stretch energy codes.”
  - Review local zoning bylaws and offer technical assistance to development review boards when evaluating the energy, climate, and health implications of site plans for proposed developments.
  - Work with housing and energy efficiency organizations to promote and improve the regional supply of affordable, high efficiency manufactured housing, such as Zero Energy Modular homes.
- Continue collaborations with key partners, such as Vermont Department of Health, state and regional emergency management, regional hospitals and community groups; identify buildings and facilities that serve critical community functions, including as emergency heating and cooling sites.
- Pilot Community-led Resilience Hubs in the NEK to advance climate and energy resilience, emergency management, and social equity while providing expanded opportunities for communities to be successful before, during, and after disruptions. ([2022 EAN Action Team Proposal](#))

**Objective:**

*Support the development of new, community-scale renewable energy in the region to meet the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan’s goal of using 90% renewable energy by 2050, in a manner that is affordable, equitable, and respects the natural environment and its inhabitants.*

**ACTIONS:**

- Support the development and siting of renewable energy, storage, transmission, and distribution resources on state and regionally preferred (and potential) locations, as identified by NVDA Act 174 Energy Maps (available online at [NVDA.net](http://NVDA.net)).

## REGIONAL ENERGY GOALS & STRATEGIES

An adequate, reliable, diverse, and secure energy supply will benefit the region.

- Promote a diversified energy portfolio for the region.
- Support the upgrade of regional transmission systems to continue to reduce constraints.
- Support the maintenance and upgrade of existing energy generation facilities and related infrastructure.
- Encourage local responders to plan for emergency energy resources (VEM Emergency Generator Grant Program generators).

Affordable energy alternatives will be available for the region's users that decrease the region's reliance on fossil fuel.

- Assist in the development of businesses that support alternative energy use.
- Work with Tier 3 energy service providers to promote the installation of cold climate heat pumps and geothermal systems by facilitating outreach and education on their benefits.
- Partner with Efficiency Vermont and Tier 3 energy service providers to increase the use of efficient wood heat and biomass systems.
- Support the development of small-scale renewable resources, such as wind and solar, and the use of supplemental sources (wood) to stabilize energy costs.
- Promote and support rail infrastructure as a cost-effective transportation resource for the energy industry.
- Encourage and support agricultural production of biofuels and oilseed crops and explore ways to broaden access to processing infrastructure.
- Identify potential users of district heating and wood heating systems and provide assistance to communities seeking to develop them.
- Encourage the legislature to increase incentives and rebates for efficient wood heat systems.
- Provide outreach and education among vendors, contractors, and the general public through venues such as tradeshow and workshops.
- Provide communities with an analysis of potential areas that are suitable for ground source heat pumps.
- Support upgrade and trade-out programs and incentives for older, higher emission wood burning stoves and boilers.

Decrease the region's reliance on single occupancy vehicle trips and gas/diesel powered vehicles.

- Continue to advocate for better telecommunications infrastructure so employees can work from home.
- Encourage local employers to reduce VMTs through programs such as ride sharing and Go Vermont.