

Actions

This Town Plan rests on the principles of respect for the environment, sound economics and regard for community values. The following summary comprises a set of actions to achieve the Plan’s goals, as outlined in each chapter, based on those principles.



Infrastructure

Pursue Irasburg’s designation as a Designated Village Center. Such a designation will make the town of Irasburg eligible for tax credits and other financial support from the state of Vermont and from granting agencies such as the Agency of Transportation, the Vermont Preservation Trust, the Vermont Arts Council and others.

Village Center Designation will support the Town of Irasburg in pursuing the following actions described and encouraged in this Plan:

- Repair, upgrade and maintain town facilities while preserving their architectural, structural and historical integrity.

In this Chapter:

- *Infrastructure*
- *Landscape Preservation*
- *Energy*
- *Social Capital*
- *Economics*

- Maintain the Irasburg Common in good condition.
- Encourage wider use of the Common, the Town Hall and other Village infrastructure by citizens and tourists alike for social and civic functions as a center of community life.
- Preserve Irasburg’s existing housing stock located in the village and encourage development and redevelopment in the historic Village Center.
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle transportation options, including development of a multi-use path from the Village Center to the Irasburg Village School.
- Develop a dedicated Park & Ride facility.
- Investigate the feasibility of installing an EV charging station.

Support state and regional efforts to improve telecommunications so that all residents have access to affordable high-speed internet and mobile telephone service. Communication towers should be sited and designed to blend into the landscape as much as possible. To achieve aesthetic and other goals, Irasburg should seek party status in the permitting process for new and expanded telecommunication facilities.

Build any new roads to meet all town standards and specifications and minimize impact on natural and scenic resources identified throughout this plan.

Assess the future need for increased cemetery capacity.



Landscape Preservation

Preserve and protect Irasburg's landscape, ridgelines, water sources, forests, agricultural lands and historic character:

- Encourage the Selectboard's active participation in Act 250 and Section 248 processes to promote and support the Town's planning goals.
- Protect and preserve Irasburg's landscape character and quality by requiring an independent Visual Impact Assessment carried out according to best professional practice, for any development that triggers an Act 250 or Section 248 process and all construction projects occurring in the Mountain, Hills, and Ridgelines Area (see map) that change the visual character and quality of Irasburg.
- Encourage growth that preserves traditional settlement patterns in the historic center and along principal routes radiating from the center.
- Through education and outreach, including the Irasburg student enrichment program, the Lake Region Vocational Agricultural Program and other community programs, strengthen a culture of appreciation and respect for Irasburg's geology, wildlife, forests, rivers and streams, wetlands, agriculture, forests and historic heritage.
- Encourage and support strong and diversified agriculture and silviculture. Support and encourage Current Use and Land Trust programs that conserve Irasburg's ridgelines, forests and agricultural lands.

Encourage silvicultural (forestry) operations that follow best forest management practices:

- Keep forests forests by maintaining working forests, promoting healthy forests and maintaining diversity within forests.
- Discourage road construction (with the exception of truck roads used in forestry operations) in forest tracts.
- Continue and strengthen the exemplary practice of the Current Use Program that currently enrolls the majority of forested land in Irasburg under forest management.
- Promote the use of Advanced Wood Heat (wood pellets and chips) as a renewable energy source.

Discourage development in flood-prone areas. Mitigate risks to buildings, historic structures, critical infrastructure and municipal investments subject to flooding. Construct road infrastructure to withstand floods and reduce water runoff.

Encourage sustainable stewardship of earth extraction activities, such as mining, sand and gravel pits, through state permitting; the Act 250 process; and the development of rehabilitation and reclamation plans for vacant, closed or unused earth extraction sites.



Energy

Meet Irasburg's energy targets through conservation, efficiency, renewable generation, and other efforts.

Work with NVDA, to ensure that regional energy policy addresses Irasburg's needs and concerns and to influence energy-related policy at the state level. Form an Irasburg Energy Committee to strengthen

Irasburg's efforts to increase energy efficiency and renewable energy generation.

Develop an Irasburg Energy Communication Plan to build community awareness of resources, opportunities and ongoing activities in energy efficiency, conservation and generation.

Conservation and efficiency

- Encourage partnerships with housing organizations, builders, developers, utilities and government agencies to support energy-efficient housing through high-efficiency new construction and weatherization of existing housing.
- Encourage energy efficiency in sugaring operations, making use of dedicated programs offered by Efficiency Vermont and electric utilities.
- Complete actions recommended by 2010 energy audits of town buildings, as budgets permit. Publicize resulting energy savings, to serve as a model for cost-effective energy efficiency.
- Support efficiency and conservations improvements at Irasburg Village School, including replacement of HVAC controls and installation of energy-efficient lighting, to the extent that budgets permit. Use efficiency improvement process as learning opportunity for students.
- Develop improved Park & Ride facilities in the Village Center to encourage car-pooling and reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips.
- Work with electric utilities to encourage fuel switching, including the potential location of a plug-in charging station for EV's in Irasburg's village center.
- Support efforts to implement Vermont's Universal Recycling Law, Act 148, to reduce truck traffic driving to the Coventry Landfill.

Energy generation

- Encourage residential rooftop solar installation in keeping with the General Standards outlined in this plan. Where feasible, consider onsite energy generation installation at town facilities including Irasburg Village School.
- Ensure that all firefighters have current training for roof-mounted solar installations and wind installations.
- Encourage state and federal programs that support improved home heating options, including programs to update older wood boilers, upgrade to newer more efficient wood boilers, and, where feasible, install heat pump technology.
- Prevent "energy sprawl" by following the standards for the siting, maximum height and maximum capacity of energy facilities, as established in Chapter 8, "Energy." Strongly discourage utility-scale energy projects on ridgelines, in forests or on agricultural lands. At the same time, encourage the development of renewable energy projects in areas such as on existing structures, on closed landfills or in gravel pits or other barren lands.
- Promote and encourage energy efficiency and conservation to meet energy goals without the need for development on ridgelines, forests or agricultural lands.
- Work with the Vermont Electric Coop and other utilities to increase distributed generation.



Social Capital

Provide a context for citizens to work together for the common good despite their differences. Build a strong sense of community among Irasburg's citizens, recognizing that a culture of trust and mutual support is key to the quality of life that Irasburg citizens value. Discourage directions and developments that threaten to fracture and divide.

Support the efforts of the school system, NVDA, employers, and young adults to improve young people's access to meaningful employment. Ensure that they are exposed to a broad range of future careers and have the ability to learn the skills needed for post-high-school employment.

- Encourage the widest possible community participation in educational policy- and decision-making at all levels, from state government to local school board.
- Support the After-School and Summer Enrichment Program, sponsored by the Leach Public Library.
- Support opportunities for adult education and enrichment, such as the University of Irasburg.

Support efforts of regional organizations to meet the housing needs of citizens at all stages of life. Encourage the development of accessory apartments and modular homes as options to increase the supply of low- and moderate-income housing.



Economics

Encourage innovative and creative approaches to using the town's natural, historic and human resources in support of a strong economic future. Support commercial ventures that match the village's scale and rural character.

- Support home-based businesses, farm stands, seasonal events, and a farmers' market for locally produced agricultural products.
- Develop an "Irasburg brand." Promote local maple syrup and other local products.
- Create a business directory of Irasburg's home-based occupations to advertise and promote local businesses.
- Assist residents and visitors in finding local businesses that meet their needs.
- Discourage the development of box stores or similarly-scaled businesses in Irasburg.

Work with state legislators, agencies, NVDA, providers and other entities to increase the availability of safe, affordable childcare.