

Strafford TP Digest #2

Chapter IV - Education

Strafford has one school— The Newton School which covers grades K–8. Across the street from the school is also the privately run Creative Preschool. The designated high school for Strafford students is Thetford Academy. Parents may petition the School Board to send their children to another approved high school with the Town contributing no more than Thetford's tuition for non-resident students.

The average number of students attending Newton School has been 123 per year over the past 5 years. The lowest enrollment of 117 was in the 2015/16 school year. The highest was 131 in 2011/12.

Newton School has 34 employees, including 12 full-time teachers.

The Town Plan recommends two "implementation tasks."

To formulate a plan providing for the long-term needs and options of Strafford students regarding high school education.

To encourage measures to bring greater energy efficiency to Newton, including traffic reductions when students are being dropped off or picked up.

Chapter V - Utilities and Facilities

Capital Budgeting & Planning (CB&P)

Under State statutes communities can create a planning program that identifies infrastructure projects and priorities over a five year period. The Town of Strafford does not have a CB&P, however, the Town Plan does include an implementation plan to develop one (p. 16, 94–95). The CB&P would be developed jointly by the Planning Commission, Selectboard, and a volunteer Budget Committee.

Solid Waste

Strafford is part of the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste District (GUV), which provides recycling opportunities and trash hauling by private vendors. The GUV is also working on a proposal for a lined landfill in North Hartland with a potential 50-year disposal capacity. Strafford supports the GUV through per capita and waste generation fees paid to the hauler, which places the greatest financial burden on the largest producers of trash.

Strafford has been one of the most successful recycling efforts in the District. We are well above the State's goal of recycling 50% of the Town's waste stream. This effort is organized and staffed entirely by volunteers!

Cemeteries

The greatest challenge facing the Town cemeteries is an increasingly critical shortage of space. The Town Plan recommends that the Cemetery Commission and the Strafford Cemetery Association—all volunteers—get together with the Town to address the problem.

Chapter VII - Transportation

Public Highway System

There are just over 80 miles of roads in Strafford, broken down as follows (miles rounded up):

Class 1 — 0

Class 2 — 16 miles (8 paved and 8 gravel)

Class 3 — 52 miles (6 paved and 46 gravel)

Class 4 — just over 12 miles

Unlike most towns in our area, Strafford has no Class 1 roads, which are entirely maintained by the State. This results in the Town bearing the full cost of our road maintenance. Highway classifications determine the amount of state aid available to assist with repairs and maintenance. Twenty-three per cent of Strafford's roads are Class 2, with just over 8 miles paved. The majority of our roads are Class 3, with almost 6 miles paved. No State aid is available for Class 4 roads.

Policy recommendations include:

- Public input should be considered before making any decisions about changes to the maintenance level, surface treatment, or class of a town road.
- Transportation planning should be considered in tandem with land use and landscape features.
- Combine widening of roadways to accommodate safe use by bicyclists, using traffic calming measures (speed indicator signs), and enforcing speed limits.
- Some Class 4 roads should be retained as public resources.
- Development on private roads should be required to conform to town access standards and to provide year-round access for services like fire and rescue.

The Town Plan proposes the following implementation tasks:

- the use of geo-textile fabric on all unpaved roads to reduce maintenance costs
- the bicycle and pedestrian path from Varney Field should be extended to the recreation fields in South Strafford
- a bicycle, horse, and pedestrian path along the Ompom River should connect South Strafford to the Upper Village to reduce risk of accidents on Morrill Highway
- creative solutions to parking problems in the area of Coburns' Store should be explored and implemented
- the Town should develop a long range plan for public highways.

Next up: Chapter VIII — Natural Resources