

Section 1.

Town Organization

Table 1.1 – General Town Characteristics

Town Name Northfield

The Public Works Department has been combined between Town and Village operations, creating a more cost-effective system. User fees support the Village-administered utilities (water, sewer, and electric). Currently, the Village and Town have different tax bases.

The Villages

From 1785 to 1825, Northfield’s four villages were developed:

South Village had numerous small businesses and manufacturing operations. It is now known as **South Northfield**.

Center Village is the site of the first post office, town clerk's office, and churches, and it was the social and political center of town for many years. The area is now known as **Northfield Center**.



Factory Village, which is the present **Village of Northfield**, was the next to develop. The area was named for the woolen mill located there. The railroad arrived in Factory Village at Depot Square in the 1840’s. Due to all the new activity, the residents began to request streetlights, sidewalks, and fire and police protection. They also petitioned the legislature to establish a separate Village of Northfield. The Village was incorporated on November 14, 1855.



For the next half-century, Village residents taxed themselves for a variety of services. Sidewalks were laid down, the Water Department was established and the first electric plant was built in 1895. The first sewer lines were laid from 1901 to 1904. At the turn of the century, the Police Department was set up, and the two independent fire companies, which had existed since the 1860's, were turned over to Village control.

Northfield Falls was the last to develop, and by the late 1820’s it was a thriving community.

Section 2.
Human Capital

Table 2.1 – Northfield Population Characteristics

	Northfield Village	Northfield Town¹	Town Remainder²
Total Population, 2000	3,208	5,791	2,583
Total Population, 1990	1,889	5,610	3,721
Absolute Population Change, 1990-2000	1,319	181	-1,138
Percent Population Change, 1990-2000	69.8%	3.2%	-30.6%
Persons per Square Mile, 2000	1,782.2	151.2	70.8
Persons per Square Mile, 1990	1,049.4	146.5	101.9
Area in Square Miles	1.8 ³	38.3 ³	36.5 ³
Percent Dependent, 2000 (under 18 and over 65)	26.8	31.1	36.4
Percent Rural, 1990		100.0	
Percent Rural Farm, 1990		0.3	
Percent Native Born (United States), 1990		97.5	
Percent Reporting French/French Canadian Ancestry, 1990		26.5	

¹Town population numbers include Village numbers.

²Remainder equals Town numbers minus Village numbers.

³There is a discrepancy between the town/village area data given by the Census and by the Northfield Town and

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Table 2.3 – Northfield Housing and Family Characteristics

	1990	2000
Number of Families	1,194	1,225
Number of Households	1,682	1,819
Average Family Size	N.A.	2.95
Average Household Size	2.61	2.46
Single-Mother Households	111	182
Total Children in Single-Parent Families	223	N.A.
Total Housing Units	1,877	1,958
Number of Owner-Occupied Housing Units	1,168	1,244
Number of Renter-Occupied Housing Units	514	575
Median Housing Unit Value	\$82,400	N.A.
Median Rent	\$344	N.A.
Median Gross Rent as % of Household Income	24.0%	N.A.
Percent Increase in Households (1990-2000)		8.1
Percent Increase in Housing Units (1990-2000)		4.3

Sources: Center for Rural Studies/VCGI. 2001. Vermont Indicators Online.
<http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators/>

U.S. Census Bureau. 1990, 2000. American Factfinder. <http://factfinder.census.gov>

these trends. It should be noted that much of the 2000 income data has yet to be released by the U.S. Census.

Table 2.3 shows that the number of families in Northfield, including overall households, increased between 1990 and 2000. The number of single-mother households also rose. In contrast, the number of housing units did not keep up with the number of households over the ten-year period with an 8.1% increase vs. 4.3%. This is in keeping with the declining housing vacancy rates in northwestern and central Vermont. The decline in average household size only exacerbates the situation. Perhaps the higher social prevalence of divorces nationwide is having an effect upon

The Famous Paines...

Elijah Paine was born in Brooklyn, Connecticut. In 1781 he graduated from Harvard College. Paine was one of the original Northfield grantees, and in 1784 he moved to the town. He served on the Vermont legislature, and was appointed

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Table 2.4– Town, County, and State Income & Poverty Comparisons

	Northfield	Washington County	Vermont
Annual Average Wage, 2000	\$24,015	\$28,306	
Per Capita Income, 1989	\$10,455	\$13,547	\$13, 527
Median Family Income, 1989	\$35,364	\$35,596	\$34,780
Median Household Income, 1989	\$29,609	\$29,623	

Section 3.

Built Resource Capital

Table 3.1– Northfield Property Valuation & Taxation

Average Residential Value (single family res. on less than 6 acres), 1998	\$85,186
Total Value of Grand List, 2000	\$1,479,723
Effective Property Tax Rate (rate per \$100), 1998	2.26%

Source: Center for Rural Studies/VCGI. 2001. Vermont Indicators Online. <http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators/>

History of Business in Northfield

Almost all of the settlers to Northfield were farmers at first, bartering goods and services. Until about 1814, residents made potash on their farms and sent it to mills in America and abroad. Elijah Paine built a huge woolen mill in 1812 when the demand for Potash began to decline. The mill employed between 175 and 200 workers. For years it was the town's largest employer.

The construction of the VT 3e68rhl VRaiceaCdec,eS804 421.0209 3E8T63.9d2C0j73c,eS.8 177.3

residents. Nevertheless, due to the mass production of the automobile, many of these businesses failed. Workers no longer had to depend on local businesses for jobs because they could drive anywhere employment was available.

As all other employment sectors declined, the importance of Norwich University increased. The presence of the college has meant economic stability for the community and a social and cultural life Northfield probably would not otherwise have seen.

Since World War II, population growth has been slow but steady. While no large industry has come to town, a number of small businesses have sprung up. However, few employ more than 30 people, and most residents work out of town. Over two centuries, Northfield has evolved from farming, to manufacturing, to a mix of small businesses and a college-town economy.

Table 3.2– Northfield Employment Characteristics

Top Five Industries, 1990

(employed persons 16 years and under)

Educational Services 23.8%

Retail 14.8%

Finance/Insurance/Real Estate 9.5%

Manufacturing (durables) 7.6%

Construction 6.5%

	Northfield Town	Washington County
Unemployment Rate, 2000	4.3%	3.1%
Change in Annual Average Unemployment, 1990-2000	-2%	N.A.

Table 3.2 illustrates the effect that Norwich University has upon Northfield’s employment scheme. At 23.8% the educational sector is by far the largest source of jobs in the town. Nevertheless, Northfield has a higher unemployment rate than the whole of Washington County.

Sources: Center for Rural Studies/VCGI. 2001. Vermont Indicators Online.

<http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators/>

U.S. Census Bureau. 1990, 2000. American Factfinder.

<http://factfinder.census.gov>

Transportation

Major Automobile Routes

Northfield lies along VT Route 12, which leads about 7 miles north up to Montpelier, the capital of Vermont, and exit 9 on Interstate 89. Route 64 joins 12 in South Northfield and goes east 2 miles to exit 5 on I-89 in Williamstown.

The VT Central Railroad

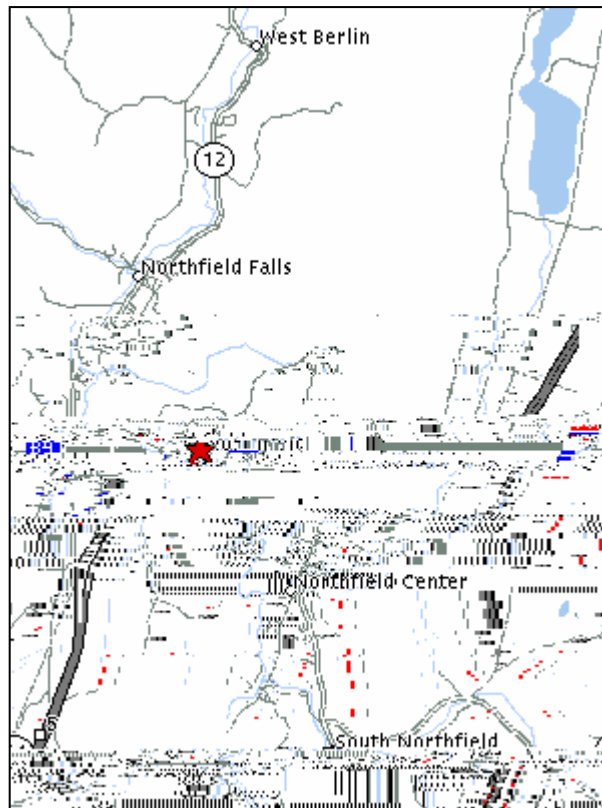
As stated above, the VT Central Railroad was initially based in Northfield, and it was a

Community Profile – Northfield, VT

Table 3.3– Northfield Town Local Transportation Behavior

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) for State & US Highways, 1998	37,680.0
Change in VMT for State & US Highways, 1986-1998	7,611.8
Total Number of Accidents, 1997	10
Number of Accidents involving fatalities, 1997	0
Percent Population who Work in Town of Residence, 1990	23.8%
Commuters who Drive Alone, 1990	1,645
Commuters who Carpool, 1990	282
Commuters who use Public Transit, 1990	0

Source: Center for Rural Studies/VCGI. 2001. Vermont Indicators Online.
<http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators/>



Section 4.

Social Capital

Schools

A school is not just an education resource, but also a great social networking hub for the community. Northfield's school system, which includes the Middle/high School and Comisky Elementary school, ranks fourth out of 23 in the state.

Comisky Elementary School has approximately 371 students from Preschool to Grade 5. Judy Granger is the School Principal.

Northfield Middle/High School recently experienced a glorious moment when the high school girl's soccer team, the Marauders, won their 13th state championship title in a victory over the Arlington Eagles on October 27, 2001. The Middle/High School Principal is Peter Evans.

Norwich University is the oldest private military academy in the United States. The academy moved from Norwich to Northfield in 1866 after the college buildings in Norwich burned down. For many years Norwich was the chief source of horse cavalry officers and engineers, outside of Westpoint. In the 1960's, there were about 1000 students attending the university, with an instructor-student ratio of 1-13. Students who enroll in the Corps of Cadets follow a disciplined military regimen, while the other students lead a more traditional academic lifestyle. As stated earlier in this profile, Norwich is one of the most influential institutions in Northfield's history, as a major source of employment, education, and college culture.

Town Activities

Recreation

Northfield has approximately 36 acres of Park and Recreation facilities including two softball fields, children's playground, and a 350,000 gallon pool. There are many other community based recreational opportunities available, such as the Municipal Swimming pool, the Parks Department Program, the Northfield Country Club, the Northfield/Roxbury Snow Travelers, mountain biking, bicycle touring, fishing the Dog River, hiking Paine Mountain, cross country skiing, and the Northfield Petting Zoo. The Northfield Teen

Community Profile – Northfield, VT

Annual Celebrations

In 2001, Northfield held its 25th annual weekend-long celebration and the 28th annual

Section 5.

Natural Resource Capital

Geography and Layout

Today, the spatial relationship of the Town is influenced by a scattered settlement plan. Many hills and a lot of pastureland encouraged farmers to settle haphazardly. The Village is quite even and spacious. It is divided by the VT Central Railroad tracks and the Dog River, which run parallel and very close to each other. The east side contains the business district and higher class dwellings.

Mountains and Hills

The **Northfield Range** of the Green Mountains is located along the town's western boundary. There are no roads bisecting these mountains within the town boundaries. **Mount Adams**, at 3236 feet, is Northfield's highest peak.

Paine Mountain is located in the northeastern corner of town. This mountain was named after one of Vermont's distinguished early settlers, Elijah Paine.

Turkey Hill serves as a reminder of the bird that once provided food for so many early wilderness travelers. By the early 19th Century, the sight of a turkey would be a rarity.

Rivers

Dog River, a tributary of the Winooski, passes through the center of Northfield. There are two small streams, the **Cox Brook** and **Bull Run**, which are tributaries of Dog River.

The **Northfield Gulfs** are the result of the damming of the normal drainage by glacial drift and the floods of water resulting from the melting ice.

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Table 5.1– Northfield Town Selected Natural and Geographical Information

Land Area (square miles)	38.3
Water Area (square miles)	0.0
Percent Conserved Lands, 1999	3.6%
Change in Forest Land to Developed Land, 1970-90 (acres)	28.7
Change in Forest Land to Non-Forested Land, 1970-90 (acres)	5.3
Change in Non-Forested Land to Developed Land, 1970-90 (acres)	7.1

Sources: Center for Rural Studies/VCGI. 2001. Vermont Indicators Online. <http://crs.uvm.edu/indicators/>
Town of Northfield, VT. 2000. Report of the Officers.

Section 6.
Sources

This Community Profile is an attempt to br