

Section 1.

Town Organization

Table 1.1 – General Town Characteristics

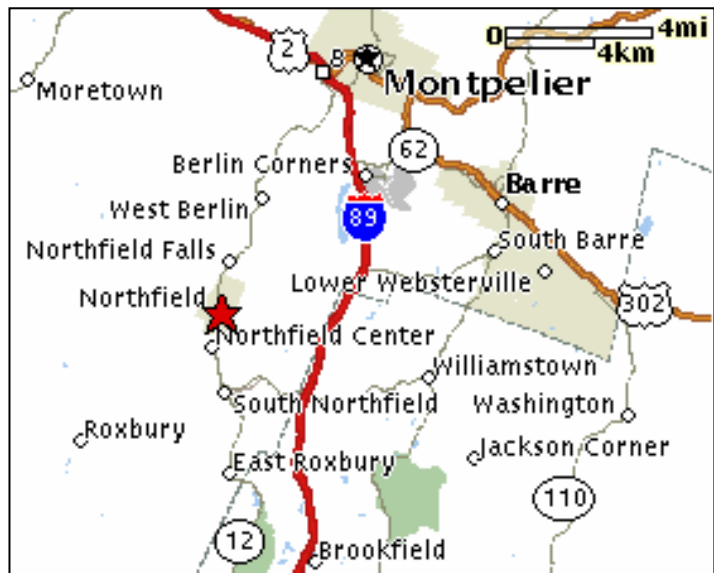
Town Name	Northfield
County	Washington
Date of Town Charter	August 10, 1781
Incorporated Villages	Northfield Village
Date Incorporated	November 14, 1855
Unincorporated Villages and Settlements	Northfield Center, Northfield Falls, South Northfield

Sources: Business Center of Vermont, Inc. 1996. "Welcome to Northfield, VT"
<http://www.in-vermont.com/northfield/>.

Marsland, William. 1962. Northfield, Vermont: A Community Study.

Where is Northfield?

Northfield is actually one of the centermost towns in the state of Vermont, as can be seen by looking at the front cover of this profile. It is located in Washington County on VT Route 12 and shares borders with Moretown, Berlin, Williamstown, Brookfield, Roxbury, Warren, and Waitsfield. It is about 7 miles south of Montpelier, the state capital.



What's in A Name?

Northfield, Vermont, was probably named for Northfield, Massachusetts, since many of the proprietors came from that area. That town, in turn, was so named because it was the northernmost town in the colony when it was created.

Chronology

Aug. 10, 1784- Original town charter to Major Joel Matthews and associates.

May, 1785- First settlement made by Ames Robinson and others from Westminster.

Jan. 8, 1847- VT Central Railroad put into operation. The tracks divide what is now Northfield Village.

1823- Town inventory: one meeting house, one tavern, two stores, one saddler, one hatter, two blacksmith shops, one tannery, and 17 dwellings.

1866- Norwich University, nation’s oldest private military college, is moved to Northfield from Norwich, VT.

1870- The grade school is built.

1956- The New high school is built. Junior high moves into old high school.

Government

The Town and Village of Northfield are two separate municipal entities, but they share many resources. They operate under the Council/Manager form of government. To operate more efficiently, both the Boards of Selectmen and Trustees employ one Municipal Manager. The Municipal Building houses the Manager's Office, the Superintendent of Public Works, Bookkeeping, Utility Offices, the Town Treasurer and the Town Clerk. The Village owns the building, and the Town pays rent. The Village Public Works operation pays rent to be housed in the Town-owned Municipal Garage, which also is the headquarters for the Police and Ambulance operations.

Table 1.2– Northfield General Planning Characteristics

<i>Vermont Forum on Sprawl Category</i>	1 – “Traditional Center”
Town Plan	March, 2001
Zoning Ordinance	1972
Subdivision Ordinance	None
Septic Approval Process	None

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

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

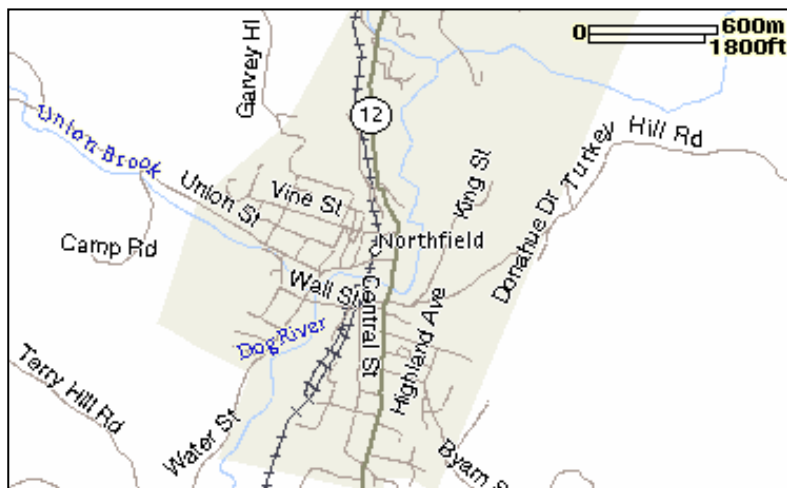
From 1785 to 1825, Northfield’s four villages were developed:

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.

[Table of Contents](#)

Next: [Human Capital](#)