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SECTION 6. COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

In an effort spearheaded by Dave Larsen, local teacher, and with no small amount of assistance from Sonia Alexander, Wilmington Town Manager, the town of Wilmington invited the VT Council on Rural Development to begin a dialogue addressing important issues in the community. In March 2001 the Council began a series of community visits, bringing in various people from across the state representing many areas of interest and expertise. Participants listened to town members and formed a set of community priorities. On April 30, 2001, participants and town members in a community meeting established a final list of priorities. These Priority Challenges are listed below:

- **Education Issue** – Explore options for acquiring capital funding to deal with facility deterioration and space deficiencies at the high school. Address funding needs to provide adequate programs and courses beyond minimum standards for Wilmington children
- **Act 60 Issue** – Determine whether there are possible actions to convince the Legislature to re-evaluate Wilmington’s “gold town” designation, reduce its contribution to the “sharing pool”, or separate capital expenditures from the sharing pool.
- **Community Center Issue** – Continue efforts to establish the teen, day care, senior and other community-based activities center. Build in possibilities for regularly scheduled out-posted social and employment services on site.
- **Economic Development Issue/Growth/Non Growth Issue** – Reach consensus as a community to determine where the town wants to go. Expand on tourist-based economy to create a year-round appeal and bring in other businesses. Establish same hours for all businesses and extend beyond 5:00 PM. Plan for controlled positive growth. Act 60 and high taxes discourage growth. There is a low number of full time residents and a lack of good paying jobs to retain young people in the community. A subgroup under Economic Development will look at: **Downtown Beautification and Parking.**
- **Elderly Services Issue** – Improve services and living opportunities. Wilmington needs an elderly housing facility to allow elders to stay in the community. Volunteer coordination is needed to help elders with paperwork and accessing needed services. These services need to be drawn in to the community.

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