

## I. LAND USE PLAN

### **Vision Statement**

*This Plan envisions Burlington as a city where...*

*... **neighborhoods** are the heart and soul of the community, and possess a strong identity. Neighborhoods are linked to each other via a network of greenspaces, public transit, pedestrian, and bicycle routes. Historic patterns of development and architecture are respected, while future growth reflects changes in family, work and travel patterns by offering a range of housing choices. Everyday services such as markets, pharmacies, and childcare are concentrated in higher density mixed-use activity centers that serve the immediate needs of the surrounding neighborhood. Local streets are reclaimed as public spaces, oriented to pedestrians, with minimal through traffic.*

*... the **downtown** is a distinctly urban place serving as the historic core of the county's educational, economic, cultural, and governmental center. Downtown Burlington is a high density, mixed-use growth center that has blended the need for concentrated and efficient development with a respect for the city's architectural heritage and natural environment. Vacant and underutilized land and buildings have been adaptively reused for housing, shops, and offices. An integrated system of regional and local public transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian paths are increasingly competitive with individual automobiles as the preferred mode of travel thus reducing the need for single-passenger automobiles. Downtown Burlington is also a neighborhood - offering housing for a range of income levels and household types, everyday services, and employment opportunities.*

*... religious, educational and medical **institutions** have a respected place in the community, and play a vital role in the city's economy and social well-being. Development of academic and medical campuses, including additional housing, is concentrated on core campuses in order to minimize impacts on adjoining residential neighborhoods. Working cooperatively with the City, neighborhoods, and business community, the institutions share their valuable skills, resources, and leaders to help address development, transportation, housing, social, and neighborhood issues within the community. Historic properties have been adaptively reused and redeveloped to ensure they continue to contribute to the community and neighborhood. Development of property owned by religious institutions is in some cases being redeveloped into higher density mixed-use developments or preserved as open space.*

... **Lake Champlain and the Winooski River**, are protected and cherished as valuable natural and economic assets of the community. The Downtown Waterfront offers a dynamic mix of year-round recreational, cultural, commercial, and residential uses, and is physically and architecturally integrated into the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. Commercial development on the waterfront compliments and enhances other commercial districts in the City. Public access and circulation is provided by an integrated system of regional and local public transit, ferries and shuttles, bicycle routes, and pedestrian paths. The shorelines outside of the downtown and along the river remain largely undeveloped with a network of protected conserved lands including natural areas offering habitat and travel corridors for wildlife, trails and bike paths for passive recreation, and agriculture. The ecology and natural and cultural history of the shoreline are protected and interpreted for the public.

... the city's unique **natural systems and open spaces** are identified and protected through a combination of public acquisition, stewardship, and creative site planning, and function as vital components of the city's infrastructure and economy. The Lake Champlain shoreline, Winooski River corridor and Intervale, Centennial and Englesby Brooks, and other significant natural areas have been the focus of these efforts.

## LAND USE POLICIES

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### THE CITY OF BURLINGTON WILL...

- **Protect natural areas from harmful and incompatible development, and maintain the integrity of natural systems.**
- **Conserve and strengthen residential neighborhoods.**
- **Encourage the adaptive reuse and historically sensitive redevelopment of underutilized sites and buildings.**
- **Encourage mixed-use development patterns, at a variety of urban densities, which limit the demand for parking and unnecessary automobile trips, and support public transportation.**
- **Strengthen the City Center District (CCD) with higher density, mixed-use development as part of the regional core while ensuring that it serves the needs of city residents, particularly those in adjacent neighborhoods.**
- **Target new and higher density development into the Downtown, Downtown Waterfront, Enterprise District, Institutional Core Campuses, and the Neighborhood Activity Centers.**
- **Encourage development of an active, urban waterfront that offers a mix of uses, is open to the public and linked with adjacent neighborhoods.**

- Strengthen the Pine Street corridor for commercial - industrial development while minimizing adverse impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Encourage light industry, the creative arts and technologies, and manufacturing and incubator space for new and emerging business in appropriate locations including the Pine Street corridor.
- Support the development of the proposed Intervale Eco-Park to provide opportunities for value-added processing of agricultural products and develop synergistic relationships between agricultural and energy-related businesses.



## INTRODUCTION

Future development and investment in the City of Burlington are guided by a diverse set of policies and strategies intended to encourage and facilitate development in specific parts of the city. The following section outlines the principal land use and development pattern to be implemented over the next 10-20 years, and serves as a policy umbrella to the other sections of the Plan that follow. It defines *where* and *how* future development is to occur. All of the other sections offer more detailed information and guidance in specific areas such as transportation or urban design that will help to facilitate this pattern.

This section of the Plan is strategic in its approach, and does not offer information or insight for all portions of the city. Instead, it focuses on areas of the city that are targeted for future development or redevelopment. These areas are the **Downtown Improvement District**, the **Downtown Waterfront**, **Institutions**, **Neighborhood Activity Centers**, the **Enterprise District** and **Brownfields**. Additionally, this Plan identifies individual neighborhoods that are in a state of change and require strategic planning and investment in order to meet community goals. These neighborhoods are **Riverside Avenue**, **Mill-Grove Street**, the **Old North End Enterprise Community**, and the **South End neighborhood**. Where this Plan is silent regarding a specific part of the city – primarily low-density residential areas, it is intended that those areas remain largely unchanged, and that the current development and use patterns remain as they are in order to preserve and maintain a high quality of life.

### A Regional Growth Center

Burlington is at the heart of a larger urbanizing region that is the principal economic and cultural engine for the northern Champlain Valley, as well as the state of Vermont. While Burlington only makes-up a small portion of this area in physical terms (~10 square miles or 1.66% of Chittenden County's land area), the surrounding area is often distinguished by its proximity to the city. The city itself is the largest, and the most intensely developed community in Vermont with a population more than two-times that of its neighbors. Being the most urban agglomeration in the state also brings challenges to Burlington that are similar to other larger metropolitan areas, i.e.: homelessness and transient populations, concentration of social services, etc.

The historic development pattern of the region is characteristic of New England with higher density mixed use compact centers surrounded by working farms and forests, and served by basic infrastructure - the definition of what we today call a "growth center." These features help to define Vermont's unique identity, support our high quality of life, and form the qualities that attract new business development and tourism.

However, the traditional development pattern has become blurred and is threatened by suburban development on the fringes of the city including large single-use developments such as shopping malls and planned residential subdivisions, strip commercial development along major highway corridors, and the continued dominance of the automobile with its associated parking lots, traffic congestion and ever-expanding highways. This trend is not only a threat to the region's traditional patterns of development, but also to our future economic growth, natural environment, and sense of community.

Geographically, Burlington is only a small part of the surrounding region, and has no extraterritorial authority over land use and development in adjoining communities. Responsibility and ability to reverse this trend of suburbanization lies therefore with each nearby community, and our willingness to collaborate together as a region on land use and public investment issues.

The 2013 *ECOS Regional Plan* places much of Burlington within a “Metropolitan Planning Area” which also includes portions of the cities of Winooski and South Burlington. The Regional Plan presents a hierarchy of progressively larger scale and more intense mixed-use development pattern. The creation of these “planning areas” follows Vermont’s land use planning goals which seeks to define “growth centers<sup>1</sup>”, and provides a very important framework to focus a wide range of objectives and policies governing future land development. The purpose of the regional growth center is to “contain the county’s largest buildings and highest residential densities. Since most of the enterprises and services having a substantial regional impact are anticipated to be located in a Metropolitan Planning Area, it should receive the highest priority for public sewer and water infrastructure. An emphasis on non-automotive modes of transportation should be given priority to allow for easier pedestrian access.”

The City welcomes the opportunities and responsibilities that are associated with serving as the historic core of a regional growth center. The boundaries of this area, however, must reflect existing and proposed development within the city, and recognize the fact that portions of this area may be either unavailable or undesirable for future development.

For the Regional vision to become reality, all communities must work together towards a more sustainable pattern of development. A more traditional pattern, through the use of carefully planned growth centers, is necessary to protect and invigorate existing cities and villages, maintain working farm and forest lands, and bring back a more sustainable and affordable form of community development.

Growth centers throughout the region should reflect traditional settlement patterns and be served by adequate infrastructure including public transportation. The number and size of growth centers must be based on reasonable projections of future growth, and their capacity to accommodate high-density development – primarily as infill and adaptive reuse. They must be small enough to concentrate development, yet large enough to accommodate the projected growth. And finally, growth centers themselves must encourage higher density mixed-use development, respect historic and cultural resources, preserve and create pockets of greenspace where possible, and promote public transit, walking and biking as the preferred forms of transportation. The Regional Plan should lead this process with a detailed plan for regional growth and development that emphasizes compact development and serves to discourage sprawl.

## **A Vermont City**

By nearly every definition, Burlington is a city; a city, however, at a smaller Vermont scale. Burlington has tall buildings, but most remain under five to eight stories; an important airport and public transit system; colleges and a university, theaters and galleries, offices, restaurants, hotels, banks and shops - yet still remains at just above 40,000 residents.

Burlington is also, in many ways, a traditional Vermont village in both form and function. The city is compact and serves as a central place of commerce, housing, education, industry, and government. People know local shop owners, and often encounter family, and friends throughout their daily travels. This description as both city and village is the essence of what makes Burlington such an attractive place to live, work and visit. Burlington exemplifies the metaphor of

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<sup>1</sup> The concept behind “growth centers” is to concentrate higher density mixed use development into traditional’ development centers in an effort to preserve and maintain the surrounding rural landscape.

the "urban village"<sup>2</sup> - "a shorthand way of describing the *feel* we want from our cities." It is not so much more than a location, but the *personality* of a place. Urban villages aren't built - they evolve over time.

Burlington's character and sense of place is widely celebrated – both locally and nationally. The city's character has evolved over time by respecting historical development patterns and architecture; cultivating "community" in our neighborhoods; protecting valuable natural, historic, and recreational resources; developing lively cultural events, resources and activities; and putting the needs of City residents above the desires of visitors.

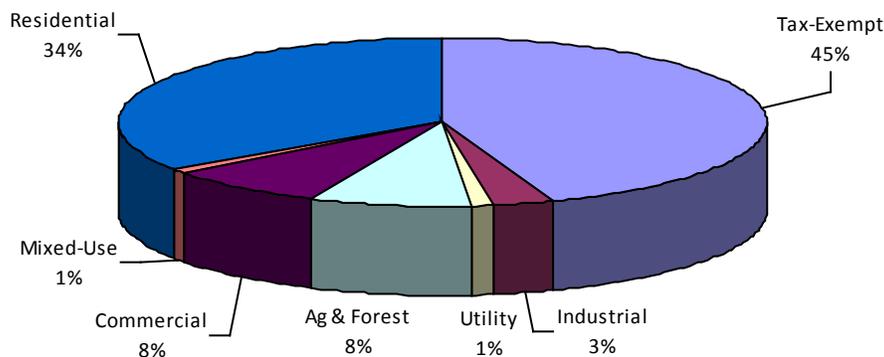
However, as Burlington has continued to evolve, this Vermont City must meet the challenges of accommodating future populations without destroying its character. Nurturing Burlington's human scale, social character, and sense of place while encouraging future growth and development is the primary objective of the City through the implementation of this Plan.

### Room to Grow

Burlington has relatively little undeveloped land remaining on which to grow. The entire city consists of only 6,457 acres of land (5,601 acres when excluding right-of-ways). Yet, Burlington will continue to grow, both as a community, and as an important part of the economic, social, and cultural core of the region. This Plan anticipates continued and sustainable growth in housing, services, employment, and population, while protecting the city's natural systems, maintaining its moderate scale and high quality urban design, supporting its neighborhoods, and celebrating its heritage.

The basic land uses in Burlington include residences, commerce, industry, public/semipublic facilities, parks and recreation, and undeveloped land. Residential and tax-exempt lands are the largest categories of use.

**Burlington Land Use (Percentage of Acreage)**



Over one-third of the city is considered undeveloped land. Undeveloped does not necessarily mean un-used however. While these properties may not contain a structure, they may be put to a commercial or industrial use for storage, serve as a golf course or playground, be actively farmed, or used for parking. In many cases, this land is both undesirable and unsuited for development due to seasonal flooding, steep slopes and sensitive natural or cultural features. A vast majority of

<sup>2</sup> Sucher, David, *City Comforts: How to Build an Urban Village*. City Comforts Press. Seattle 1995,

the undeveloped land in Burlington is exempt from property taxes, which means it is owned by a religious or educational institution, the city or the state, or a non-profit organization.

Vacant land is only a portion of the future development potential. Many properties remain significantly “underdeveloped”<sup>3</sup>. Many developed parcels and surface parking lots could be more intensely re-developed with multi-use structures<sup>4</sup>, taller buildings, and smaller setbacks.

Complete build-out of the City is not likely to happen. Many parcels are substantially developed - some with historic buildings - or include areas that are inappropriate for intense development. Often land characterized as vacant cannot, and should not, be developed because it is either wetland or other natural area, has steep or unstable slopes, or is a small, oddly shaped lot. However, Burlington can easily accommodate additional growth and sustain itself as an important component of the regional hub without threatening the City’s unique qualities and defining characteristics.

The challenge is to define the amount of future growth that is possible and desirable, and develop effective strategies to encourage future growth while retaining the scale and character of the city. These strategies must address two distinct issues currently faced by the City: first, how can we ensure a more efficient use of properties that are currently developed to some extent (such as through adaptive reuse of vacant upper floors, or additions); second, is to ensure the most efficient use of properties that are currently undeveloped or undergoing significant redevelopment.

## **Open Space Protection**

The natural environment is a chief ingredient in defining Burlington’s character - making it one of the most attractive and inviting small cities in the country. Burlington’s citizens, non-profits, and city government have a proud tradition of protecting the city’s sense of place, natural environment, open spaces, and recreational opportunities. Recent studies throughout the country have debunked the myth that conservation and development are inherently at odds. The fact is that open space conservation is good for everyone - residents, property owners, visitors, and businesses alike – and the bottom line. This is a fact that Burlington clearly recognizes, and from which it has long benefited.

The result was the completion of the *Burlington Open Space Protection Plan* in October 2000. The plan presents a far-reaching strategy that will enable the City to pursue and implement its long-held goals for open space protection, providing an over-arching vision for the future of Burlington’s landscape where natural areas, parklands, and greenbelts are physically integrated into the urban fabric to complement development with conservation - where natural and recreational systems play an essential role in enhancing environmental quality, economic prosperity, and quality of life. A 2013 update, rather than a wholesale replacement of the 2000 plan, adapted the original vision and goals to reflect progress made on past goals and changes in the public perception of needs for open space. The foundation of the update was an extensive public outreach process to understand what is currently on the minds of residents regarding open

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<sup>3</sup> “Underdeveloped” refers to those parcels that are developed at less than 50 percent of the average of the existing or allowable density in the zoning district.

<sup>4</sup> “Multi-Use Structures” refers to buildings, for example, with: parking below grade, street level retail, and office and/or residential uses above the street.

space quality, availability and access. The open space inventory was also updated to reflect the current status and use of open space in the city. Combining the public input gathered with the updated inventory in a matrix will be used to inform open space acquisitions in the coming years. Finally, policy goals were articulated to guide future decisions relating to open space.

**Both the 2000 Open Space Protection Plan and its 2014 update are hereby incorporated in to this plan by reference.**

## Growth Areas

The City of Burlington expects, and welcomes, continued growth and development over the next ten years – primarily in the form of infill, adaptive re-use and redevelopment. In an effort to facilitate future growth, and to continue to encourage urban densities and use patterns, the City will seek to concentrate future higher-density development activity primarily into the following areas:

### DOWNTOWN & URBAN WATERFRONT

#### **planBTV – Downtown & Waterfront Master Plan**

In the Fall 2010, the City of Burlington was awarded a Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant by the US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) which provided a unique opportunity to advance Burlington’s place as one of America’s most livable and sustainable communities. Burlington’s project – known as “planBTV” and incorporated by reference herein – was the result of a 2+-yr planning process for the development of a comprehensive guide for downtown and waterfront development that will foster sustainable economic growth over the next 10-20 years.



The development of a land use and development plan focused on Burlington’s Downtown and Waterfront has been a long-standing action item in the Municipal Development Plan since at least 1996. While many other planning efforts involving the downtown or waterfront have taken place over the years, none were comprehensive in scope where land use, transportation, land development, urban design, and public infrastructure were all woven together. Additionally, past examples of comprehensive plans prepared by the City had been done at a city-wide level with broad-brush and high level recommendations. The planBTV study area encompasses the Downtown Improvement District in its entirety, as well as the waterfront and harbor, but does not include the Urban Reserve.

*planBTV: Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan* refines broad city-wide goals for sustainable development into a focused, actionable, area-specific strategy to ensure the vitality of the central core of our community and enable us to achieve our community vision. While the over-riding focus of the effort has been centered on improving economic vitality, the plan addresses a wide range of inter-related topics including housing, transportation, climate change, urban agriculture, waterfront and harbor development, parking, land use and urban design. Overall, the final outcome can be summarized around four fundamental themes in order to create a more livable community – **Vibrant Economy, Great Urban Design, Housing Choice, and Transportation Choice**. None can be considered in isolation, and all have a direct influence on the success of each and every other theme.

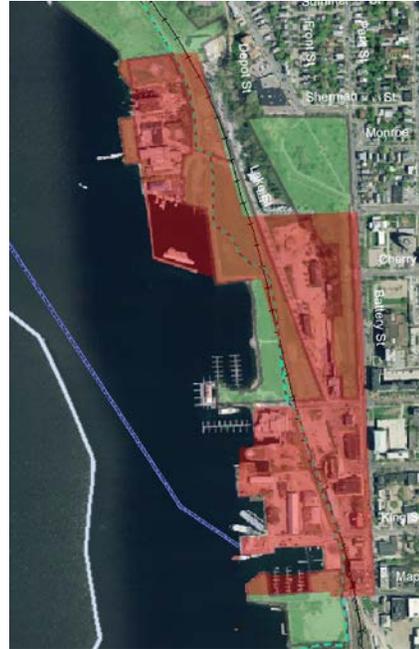
## DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

The City's "Downtown Development District" designation will make various incentives such as state tax credits and loans available to facilitate continued redevelopment and reinvestment in the heart of the city. To gain a better understanding of the opportunities and obstacles for future development, the City has created a detailed area plan specific to the Downtown and Waterfront – planBTV. planBTV identifies and specifies the infrastructure needs, density potential, and development logistics and defines design standards. planBTV should serve as the primary tool for guiding private and public investment necessary to ensure the vitality of the city's core.

## THE DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT

Since the early 1800's, Burlington's harbor and downtown waterfront have been an important commercial area, scenic and recreational attraction, and community resource. The Lake Champlain waterfront is the city's premier gateway, and an asset that cannot be duplicated or replaced.

In 1998, the City revised its *Waterfront Revitalization Plan* for the Waterfront Urban Renewal District. This Plan was a revision of an Urban Renewal Plan prepared by the City in 1990. The 1998 Plan included 22 projects that are in varying stages of development. New projects include the expansion of the Lake Champlain Basin Science Center, redevelopment of the Moran Generating Station, improved pedestrian and public transit connections with downtown, and access to adjoining neighborhoods to name only a few. This plan is incorporated into this municipal development plan by reference. The City's priorities for the Downtown Waterfront have most recently been articulated in planBTV-Downtown & Waterfront Plan adopted in 2013. planBTV includes many of the projects identified in the 1998 Waterfront Revitalization Plan.



### - Urban Reserve

The 40-acre "Urban Reserve" north of the Moran Plant remains largely vacant, and has limited infrastructure making new development costly. In proposing the original purchase of the Urban Reserve, the *1990 Urban Renewal Plan for the Waterfront Revitalization District* stated very clearly that one of the principal motivations for creating this "Urban Reserve" was: "to reserve the right for future generations to determine what level of development should occur at this site." The citizens of Burlington maintain a strong interest and concern for the future of their waterfront in general, and the Urban Reserve in particular.



In October 1997, the City Council adopted an *Urban Reserve Interim Use and Stewardship Plan*, which recommended that the City maintain the property as passively-used and publicly-accessible open space allowing the continued re-naturalization of the property and reseedling, with opportunities for public education, enjoyment and informal passive recreation. Additionally, the

plan committed to the continued investigation and limited remediation of this brownfield site, and to maintaining remnants of the property's railroad and industrial heritage. The final use of this property remains a large and important issue for the city. A long-term plan for the property is a priority of the City

## **INSTITUTIONS**

Burlington's institutions of higher education and health care play an important role in the city's economy and overall vitality. Not only do they provide nearly 30 percent of all jobs in the city, they serve statewide educational and health care needs, attract new and expanded business to the region, and broaden cultural opportunities within the city. In order to compete in their respective missions, they must continue to change and grow over time. The Institutions do, however, pose impacts on adjoining residential neighborhoods. Issues such as noise, parking, traffic, housing costs and neighborhood character continue to be of great concern.



A more urban configuration of each core campus, fixed growth boundaries, more efficient use of existing facilities, and cooperative relationships such as CATMA (Campus Area Transportation Management Association) and partnerships such as UVM's Winooski Falls apartments, will help the Institutions develop without further intrusion into the neighborhoods. In recent years, the City, the institutions and the neighborhoods have worked jointly on the creation of Institutional Core Overlay (ICO) Zones that would concentrate development within their respective core campuses. To-date core campuses have been adopted for Champlain College, UVM and Fletcher Allen.

As the Institutions focus future growth within these core campuses, a fresh look should be taken at the current Institutional (I) zoning district boundaries, and allowed densities outside of the core campuses, to ensure both continue to reinforce safe and healthy neighborhoods with vital and growing institutions.

### **- University of Vermont**

The UVM Board of Trustees are considering a new Campus Master Plan. This plan outlines a number of strategies to concentrate university functions within existing boundaries, improve circulation within and through the various campuses (Academic, Athletic, and Redstone), and make more efficient use of existing sites for future development. Additionally, UVM has entered into several partnerships with a private developer to provide housing for students. This is a good model that should be considered for use in Burlington's City Center as well. Finally, there may be opportunities to create and locate research and development space in the city's enterprise district as a means of supporting new business



development and technology transfer. All of these go a long way towards balancing the future development needs of the University with a respect for the surrounding residential neighborhoods.



Waterman Building

Perhaps the biggest issue facing the University-City relationship continues to be that of student housing. Students have a tremendous impact on the availability and affordability of housing in the city as well as the quality of life in the residential neighborhoods surrounding the campus. While not all students who live in rental housing attend the University, it has a dominating influence given its size and the composition of its undergraduate population.

The University and the City have struggled over this issue for decades with little result. As part of a City-University agreement, UVM is working to provide additional on-campus housing at University Heights. This is an important and welcomed step, but more will need to be done in coming years to absorb a higher percentage of students who live on-campus. The University currently houses approximately 60% of its undergrad degree students on-campus. Other opportunities for additional on-campus housing include the recently acquired Trinity campus and Redstone campus.

The University and the City must also continue to address quality-of-life issues faced by the residential neighborhoods surrounding the campus. Problems over noise, traffic, parking, and vandalism threaten the stability and tranquility of these residential areas. The University has also agreed to take action against any off-campus student misconduct.

#### **- Champlain College**

Champlain College is a small private college located between the University of Vermont and the downtown. Champlain was established in 1878 as a business college, and operated as a two-year college until 1991 when its first bachelor's degree was offered. A graduate program was added in 2002. Today, Champlain occupies 40 buildings on over 22 acres, and serves approximately 2,000 students. Back in 2007, Champlain College developed a campus master plan that address how and where Champlain College will grow in the future to meet it's goal of increasing its student base without further intrusion into the surrounding residential neighborhood. Opportunities for consideration may include apartment-style housing in the City Center.

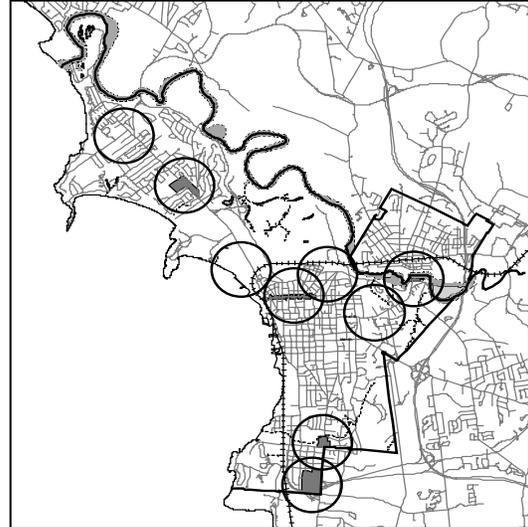
#### **- Fletcher Allen Health Care**

Fletcher Allen has made an important strategic decision to make a significant investment in expanding and revitalizing its MCHV-Campus in Burlington. This \$70 million, 607,000 square-foot development project created a new outpatient treatment facility on the MCHV Campus, a new Education Center that physically integrates the hospital complex with the adjacent Medical School at the University, and more than 1,200 underground parking spaces. This development has been largely welcomed by the City and nearby residents. However, concerns over traffic into and through the facility, the loss of greenspace, and threats to historic resources and water quality in Centennial Brook remain. As their attention turns to future needs and facilities, including those of the in-patient portion of the hospital, Fletcher Allen will need to continue its efforts to minimize the impacts of parking and traffic, preserve the remaining historic buildings and valued open spaces, and reduce stormwater runoff to allay these concerns.

## NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITY CENTERS

The 1991 Burlington Municipal Development Plan introduced the concept of the “Neighborhood Activity Center” (NAC) to encourage small-scale commercial and mixed-use development in convenient neighborhood locations. The NAC applies the growth center concept<sup>5</sup> at a neighborhood scale.

The intent of the NAC is to take underutilized commercial areas within a residential area, and transform them into higher-density, compact mixed-use settlements. These areas will typically include childcare centers, local banks, grocery stores, offices, branch libraries, pharmacies, small businesses, churches, and housing. NAC’s are close to where people live and oriented to serving the neighborhood, thus lessening the need to drive for local errands and convenience shopping. They may also be attractive locations for community technology centers that provide support and resources to small businesses, and serve as remote offices for larger businesses offering employment for nearby residents.



Neighborhood Activity Centers

In 1994, the City completed a conceptual plan for two Neighborhood Activity Centers – one located on North Avenue at the Ethan Allen Shopping Center, and the other on North Winooski Avenue and Archibald Street. The Ethan Allen Shopping Center has seen a significant increase in the number of housing units, with the recent development of both senior and rental units. Today, the City takes a broader view of NAC’s, and recognizes their potential application across a wider variety of sites around the city. If they are to be successful, they must be within walking distance of nearby residents, and therefore more than just two or three locations throughout the city are necessary. They also need to be designed and scaled to serve the surrounding neighborhood; therefore, a “one size fits all” approach to density or uses may not be appropriate. Finally, they should be linked to the center city via active public transit corridors. Additional locations for the development of Neighborhood Activity Centers include North Street’s Commercial District, the intersections of Shelburne Street and Flynn Avenue, North Avenue and Plattsburg Avenue, Colchester Avenue and Mill Street. Each site will be evaluated for its ability to serve such a function, and appropriate zoning changes will be developed on a case-by-case basis.

The City will draw infill development into these areas through revised zoning that promotes neighborhood-scale mixed uses, increased density, smaller setbacks, additional parking waivers, and height bonuses for shared and below-ground parking. Convenient access to transit, and bicycle and pedestrian routes, must also be provided. Finally, it is of critical importance that these areas maintain clear and distinct boundaries from the surrounding neighborhood to prevent the spread of the higher densities. Options for consideration will include the creation of form-based regulations for these areas.

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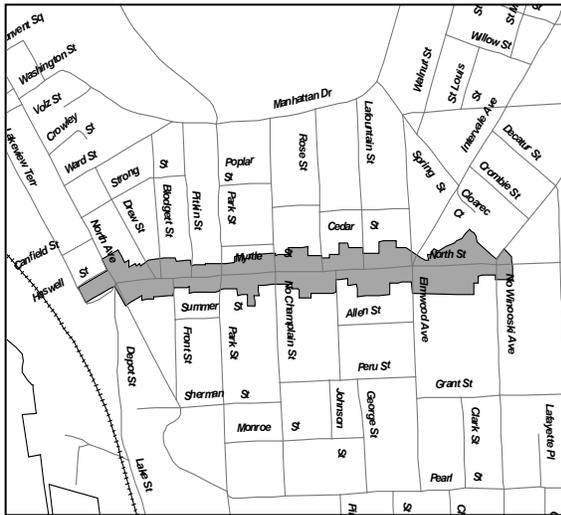
<sup>5</sup> Growth Centers are areas of higher density, typically mixed-use, development surrounded by working farm and forestland or lower density development.

**- North Street Commercial District**

In 1998, the City completed a revitalization plan for North Street’s commercial district. The North Street Plan was adopted by the City Council with a specific recommendation that the City’s Municipal Development Plan incorporate its principle recommendations. ***This Plan for the revitalization of the North Street Commercial District is thus incorporated by reference.***

Historically, the western portion of North Street (west of No. Winooski Ave.) has served as “Main Street” for Burlington’s Old North End (ONE) neighborhood. The intent of the Plan is to create a more livable and pedestrian-friendly environment, and restore community pride and vitality in the commercial district. In doing so, the same concept of higher-density, neighborhood-oriented uses envisioned for NAC’s were applied as a strategy for future development and revitalization of this struggling commercial district.

The intent behind the creation of the Plan was to create a mixed-use area that supports locally-owned destination businesses and encourages small, neighborhood-oriented businesses. The traditionally working class and ethnically diverse character of the neighborhood will be maintained and supported, and the history of North Street and the Old North End Neighborhood should be celebrated and communicated. The City was successful in listing the North Street Commercial District to the National Register of Historic Places, and will continue to seek Downtown District designation from the VT Downtown Program so that this area can benefit from the full range of incentives for redevelopment available at the state and federal level.



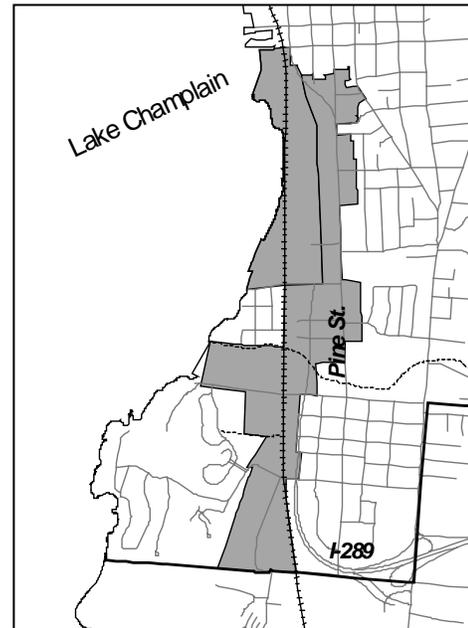
North Street Commercial District

The principal recommendations of the Plan focus on the safe use and enjoyment of the streetscape for pedestrians; a range of streetscape improvements including narrowing the street, widening the sidewalk, raised and painted crosswalks, and creating bump-outs at intersections and crosswalks. Other improvements include adding street trees and landscaping, the undergrounding of all overhead utilities, and a reconfiguration of the street lighting. While the streetscape and street reconfiguration portions of this Plan were completed in 2005, the City must still work hard with local businesses and residents to ensure the vision for this neighborhood center is fully realized.

## THE ENTERPRISE DISTRICT

Historically, Burlington's major industrial corridor, the Enterprise District along and west of Pine Street, has seen new and expanded industrial uses, and the adaptive reuse of old warehouses and factories. The Enterprise District adjacent to the Pine Street corridor is one of the only places in the city where many commercial-industrial uses are permitted. Traditionally, these businesses have provided many well-paying jobs to both white and blue-collar workers, added significantly to the regional economy and city tax-base, and helped to underwrite the cost of city services and utilities.

However, this area is also adjacent to several residential neighborhoods, and there is growing pressure to allow new uses such as retail and housing that may not be complementary to the area's commercial-industrial character and function. Nearby residents are particularly concerned about the impact of through-traffic, particularly trucks, on neighborhood streets; noise from nearby industrial uses; safety of pedestrians and children; and access to local parks and the lake. The City is working to protect these residential areas from the impacts of nearby industrial uses, and will promote future uses that are less transportation and trucking oriented. Traffic calming techniques and designated truck routes have been employed to discourage through-traffic and trucks in residential areas. The long anticipated completion of the Champlain Parkway should also help to address many of the traffic concerns.



Enterprise Zoning District

Tensions over the future direction of this portion of the city remain. Is it to continue as a predominantly commercial-industrial district that supports value-added enterprise, or is it to convert to a more mixed-use commercial district that supports additional housing? While significant change has occurred in the City's manufacturing base over the years, many opportunities remain for the future. The City must maintain some place where commercial and industrial uses can remain and flourish if the City's objectives as a sustainable community are to be realized. The location, extent and character of this (or these) area(s) must be evaluated within the context of overall citywide objectives for land use and community development.

Planning is underway for the redevelopment of a significant portion of this area surrounding the General Dynamics' site into largely commercial offices. The future of the railyard immediately to the north could well be a deciding factor as well. If the railyard operations are moved out of the city, opportunities to expand rail use and relieve future truck traffic will be lost. The City must first consider the long-term impact on its future commercial-industrial base before turning its back on this important piece of transportation infrastructure. If additional jobs are to be brought into the area, then there must be recognition of the housing demand that this will create and the impact on an already severe housing shortage. Finally, redevelopment of the railyard<sup>s</sup> should keep in mind the recommendations of the *Burlington Harbor Management Plan* that designates this area for seasonal marina services.

Working with businesses and residents, the City must identify areas within the district that remain viable for continued commercial-industrial use, and assess the fiscal impact to the tax-base and

ratepayers of any proposed conversion away from commercial-industrial uses. If the City chooses to maintain the commercial-industrial nature of the district, it must then aggressively protect this area from intrusion by incompatible uses, and work to minimize any impacts on adjacent residential areas. Examples should include greater use of rail to minimize truck traffic, and permanent buffers (either vegetative or lower intensity uses) from residential areas. Over the next few years the City will develop a detailed sector plan (planBTV-South End) that outlines future development, infrastructure, greenspace, and circulation needs of this portion of the city.

## **BROWNFIELDS<sup>6</sup>**

The *Burlington Brownfields Pilot Initiative* is an US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) program that facilitates redevelopment of properties with real or perceived contamination issues through the assessment of environmental risk, remediation planning, and relief from liability. The City has made the cleanup and redevelopment of Brownfields a high priority to improve the environment, increase the tax base, create and retain jobs, and curb sprawl.

The Community & Economic Development Office (CEDO) works with non-profit partners, other City Departments, commercial brokers, developers, and Vermont Dept. of Environmental Conservation to expedite complex transactions.

Completed Projects include Architectural Salvage Warehouse, Mill View Apartments, Multigenerational Center, the temporary VT Transit Passenger Terminal, Thelma Maple Housing Coop, and Metalworks.

Recent projects include:

- **Vermont Transit Bus Barns:** Bus and trolley maintenance and repair facility into 25 units of affordable housing and 20,000 square feet of new commercial space.
- **Urban Reserve:** Assessment and cleanup of former bulk oil storage facility.
- **Moran Plant:** Abandoned coal-fired power plant.
- **Pine Street:** Potential 100,000 square foot new commercial/retail development.
- **Vermont Railway Rail Yard:** Potential move of railway being studied: possible 13 acres freed up for mixed-use development
- **General Dynamics Armament Systems (GDAS):** Possible construction of new world headquarters and redevelopment of 225,000 square foot manufacturing facility.
- **Central Market:** conversion of former dairy/ice cream factory/police station into food market.

## **City of Neighborhoods**

Burlington's vitality and sense of community comes largely from the strength of its residential neighborhoods and the diversity of its people. Neighborhood boundaries are defined by where you live, and more importantly the people who live near you. It is this sense of place, and the quality of the built and natural environment, that form the foundation of Burlington's outstanding quality of life.

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<sup>6</sup> Brownfields: Abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. (US EPA)

The individuality of each residential area of the city must be respected in order to support and strengthen established neighborhood land use and design patterns, and most importantly the quality of life enjoyed by the residents. For example, setbacks and building height should generally reflect existing neighborhood patterns, but they needn't be uniform throughout the city. There are places in the city (downtown, NAC's, and other areas where higher density development is desired) where smaller setbacks should be allowed. Commercial uses, except authorized home occupations, should largely be excluded from residential areas except where they are part of a neighborhood activity center. The stability and quiet of low-density residential areas should be protected to the greatest extent possible. Working with neighborhood representatives, the City needs to identify design features worthy of protection, and work with citizens and the private sector to improve the livability of neighborhoods.



Within each neighborhood, this Plan vigorously promotes greater opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle travel, access to public transportation, traffic calming of residential streets, concentrations of mixed-use development that provide convenient neighborhood services, restoration of older buildings, and public greenspace in an effort to enhance neighborhood identity and character. Future opportunities include:

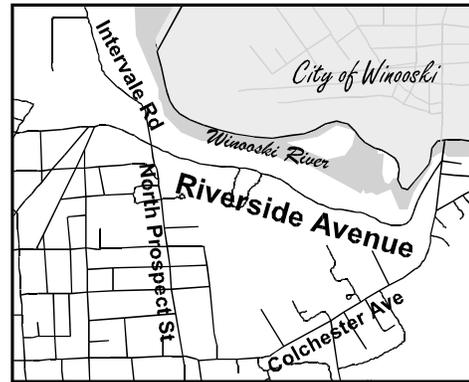
- Residential uses, including single-room occupancy (SRO) with no kitchens, in upper floors of commercial buildings.
- Performance standards to protect residential neighborhoods from the impacts of adjacent industry and commercial development.
- Creation of mixed-use higher-density neighborhood activity centers to put daily services and jobs within walking distance of residential areas.
- Improving the frequency and convenience of public transit, and developing creative parking alternatives for higher density developments.
- Offering childcare facilities in all neighborhoods.
- Increasing density in Neighborhood Activity Centers and designated locations along major transit corridors.
- Embarking on a greening program to replace unnecessary pavement with landscaping; encourage a diversity of open spaces accessible to each neighborhood including pocket parks and community gardens; the promotion of rooftop and wildflower gardens, and a network of paths and wildlife travel corridors.

### **NEIGHBORHOODS IN TRANSITION**

Many neighborhoods in the city are in the process of changing or reinforcing their own identity. Through sensitive and strategic design, regulation, enforcement, and investment, the City can target these areas in order to fulfill community goals.

### **Riverside Avenue**

Historically a mix of residential, industrial, public, and commercial uses, Riverside Avenue was recently reconstructed to clearly define the street edge, improve access and safety for pedestrians and bicycles, and improve the flow of traffic. The south side of the street has been the site of rapid residential development. Ways must be found to alleviate traffic congestion, improve pedestrian connections into adjoining neighborhoods, and contain stormwater. Strong erosion control measures are necessary to protect steep slopes and water quality. The northern side of the road parallels the Winooski River along a very steep embankment. This area is increasingly prone to slope instability and some areas have recently failed forcing the City to condemn some existing buildings.



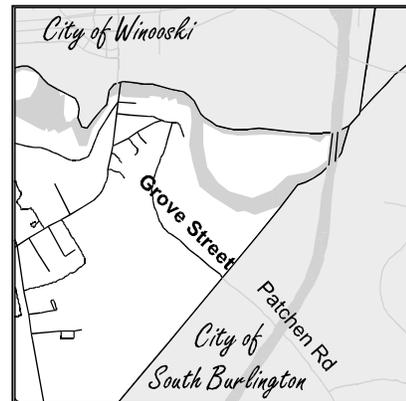
Riverside Avenue Area

The City will encourage a more urban configuration of higher-density mixed residential and commercial uses on the south side of the street. The street itself must continue to serve as an important thoroughfare for the city while providing safe opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists. The area along the river bank is ideal for a greenway corridor connecting to the Intervale, providing a buffer from the busy street for the river and the trails along the river bank. The City is considering rezoning portions of the north side of Riverside Avenue along the river to an open space zone such as Recreation/Conservation/Open Space (RCO), as well as long-term protection through acquisition for conservation and the use of transferable development rights.

### **Mill Street-Grove Street Neighborhood**

At the eastern end of Riverside Avenue is the Mill Street-Grove Street neighborhood. This area lies directly across the Winooski River from the City of Winooski, and is connected with the City of South Burlington via Patchen Road. The neighborhood serves as an important gateway to **both** cities of Burlington and Winooski.

As with Riverside Avenue, areas adjacent to the river along Grove Street have very steep banks and sensitive habitats. These must be cleaned-up and protected to prevent degradation, erosion and water quality. Opportunities to preserve a greenway corridor along the river to protect water quality, preserve wildlife travel corridors, and provide passive recreation are a high priority.



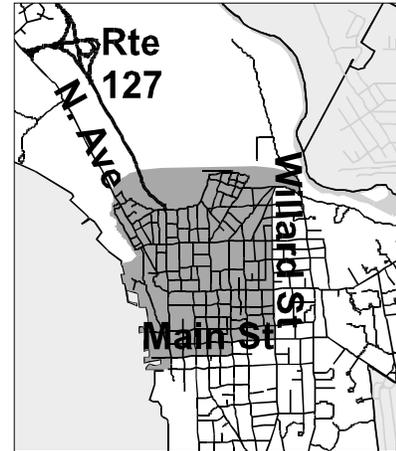
Mill Street-Grove Street Area

Mill Street is a neighborhood with a rich history, and strong ties to the City of Winooski. The riverfront surrounding the Winooski Falls and the associated mill buildings are important features – both naturally and historically. Pedestrian access across the river must be ensured as many residents are served by businesses and services found in Winooski. A proposal to provide a pedestrian bridge across the river in this area will go a long way towards improving connections across the river.

### ***The Old North End Enterprise Community***

Neighborhoods immediately north and south of downtown have suffered neglect and disinvestment over the years. These areas need public and private investment in infrastructure, housing, and street amenities to improve their residential and commercial environment.

In 1994, a portion of the City of Burlington was named an *Enterprise Community* by the US Department of Housing & Urban Development - one of 75 nationally. This area encompasses the neighborhoods of the Old North End, Downtown Waterfront, Central Business District, and the neighborhoods immediately south of the CBD generally bounded by King and Willard Streets (Census Tracts 3, 4, 5 & 10). This area is defined by its pervasive poverty, high unemployment, and general distress. In fact, no other neighborhood in Vermont matches Burlington's Enterprise Community (EC) in terms of population living below the poverty level.



Old North End Enterprise

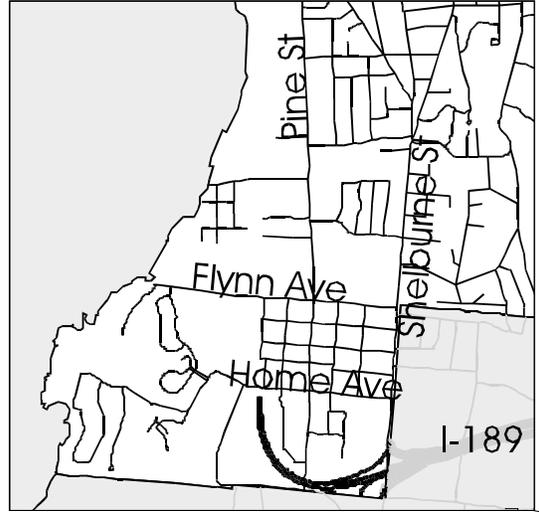
In the face of many challenges, the EC remains a viable residential and commercial area with many assets and opportunities. The housing stock is in poor condition, but repairable. Existing small business require only a bit more space, assistance or capital in order to prosper. There exists a well-established network of "third-sector" organizations with years of experience. In addition, perhaps more importantly, there remains a sense of community and neighborhood identity that is working hard to make the EC a better place. Several projects are underway or have been recently completed that will help to advance the goals of the neighborhood including:

- **Vermont Transit Bus Barns:** The conversion of an historic bus and trolley maintenance and repair facility into 25 units of affordable housing and 20,000 square feet of new commercial space.
- **Community Health Center:** An extensive redevelopment and expansion of the Community Health Center facility on Manhattan Drive.
- **North Street Commercial District Revitalization Plan:** A combination of streetscape, historic preservation, and business development strategies to revitalize the Old North End's "Main Street."
- **North Winooski Avenue Rehabilitation:** Streetscape and traffic flow improvements.

It continues to be a high priority of the City to actively promote redevelopment and investment within the Enterprise Community, and to implement the strategies found in *Common Ground: A Strategic Plan for the Old North End Enterprise Community* which is incorporated into this Plan by reference.

### **South End Neighborhoods**

As discussed previously, Burlington's "South End" neighborhoods have become increasingly attractive as places to live given their proximity to downtown and the lake. However, portions of this area are part of an industrial zone that extends southward along the lakeshore from the downtown. Obvious conflicts have been the result. Residents are faced more and more with the impacts (most typically noise and truck traffic) resulting from the redevelopment and expansion of industrial uses nearby. Industrial properties are faced with angry neighbors with complaints over traffic, noise, and loss of open space. This is increasingly a problem as the City looks to support and retain existing manufacturing jobs and attract additional businesses to this area - the largest industrial zone in the city, and at the same time improve the livability of its residential neighborhoods.



Burlington's South End

Current zoning offers little relief. Buffers between residential and industrial zones are small, and use restrictions do little to limit the types of uses that are most likely to generate high volumes of truck traffic. At the same time, zoning has encouraged increased residential development near to what has traditionally been a predominately industrial area. The result has been the completion of several large residential developments (Red Rocks, Lake Forest, Ledgewood, Southwind). The outcome of these converging policies has had unsatisfactory impacts on many South End residents, as well as posing uncertainty for existing and future industrial users.

The City must take immediate steps to ensure industrial uses adjacent to residential areas minimize their impacts on the residential character of the South End especially with regard to through traffic, air quality, noise and safety for cyclists and pedestrians - especially young children. At the same time, the City must take steps to protect core industrial areas by limiting scattered infill residential development and other uses that may threaten to erode the continued viability of industry and manufacturing.



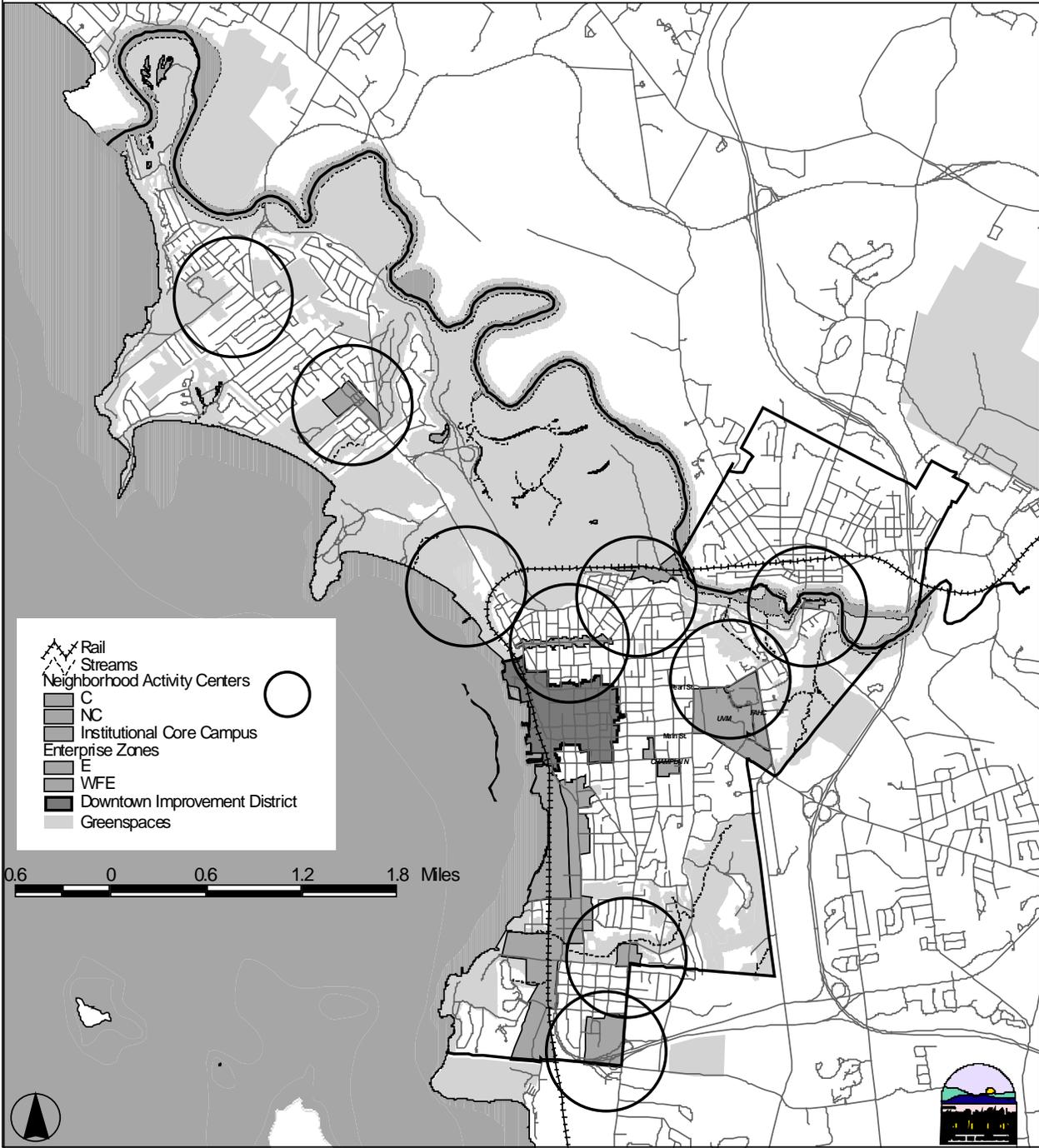
Lakeside Avenue



Pine Street Sculpture

City of Burlington, VT  
2001 Municipal Development Plan

# Future Land Use Map - Centers for Growth and Development -



## Land Use Action Plan

Action Item	Lead Agency	Secondary Agencies
Undertake an analysis to better understand the physical capacity of specific parts of the city to accommodate additional development.	Planning & Zoning	CEDO
Completion of a study that evaluates the nature, extent and scale of future upland development needed to serve the water-based activities proposed by the <i>Harbor Plan</i> .	Parks & Recreation	Planning & Zoning CEDO
Continue the implementation of the <i>North Street Commercial District Revitalization Plan</i> .	CEDO Public Works BED	Planning & Zoning Parks & Recreation
Develop a planBTV-South End area master plan to identify areas within the south end Enterprise Zoning District that remain viable for continued commercial-industrial use, and assess the fiscal impact to the tax-base and ratepayers of any proposed conversion away from commercial-industrial uses.	Planning & Zoning CEDO	
Continue the cleanup and redevelopment of Brownfields a high priority to improve the environment, increase the tax base, create and retain jobs, and curb sprawl.	CEDO	
Consider a rezoning for the former-St. Joseph's Orphanage that would allow for institutional campus development.	Planning & Zoning CEDO	
Continue the implementation of the 2000 <i>Open Space Protection Plan and its 2013 Update</i> .	Conservation Board Planning & Zoning Parks & Recreation	
Advocate land use and development policy and strategies that further Burlington's role as the historic core of the region, limit suburban sprawl, and encourage future development to be concentrated within local and regional growth centers as a member of the Chittenden County RPC.	Planning & Zoning Public Works CEDO	
Re-examine the Institutional District boundaries and allowed densities in those areas where they adjoin residential neighborhoods.	Planning & Zoning	
Develop more plans for Riverside Avenue and the Pine Street corridor through the use of design charrettes or preparation of a detailed sector plan.	Planning & Zoning	
Monitor remediation and interim use of the Urban Reserve.	Planning & Zoning CEDO	

Examine the opportunities for increasing allowable densities along selected portions of major transit corridors.	Planning & Zoning	CEDO
Study the feasibility of using transfer of development rights program for portions of the city.	Planning & Zoning	CEDO
Prepare a plan for the development of a network of connecting mid-block pathways within the downtown and into adjacent neighborhoods, and add these corridors to the City's Official Map.	Public Works	Planning & Zoning CEDO
Monitor the expansion of FAHC to ensure issues regarding traffic, historic buildings and stormwater runoff are carefully addressed.	Planning & Zoning	Public Works
Monitor the impact of the "Functional Family" ordinance on the supply and affordability of housing.	CEDO	