

then let it rise

5 STEPS TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The South End has long been an economic engine for Burlington and the region—a place where businesses grow from start-ups to success stories, and where people come to work. As the economy has changed, the types of work spaces businesses are looking for within the South End has evolved too.

A hundred years ago, South End buildings bustled with heavy-duty industrial activities. Coal was transformed into gas, structural steel and iron castings were fabricated, and the Lumiere Brothers manufactured plates for development of color photographs. By the 1980s, many of these buildings—and a new generation of one-story industrial and commercial structures—stood vacant. And today, those same buildings house a rich and eclectic mix of industrial, office, auto-related commercial, retail, and studio/workshop space.

What's the future fuel that will drive this economic engine? The Burlington South End

Vermont Structural Steel (Flynn Ave, 1951)

Market Study prepared by HR&A identified current trends and issues:¹

- **Growth in the “New Economy” sector**—industries focused on technology, arts and design, and small scale, artisanal and food manufacturing.
- **Demand for spaces that combine industrial AND retail operations** (e.g., breweries with tap rooms, prototype facilities that welcome shoppers and offer tours, commercial kitchens with restaurants, artists' studios with retail space)
- **Industrial rents that are significantly higher than elsewhere in Chittenden County**, reflecting the appeal of the South End for blended industrial/retail operations...businesses that are typically willing to pay more for space than a company looking for a traditional warehouse or manufacturing facility. Today, average industrial rents are \$2.20/SF higher in the South End than for the county as a whole.
- **Office rents that are comparable to downtown**, reflecting the appeal of the South End for businesses in search of office space; the South End offers a fun, funky environment and relatively low cost parking.
- **There is strong demand for housing in the South End to accommodate a growing workforce**, but development economics and land use regulations (zoning) are barriers to addressing this housing need.

Burton Snowboards (Industrial Parkway, 2015)

All of these trends point to a reality that demand for space across all sectors exceeds the current supply. In order to meet these needs, policies are needed that increase the supply of space available by fostering development of new space, unlocking the potential of underutilized land through higher density development. There are a finite number of potentially developable parcels within the South End and it is critical that the full potential of these parcels to support new development is maximized.

Plan BTV South End outlines a strategy to:

- Expand the economic development toolbox available to support growth
- Provide direct assistance to existing and potential new South End businesses
- Advance land use policy changes within the Enterprise Zone to enhance its value to the City

¹ For more information, see the HR&A South End Market Study at www.planbtvsouthend.com

Strategies

Expand the economic development toolbox available to support growth.

There are many financial barriers but relatively few tools available to assist the City or property owners/businesses in advancing reuse of underutilized land and buildings within the South End.

Expand the financial tools available from state and regional sources to support development of new facilities—to include grants, new economic development programs, state designations that can enhance allocation of public resources.



Work cooperatively with the state government and regional development entities to advance this initiative.



Community and Economic Development Office; elected leadership

The South End is home to over 470 businesses employing nearly 6,300 people. Roughly 30% of Burlington's office space and 90% of the city's industrial space—a combined total of approximately 2 million square feet—is located in the core of the South End. That's an important slice of Burlington's economy, and no one wants to see that vitality threatened.

Provide direct assistance to existing and potential new South End businesses.

Businesses need a variety of supports to assist them with setting up a new enterprise or expanding an existing operation.

Provide workforce training support and other assistance to existing businesses; work with schools and other educational institutions to ensure available programs prepare the workforce for the jobs of the future; continue to provide technical support to businesses seeking space in the South End including identifying potential spaces; provide succession planning assistance to existing businesses and property owners; and assist businesses with navigating the permitting process.



Ensure that sufficient resources are available to support technical assistance activities.



Community and Economic Development Office

Advance land use policy changes within the Enterprise Zone to enhance its value to the City.

The Enterprise Zone needs to meet the evolving needs of the City, including incorporation of affordable and

workforce housing in select locations, while also leveraging opportunities for preservation and expansion of maker space. Efforts must also address the expansion needs of industrial businesses that may pose conflicts with nearby residential uses.

Evaluate possible changes to the Enterprise Zone that incorporate housing in select locations and result in more predictable development outcomes overall; support growth and expansion of operations for existing industrial businesses within the zone.



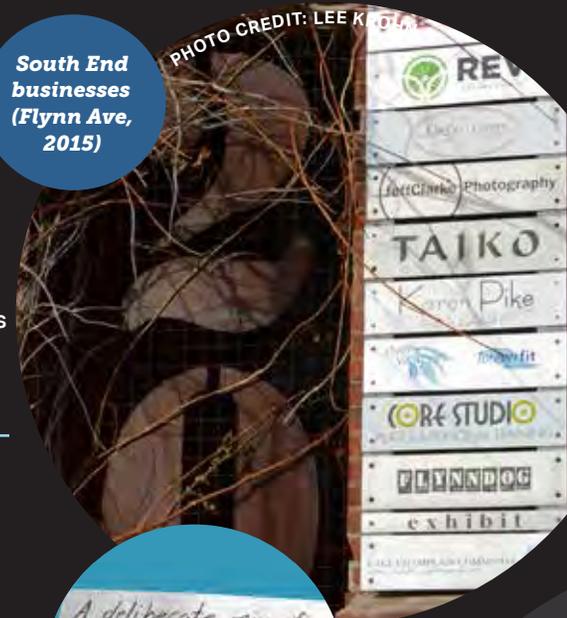
Continue community conversation and advance specific proposals for desired zoning changes.



Department of Planning and Zoning, Community and Economic Development Office

South End businesses (Flynn Ave, 2015)

PHOTO CREDIT: LEE KIDWELL



A deliberate mix of industries (art, food, beverages, crafts, resale, housing, education, etc.). Keep it a truly varied place!

Comment from participant in Marble Run outreach project, designed by local artist Kevyn Cundiff.

Number of employees by size of business, South End, 2014

