

Exhibit CS-BW-46

Docket 8302

Exhibit CS-MK-3

Excerpts from 2010

Town of Bennington Plan

Bennington Town Plan



Adopted: October 11, 2010

Prepared by the
Bennington Planning Commission

Approved by the Planning Commission: August 4, 2010

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1.2 GOALS

Specific goals provide focus and direction to the policy statements and recommended actions set forth in each chapter of the Town Plan.. These goals also are consistent with the 13 specific goals of 24 V.S.A. Section 4302.

1. **Support and strengthen Bennington's role as an economic center.** Continue to develop an economy that is based on businesses that provide satisfying and rewarding employment while maintaining high social and environmental standards. Provide public investment and support as appropriate to create a competitive business environment.

Promote the use of local products and resources in a manner that supports development of a sustainable local economy.

Recognize the importance to the community of a variety of economic enterprises. Support emerging new technology and service oriented businesses, traditional manufacturing, agricultural, and forestry-related businesses. Provide the infrastructure necessary to support desirable new technology-driven industries.

2. **Plan development to maintain the town's historic settlement pattern** of a well-defined urban growth center surrounded by rural countryside. Provide incentives for investment in the downtown and ensure that new development is consistent with the area's historic character and form. Support efforts to strengthen and revitalize existing residential neighborhoods near the town's center.

Development in rural areas shall respect the need to protect the town's natural resources and scenic landscapes. Sprawl—dispersed, auto-dependent development outside of compact urban and village centers, along highways, and in rural countryside—is costly, inefficient, and unattractive and will be strictly limited. The forest lands on the steep slopes of Mount Anthony, Whipstock Hill, and the Green Mountains must remain free from development and be reserved for forest and recreation related uses.

3. **Recognize the importance of significant natural, scenic, and historic resources.** Make use of public investment, regulation, and creative development techniques to protect open spaces, natural and fragile areas, scenic views, and historic sites, structures, and districts that are significant to the community.

Support appropriate utilization of local natural resources for economic and renewable energy development while ensuring that any resource extraction is accomplished in an environmentally sensitive manner.

4. Support policies, public investments, and projects undertaken by both private and non-profit developers that help **ensure the availability of an adequate supply of housing that is affordable and desirable** for all of the town's residents. Single-family, multi-family, rental, and ownership opportunities all must be available in sufficient quantity in the community.

Chapter 3 - Land Use

3.1 Existing Land Use

Current development patterns in Bennington reflect the town and state goal of “maintaining the historic development pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.” The most densely developed part of town is located near its geographic center, in and around the historic downtown. Commercial, residential, cultural, and institutional uses are found in and immediately adjacent to this relatively small, but vitally important part of the community.

Additional concentrations of residential development are found along the traditional grid network of streets that surround the downtown. Newer residential development and subdivisions, at a moderately high density supported by municipal water and sewer services, lie further from the center, but within the town’s Urban Growth Area (Map 3.1).



Attractive homes and trees line many of the local streets in Bennington’s traditional neighborhoods.

Large scale commercial developments including department stores, grocery stores, car dealerships, and similar uses are found north of the town’s center, lying along the Northside Drive / Kocher Drive corridor.

A number of important industrial buildings are located in land zoned for such uses off East Road, Bowen Road, and near the VT 67A/VT 279 interchange. Other industrial uses occupy buildings located along the streams that were once used for power generation in the town’s historic industrial core.

Major public buildings and service facilities are found in and around the historic village center. The elementary schools and the high school are located just outside of the central business district. The middle school is slightly further from the town center, located on East Road adjacent to the alignment of the eastern segment of VT 279 and almost across the road from Willow Park. The Southern Vermont Health Care campus and many supporting personal service businesses are located southwest of the downtown.

Some areas adjacent to the downtown support a mix of uses that are transitional between the historic commercial district and residential or non-traditional commercial areas. Lower Elm Street, for example, includes many older homes that have been converted to offices, and Benmont Avenue includes a mix of historic, commercial, residential, and industrial buildings and uses. Special attention is needed to ensure that these areas retain their historic integrity as well as their economic viability.

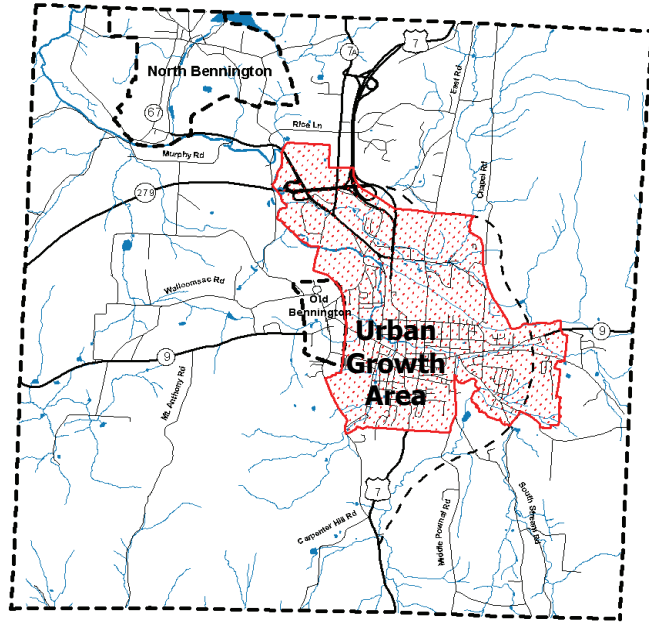
All of the concentrated development referred to above is located within the Urban Growth Area. The town’s rural areas are located beyond the Urban Growth Boundary, where agricultural landscapes blend with forested mountainsides. Residential development in these areas is of a much lower density and the few pre-existing commercial uses are confined to limited sites along state highways. The Green and Taconic Mountain Ranges remain forested and free of development.

Land use policies and public investments shall be designed to promote new development, infill development, and redevelopment of existing properties within the Urban Growth

Area. Although development will occur outside of this area, it will be much less concentrated and shall not include new commercial uses because such uses are incompatible with the rural character of the area. These outlying rural areas also contribute important historic and scenic qualities to the town, and new development in these areas must be carefully planned to protect those resources.

As noted, the downtown is located in Bennington's historic business center. It is an important regional retail and service center as well as a civic center, with town, state, and federal offices. The town has made a commitment to maintaining a strong and vital downtown to preserve the community's unique character and to support economic development.

The historic villages of Old Bennington and North Bennington are separately incorporated municipalities, but lie within the town's boundaries. Both of these unique villages add a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional uses at a smaller scale than found in Bennington's downtown.



Map 3.1 The shaded area represents Bennington's Urban Growth Area. The greatest density and diversity of land uses are to be restricted to this area. A formally designated "Growth Center" has been approved and lies entirely within the Urban Growth Area.

3.2 Land Use Plan

The town seeks to direct growth and development in a way that reinforces the existing settlement pattern of a concentration of mixed uses within the Urban Growth Area surrounded by open rural countryside. A sufficient amount of land must be available to support new growth and economic development opportunities. At the same time, policies and regulations must be implemented to ensure that new development enhances the town's unique character and furthers this Plan's Vision Statement and Goals.

The following **overall objectives** of this Land Use Plan will guide the specific policies and recommendations for each land use, or zoning, district:

- ◆ Encourage relatively dense and diverse development within the Urban Growth Area and ensure that there is a clear demarcation between urban and rural areas at the Urban Growth Boundary.
- ◆ Require new development to strengthen and support the town's existing land use pattern and historic and scenic qualities.
- ◆ Provide development opportunities that allow for continued high quality economic development that will support Bennington's position as the regional growth center.
- ◆ Support Bennington's historic downtown as the commercial, civic, and cultural heart of the community. Necessary retail services, including groceries, should be provided within this area to serve surrounding residential areas.
- ◆ Expand opportunities to create an adequate supply of a variety of housing types.

- ◆ Maintain the rural character of the outlying countryside and support agriculture, forestry, and recreational uses in these areas as well as carefully planned low-density residential uses.
- ◆ Plan development in a manner that avoids commercial or residential sprawl and which is consistent with the efficient provision of municipal services and the protection of important natural, scenic, and historic resources.
- ◆ Maintain the integrity and quality of established residential neighborhoods.

These objectives are implemented through the municipal Land Use and Development Regulations (LUDR) which divide the town into a number of zoning districts. Each district has a unique set of allowed uses and dimensional requirements, and some have special design or resource protection standards. The LUDR also includes the regulations that govern the subdivision of land.

Although the LUDR has served the town well, it is rather lengthy and complex and relies on a traditional method of segregating uses and specifying density levels to achieve the planned community character and development type. It may be possible to achieve the town's land use objectives with a simplified "form-based" land use ordinance.

A form-based ordinance such as the "Smartcode" model integrates zoning and subdivision regulations, public works standards, and architectural controls, much like the current LUDR, but with simplified land use districts. The form-based regulations focus on the physical form of buildings and areas while promoting a vibrant downtown, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, conserved rural open lands, housing diversity and alternative transportation options. The ordinance also can be used to restrict costly and inefficient sprawl and to promote redevelopment of areas that currently diverge from the town's land use vision.

The Planning Commission should review ordinances like Smartcode, evaluate their effectiveness in communities similar to Bennington, and consider developing a comprehensive form-based ordinance to replace or complement the current LUDR.

Land Use Districts

The Municipal Land Use and Development Regulations are based on the following land use district designations and descriptions. Those Regulations identify specific use and dimensional standards for each district. The location of the districts are represented graphically in the land use maps that follow this section (Maps 3.2 and 3.3).

Downtown and the Historic Central Bennington Design Review District

Bennington's downtown is the historic heart of the community. The character and vitality of this unique area must be retained to support the social, cultural, and economic goals set forth in this Plan. "Downtown" refers to the Central Business District and the relatively densely settled areas surrounding it. Map 3.4 shows the downtown area and the specific boundaries of the regulatory design review district.



The downtown includes a wide variety of commercial, civic, institutional, cultural, and residential uses. This mixed use environment is critical to maintain the vibrancy of the area and includes several zoning districts supporting this type of mixed use environment. Special site and building standards ensure high quality development.

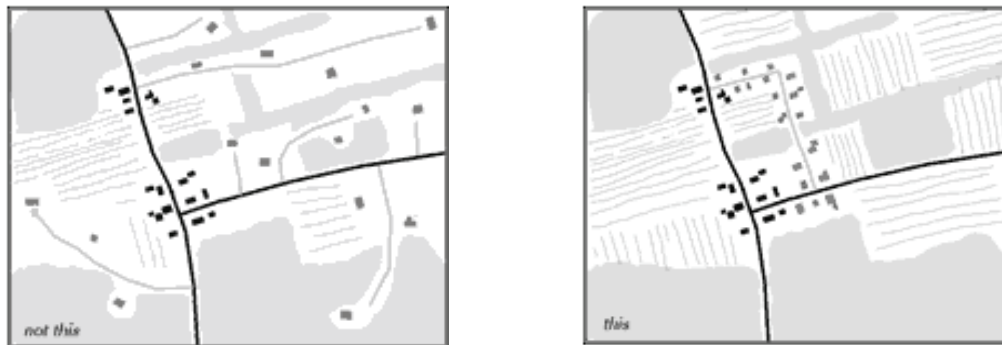
Rural Residential District (RR)

The town's Rural Residential Districts are located outside the Urban Growth Area, but in areas that support existing residential development and can accommodate low density residential growth because of the availability of good roads and soil conditions. These areas are intended to support limited growth while preserving the rural landscape and scenic and natural resources.

Appropriate uses in the Rural Residential District include agriculture, forestry, low density residential uses, limited commercial uses such as veterinary clinics and neighborhood grocery stores, golf courses, earth resource extraction, and certain educational and cultural uses. Community care facilities and multi-family dwellings are permitted in the district provided they are approved subject to the town's residential Planned Unit Development (PUD) regulations.

The residential PUD standards require development to be consistent with Vermont's traditional rural landscape of farmsteads and small clusters of dwellings surrounded by open space. Significant open space shall be preserved in any PUD and the design must maximize preservation of important agricultural land and other natural resources. Density bonuses may be permitted to encourage open space preservation and provision of affordable housing.

The design of new subdivisions is especially important in ensuring the retention of an efficient and attractive land use pattern in these rural areas. Any new subdivision must be planned to preserve important agricultural land and natural and scenic resources, and all major subdivisions must meet standards for Planned Unit Developments.



Two views of new residential development in a rural area near an existing cluster of buildings. By using effective residential planned unit development techniques, subdivisions with the same number of units can be achieved without consuming productive farm land and open space. This can allow agricultural land to stay in production, increase infrastructure efficiency, and lead to the creation of open spaces for community use. From Growing Smarter - Best Site Planning for Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Development, produced by the Smart Growth Vermont.

Rural Conservation District (RC)

Rural Conservation Districts are located in valley areas outside the Urban Growth Area which have retained their rural and open space character. Considerable acreages of agricultural land exist in these areas, along with extensive woodlands and low density residential development. The purpose of the Rural Conservation Districts is to preserve this distinctive

rural character while accommodating low density residential development in a manner that avoids the need for public water supply and public sewer systems.

Agriculture, forestry, very low density single-family residential development, and certain limited uses that are suitable in rural areas are permitted in the district. Additional standards apply to college buildings, cultural institutions, and the adaptive reuse of historic structures as bed and breakfasts. Subdivisions must protect important agricultural land, natural, and scenic resources; major subdivisions must meet the standards for residential Planned Unit Development.

Connections of any building to the municipal wastewater treatment system may only be approved if the Development Review Board finds a compelling public health threat, and such connection cannot be used to expand the use.

Specific design standards shall apply to new development in the Rural Conservation Districts in recognition of the existence of a concentration of agricultural and forest lands and to protect the extraordinary scenic resources such lands and uses provide. Any use in the Rural Conservation District, including single-family dwellings, shall require approval under those regulatory guidelines. Development in this area cannot be sited in prominently visible locations on hillsides or ridgelines, shall utilize earth tone colors and non-reflective materials on exterior surfaces of all structures, and must minimize clearing of natural vegetation.



A typical scene in one of Bennington's RC Districts; this view looks across Pleasant Valley.

Agriculture District (A)



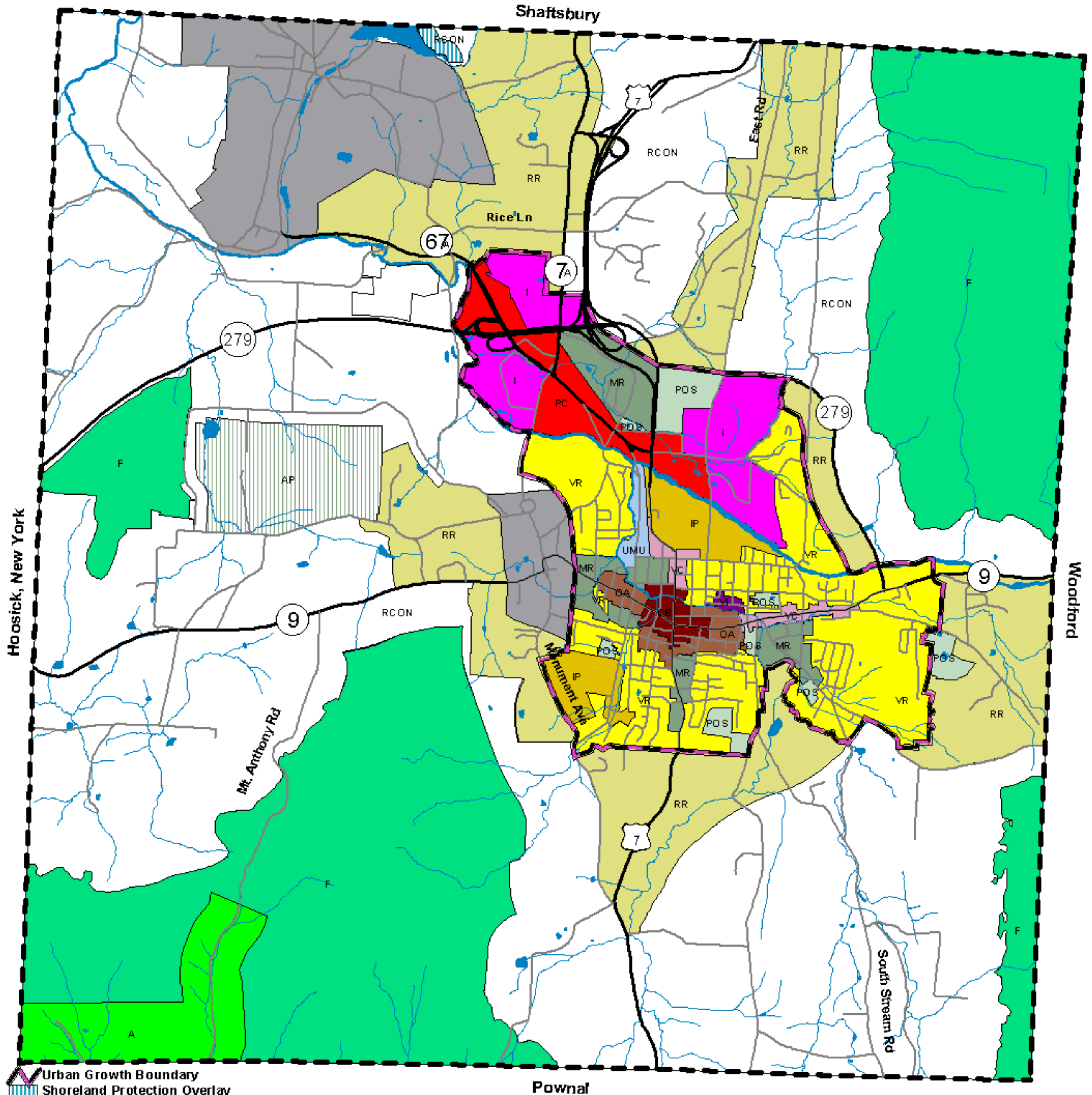
Valley farmland in the Agriculture District along Skiparee Road.

One Agriculture District has been established in the southwestern corner of town, along Mount Anthony and Skiparee Roads. This area is very remote from the town center and municipal utilities and includes extensive agricultural uses lying in steep-sided narrow valleys. The purpose of the district is to provide for all types of agricultural use while limiting nonagricultural uses. Agriculture, forestry, very low density (25 acre minimum lot size) single-family residential development, and a limited number of accessory uses are permitted in the district.

downtown. Industrial uses in the district shall be planned and operated in a manner that does not adversely impact nearby residential neighborhoods.

10. Creative redevelopment shall occur in the **Urban Mixed Use District**. A mix of industrial, professional, retail, and residential uses shall be encouraged in this district. Building and site design shall preserve the historic character of the area. Public and private development shall provide an attractive streetscape, pedestrian amenities, and safe and efficient management of vehicular movements. This area should develop as a mixed use district, and not become dominated by retail uses, so that the downtown remains as the town's retail center.
11. Bennington's **Institutional and Professional Districts** shall continue to support regionally important health care and educational facilities. Expansions to major institutional uses shall be based on approved master plans and shall not adversely impact the character of adjacent residential or mixed use neighborhoods.
12. The town will work with the Bennington County Industrial Corporation and other organizations to ensure that uses in **Industrial Districts** shall have the infrastructure and resources they need to be successful. Industrial uses shall not have an adverse impact on the environment or residential properties.
13. The **Planned Commercial District** provides for a wide range of businesses such as retail stores, restaurants, lodging establishments, and automotive uses. Commercial uses shall be planned to be compatible with adjacent uses and shall share parking, access, and pedestrian facilities whenever possible. Building and site design shall be consistent with the Planned Commercial District Design Standards.
14. New development in the **Route 7A Corridor Overlay** shall retain the rural character of the area and not adversely impact traffic flow or safety on this historic approach to Bennington. Strictly limited commercial uses are permitted in accordance with design and dimensional standards that preserve open space, scenic resources, and the rural character of the area. Uses that would contribute to sprawl or commercial strip development shall be prohibited.
15. The **Planned Airport District and Airport Approach Overlay District** provides the land that is necessary for continued effective operation of the WH Morse State Airport and incidental commercial and professional uses. Development in the area shall not lead to unsafe conditions or inhibit effective use of the airport.
16. The **Rural Residential Districts** shall provide for relatively low density residential development just outside the area of more compact development. New residential development in the area shall be carefully planned to protect important agricultural land and other natural and scenic resources. Major subdivisions shall meet the standards of a residential Planned Unit Development (PUD) to protect Bennington's traditional rural and agrarian landscape.
17. **Rural Conservation Districts** shall continue to support traditional low density rural and agricultural uses. Extension of municipal water supply and wastewater disposal lines to these areas shall be prohibited. New residential development in the area shall be carefully planned to protect important agricultural land and other natural and scenic resources. Major subdivisions shall meet the standards of a Residential Planned Unit Development (PUD) to protect Bennington's traditional rural and agrarian landscape.

Map 3 - 2 LAND USE PLAN Bennington, Vermont



- Urban Growth Boundary
- Shoreland Protection Overlay
- Land Use Districts
- Rural Conservation
- Rural Residential
- Village Residential
- Mix Residential
- Office and Apartment
- Institutional and Professional
- Village Commercial
- Planned Commercial
- Central Business
- Industrial
- Village Industrial
- Urban Mixed Use
- Agricultural
- Forest
- Public Open Spcae
- Planned Airport
- North Bennington
- Old Bennington



Chapter 4 - Natural, Scenic, and Historical Resources

4.1 Overview

Bennington's location and history have combined to create a community that is rich in a variety of resources. The town's natural resources are important to the area's economic vitality and have played an important role in shaping the character of the community. Many of those resources also now provide for exceptional outdoor recreational opportunities.

The scenic quality of the landscape, including both its natural and man-made features, is another important community resource. Views of rural fields and farmsteads, waterways, mountains, and historical structures enhance the quality of life for residents and are important for tourism and future economic development.

Settlement of Bennington began in the mid-1700s and the early pattern of relatively densely developed village centers surrounded by rural countryside is still evident today. The town's historic districts and their distinctive architecture represent irreplaceable resources that further define the community's character and support economic development.

This section of the Plan will identify and discuss the preservation and wise use of important natural, scenic, and historical resources.

4.2 Natural Resources

Bennington's natural resources always have played an important part in the life of the community. Early settlers in the area farmed the lowland agricultural soils and harvested trees from the mountainsides. Streams provided power for early industry, sand and gravel deposits were mined for roadway and building construction, and abundant wildlife roamed throughout the hills and valleys.

Those same natural resources continue to provide economic benefits to the community while also supporting important recreational activities for residents and tourists. Wise use and conservation of these resources will ensure that future generations will benefit from them as well. The objectives and specific policies set forth in this section should be read in conjunction with those of the corresponding land use districts.

Agricultural Land

Bennington contains some of the most extensive valley lands in southern Vermont and many of the soils lying in these lowland areas are very productive for agricultural use (Map 4-1). Because prime agricultural soils are often the same soils that are best suited for development, the potential for loss of much of this resource is considerable. Conserving agricultural land benefits the community in a number of ways, including:

- Support for a diverse economic base while ensuring the future viability of local agricultural production;
- Maintenance of the town's rural character and agricultural heritage;
- Preservation of open space, scenic vistas, and ecological resources.



Bennington's agricultural and forest lands provide numerous benefits to townspeople.

Although the number of active farms in Bennington has declined, there are still 30 farming operations in the community. Recent trends (county data, 2007 US Census of Agriculture) indicates a continuing reduction the number and size of farms, although the value of products sold has increased substantially. There has been some diversification from traditional dairy and crop farming, as apple orchards, Christmas tree farms, and other specialty producers also are now found in rural areas. Public policies and private development shall seek to conserve prime agricultural soils and the potential for agricultural production in the town's rural areas. Because the town seeks to direct growth to the Urban Growth Area while protecting rural open space in outlying areas, loss of agricultural soils to alternative uses in the center of town is expected and appropriate.

Local agriculture will become increasingly important as energy constraints affect the supply and transport of food. A strong emphasis must be placed on preservation of productive soils and support for local farms. Initiatives such as the Bennington County "Farm to Plate" program and the Walloomsac Farmer's Market should be supported by the town.

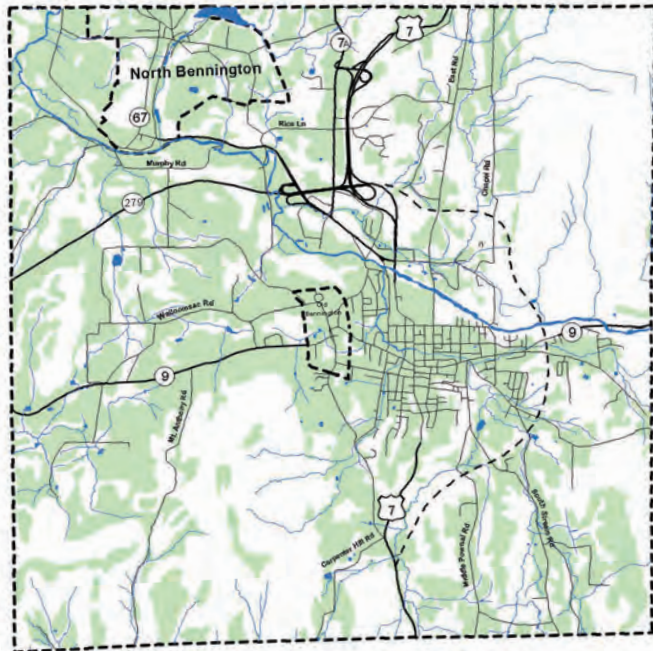
Agricultural land conservation will be encouraged by requiring that development remain at a relatively low density in rural areas and by requiring that new subdivisions be planned to preserve open space and the use potential of agricultural soils. When development is planned adjacent to an existing agricultural operation, the project shall be designed to minimize conflicts between the different uses.

Owners of agricultural land are encouraged to consider use of programs that reduce the property tax burden on open lands. Acquisition of agricultural land or the development rights to such land by organizations such as the Vermont Land Trust is an effective way to preserve these resources, often while providing considerable benefits to the landowners and enabling continued viability of the farming operation.

Forest Land

Much of Bennington is covered in forests, particularly on the slopes of the Green Mountains and Mount Anthony. Numerous smaller woodlots are found throughout the valley areas. All of these woodlands help to prevent soil erosion and flooding, contribute to air and water quality, and support valuable timber, wildlife habitat, recreational, and aesthetic resources. Protection of forest resources is an important objective of this Plan.

The extensive forests covering the mountain slopes have not been developed because



Map 4-1. The shaded areas represent prime agricultural soils, as mapped by the Natural Resource Conservation Service. These areas cover much of the valley land in the town. With the exception of the Urban Growth Area, most of these areas retain the potential for supporting a variety of agricultural uses.

of their remoteness and limited access. With the withdrawal of agricultural uses from marginal hillsides and reduced demand for local timber in the 20th century, the amount of forest land in Bennington actually increased. However, experiences such as the unsuccessful effort to create residential lots over much of Mount Anthony serve as a reminder that active efforts to conserve these resources are necessary.

Most of Bennington's high elevation forest land is zoned to permit only forestry, recreation, and other uses that will protect the value of the resource. Property tax reduction programs, appropriate land use planning, and acquisition of land or development rights by a land trust or other conservation organization are appropriate techniques for preserving forest land.

The Green Mountain National Forest covers a large amount of land on the town's eastern side and in the nearby mountain towns. Lands acquired by the Forest Service remain accessible to the public; all of these properties should be actively managed for multiple uses including recreation, timber production, and wildlife. The town should participate in National Forest planning activities and should coordinate forest planning with other nearby towns, especially with Woodford. Particular attention should be given to planning for the wise and environmentally sound use of forest trails and roads. Unrestricted access by all-terrain vehicles, trucks, and other motorized vehicles can result in severe damage to these travelways and cause erosion and water quality degradation; consequently, use of these vehicles should be allowed only on public lands and trails when proper environmental safeguards are in place.

Water Resources

Bennington contains a wide variety of water resources, including ponds, wetlands, rivers and streams, floodplains, and groundwater (Map 4-2). The quality of these resources is essential to the health of residents and to the local economy. Effective planning for water resource protection requires consideration of activities that occur throughout a watershed. Construction, stormwater runoff, road building and maintenance, and agricultural and logging activities all can increase the flow of sediments, nutrients, or other pollutants into waterways. Appropriate land use and environmental regulations (including the new Vermont state stormwater regulations), adherence to accepted best management practices and erosion control procedures, and public education contribute to protection of these vital resources.

Lake Paran

Lake Paran covers approximately 40 acres with a shoreline shared by Bennington, North Bennington, and Shaftsbury. The lake is an important recreational resource that is used for swimming, boating, and fishing. Because maintaining water quality in the lake is of such great importance, development within 200 feet of the shoreline shall be restricted to prevent sediments or nutrients from entering the water. Much of the northern shoreline of the lake has been protected through a cooperative venture with the Vermont Land Trust.



Lake Paran is an important water resource in the northwestern part of town.

Rivers and Streams

Streams flow into Bennington's valleys from mountains lying to the north, east, and south. A sizeable river, the Walloomsac, is formed from the convergence of these streams and flows westward from the center of town. These waterways always have been important to the community, first serving as a focus for settlement and development in both urban and rural areas and now providing important recreational and aesthetic benefits to residents and visitors. The Bennington municipal sewage treatment plant also discharges treated effluent into the river near the town's western boundary.

The Walloomsac and its tributaries tie together a diverse landscape in Bennington as they flow from forested mountains and rural fields through residential neighborhoods, the historical downtown, and past mills and factories. Efforts to protect water quality and direct interest and attention toward the river and streams have been effective and should be continued. A special project has just been initiated to restore the channel and floodplain of the Roaring Branch. The work will lower flood levels, decrease flood water velocity, and restore natural sediment deposition on the alluvial fan.



Restoration work along the Roaring Branch on the east side of town will improve water quality and floodplain management.

Environmental regulations that control discharges to these waterways are necessary to maintain the quality, function, and value of the resources. In addition to state and federal regulations, local zoning standards regulate development and vegetation clearing within buffer zones along all stream banks.

Preservation and rehabilitation of historical structures along the river and construction of pedestrian and bicycle pathways adjacent to the stream banks will promote appreciation of the waterways and enhance economic development opportunities. Special attention should be paid to preservation of the three covered bridges over the Walloomsac and development of adequate, safe, and attractive parking, public access, and pathways at these locations.

Wetlands

Wetlands are areas transitional between aquatic and terrestrial systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water. Benefits provided by wetlands include: flood and storm water control, maintenance of surface and ground water



Part of a large wetland complex located in the northwestern part of Bennington.

quality, open space and aesthetic appreciation, fish and wildlife habitat, ecological research and educational opportunities, and sources of nutrients for freshwater food chains.

Concentrations of wetlands in Bennington are found south of the town's center along Jewett Brook and South Stream, in the relatively flat areas to the west bounded by Whipstock Hill and Routes 9 and 279, and in the low lying areas south and east of Lake Paran.

The Vermont Wetlands Rules and federal regulations administered by the Environmental Protection Agency and

the Army Corps of Engineers provide protection for wetland resources. Town regulations also prohibit incompatible development within 50 feet of Class 1 or 2 wetlands.

Floodplains and Fluvial Erosion Hazard Areas

Floodplains are areas that are inundated during high water flows and are important for floodwater storage as well as for the role they play in supporting significant riparian wetlands and wildlife habitats. Substantial floodplain areas in Bennington are located along the Roaring Branch, the Walloomsac River, Furnace Brook, Jewett Brook, and South Stream. Development in floodplain areas is inherently dangerous and is subject to strict regulation under the town's Flood Hazard Area zoning regulations. No development other than agriculture and forestry is allowed in these areas without approval by the Development Review Board after showing that specific engineering and construction standards have been satisfied.

The town recently completed mapping of fluvial erosion hazard (FEH) areas and has implemented special regulations for those areas (Map 4-2(A)). These FEH zones recognize the fact that rivers' locations are not static, but change over time as a result of erosive forces. Development in these areas is restricted to prevent damage from erosion in much the same way that development in flood hazard areas is restricted to prevent damage from inundation.

Groundwater

A large amount of the water consumed by domestic, commercial, and industrial users in Bennington is derived from groundwater; of course, surface waters are fed from groundwater as well. A sufficient supply of clean groundwater is therefore crucial to residents and businesses and to future development. The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation and the Vermont Department of Health have identified public water source protection areas covering areas that supply groundwater to municipal and private water systems of a certain size. These source protection areas are illustrated on Map 4-2 and include recharge areas for sources like the Morgan Spring and watersheds of surface water sources such as Bolles Brook.

State and federal environmental regulations provide standards for the collection and distribution of these water resources. Land use regulations shall limit the type and intensity of development in upland areas where important groundwater recharge occurs. In addition, because many residences and businesses rely on individual on-site wells to serve their water needs, strict adherence to local and state regulations is critically important.

Earth Resources

Mineral, sand, gravel, rock, and other earth resources in Bennington have been utilized since colonial times. Iron ore was mined at one time and stone furnaces from this early industry are still visible near the Bennington-Woodford town line. Talc, limestone, and dolomite were extracted from small quarries from time to time in the past, and clay deposits were used in the production of local pottery, brick, and in papermaking. At the present time, the only significant earth resource extraction operations involve sand and gravel deposits that are used for roadway construction and concrete aggregate.

Important earth resources should be identified and land development planned so that these deposits remain available for future use. In addition, because extraction operations potentially can have adverse impacts on the environment and nearby properties, any new or expanded

quarrying and extraction is subject to special review by the Development Review Board. Any new extraction operation must demonstrate that it will not unduly impact the environment or the value of neighboring properties, and must include a plan for rehabilitation of the site once the operation is complete.

Earth resource extraction operations in adjacent towns also can affect Bennington, as is the case with the gravel pit off Burgess Road in Woodford. The town should participate in any appropriate environmental reviews of such projects to ensure proper resource management and site reclamation.

Air Quality

The quality of the air in Bennington is generally excellent and efforts should be made to ensure that it remains clear and clean. Threats to air quality may come at a number of levels. A serious local environmental health issue involves the illegal burning of domestic refuse, so-called “backyard burning.” Such activities discharge dangerous amounts of airborne particulate and toxic and carcinogenic products of combustion. Local and state regulations that prohibit such practices must be strictly enforced.

Economic development in Bennington has emphasized “clean industries” that do not emit dangerous amounts of air pollution and this approach should be continued. Of course, airborne pollutants often originate from well beyond a municipality’s borders so the town must remain aware of potential pollution sites, especially to the west in New York State, and work with the state to make sure that local air quality is not degraded.

Emissions from motor vehicles can have significant local and regional impacts on air quality. Efforts to reduce vehicle miles traveled through efficient land use planning should be continued and opportunities for alternative transportation enhanced to reduce congestion and emissions. The town can also promote clean air by requiring planning for energy efficiency in new developments and by promoting the use of fuel-efficient vehicles.

Fish and Wildlife

As noted in the earlier sections of this chapter, the diverse natural environments of the town provide habitat for a wide range of fish and wildlife species. Streams, ponds, and wetlands support popular sport fish such as rainbow and brook trout, as well as the invertebrate species they rely on for food. These water bodies also serve as critical habitat elements for waterfowl, amphibians, and many mammals (e.g., otter, beaver, bear, moose, and deer) that feed and travel along the shorelines. It is important to maintain natural vegetative covers along streambanks and to prevent the introduction into water bodies of sediments and harmful nutrients that encourage algal growth.

The whitetail deer is an important part of the local ecosystem and is a popular game animal for resident and visiting sportsmen. While deer are found throughout rural areas of the town, certain wintering yards are particularly important to the health of the herd. These habitat areas are often associated with a high degree of softwood cover having a southerly or westerly aspect, and are free from human disturbance. Important deer yards have been identified on Mount Anthony and Whipstock Hill (Map 4-3) and shall be protected from development



The black bear is one of several large mammals that live in and around Bennington.

activities that would degrade them. The population of the deer herd does need to be carefully managed because an overabundance of deer can result in damage to natural vegetation and crops.

The black bear is another distinctive animal that requires specific habitat elements to thrive. Large tracts of undeveloped forest land, including the high elevation forests in the Green and Taconic Mountains in Bennington, are critical to the survival of a viable population of black bears. Large expanses of forest, and bear travel corridors that connect such forested areas, must be maintained. The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife has identified areas that are likely to support black bear populations (Map 4-3) and within these larger areas are “critical habitats” that must be preserved, including beech and oak stands, wetlands, and the aforementioned travel corridors.

Unique Natural Areas

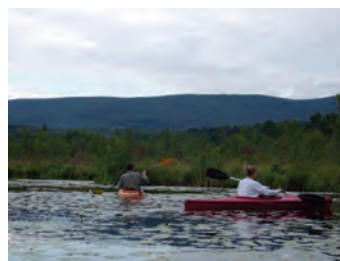
There are several unique natural areas in Bennington that deserve special mention and protection. The Vermont Natural Heritage Program has identified rare plant and animal species and unique natural communities in the area. Information on other significant natural areas, including geologic features such as caves, waterfalls, and rock outcroppings has been separately compiled by the Vermont Natural Resources Council and the Bennington Country Regional Commission. These areas and the lands immediately around them must be protected from incompatible development. The locations of the resources identified in Table 4-1 are displayed on Map 4-3.

Table 4-1 Unique Natural Features in Bennington

- 1 **Whipstock Hill** Exposure of the rock type Wildflysch Conglomerate, illustrating the development of the Taconic Mountains.
- 2 **Everett Cave** Solution cave with dripstone formations in Mt. Anthony.
- 3 **Jewett Brook Marsh** Scenic pen water marsh providing important habitat for many plants and animal species.
- 4 **Tuliptrees** Large two-stemmed tuliptree and several smaller ones on Mt. Anthony.
- 5 **Mount Anthony** Scenic landmark whose synclinal nature is well-exposed around its northern end.
- 6 **Silk Road Alluvial Forest** Canopy of elm, sycamore, and eastern cottonwood, also containing a shrub swamp.
- 7 **Silk Road Woods** Wooded area containing uncommon species.
- 8 **Pit of Misery** Open pit on the lower slopes of Mt. Anthony
- 9 **Stratton Brook Falls** Scenic falls along Stratton Brook descending from Bald Mountain.
- 10 **Wetland Plant Community** A rare sedge, *Carex schweinitzii*, growing in this wetland is found in fewer than 10 sites statewide.
- 11 **Serendipity Fen** Rich fen within a 100+ acre wetland.
- 12 **McCullough Woods** Mixed northern hardwoods forest of old growth white pine, sugar maple, beech, elm, and red oak.
- 13 **Bald Mountain** Boreal outcrop community with areas of talus.
- 14 **Cemetery Meadows** Meadow containing the rare plant, arrow-leaved aster (*Aster sagittifolius*).



Whipstock Hill Exposure



Jewett Brook Marsh



Talus slope on Bald Mountain

In addition to these natural areas, a number of important individual tree specimens are found in Bennington. The Department of Natural Sciences at Castleton State College compiled a registry of Vermont's largest trees and five of those state champion trees are in Bennington. All of these trees are in residential areas and the owners have been made aware of their presence. Special efforts should be made to protect these trees and other attractive mature trees in the community. Site plans for new developments shall identify and preserve these important trees.

4.3 Scenic Resources

The scenic quality of the landscape is one of Bennington's most important assets. The visual appearance of the town's natural and built environment, and the quality of life that it represents, is important to residents, tourists, businesses, and to future economic development.

Bennington is characterized by its expansive valley that has been able to support a rich variety of rural and urban development. That development has occurred in close proximity to distinctive upland features which have themselves limited and channeled the direction of such growth. The varied nature of the valley landforms and built environment juxtaposed with wild and abrupt mountainsides gives Bennington its unique sense of place.

Many individual factors come together to create Bennington's special visual landscapes. These "scenic elements" reflect both characteristics that are unique to Bennington and certain features that are widely recognized as adding visual interest to a landscape. The town's Scenic Resource Inventory (December 2004) discusses each of these elements in detail: open fields, mountains, water, distant views, gateways, scenic roads and public places, historical sites and districts, and the Bennington Battle Monument.



Bennington's natural and built environment combine to create a truly unique sense of place with outstanding scenic qualities.

The Scenic Resource Inventory also discusses how those features are organized in the landscape to create pleasing views. The "visual qualities" of landscape contrast, order and harmony, focal points, spatial quality, and intactness that make a particular view special and unique to the community must be protected to retain the integrity of the resource.

The scenic quality of a landscape can be affected, positively or negatively, by change. A number of landscape features are particularly sensitive to change, among them: views across open fields, prominent ridgelines or hillsides, historical buildings and districts and gateways to those districts, and scenes that include important contrasting elements such as water.

The town's land use plan and regulations are designed to reinforce the scenic quality of the landscape by focusing development in historical village centers and preserving the rural character of the outlying countryside. Special regulations also have been adopted that preserve scenic resources by requiring aesthetically sensitive design of subdivisions and commercial buildings. In addition, zoning regulations establish very specific standards and review procedures for new and altered buildings in the town's designated historic design review district.

Nonregulatory tools also can be used to protect identified scenic resources. The town should work with conservation organizations such as the Vermont Land Trust to acquire properties, or conservation or scenic easements to properties, that have particular scenic significance to the community. Local and state designated scenic roads, such as Route 9, the “Molly Stark Byway” can help provide funding and impetus for preserving and promoting scenic roadway corridors.

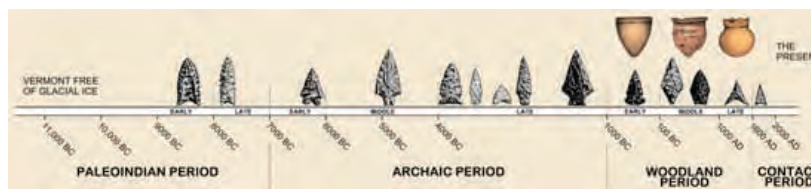
Special attention should be given to visual gateways: points of transition along a public highway where it is evident that the traveler is arriving at a unique place. Gateways are located at entry points to the historical downtown and at places along rural highways where significant visual elements of the town’s landscape first appear. These features can be improved through effective planning of adjacent land uses and integration of site features such as landscaping and careful placement of historic district signs.

Recent interest in development of renewable energy resources raises a number of important issues. Commercial-scale wind turbines will be highly visible and should be located only in locations approved by the community. Biomass (wood) heating and electric generation will involve significant tree harvesting and may include plants with smokestacks and visible plumes of steam; the environmental and scenic impacts of those operations must be considered. Finally, small-scale hydroelectric generation can impact stream water quality, fish habitat, and aesthetics; restricting development to existing dam sites (Paper Mill Village) will greatly minimize any such concerns.

4.4 Historical Resources

Bennington’s historical structures, districts, and archaeological sites are important resources that provide residents with a sense of their heritage and a link with the past, promoting a sense of community identity and pride. Those same resources add to the aesthetic qualities of the town and provide an interesting context that makes the community attractive to tourists and to people and businesses seeking to relocate.

Details of some of the earliest human history of the Bennington area have been gleaned from archaeological sites excavated along the Walloomsac River. Careful inventories of prehistoric Native American sites adjacent to the river have revealed artifacts and evidence of 6000 years of human occupation and use of the area. These sites and others which are likely to contain materials from Native American and early colonial settlements should be protected from



Native American artifacts uncovered in Bennington reveal a long history of settlement and activity in the Walloomsac Valley—U. Maine at Farmington Archaeology Research Center.

development that would destroy the artifacts. If development is to occur in these areas, professional archaeological investigations should be undertaken and any artifacts and findings should be documented and displayed in the area.

Bennington was chartered as a town in 1749 and evidence of its long history since that time exists in the layout of local roads, architectural styles of buildings identified with specific

periods, and groups of buildings and structures in commercial, industrial, and residential districts. A comprehensive inventory is a necessary first step in understanding and protecting historical resources. Fortunately, several inventories and assessments of local historical resources have been completed. The most comprehensive is the Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey for the Town of Bennington which contains information on more than 3,000 properties in Bennington, Old Bennington, and North Bennington. Several historic districts and individual structures also have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places (Table 4-2).

Of particular interest and concern to the town is the Downtown Bennington Historic District. This area includes a concentration of historical commercial, civic, and residential structures at the center of the community that, more than any other area, gives the town its unique sense of place. A design review district (Map 3-4) has been established to ensure that the historical integrity of this important area remains intact.

Table 4-2. Sites in Bennington Included in the National Register of Historic Places

Downtown Bennington Historic District
Old Bennington Historic District
North Bennington Historic District
Furnace Grove Historic District
Carrigan Lane District
Ritchie Block
Silk Road Covered Bridge
Paper Mill Covered Bridge
Henry Covered Bridge
Bennington Railroad Station
William Henry House
Holden-Leonard Mill Complex
Frederick Squire House
U.S. Federal Building (current Bennington Police Station)
Everett Mansion
Park-McCullough House
Cora B. Whitney School (converted to affordable housing)
RAHC properties on South Street and Benmont Avenue



There is a concentration of important historic structures in the Downtown Historic District; the former Federal Building is in the foreground of this photograph looking up South Street.

Inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places may enable property owners to receive federal tax advantages for historically appropriate improvements. In addition, Bennington is a Certified Local Government (CLG) - under a program developed by the National Park Service to encourage preservation of locally important historical resources. As a CLG the town is able to access certain funding and technical support resources that facilitate stated preservation goals. The Bennington Historic Preservation Commission was established in response to requirements of the CLG program and this Commission now oversees many historic preservation activities and programs in the community.

The Historic Preservation Commission has developed preservation guidelines to protect the character of historic districts that it has identified. Many of those guidelines and recommended actions are contained in its publication, Time and Place in Bennington, A Handbook for the Central Bennington Historic District. This document was updated recently and is now available, with its comprehensive set of design guidelines, on the town's website.

No single tool can ensure a successful historic preservation program. A combination of regulatory design controls, public funding for site and building improvements, and incentives for adaptive re-use of historical structures is necessary, and the town supports each of these techniques to achieve its historic preservation objectives, which can be summarized as follows:

- Maintain the community's special historical and cultural heritage and preserve a sense of place and pride for the town's residents;

- Maintain those historical and aesthetic qualities that are economic assets to the community and promote the economically viable reuse of historical structures;
- Require that the renovation and alteration of existing structures, and the construction of new structures, is done in a manner consistent with the character of the historic district in which they are located;
- Achieve overall visual compatibility within each district through careful attention to architectural, landscape, and site structure details;
- Save historical structures whenever possible.



Many of Bennington's historic structures are located along its waterways, such as the three covered bridges over the Walloomsac River.

The town will continue to pursue funding opportunities that support these objectives. Ongoing historically appropriate streetscape improvements in the downtown funded through the Transportation Enhancements Program have been particularly effective in this regard. Development of historical properties in Bennington, or of any property in designated historic districts, shall comply with the town's preservation guidelines and the applicable regulatory design standards. Consideration should be given to "landmark status" for especially significant historic buildings and sites and to preservation of unique and historically important interior spaces.

4.5 Policies and Recommendations for Natural, Scenic, and Historical Resources

1. The town should continue to work with conservation organizations and the Vermont Land Trust to preserve lands that contain productive agricultural soils and to support economically viable farming operations.
2. Land development in rural areas shall be designed to preserve as much prime agricultural soil as possible. Within the Urban Growth Area, preservation of agricultural soils is not required.
3. High elevation forest lands shall remain free from development and shall support appropriate uses as defined in the municipal zoning regulations. Conservation of important tracts of forest land through tax incentives or acquisition by conservation organizations or the Green Mountain National Forest is encouraged.
4. Surface water resources shall be protected through comprehensive watershed planning that includes erosion and storm water control and by maintaining undisturbed buffers between development and stream banks and shorelines.
5. The town should seek opportunities to focus community interest toward and along waterways through development of linear parks, pathways, and safe and adequate public access and parking locations.

6. Development in regulatory floodplains and fluvial erosion hazard zones shall be strictly regulated according to the municipal flood hazard and fluvial erosion hazard regulations.
7. The quality and quantity of groundwater resources used for residential, commercial, and industrial consumption shall be protected through strict adherence to state and local environmental and health regulations.
8. Development planning shall consider the need for future extraction of important deposits of earth resources. Earth resource extraction operations shall be conducted in a manner that does not harm the environment, the value of nearby properties, or future development of the site.
9. Air quality must be maintained by prohibiting discharges of unhealthy pollutants from industrial, commercial, or residential sources.
10. Critical fish and wildlife habitat areas and unique natural areas shall not be damaged by incompatible development. The town should work with conservation organizations when opportunities arise to acquire such areas.
11. Development of renewable energy resources should consider both the need for locally produced energy and the need to protect natural and scenic resources.
12. New development shall be sensitive to scenic resources and shall be planned in a manner that preserves the visual integrity of critical scenic elements and visual qualities.
13. The town should work with conservation organizations to permanently protect important viewsheds through purchase of properties or scenic easements. The town should continue to participate in and support local and state scenic roads programs.
14. Protect and enhance existing visual gateways to the community and downtown, and seek opportunities to establish new gateways at appropriate locations.
15. Strict adherence to design guidelines and standards for additions or alterations to historical properties and for any construction or building alterations within the Historic Bennington Design Review District is required.
16. The adaptive reuse of historical buildings, rather than their demolition and replacement, is required whenever such reuse is practical and appropriate. Historical structures shall be incorporated into site plans for new developments.
17. The Historic Preservation Commission shall continue to serve in an advisory role to the Planning Commission and the Development Review Board when regulations and development proposals affecting historical sites or districts are being considered.
18. Explore and pursue opportunities for funding and financial incentives (Rehabilitation

Investment Tax Credits, CLG, National Trust, etc.) that will support historic preservation efforts by the town and private property owners.

19. Support efforts by the Historic Preservation Commission, the Chamber of Commerce, the Better Bennington Corporation, and other organizations to increase awareness of historical resources through displays, walking tours, and other means.
20. The town should develop an inventory of irreplaceable natural, scenic, and historical resources - "Landmarks" - that must be protected. These landmarks include, but are not limited to, features such as the Bennington Battle Monument, the covered bridges, the Hotel Putnam, Mount Anthony, and similar features that are of fundamental importance in establishing Bennington's unique character.

7.13 Recreation and Open Space

Open Space Recreational Resources

Bennington's undeveloped open space—forests, fields, and parkland—are important natural and scenic assets and also support a wide range of recreational activities. Developed parks and other facilities add to the recreational opportunities available to residents and visitors. It is important that these open lands and facilities be maintained, expanded where appropriate, and properly managed. The town recently completed an inventory and assessment of parks, recreation facilities, and open space resources. This Park and Open Space Plan should be consulted when considering improvements to existing facilities, development of new facilities, and acquisition or preservation of open lands. An important objective of the plan is creation of a comprehensive pathway network that provides access to the town's natural and historic resources.

The town includes extensive publicly owned forest land, most notably the nearly 1,000 acres that are part of the Green Mountain National Forest on the slopes of Bald Mountain. These National Forest lands continue into adjacent towns, offering a vast reserve of public land for hiking, fishing, hunting, swimming, boating, skiing, and other sports. The Forest Service is authorized to purchase land anywhere in Bennington County, and additions to the National Forest in Bennington should be supported for contiguous lands that would ensure public access to important recreational areas.



A trail through the Green Mountain National Forest.

Several other tracts of forest land and open fields are either publicly owned or provide for public access to natural resource based recreational opportunities. Southern Vermont College and the Mount Anthony Preservation Society each own substantial amounts of land on Mount Anthony that include a number of recreational trails. The McCullough Woods and Fields in the northwestern part of town (partially in North Bennington) is a large area of conserved land with well-maintained public use trails. The “Y-Woods” on Morgan Street and the Bradford-Putnam Wetlands off Burgess Road are town-owned properties that both include short trail systems through interesting woodlots. Much of Whipstock Hill is owned by the State of Vermont. Efforts to maintain these lands and ensure continued public access to them should be supported.

The Norman and Selma Greenberg Reserve, south of the center of town, is owned by the New England Tropical Conservatory, which has developed a trail system, conducts outdoor educational activities, and plans to develop additional facilities. The lowland and upland portions of the reserve are bisected by the proposed southern leg of VT 279; a legal and safe pedestrian access between the two sections of the reserve should be secured.

The Walloomsac River is an especially important recreational asset. The town should seek opportunities to provide secure public access to the river at appropriate locations and should pursue development of a pathway along the river that connects its three covered bridges.

Some important open spaces used for hiking, fishing, hunting, and other recreational pursuits are located on large tracts of private land that are accessible to the public through the generosity of the landowners. Recreational users should always obtain permission before entering these lands and must be careful to not cause any disruption or damage. If particularly important privately held recreational lands become available, acquisition of the land or

easements by a conservation organization would allow continued public access to the land.

As noted in the Transportation chapter, the network of town and state roadways and the developing pathway system in the community are very important recreational, as well as transportation, facilities. Development and maintenance of these facilities shall recognize the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians as well as motorists. A pathway parallel to the eastern leg of VT 279 would be an outstanding resource for bicyclists and pedestrians while connecting existing sidewalks and trails. The town should ensure that rights-of-way along the highway/utility line corridor can be made available for such a facility.

Parks and Recreation Centers

Several parks and recreation centers owned by the town or school districts contain facilities that support a wide variety of recreational activities. Willow Park, occupying 60 acres between East Road and US 7, has soccer, baseball, and softball fields, tennis and basketball courts, horseshoe facilities, playground equipment, BMX trails, a cross country running course, two pavilions, and picnic areas.

The Municipal Recreation Center is located at Memorial Park on Gage Street. This centrally located facility on nine acres has an indoor pool, weight rooms, a multipurpose game room, locker rooms, outdoor playing fields, and houses the Recreation Department Office. The town has studied the feasibility of expanding the facilities at this park to include an indoor arena that would include an ice hockey rink and gymnasium. The site could accommodate the new facilities and related parking, but such development would have to be accomplished in a manner that would minimize any adverse impacts on the surrounding residential neighborhood. The town should work with interested groups and organizations to pursue funding for this project.



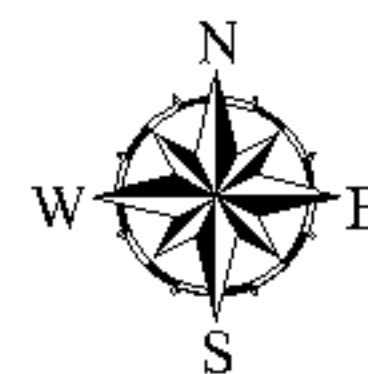
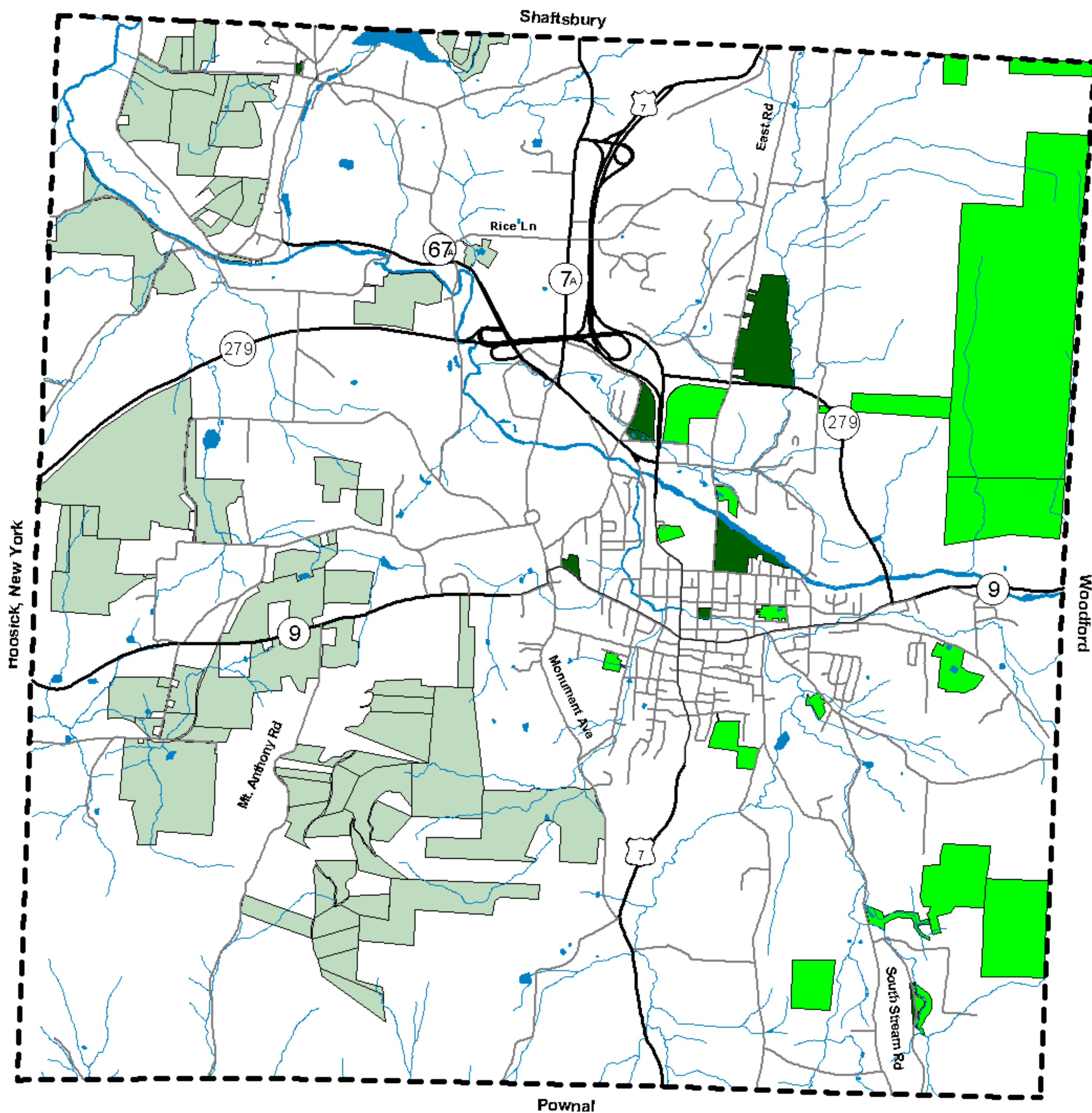
Playground facilities at Willow Park

Three smaller town-owned parks offer a variety of recreational facilities to residents. The 6.5 acre Stark Street Playground contains a basketball court and a softball field. The Leonard J. Black Memorial Park covers 4.7 acres on Orchard Road; this park once had an outdoor swimming pool and now is being considered as a site for an indoor/outdoor tennis facility. Additional improvements to the Black Memorial Park could include a path along Furnace Brook and updated park and playground equipment. The Beech Street Field has a baseball field and multi-purpose field on an 18 acre site.

Recreational facilities located at the town's elementary, middle, and high schools are used by students as well as neighborhood residents and community sports teams. New playing fields created as part of the Middle School project have filled a demonstrated need and the gymnasium, playing fields, and track at the High School are very popular with residents and organized youth and adult sports leagues.

The town also contains a wealth of privately owned and operated recreational facilities. One of the region's premier golf courses lies at the base of the Battle Monument, a popular bowling alley is located in a busy commercial area, two fitness centers are easily accessible in the center of town, and a new tennis center that will include indoor courts is planned for the former Leonard J. Black park. In addition, several retailers sell a wide variety

Map 7 - 3
PUBLIC PARKS, OPEN SPACE,
AND CONSERVED LANDS
Bennington, Vermont



up the site and river);

- Small and commercial scale wind turbines to generate electricity at suitable sites;
- Solar energy to heat buildings, water, and to power photovoltaic cells;
- Wood and wood chips (as used in local schools and at Bennington College to provide heating). These “biomass” systems also can be used at institutions such as the local hospital for both heating and cooling, and excess heat can be used to generate electricity in “combined heat and power” (CHP) systems;
- Methane sources from the sewage treatment plant and dairy farms;
- Liquid biofuels such as vegetable oils and biodiesel from crops such as canola and sunflowers;
- Geothermal energy (as used in the State Office/ CCV building on Main Street and in the new building being constructed at Bennington College) to supplement space heating systems).

Much of the town’s energy is used in the form of electricity and it is critical to assure an adequate supply from both generating sources and the capacity of transmission and distribution systems. Approximately two-thirds of the town’s electricity is supplied through state contracts with Vermont Yankee Nuclear and Hydro Quebec. It will be important to maintain those sources of supply while additional generating capacity is developed (Vermont Yankee’s operating license expires in 2012 and may be extended another twenty years). Ultimately, a “smart grid” will be needed to much more efficiently manage the generation, transmission, and use of



The town needs to be prepared for the potential loss of electricity generated at Vermont Yankee, perhaps as early as 2012; the closing could result in higher electricity rates and will emphasize the need for more local sources of electricity.

electricity. It is likely that the smart grid will rely on many distributed small generators located closer to the points where the electricity is used; consequently, the town should support economically and environmentally sound development of local electricity generating capacity, improvements to the “Southern Loop” transmission system, and development of smart grid technology.

Educational efforts can contribute a great deal to energy conservation by making residents and businesses aware of the value of using energy efficient appliances, construction techniques, and other practices. For example, a recent project undertaken with Efficiency Vermont to encourage replacement of incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs (which are up to six times as energy efficient) was very successful. The “Button Up Vermont” home weatherization and energy efficiency program conducted in town recently should be a regular event every year and publicized on CAT-TV. The Energy Committee should actively work to implement these and other educational measures - such as a “10% Challenge” (with a goal of reducing townwide energy use by ten percent) - throughout the community.

8.3 Energy Policies and Recommendations

1. Actively promote the energy-related benefits of town policies that:

- Lead to consideration of energy use, including short and long-term energy costs, in municipal decision-making;

- Focus Development in the Growth Center;
 - Require efficient residential and commercial subdivision design and construction;
 - Support development of renewable energy resources;
 - Provide dedicated facilities for bicycles and pedestrians and improvements to roadways to encourage walking and biking;
 - Require pedestrian linkages between adjacent residential developments and between adjacent commercial developments;
 - Encourage mixed uses in the downtown; and
 - Support public transportation services, ride-sharing programs, and improved freight and passenger rail service to the town.
2. Create and support programs and facilities that provide stable, affordable, and clean renewable sources of energy, including wood (and other biomass), wind, water (hydroelectric), solar, and geothermal. Give strong consideration to the energy needs of the community when evaluating the environmental and economic affects of such programs and facilities.
 3. The town will make an effort to reduce fossil fuel use in its municipal facilities and operations.
 - A recent proposal to install LED streetlights downtown should eventually be expanded to cover the entire town.
 - Fuel efficiency should be an important consideration when the town replaces vehicles and heavy equipment.
 - Opportunities for employing renewable energy resources in municipal buildings and facilities should be pursued.
 4. The town will prepare a comprehensive energy plan and implementation program; the plan should be updated regularly to document annual energy use and costs as well as savings from implementation measures.
 5. The town should consider completion of a comprehensive municipal energy audit.
 6. The town should continue to pursue energy conservation measures and renewable energy projects.
 7. New construction should meet or exceed state residential and commercial energy efficiency standards. Awareness of LEED and Energy Star construction techniques should be improved and projects designed to achieve certification under those programs supported.
 8. The town should encourage participation in Efficiency Vermont energy conservation programs.
 9. The town should utilize innovative programs such as the Clean Energy Assessment District to provide incentives and support financing of energy conservation and efficiency improvements.
 10. The town and its Energy Committee should work with other organizations to promote energy conservation through regular educational programs and initiatives.