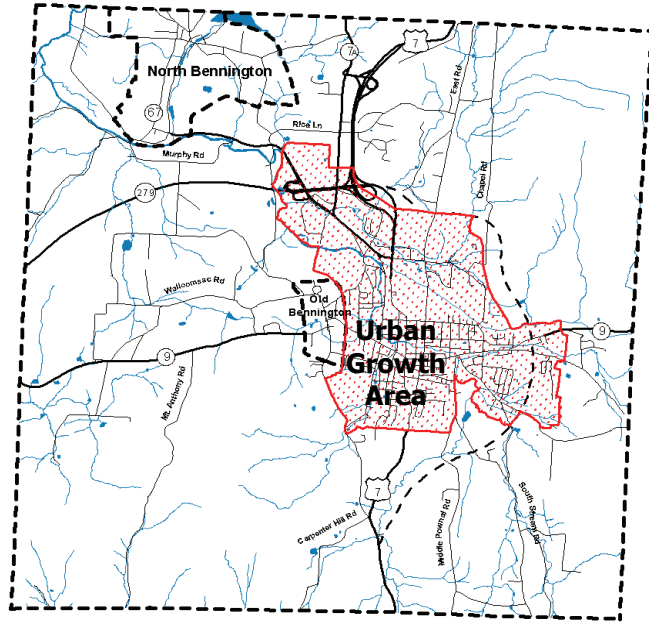


Area. Although development will occur outside of this area, it will be much less concentrated and shall not include new commercial uses because such uses are incompatible with the rural character of the area. These outlying rural areas also contribute important historic and scenic qualities to the town,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