

11. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The previous chapters of this plan provided critical information for deciding the amount, location, type and rate of development that should occur in the Town of Essex in the future. This Land Use and Development section takes into account the opportunities and constraints outlined previously and sets forth where and how Essex might grow.

11.1 Existing Conditions

According to the 2008 Essex Open Space Plan, incorporated herein by reference, since 1990, the majority of the Town's population growth (91 percent) and housing development (85 percent) has occurred outside the Village of Essex Junction. During the 1990s the Town's population outside the Village increased, on average, by 86 new residents per year, while the number of new housing units increased by 73 per year.

The majority (68 percent) of new housing permitted in the Town since 2000 is townhouses and condominiums located in the sewer service area. Permit data indicates that since 2000 an additional 385 housing units have been approved outside the Village- including 260 condominium and townhouses within the sewer core. The amount of higher density housing being developed in this area reflects residential phasing requirement that target the sewer core for 80 percent of new housing; and also suggested that this area is now largely built out. The shift toward higher density multi-family housing also reflects increased market demand for smaller, more affordable units to serve both new households and an aging population – including more housing options for empty nesters and seniors.

Zoning regulations confine most new commercial and industrial development outside the Village of Essex Junction to planned growth areas served by municipal infrastructure. These include Essex Town Center – long planned for higher density by mixed residential and commercial development, and the Saxon Hill Industrial Park areas (RPD-I District) which are zoned and managed for both industrial development and open space protection.

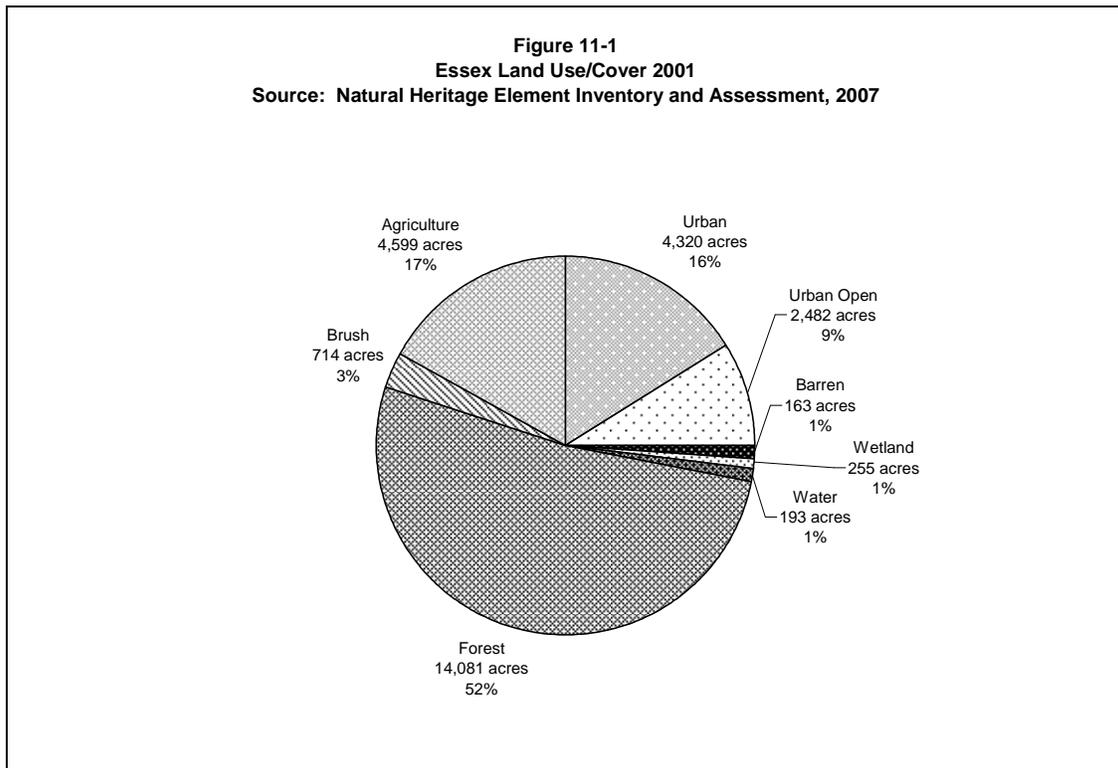
The Town's ongoing efforts to manage growth – its plans, policies, land use regulations, allocation ordinances, and investments in public land and infrastructure – have well served both the community, and the Town's remaining open land.

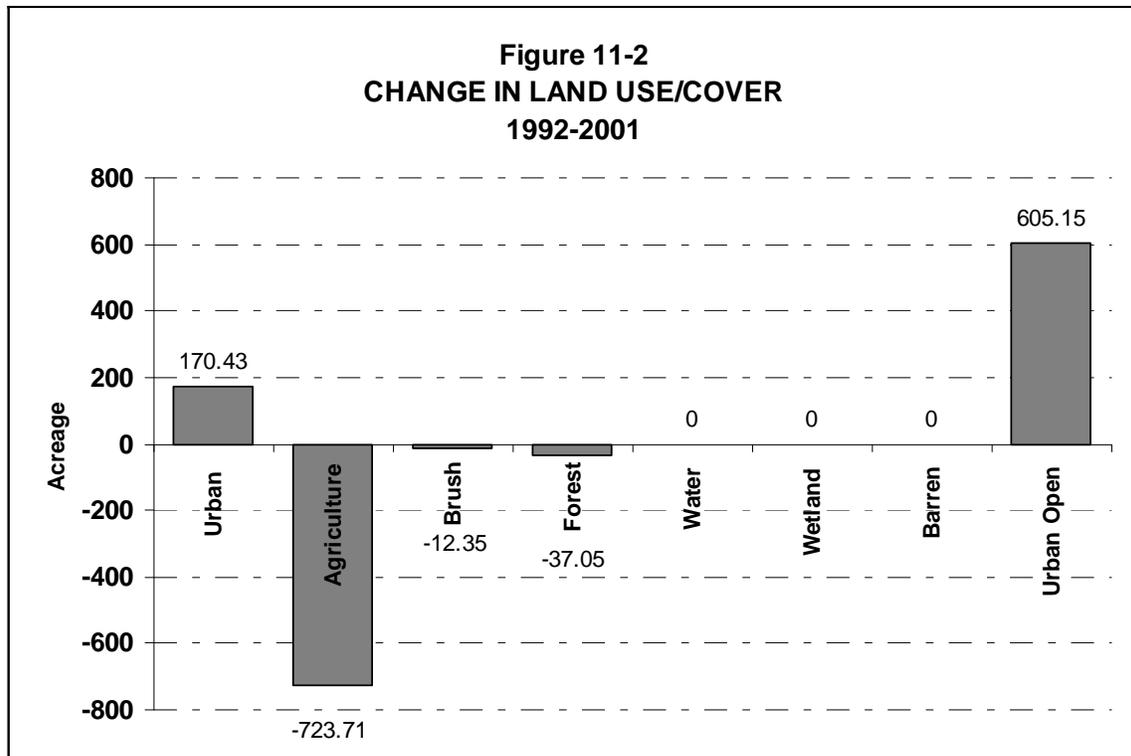
The trends in land use development, however, have resulted in the following impacts:

- The continued subdivisions or “parcelization” of open land which results in increasingly fragmented land ownership, management and use.
- The conversion and abandonment of farm and forest land to other use – mostly large lot residential development.
- The ongoing encroachment of development into environmentally and visually sensitive areas.
- For these reasons, it is important for the Town to carefully evaluate all planning areas to determine if current goals and objectives align with where Essex desires to see its residential,

commercial, and industrial growth for years to come. Discussions may take into consideration planned growth, economic development, preservation of open space and scenic corridors, preservation of prime agricultural lands and the general rural character of much of Essex.

The Town of Essex remains largely underdeveloped if measured only by land cover. A University of Vermont analysis of 2001 satellite data shows that roughly 52 percent of the Town is forested, 17 percent is in agriculture and 25 percent is developed at visible “urban” densities of development, as seen in Figure 11-1. A comparison of these data to the 1992 data however, suggests that during this period the Town has lost an average of 72 acres of forestland to development each year, as seen in Figure 11-2.





Source: Natural Heritage Element Inventory and Assessment, 2007

Table 11-1 helps illustrate the changes, which have occurred in the Town’s land use. Analysis of the parcels making up the Town’s Grand List shows that land devoted to all residential housing in proportion to total land area in the Town was about 57 percent in 2009. Comparing this figure with previous Town Plans shows a 12 percent growth in the total area of land used for all residential housing from 1977 to 1990, 16 percent growth from 1990 to 2000, and an additional eight percent from 2000-2009.

Map 21, *Existing Land Use*, depicts the generalized pattern of land uses in the Town. Noteworthy features include the large portion of the Town that is forested, the significant corridor of agricultural lands east of Old Stage Road and another between River Road and the Winooski River, and the concentration of residential, commercial, and industrial development in the southern portion of the Town (outside of the Village). This latter observation is reinforced when the dense patterns of the Village are considered.

The rate of growth in commercial acreage was high with 173 percent growth from 1977 to 1990; 48 percent growth from 1990 to 2000; and an additional 21 percent from 2000 to 2009. Industrial acreage grew by 81 percent from 1977 to 1990; by a much lower 17 percent from 1990 to 2000, but grew by an additional 50 percent from 2000 to 2009. In 1977, less than one percent of the Town’s land was allocated to each of the commercial and industrial land use categories. That share rose in 2009 to five percent for commercial uses and rose to 1.7 percent for industrial uses.

	1977			1990			2000			2009		
	Units	Acres	% Total Land	Units	Acres	% Total Land	Units	Acres	% Total Land	Parcels	Acres	% Total Land
Residential	1858	8172	36.8	2718	9190	41.5	3633	10694	48.3	3703	11584	56.9
Commercial	38	NA	0.9	340	544	2.5	346	807	3.6	194	1024	5.0
Industrial	5	85	0.4	14	153	0.7	17	179	0.8	16	361	1.7

Source: Town of Essex Community Development Office, Grand List

The expanding use of land for housing and business growth has been at the expense of open space: multi-acre holdings of residential land, farm land, and wooded countryside. In 1977, 5,270 acres (24 percent of the land supply) was shown to have been in farm use. That acreage was significantly reduced by 2009.

It should be emphasized that the results from this summary of land use are most valuable when viewed in terms of the relative changes that are exhibited: general shifts in the use of residential land from one density to another, and categories of growth or loss. Actual numbers should be used with care and discretion as methods and the precision of recording the information have varied from one collection period to another.

Because of variations in the methods of recording information and in the actual definition of other types of land use (and non-use) over this time period, it would not be valid to make comparisons in the other categories of land use.

11.2 Description of Planning Areas

In looking at the diversity and extensive land area that make up Essex, the Planning Commission has divided the Town into distinct planning areas – Fort Ethan Allen, Essex West, Neighborhood Growth Centers, Saxon Hill, the Highlands, the Lowlands, the Winooski River Corridor and the Town Center area, made up of several sub-areas known as Butlers Corners/Lang Farm and Essex Center. Map 20, *Planning Areas and Neighborhoods*, depicts each of these areas. This approach provides a location-specific means for addressing the unique set of circumstances found in the different regions of Essex. The following lays out a specific vision for each of these planning areas by identifying goals and objectives for accomplishing the vision.

Fort Ethan Allen

Fort Ethan Allen is an historic complex of buildings providing industrial, institutional and residential uses in a unique setting on VT Route 15. In 1987, the Town designated this area as a design control district to enhance the rich cultural heritage of the Fort and to minimize the threat of demolition or substantial character alterations of the many historic structures within the area. The large open area in front of Officers' Row is known as the Parade Grounds and is zoned for recreational uses only. The Parade Grounds, located both in Essex and Colchester, have significant recreational and

aesthetic value not only for the two towns, but for the entire region. They are integral to maintaining an aesthetically pleasing gateway to the Town and for providing an essential visual break in the built-up areas along VT Route 15.

The Fort property is under the ownership of the University of Vermont, St. Michael's College and private land holders. It also lies within the towns of Essex and Colchester. The proximity of the Circumferential Highway and other major commuter routes will make this area especially attractive for increased development. Planning efforts should recognize the Fort in its entirety in order to coordinate future development.

Goal 11.1: Preservation of the historic, cultural, and visual qualities of Fort Ethan Allen.

Objective 11.1.1: Retain designation as a historic district of local, state and national significance.

Objective 11.1.2: Expand Design Control District to encompass the entire Fort area to preserve existing buildings and ensure architectural compatibility of renovations, alterations, and new construction. Although individual sections of the Fort have distinct uses, zoning and design controls should treat the entire area as one cohesive unit.

Objective 11.1.3: Maintain the Parade Grounds as open space, as affirmed by the 2008 Essex Open Space Plan.

Goal 11.2: Coordinate planning of the Fort with the Town of Colchester to ensure it develops as a cohesive neighborhood.

Objective 11.2.1: Implement the "Fort Ethan Allen Master Plan Study", 1988.

Objective 11.2.2: Ensure that Essex and Colchester zoning provisions are mutually compatible.

Goal 11.3: Encourage economic growth and diversity of uses within the Fort.

Objective 11.3.1: Provide infrastructure to foster economic development.

Objective 11.3.2: Modify zoning to allow more commercial and industrial uses in appropriate locations.

Objective 11.3.3: Improve pedestrian traffic patterns via links from the Fort to Susie Wilson Road and Kellogg Road. Evaluate options, which may include a pedestrian bridge connection to the westerly end of the abutting shopping center.

Essex West

The Essex West area is bounded by Fort Ethan Allen to the south, the Town of Colchester on the west, Gentes Road and the Tree Farm soccer facility to the north and the Village of Essex Junction on the east. Although it is somewhat isolated from the rest of the Town outside the Village, this area is almost a self-contained community with its diversity of uses, a mix of housing opportunities and direct access to major transportation routes.

Essex West currently contains five different zoning districts including an Industrial Zone, a Retail Business Zone, a Medium Density Residential Zone, a Mixed Use Development Zone and an Open Recreation district which includes the Tree Farm soccer facility, now owned by the Town. It also provides several gateways to the community from VT Route 15, VT Route 2A, Kellogg Road, and the Circumferential Highway.

With construction of only the Essex portion of the Circumferential Highway, this area has experienced a significant increase in development pressure. Susie Wilson Road has become one of the primary commuter routes in Chittenden County because it provides a direct connection to the

Highway from VT Route 15. A report was prepared for the Town by Lamoureux and Dickinson, Consulting Engineers, in May 2000 entitled “Susie Wilson Road, Capacity and Access Management Study”. The report recommends that the Town consider such measures as general access management standards, specific driveway relocation or consolidation, removal of certain high traffic generating uses from the list or permitted uses, development of performance standards to limit traffic generation, and encouragement of demand management incentives. A follow-up “scoping report” is pending that will specifically identify work elements to address existing and anticipated traffic issues. In 2004 the Selectboard received a report from the Susie Wilson Road Study Committee, which recommended zoning changes to allow higher densities, mixed uses, and additional lot coverage.

Goal 11.4: Encourage the development of the Essex West area as a subregional growth center which will provide greater employment opportunities, broaden the tax base, increase retail and personal services and provide a diversity of housing opportunities.

Objective 11.4.1: Evaluate vacant land in the area for use as potential affordable housing sites.

Objective 11.4.2: Encourage a variety of housing types that will benefit from proximity to employment opportunities, shopping, and transportation infrastructure including bus routes.

Strategy 11.4.2.1: Specific Zoning Recommendations: Change zoning for existing non-residential districts that are appropriate for residential use – the I1 district northeast of VT Route 2A and the Circumferential Highway. The area east of the rail line should be Agriculture-Residential. The area west of the rail line should be Mixed Use.

Objective 11.4.3: Maintain transition zones and buffer strips to prevent encroachment of commercial/industrial uses into residential districts.

Goal 11.5: Plan for the expansion of needed facilities and services to support this area’s potential for future growth.

Objective 11.5.1: Implement appropriate measures from the Susie Wilson Road, Capacity and Access Management Study and subsequent recommendations of the follow-up scoping analysis.

Objective 11.5.2: Upgrade deficient bridges and railroad crossings on Old Colchester Road and Gentes Road.

Objective 11.5.3: Facilitate the extension of municipal water along the length of VT Route 2A to the Town line.

Objective 11.5.4: Facilitate the provision of municipal sewer to the Painesville Manor area.

Objective 11.5.5: Work toward providing pedestrian and vehicular links to the Village in the Pinecrest Drive area.

Objective 11.5.6: Complete construction of sidewalks along Susie Wilson Road, Kellogg Road and Pinecrest Drive.

Goal 11.6: Ensure a well integrated, aesthetically pleasing mix of uses.

Objective 11.6.1: Revise Zoning Bylaws to ensure that development along VT Route 2A, VT Route 15 and Kellogg Road is subject to landscape and site design review criteria to create a unified treatment of existing and future development. These areas function as gateways to the community and their appearance is extremely important.

Objective 11.6.2: Restrict access to the arterials and major collectors to ensure safe, functional and efficient travel.

Objective 11.6.3: Re-evaluate the setback and landscaping requirements for the Mixed Use Development District along the Pinecrest Drive area to ensure that as sites are developed for non-residential purposes, they are compatible with the existing residential uses.

Goal 11.7: Protect and enhance existing natural features.

Objective 11.7.1: In accordance with recommendations in the 2008 Essex Open Space Plan, establish a trail network and green belt along Sunderland and Indian Brooks with connections provided adjacent to residential developments. Any trail system development occurring along these stream banks must be done sensitively given the fragile nature of these areas.

Objective 11.7.2: Establish a conservation/buffer zone on either side of Indian and Sunderland Brooks.

Neighborhood Growth Centers

The areas immediately adjacent to River Road, Sand Hill Road, VT Route 15 and the Village/Town boundary have historically been the Town's residential growth centers. Because of past policies and regulations, nearly half of all homes in Essex are located on neighborhood streets as opposed to major roads. Neighborhoods are important for creating a sense of community and therefore, future growth should be encouraged to maintain this development pattern. Town services, including schools, adequate streets, sidewalks, sewer, water and recreation facilities should be provided where needed to support these land uses.

The neighborhood growth centers are located within the Town's sewer service area. As undeveloped land inside the sewer boundary becomes scarcer, additional development or redevelopment can be considered in neighborhood growth centers. However, any such development should not be allowed to alter the essential character of the existing neighborhood.

Goal 11.8: Promote a human dimension to development that will enhance a sense of community.

Objective 11.8.1: In accordance with the 2008 Essex Open Space Plan, encourage provisions for greenbelts, open space and recreational amenities within new residential developments.

Objective 11.8.2: Encourage vehicular and trail connections between old and new development, but take into account impacts on the character of the neighborhoods.

Objective 11.8.3: Encourage affordable housing to allow for a wider income mix of residents within Essex.

Objective 11.8.4: Evaluate residential street improvements to determine if they meet neighborhood goals, traffic safety and functional classification requirements.

Objective 11.8.5: Enlist the assistance of residents in public safety programs (Neighborhood Watch, McGruff House) and in maintenance of neighborhood parks.

Goal 11.9: Encourage innovative neighborhood concepts.

Objective 11.9.1: Provide flexibility within the zoning and subdivision regulations to allow consideration of concepts such as, but not limited to:

- a. Zero lot line development;

- b. Congregate and group housing;
- c. Higher densities for multi-family dwellings;
- d. Vertical construction through increased height allowances tied to increased setbacks;
- e. Expanded use of accessory apartments.

Objective 11.9.2: Evaluate zoning and subdivision regulations to allow density bonuses in order to promote and encourage development within neighborhood growth centers.

Objective 11.9.3: Promote Planned Unit Developments – Residential (PRD-Rs) as a means of providing affordable housing through decreased infrastructure costs, open space, and green belts within developments.

Goal 11.10: Encourage development within existing neighborhood growth centers to ensure the efficient provision of municipal services.

Objective 11.10.1: Through the subdivision process, provide for interconnections between adjoining neighborhoods.

Objective 11.10.2: Continue to require two or more points of ingress/egress for large developments.

Objective 11.10.3: Encourage access for new development that connects directly to major streets without causing increased traffic on existing minor residential streets.

Objective 11.10.4: Minimize curb cuts on major collector roads.

Objective 11.10.5: Encourage provisions for greenbelts, open space and recreational amenities within new residential development; encourage trail connections between old and new developments.

Saxon Hill

The Saxon Hill area has long been considered a resource to be preserved. The area consists of a forest and four ponds formerly used as a public water supply. Of educational, historical and commercial (logging) value, the Saxon Hill forest serves as a prime example of intensive forestry management and the function of forestry in reclaiming poor soils and maintaining a watershed. The recreation potential of this area has long been affirmed and is addressed to greater detail in the Parks and Recreation chapter.

In 1977, a major portion of the area was designated a Resource Preservation—Industrial District. The specific objective of the RPD-I District is to “protect...natural attributes for public enjoyment and when it is deemed economically and aesthetically feasible, to carry out economic development activities in harmony with the natural surroundings.” Limited, well-planned industrial and office uses are considered a compatible use within this area for several reasons. The forest itself provides a suitable buffer for neighboring residential developments. In addition, this area offers many of the characteristics which are desirable for such uses: level terrain, well-drained soils, proximity to transportation routes and availability of utilities.

Since 1977, a number of industries have chosen to locate in Saxon Hill Forest. As this area has evolved, a number of issues about its future use and management have been raised. The Town has agreed that 60 percent of the land should be kept in open space; 25 percent can be developed for industrial uses and the remaining 15percent shall be retained for recreation/conservation use until

and unless the Planning Commission deems it necessary to allow industrial or office uses in all or part of that portion.

The 2008 Essex Open Space Plan recommends that natural amenities for public enjoyment be protected and that fixed boundaries for conservation and development be established.

Goal 11.12: Promote a diversified and stable economy by encouraging compatible industrial development and assuring the successful operation of existing industries in the Saxon Hill Industrial Park.

Objective 11.12.1: Ensure that uses in the park are primarily light industrial and large-scale uses. Limited commercial support services should be allowed in a very minor portion of the park.

Objective 11.12.2: Ensure that residential uses are not allowed in the RPD-I District.

Goal 11.13: Protect the natural attributes of the RPD-I District for public enjoyment and, when it is deemed economically and aesthetically feasible, carry out economic development activities in harmony with natural surroundings.

Objective 11.13.1: While maintaining the 60/40 split reserved for recreation/conservation uses, the Town should work with the landowner to establish fixed boundaries of land to be considered for development and land to be protected for recreation/conservation use.

Objective 11.13.2: The Town shall evaluate options to purchase or otherwise permanently preserve 60 percent of large contiguous sections of the RPD-I District.

Objective 11.13.3: Enhance the importance of the major points of entry to the park and take steps to maintain them.

Objective 11.13.4: Retain the 200-foot buffer requirement between residential areas and along Route 15 and Sand Hill Road. The Planning Commission should evaluate the need for and the size of buffers between other industrially-zoned properties.

Objective 11.13.5: Ensure that recreation/conservation areas are effectively managed and clearly establish the responsibility for such management.

Objective 11.13.6: Consider the addition of color standards or other regulations to the RPD-I District to ensure building and accessory use designs that are in harmony with the natural surroundings.

Goal 11.14: Assure the provision of adequate infrastructure to support the existing industries and the build-out of the industrial park.

Objective 11.14.1: Encourage the provision of improved public transportation to this area to minimize land area needed for parking lots and to reduce traffic.

Objective 11.14.2: Encourage the developer of the park to develop a transportation system management plan (TSM) which outlines a range of options to decrease vehicular trips to the park, including:

- a. Car pooling;
- b. Park and Ride facilities;
- c. Public transportation;
- d. Incentives for multiple occupant vehicle use;

- e. “Transit passes”.

Objective 11.14.3: When segments A and B of the Circumferential Highway have been completed and connected to the existing segment, efforts should be focused on scoping studies aimed at mitigating the corresponding traffic impacts along VT Routes 15 and 117. Part of the scoping effort should be on the completion of the connection of Allen Martin Parkway to the Circumferential Highway.

Objective 11.14.4: Extend municipal sewer to allow high water usage industries.

Objective 11.14.5: Consider allowing the reallocation of a small portion of the existing sewer allocation for the RPD-I and abutting industrial districts if it is determined that the remaining allocation will be sufficient to serve anticipated development for a 20-year planning period.

Objective 11.14.6: Review the existing road infrastructure to ensure adequate connectivity and emergency access at full build-out at the industrial park.

Goal 11.15: Better manage the Saxon Hill area for its recreational and resource value.

Objective 11.15.1: The Town Parks and Recreation Department should work with the developer to establish a trail management plan which addresses on-going maintenance, trail signage, better policing of trails to eliminate motorized vehicles, illegal dumping and protection of deeded easements for multi-use trails.

Objective 11.15.2: Undertake educational efforts to make the public aware of Saxon Hill and enlist their assistance in trail maintenance.

Objective 11.15.3: Organize and promote public events such as cross country ski races, mountain bike races, foot races, orienteering competitions, nature walks, etc. to increase the use of the park. Area fitness clubs and interested residents should be encouraged to coordinate such events.

Objective 11.15.4: Establish a hiking trail connecting the Winooski River to the top of Saxon Hill with an overlook tower to be developed.

Objective 11.15.5: Re-evaluate the Forest Management Plan with the Tree Warden to assure it is being implemented.

Objective 11.15.6: Initiate discussions with the Essex Junction School District regarding future use of their 90-acre parcel and include it in an overall management plan for the forest.

The Highlands

More than 20 percent of the Town’s land area can be described as “Highlands” or those areas having steep slopes and high elevations. These include Brigham Hill (elevation 1,032 feet), Bixby Hill (elevation 666 feet), Saxon Hill (elevation 807 feet), and the Osgood Hill Road and Sleepy Hollow Road areas. The Town has appropriately designated the majority of these areas as conservation zones with a minimum of 10 acres required for residential use. The two largest conservation areas extend from the northwestern and northeastern corners of the Town. They have in common soils ill-suited for anything but low density development, large tracts of productive timber, remoteness from public services and transportation arteries, and light, scattered development. The Saxon Hill areas extending from the Jericho Town line to Sand Hill Road are unique planning areas described previously.

These areas are important for wood production, aquifer recharge, wildlife habitat, recreation, erosion control and aesthetics. They also provide an alternative residential development pattern for those

interested in housing located in more remote areas than the higher density zones closer to Town services and facilities. The challenge is how to preserve the integrity of the fragile natural resources in the area.

Goals and objectives for the highlands are presented in Section 11.3, Rural Lands.

The Lowlands

The Town of Essex is drained by three river basins—the Winooski and Lamoille Basins and a small area drained by Indian Brook and Sunderland Brook, which flow directly to Lake Champlain. The Brown's River and Abbey Brook drain the northeast section of the Town and flow into the Lamoille River, while Alder Brook is the principal drainage into the Winooski River. These water resources and their associated floodplains and wetlands influence the distribution of other low lying open land types identified in the "Open Lands Study" completed for the Town in 1989. For example, the distribution of floodplains closely aligns with the availability of prime agricultural soils. These in turn represent the Town's most visually sensitive areas. The fact that development in the floodplain is prohibited explains the continuing presence of open land, particularly along the Browns River and Alder and Abbey Brooks. Similarly, the pattern established by the Winooski River and stream and brook tributaries is reflected in the networks of recreation areas and proposed trails that the "Open Lands Study" identified.

Despite a major portion of the low lying areas in Essex being protected via floodplain regulations, there is a significant area which is vulnerable to development. The Lost Nation Road area and the area west of VT Route 15 have become particularly attractive because of the proximity of two new intersections for the Circumferential Highway. Similarly, agricultural lands are attractive for development given the lack of physical constraints for same. The 1977 Town Plan identified 16 active farms in Essex. In 1988, there were five active farms including one located in the Village participating in the Farm Tax Contract. In 2004, there were nine farms in the program. The rest of this area is used for low density housing.

The zoning for this area is intended for agricultural, forestry, rural housing, recreation and resource protection purposes. Significant open land resources that should be protected in this district include:

- a. Prime farm lands;
- b. Prime forest lands;
- c. Scenic vistas and views;
- d. Trails having local and statewide significance identified by the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST), the Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD), and the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC);
- e. Floodplains, wetlands, and water bodies.

These resources are shown on the maps included in the Open Lands Study. Because a major portion of the lowlands area is overlain by these significant features, the purpose of the zoning districts in the area is to protect and wisely manage these valuable natural resources through the careful placement of housing with respect to these resource lands and the establishment of open space requirements.

The challenge for the Town is to work with the owners of these important open lands to encourage their long-term maintenance. The 2008 Essex Open Space Plan re-affirmed the following goals for this planning area.

Goal 11.16: Protect the integrity and quality of existing water courses and wetland areas.

Objective 11.16.1: Ensure that development in floodplain areas is avoided.

Objective 11.16.2: Require development to be setback from streams, drainage ways and wetlands to minimize the impairment of same.

Objective 11.16.3: Retain the current low density and type of uses allowed in the area.

Objective 11.16.4: Do not extend municipal water and sewer into these areas except for conditions of compelling need to maintain the public's health.

Goal 11.17: Wisely manage the natural resources through careful placement of housing and the establishment of open space requirements.

Objective 11.17.1: Review Town policies on community waste water disposal systems and private roads and revise as needed.

Objective 11.17.2: Amend zoning and subdivision regulations to implement the recommendations in Section 11.3, Rural Lands and to establish specific standards for natural resources protection.

Objective 11.17.3: Consider implementing Conservation Design Subdivision regulations to preserve natural resources and open space.

Winooski River Corridor

The Winooski River Corridor provides one of the more spectacular natural and recreational areas in Essex. Within the Corridor are to be found fast water, secluded groves, vistas of riverscape and mountains, wild flowers and unique natural areas. However, this area is known and frequented by only a small number of people as access to it is unimproved or difficult and the water quality is poor in certain areas.

The Town is a member of the Winooski Valley Park District, a union municipal district comprised of the communities bordering the lower Winooski River Valley. The purpose of the District is to acquire and manage park lands, to protect open space and access to the Winooski River, and to provide passive recreational opportunities on lands within its seven member towns. Other than participation in the district, the Town has not worked to improve access or water quality in recent years. With increasing demands on the river for hydroelectric power and wastewater treatment and as a recreational and natural resource, the Town should refocus its efforts to assure its future use does not compromise one of these uses over another.

Goal 11.18: Revise Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to ensure that review of development proposals and future planning efforts includes consideration of access to and along the Winooski River Corridor in order to take better advantage of its importance as a natural resource. The 2008 Essex Open Space Plan re-affirmed the objectives listed below.

Objective 11.18.1: Develop a bicycle/walking path along the entire corridor to connect the Burlington bike path to a bike path running along the Circumferential Highway and looping back to the mouth of the Winooski River.

Objective 11.18.2: Develop a spur trail to an overlook tower and picnic area on the top of Saxon Hill.

Objective 11.18.3: Preserve the oxbow near the bottom of Sand Hill Road as a natural area and outdoor laboratory.

Objective 11.18.4: Work with Winooski Valley Park District to upgrade the remainder of “68 Acres” as a walk-in park with parking established near the Woodside facility.

Objective 11.18.5: Develop canoe launch areas in strategic locations.

Objective 11.18.6: Encourage ecologically sensitive vegetable/fruit farms along the river’s banks via tax stabilization and regulatory measures.

Objective 11.18.7: Renew interest in the river as an amenity via public education and marketing, and by sponsoring canoe treks, hikes, and green-up days.

Objective 11.18.8: Promote annual “green-ups” of the corridor using civic groups, Scouts, and Correctional Center residents.

Objective 11.18.9: Encourage private owners of property along the river to “adopt” a portion of the Winooski River by maintaining their frontage and keeping it free from debris.

Town Center

In the 1990 Town Plan public forum, residents overwhelmingly expressed a need to maintain a sense of community and pride in the place they live. The historic Essex Center area was identified as an essential element in achieving this goal and was pointed to as a focus in the community worthy of preservation. A Land Use Committee, charged with formulating a vision for the future land use of Essex, recommended that a Town Center be developed. According to the Committee, the Town Center should be pedestrian-oriented and contain a mixture of residential, commercial, civic and cultural opportunities. The center should be separated from other settlements by open lands.

The call for a Town Center, as a focus for growth and a center for community life, led the Town to conclude that a plan was needed to identify where the center should be and how it should be developed.

Through the town-wide surveys conducted for the 1991 Town Plan and subsequent plan updates, the work of the Essex Land Use Committee, and a public design workshop on the new Town Center, a set of goals for the Town and for the Town Center was established. These goals have guided the design process throughout and were re-affirmed in the 2008 Essex Open Space Plan.

Town-wide Goals

1. Involve citizens in planning.
2. Promote growth in compact centers.
3. Develop a Town Center.
4. Preserve significant features.
5. Prohibit strip development.
6. Plan for growth both with and without the Circumferential Highway.
7. Service growth centers with adequate infrastructure.
8. Pace growth with the market and Town services.
9. Provide for a rural/private lifestyle and encourage the location of neighborhoods near growth centers.

10. Encourage non-motorized, multi-use paths.

Goals for the Center

1. Provide a separation between built-up areas and countryside.
2. Provide a human scale for development.
3. Promote a settlement pattern that:
 - a) enables mixed uses,
 - b) has compact commercial development, public services, and residential development at higher densities, and
 - c) protects major open spaces and views.
4. Incorporate a pedestrian/bikeway network.
5. Provide for alternative transportation systems.
6. Identify new routes to better serve the center.
7. Provide for affordable housing.
8. Amend regulations to carry out goals.
9. Enable growth at both the Town Center and historic Essex Center, but in different ways.
10. Control development of the VT Route 15 corridor between Butlers Corners and historic Essex Center.

A build-out analysis was prepared in 1991 showing what the historic Essex Center, “Golden Triangle”, Butlers Corners and Lang Farm area would look like under the then current zoning and subdivision regulations and development trends. These areas were chosen for study because of their current as well as historical focus as centers of community growth and activity. The results of the build-out analysis were startling. The current regulations were clearly leading the Town in a direction that people did not want to go. The build-out plan showed that:

- Instead of compact settlements surrounded by rural countryside, there would be sprawl.
- Instead of mixed-use developments, projects would contain only one major type of use.
- Views that citizens identified as being important would be obstructed.
- Higher density housing would not be possible.
- There would be strip commercial development along Center Road.
- Neither a pedestrian-oriented center nor public transit would be facilitated by the plan.

As a result of the build-out plan, a new design for the Town Center was developed based on the goals for the Town and the center, the results of three public design workshops, and the guidance of the Town Center Master Plan Advisory Committee, the Planning Commission and the Selectboard. The Town Center Master Plan (April 1991) prepared by Humstone Squires Associates was incorporated by reference into the 1991 and 1996 Town Plans and continues to guide development in the Town Center. The designs, standards and recommendations from the Town Center Master Plan should be considered in the review of future development plans for this area, but the Planning

Commission may permit modifications if in conformance with the overall goals and objectives of this Town Plan.

The Town Center Master Plan reinforces the goal of compact settlements surrounded by rural countryside through the preservation and improvement of the quality of open space and the enhancement of settled areas. The plan offers the Town of Essex lively, mixed-use centers for community life in close proximity to greenways, trails, recreation land, forests, and farmland. With the plan, the Town has a focus for new development and a wide range of activities. People can walk to the store and post office, a friend's house, their job, or a park. Nearby trails wind through deeply wooded areas or alongside a brook. Beyond there are vast expanses of protected wetlands, forest land and open meadow land.

In the Butlers Corners area, historic buildings are to be retained as prominent features within the greenway. Progressing eastward, the VT Route 15 greenway becomes a broad, tree-lined boulevard adjacent to existing and in-filled residences. The VT Route 15 boulevard will continue to Historic Essex Center where it will be scaled down to fit within the existing buildings and historic character of the area. While some commercial development will be permitted along VT Route 15 between Butlers Corners and Essex Center, it will be limited in scale. Controls may include building design guidelines or restrictions on high-traffic generating uses, such as gas stations and fast-food restaurants.

Essex Four Corners is defined as the cultural center of the community. The vision is for a center in which civic spaces, cultural events, churches, community groups, pedestrians, artists and performers, and pedestrians thrive. A new common is envisioned whereby the existing common and Library lawn are renovated.

A new center is to be located at Butlers Corners and the Lang Farm. Here, higher density and mixed-use buildings will offer a variety of housing types within close proximity to shops, services, community facilities and places of work. A street network will provide a framework for development and promotes pedestrian circulation and public transit.

The scope and scale of commercial development in the Town Center will serve a market that extends beyond the Town of Essex. In addition to this major retail presence, the Town Center will be home to a number of other community-serving offices, retail shops and services.

Higher-density residential development will continue in the Town Center, either in combination with first-floor commercial development or in residential-only buildings in close proximity to non-residential uses. A new common will be established in the Town Center.

A secondary commercial and residential center, not specifically proposed in the final design concept of the Town Center Master Plan, is proposed here for the area west of VT Route 15, south of Lost Nation Road, and north of the Circumferential Highway as shown on Map 22, *Future Land Use*. High-density residential development will go forward only if, in addition to the sole planned VT Route 15 vehicular access at the existing traffic signal, a strong pedestrian connection is provided across VT Route 15 to the Town Center.

This secondary center also will allow for an expansion of the locally oriented commercial services that were originally expected to fill the former Lang Farm Retail Center and the Town Center area.

The development should be carefully designed and executed to preserve the rural/urban settlement pattern break proposed by the Town Center Master Plan. Of particular concern would be the size, scale, and orientation of proposed buildings and how the final appearance of this highly visible area

would be altered. The Business Design Control District should be extended to include the commercial development of this area.

Development in this area can probably be best accomplished through a Planned Unit Development that would allow proposed projects to address setbacks and other zoning regulations constraints with some flexibility.

Outside Butlers Corners/Lang Farm, Essex Center, and existing residential areas, development will be clustered and multi-unit dwellings discouraged so as to reinforce the concept of compact settlement surrounded by countryside, create more contiguous open space and preserve significant views. Additional analysis should be conducted addressing possible expansion of the sewer core area that enhances the Town Center. Such analysis must consider the consequences of additional growth and sprawl.

Implementation

The implementation of the new Town Center Plan has begun and will continue to take place over a long timeframe. The exact timeframe is unpredictable and will be dependent on the actions of the landowners, the Town's priorities as reflected in the Town Plan, Capital Budget and Program, changing fiscal conditions, and regional and local market conditions. The implementation of the plan began with its incorporation into the Town Plan. Regulatory changes have included revisions to zoning districts and district regulations and amendment of standards in the subdivision regulations.

Private development has begun in accordance with the 1991 The Town Center Master Plan and with the revised zoning and subdivision regulations. Other steps will include adoption of an official map that will show new streets, trails, public recreation areas, pedestrian easements, drainage ways, and public building sites. It will also provide a mechanism for public acquisition of these areas. The improvements will be financed by a combination of public and private mechanisms. The public investment will be phased according to the Town's Capital Budget and Program. Impact fees, public subsidies, special assessment districts and tax increment financing will also be considered. In addition, the 1991 Master Plan should be updated to include existing conditions and to validate local perspective of the Town Center. In 2004 the Selectboard received the report of the Town Center Study Committee, which recommended increased residential densities, increased proportions of residential in the residential to commercial mix, and underground or tiered parking. The 1991 Master Plan is long over due for a comprehensive update to examine densities, infrastructure funding, uses and design control.

11.3 Land Use in Outlying Areas

Rural Lands

Much of the Town's land use planning is focused on directing new development towards the Town Center and other planning areas within the sewer service area. A complementary planning goal is the prevention of excess development on rural land outside the municipal service boundary. As part of the preparation of this Town Plan, Burnt Rock, Inc. was hired to review recent development trends, to examine land use patterns and goals for the rural area, and to recommend regulatory and non-regulatory techniques to achieve those goals. Recommendations from the 2001 Essex Rural Land Study are provided below. These recommendations were re-affirmed in the 2009 Essex Open Space Plan:

Data and Information Collection

- (1) Significant headway on updating natural resources inventory was made with the 2007 Natural Heritage Element Inventory and Assessment, incorporated herein, and one by Arrowwood Environmental. The assessment recommended further and ongoing field work to map wetlands, vernal pools, and wildlife habitat.
- (2) Conduct a GIS, orthophoto-based inventory of land use and land cover, in addition to data layers comprised of natural resources identified in (1) above.
- (3) Undertake a survey of rural enterprises, including small farming operations, to document non-residential land uses within the rural area.

Regulatory Options

- (1) In accordance with the 2008 Open Space Plan, establish specific natural resource protection standards to apply to all development throughout the rural area districts. Such standards, adopted as part of the zoning bylaws, should include:
 - a. Setback and buffer requirements for streams and wetlands (minimum of 50 feet, preferably greater; could be relative to site conditions).
 - b. Steep slope standards (e.g., erosion control measures for all development on slopes of 15 percent or greater; possible prohibition of development on slopes of 25 percent or greater). Such a standard would be an expansion of existing slope limitations related to the construction of septic systems.
 - c. Specific standards to protect water supply source protection areas to ensure that development does not result in groundwater contamination.
 - d. Definition and delineation of ridgelines, on which inappropriate development activities could adversely affect the town's scenic landscape, and adoption of appropriate development standards either to prohibit development in those areas or to mitigate the environmental and visual impacts of development.
 - e. Preservation of open space whenever land development is proposed.
 - f. Increasing lot size requirements (e.g., amending Agriculture-Residential zoning district from 3 acres to 5, 10 or greater).
 - g. Undertake a Comprehensive Growth Management Program, including allocation ordinances and subdivision regulations that direct 80 percent of new development to the Town's sewer core area.
 - h. Consider adopting Conservation Design Subdivision regulations to better protect open space in the more rural areas in the Town.
 - i. Establish minimum open space standards for subdivisions and higher density development within the sewer core, i.e.: re-establish a 15 percent open space requirement for neighborhood parks and playgrounds.
 - j. Strengthen the role of the Conservation Committee in the development review process.
- (2) Revise Planned Unit Development-Residential provisions to encourage greater use. Such revisions could include:

- a. Providing additional incentives (such as increased density and/or the elimination of standards that are more restrictive than conventional subdivision standards).
 - b. Including specific standards regarding the preservation of open space. Such guidelines should describe the features to be protected as open space, the area and configuration of land to be dedicated as open space, and the legal mechanisms for dedicating open space.
 - c. Reducing existing road standards (perhaps to allow private roads in exchange for a high quality of site design and/or the preservation of open space. Related to revised road standards, a minimum requirement for PUD-Rs might include a standard that the pre-development parcel has a minimum frontage on an existing public road of between 500 and 1,000 feet to discourage residential developments on large parcels that lack frontage. Such a standard should be coordinated with the policies regarding the extension or creation of new public roads. Reduction of road standards should not allow a greater number of lots than could be approved under conventional subdivision design.
 - d. Review administrative procedures to ensure that the review process and application requirements are, at minimum, no more cumbersome than the requirements for conventional subdivisions.
 - e. Preservation of open space whenever land development is proposed.
- (3) Subdivision regulations should be revised to provide better protection of natural resources and to ensure that future development patterns in the rural areas are consistent with the area's rural character and landscape. Such revisions should include:
- a. Strengthening natural resource protection standards to address streams, steep slopes/ridgelines, wildlife habitat and scenic areas (e.g., requiring house placement/building envelope in the middle-ground of view sheds to avoid placement in the foreground and background).
 - b. Establishment of a Conservation Subdivision Design requirement that requires the identification of prominent site features (farmland, steep slopes, etc.) and the preservation of those features through designation as open space prior to house siting, lot configuration, and road layout. Designated building envelopes should be required on all lots to limit the extent of area in which development of homes and related improvements could take place.
 - c. Consideration of adopting performance standards to determine project density (e.g. wetlands, slopes in excess of 25percent, etc. might be eliminated from density calculations).
 - d. Requiring cluster design, whether in conventional subdivisions or Planned Unit Developments-Residential, as needed to avoid adverse impacts on lands identified on the Significant Features Resource Map.
- (4) In addition to regulatory revisions described above, it is important that the following existing regulatory provisions be continued:
- a. The C2 zoning should be maintained in its present form, except as may be modified under (1) and (2) above.
 - b. Existing phasing policies should be continued, with revisions only to reflect current growth projections.

Non-Regulatory Options

- (1) Seek the assistance of private, non-governmental land conservation organizations (e.g., Vermont Land Trust) to further local land conservation priorities and encourage voluntary protection options (e.g., donation of conservation easements).
- (2) Consider the creation of a local open space conservation fund, in combination with available state and federal matching funds, to protect open space through purchase of land or interest in land (e.g., conservation easements, trail easements).
- (3) Review the Town's existing tax stabilization program and consider opportunities for expanding or strengthening that program.
- (4) Establish a formal public land acquisition and stewardship program, to be managed by the Selectboard in consultation with the Conservation Committee.
- (5) Undertake other non-regulating measures to conserve open space, including additional field inventories and natural resources mapping; a survey of owners of remaining farm and forest parcels; a mapping and analysis of local watersheds; considering expansion of the Essex Farm and Open Land Tax Abatement Program; encourage community support programs such as "Buy Local," and additional updating of the Significant Features Map.

11.4 Proposed Land Use

Map 22, *Future Land Use*, shows the anticipated patterns of development for the Town outside of the Village. The following are more specific descriptions and purposes of each designated area.

Conservation (C1): The purpose of the Conservation Area is to protect the sensitive natural resources and steep slopes which make these areas inappropriate for intensive development. These areas are remote from municipal services and facilities and lack accessibility. Low density residential and related uses are permitted in this district only if applied to a land unit of ten acres or more.

Floodplain (C2): The purpose of the Flood Plain Area is to reduce the potential for damage from flooding; to protect streams and water courses for erosion, siltation and pollution; and to protect the natural ecology of stream beds and lands adjacent to water courses. In these areas, no building is permitted and excavation, fill, disruption of vegetative cover or other encroachment is restricted.

Open Recreation (O1): The purpose of the Open Recreation Area is to protect the natural resource value of publicly owned lands which are essentially undeveloped; lack direct access to public roads; are important to wildlife and wildlife habitat; have high potential for commercial forestry use; are unsuitable for land development, or include irreplaceable, limited or significant natural, recreational or scenic resources. No public sewer and water facilities are planned for these areas. Due to the limited facilities and services proposed for the district and the critical resources located within it, only limited recreation uses, conservation uses and forestry which are compatible within the district purposes, and do not require additional facilities and services, will be encouraged.

Agriculture/Residential (AR): The purpose of the Agriculture/Residential Area is to protect lands with an economic capability for agriculture and which are now essentially undeveloped except for uses associated with agriculture or forestry. In this district, planned residential developments and developments which do not remove the potential of the land for agricultural production, such as open space, conservation, and certain forms of outdoor recreation, are encouraged. Further road development and the extension of public water supply and sewage disposal systems are not planned

for the district. Therefore, only low density residential and recreational development which utilizes existing facilities; adequately disposes of sewage; and which is compatible with the district's purposes and guidelines should be permitted. However, in order to facilitate effective use of existing structures (particularly historic structures and farm structures) the Town should explore additional allowable uses, such as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and renewable energy production that will generate some economic return while not jeopardizing the rural character of the area. Evaluate, as part of the potential merger of the Town and the Village, the Agriculture-Residential zones on the Future Land Use Map regarding more suitable development allowances, for that land occurring south of the Circumferential Highway, east of VT Route 2A, and west of VT Route 15 to the Village jurisdictional boundary.

Low Density Residential (R1): The purpose of the Low Density Residential Area is to facilitate residential development in areas adjacent to but outside of the "sewer core area" as defined in the most recently adopted Town of Essex Sewer Allocation Policy. Densities are kept low and lots are large enough to accommodate on-site disposal systems. Connection to municipal water service may be required.

Medium Density Residential (R2): The purpose of the Medium Density Residential Area is to facilitate residential development in areas inside the "sewer core area" as defined in the most recently adopted Town of Essex Sewer Allocation Policy. Connection to municipal sewer service shall be required where installation of these facilities is feasible or deemed necessary. Densities and lot sizes are based either on the provision of off-site services or the ability to accommodate on-site services.

High Density Residential (R3): The purpose of this area is to encourage a wider range of housing opportunities in an area served by municipal services and facilities and public transportation. Home occupations, accessory apartments, and provisions for multi-family units on small lots are encouraged in this district to enable some expansion of uses while avoiding strip commercial development.

Residential Business (RB): This area includes properties, which are predominantly residential in nature located on the south side of VT Route 15 in Essex Center. The RB district was established to protect the existing residential uses while allowing for limited commercial uses, which are low traffic generators and compatible with neighboring residences.

Business Design Control Overlay (B-DC) and Historic Preservation Design Control Overlay (HPDC): The purpose of these areas is to maintain and enhance the rich cultural and architectural heritage of the Fort Ethan Allen and Essex Center areas and to eliminate or minimize substantial character alterations of the buildings. A report entitled Historic Preservation and Design Control Standards for Essex Center and Fort Ethan Allen (1986) contains standards and guidelines to be used in the review of development proposals in these areas.

Mixed Use (MXD): The purpose of this area is to allow a mix of residential and commercial uses in keeping with the existing character of the area.

Mixed Use-Planned Urban Development (MXD-PUD): This area has a combination of residential, commercial and industrial development on a large tract of land where a comprehensive planning effort has been undertaken.

Mixed Use District-Commercial (MXD-C): The purpose of this area is to provide an area in the Town which permits a broad range of retail and personal service shops, professional and governmental offices, and supportive, compatible commercial uses. Residential uses, which add

interest and vitality to the area and accommodate those who desire high-density housing are encouraged. All uses should be properly located and designed to enhance the existing structures in the area. Development should be reviewed in accordance with the 1991 Town Center Master Plan.

Center (CTR): The purpose of the Center Area is to support the role of the Historic Essex Center as the focus of many social and economic activities in the community. The types of uses that will be encouraged include residential, civic, cultural, neighborhood commercial, home occupations, and other compatible uses that will serve the needs of the community. Such development should occur in a pattern and scale that will maintain the traditional social and physical character of the Historic Essex Center and preserve its historic and scenic resources. Sufficient facilities and services are planned for this area to accommodate moderate to high-density development. Development should be reviewed in accordance with the 1991 Town Center Master Plan.

Retail Business (B1): This area consists of existing commercial areas and adjacent lands which are becoming predominantly commercial in nature. Due to the location of these areas on major thorough-fares, they are well suited for providing the retail, business and personal service needs of this community and other nearby towns. However, strip development along these thoroughfares must be discouraged in favor of consolidated access points in order to minimize traffic hazards and maintain smooth traffic flows. Also, since these areas are the focal point of activity for the Town, the review of commercial development within this district must ensure attractiveness for site design and signage. Furthermore, new commercial development should be compatible with adjacent commercial and residential structures.

Resource Preservation-Industrial (RPD-I): This area is established for land that is comprised of forests, bodies of water, or similar natural settings. The specific objective of the RPD-I district is to protect all or part of such natural attributes for public enjoyment and, when it is deemed economically and aesthetically feasible, to carry out economic development activities in harmony with the natural surroundings. Uses included in this district include office, research and development facilities, laboratories, and limited commercial support services for employees of the Saxon Hill Industrial Park, such as banks, restaurants, recreation/health spas, etc.

Industrial (I1): This area provides for employment opportunities in manufacturing, warehousing, research and development and commercial uses which specifically serve the industries or their employees in areas serviced by good transportation facilities and public utilities. Other uses incompatible with industrial uses, such as residential uses, shall not be permitted for the health, safety and welfare of the community.

11.5 Land Use Goals and Objectives

The following general goals and objectives shall guide any future land use planning, zoning changes and development approvals.

Goal 11.19: Future development should be consistent with Essex's role as a sub-regional center with the scale of development supportable by a market derived from Essex and its surrounding communities.

Objective 11.19.1: Work with other communities in the region to ensure land use compatibility across municipal borders and to protect the vitality and importance of the region's dominant commercial centers.

Objective 11.19.2: Cooperate with the Village of Essex Junction to ensure its vitality as a commercial service center.

Objective 11.19.3: Should merger of the Town and Village occur, the entire community should carefully examine lands along both sides of the current Town/Village boundary to determine appropriate land use designations. Zoning changes may be made to reflect the results of this evaluation.

Objective 11.19.4: Participate in the formulation and implementation of the Chittenden County Regional Plan to ensure the regional functions of the area’s municipalities are represented.

Goal 11.20: Facilitate the future development of the Town of Essex by taking into consideration the physical, natural and economic constraints and opportunities.

Objective 11.20.1: Guide and direct future development in accordance with:

- a) the physical capability of the land,
- b) the economic and efficient provision of public services and facilities,
- c) the interrelationship and compatibility of existing settlement patterns,
- d) the proximity to highways and railroads, commercial and employment centers and municipal services,
- e) the appropriate siting of renewable energy sources, such as solar arrays, biomass fields, etc.
- f) the need to address existing deficiencies,
- g) the impact on natural resources and significant features, and
- h) the consistency with the overall goals established in this Plan.

Goal 11.21: Continue to implement a growth management plan that establishes an acceptable rate of growth that can be accommodated by the Town.

Objective 11.21.1: Maintain a population growth rate consistent with the growth rate projected in Chapter 2.

Goal 11.22: Link neighborhoods to shopping centers, schools, work places, and parks and natural areas via a trail and greenbelt system.

Goal 11.23: Plan development so as to maintain and enhance Essex’s historic settlement pattern of compact centers separated by rural countryside.

Objective 11.23.1: Intensive residential development shall be encouraged primarily in areas related to community centers, and strip development along highways shall be discouraged.

Objective 11.23.2: Economic growth shall be encouraged in the Town’s designated growth centers which are: Essex West/Fort Ethan Allen, Essex Center including Butler’s Corners and Lang Farm, and the Saxon Hill Industrial Park.

Objective 11.23.3: Public investments, including the construction or expansion of infrastructure, shall reinforce the general character and planned growth patterns of the area.

Objective 11.23.4: The long-term maintenance of significant open lands shall be encouraged via the implementation of strategies set forth in the 2008 Essex Open Space Plan.

Goal 11.24: Develop a physical and psychological “center” for Essex.

Objective 11.24.1: Update and consider the designs, standards and recommendations from the 1991 Town Center Master Plan in the review of future development plans for the Town Center area.

Objective 11.24.2: Review and consider the recommendations of the 2004 Town Center Study Committee, including increased residential densities, increased proportions of residential in the residential to commercial mix and underground or tiered parking.

Goal 11.25: Preserve existing structures in the Agriculture/Residential Area (particularly historic structures and farmstead structures) by allowing additional uses that provide more economic return while not jeopardizing the rural character of the area that the Town seeks to maintain.

Objective 11.25.1: Explore the potential of additional uses that may be allowed in the Agricultural/Residential Area to provide some economic return for the use of existing structures (particularly historic structures and farmstead structures) while not adversely impacting other important characteristics of the area.

Strategy 11.25.1.1: Undertake a study of potential uses that meet the above criteria, and ways that they can be incorporated into the regulations for the Agriculture/Residential Area while continuing to protect the rural character and natural features of the area.

Strategy 11.25.1.2: Amend the Zoning Regulations for the Agriculture/Residential Area to allow those uses identified as providing some economic return to the use of existing structures while not adversely impacting other important characteristics of the area.