

THE LANDS OF COLCHESTER

VISION: Colchester, Vermont located on Lake Champlain's Malletts Bay, is a diverse, civic-minded community endowed with a rich heritage of commercial, agricultural, recreational, and educational gifts. Proud of the quality of life already enjoyed here, the people of Colchester seek to build upon this foundation to ensure economic prosperity, recreational opportunity, and an entrepreneurial spirit for future generations.

GOAL: Colchester has a unique diversity of land types and uses including: residential, agricultural, recreational, commercial, industrial, institutional, and natural areas. As the Town continues to grow, it will be important to maintain the diversity of the community and the character of the Town.

OBJECTIVE: The six land use categories for Colchester set land uses for Colchester over the term of this plan, through the Future Land Use Map. The Development Regulations provide specific detail for land uses.

HISTORY ON THE LAND

Approximately 12,000 years ago, glacial sheets receded and gave way to the Champlain Sea which cloaked most of the Champlain Valley under its waters. As the Sea receded, evidence can be found that Native populations began to utilize the lands of Colchester. Archaic and Woodland Period archaeological sites, located along present and former stream channels, provide evidence that native peoples made use of the area's stone raw materials for tools and abundant plant and animal resources for food and other necessities of life.

In 1609, Samuel de Champlain entered the area during an exploration of the waters now called Lake Champlain, introducing a European presence to the area. In 1763, New Hampshire Governor Benning Wentworth chartered the Town of Colchester. The first European settlers of Colchester purchased land from the Onion River Land Company and attempted to take residency during the years preceding the Revolutionary War. After the War, the settlement of Colchester began to take hold as the region stabilized and land feuds between neighboring states were settled. Ira Allen was among the first residents of Colchester when the Town held its first Town meeting of record in 1793. The first parcels of land were mapped by N. Baker in 1802.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Colchester was reliant on agriculture as its economic base. The gently rolling, fertile soils of Colchester were well-suited to agriculture, but often required substantial clearing. Saw and grain mills developed along waterways and dams were built to exploit water power. The Village of Winooski Falls (later Winooski) was the Town's first center. Malletts Bay was developed as a port of trade. Later, nineteenth century developments brought the railroad to Town. The twentieth century brought change with the advent of the automobile, but the Town remained relatively agrarian until the second half of the twentieth century when development pressures spilled onto the Colchester landscape. In 1922 the Village of Winooski voted to change from an incorporated Village in the Town to a separate City. What remained of Colchester was more rural and agricultural with City of Winooski remained as the center of commerce and population.

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49 Colchester remained primarily agricultural through the mid-1960's. Now about 20% of the land is
50 zoned for agricultural use. Over time agricultural uses have declined while demand for residential
51 development has grown creating development pressures on undeveloped areas.
52

53 The original 1955 zoning map and 1969 Town Plan include commercial, industrial, residential, and
54 resort land uses which are still present. The resort land use classification, used for summer seasonal
55 camp communities in areas such as Sand Dunes, Colchester Point, Mills Point, Spauldings West Shore,
56 Porters Point, Coates Island and Goodsell Point has been retired. These communities were generally
57 constructed in the 1940's and 1950's. Many were owned by successive generations of families. The
58 majority of seasonal summer cottages, or camps, have transitioned to year-round occupation. In 2002
59 the Town developed guidelines for the conversion of camps to year-round homes to ensure against
60 environmental damage and devaluation of surrounding properties.
61

62 While Colchester evolves, historical development patterns are still evident. Multiple areas within the Town
63 served as commercial centers for various portions of the community at a time when travel was more time
64 consuming and costly. Suburban residential developments have occurred in areas all over the Town. The
65 distinct areas of the Town have grown together with few farming and rural areas in between. However, due
66 to the incredibly disbursed development that has arisen due to the Bay, rivers, wetlands, and land
67 geography, it is not financially possible to bring fee based utilities (water, sewer) or transportation
68 infrastructure to all areas of Town.
69

70 With the creation of a growth center at Severance Corners in the 1990s, the Town has sought to provide an
71 area where residences and businesses are co-mingled in more of a town center setting. This area now
72 benefits from State investment in an improved intersection, bus service, fee funded water, and fee funded
73 sewer.
74

75 The commercial areas of Warners Corners and the Village have evolved to meet changing needs. Infill
76 development continues within commercial and residential areas with development standards evolving to
77 provide better protections for sensitive areas, particularly along the Lake. As we look to our future, two
78 cornerstones will be continuing to ensure sustainable development and protecting our natural resources to
79 foster resilience from the changing natural environment.
80

81
82 **A LAND USE PLAN FOR NOW AND THE FUTURE**
83

84 Agriculture Mixed Use: Farms are an important part of Colchester's community character, and
85 heritage. The Town seeks to retain and support these farms. The Agricultural / Mixed Use area balances
86 continued agricultural use with property owners' needs and also includes opportunities for agricultural
87 tourism and the commercial elements that are necessitated by the changing face of agriculture. This area
88 is zoned Agricultural Mixed Use.
89

90 Rural: These areas tend to be open and sparsely developed. Agricultural uses and low density
91 residential uses are compatible land uses within these areas that often include significant natural
92 resources, prime agricultural soil, and other characteristics that generally make these areas unsuitable
93 for denser development. The lack of density creates privacy within a more natural surrounding. The
94 tradeoff is often a longer, more auto-centered travel required of residents. Some limited silvicultural
95 activities also occur within these areas although these activities tend to be small and informal.
96 Recreational facilities and uses may also be appropriate. These areas are generally zoned AGR, R10 &
97 R5.

98
99 Suburban Residential: These areas are appropriate for residential development at a medium density of
100 one to three units per acre, generally matching the existing development pattern. Limited development
101 of neighborhood commercial services, such as small offices and stores, schools, recreational facilities,
102 religious institutions, or daycares may also be considered where appropriate. These areas are generally
103 zoned R1, R2, R3, and Mobile Home Park (MHP).
104

105 Village Mixed Use: These are primarily existing developed areas with a mix of residential and business
106 use. Future development is meant to be compatible with existing uses. Additional public infrastructure
107 will generally not be required to support desired levels of growth and density. Within a subset of the
108 Inner Bay neighborhood in the Lakeshore Districts, a change in wastewater treatment systems is needed
109 to remediate water quality issues from existing development. Uses appropriate for village mixed use
110 include residential, small office, restaurant, small retail, agriculture, and many businesses integrated
111 into neighboring residential uses. Appropriate industrial uses should be conditioned on their ability to
112 fit with neighboring uses. Although multi-family and higher residential densities are encouraged, lower
113 density Residential Districts such as R-1 and especially R-2 are also compatible in village mixed use
114 areas. Depending on their densities, mixed use areas can be walkable, and depending on their proximity
115 to other more dense areas, they can be connected via bike/ped paths and in some cases public transit to
116 create alternatives to single-occupancy trips. These areas are generally zoned LS1, LS2, GD1, GD2, or
117 GD4.
118

119 Business Use: These areas support large scale commercial development and/or manufacturing and
120 distribution uses. These areas are zoned commercial, industrial, or business district with care being
121 taken to, when necessary, separate these uses within the land use categories. Growth and expansion of
122 new and existing businesses, especially medical, research and high-tech uses, is encouraged within this
123 area. These areas are generally zoned Commercial (COM), Industrial (IND), and Business District
124 (BD).
125

126 Growth Center: This area calls for higher density, compact, highly integrated, mixed use development
127 and is intended to be the primary area for new development in Colchester. The allowed uses include
128 office, restaurant, civic facilities, residential, retail and a variety of businesses. Multi-family and high
129 density single-family residential are strongly encouraged. Building heights will be higher than other
130 areas of Town providing they can be blended into the topography, are visually compatible with the area
131 and include architectural features that mitigate the visual impacts. The growth center requires fee based
132 water and sewer services. The growth center is intended to be a walkable area connected with public
133 transit and bike/ped paths that increase transportation opportunities serving this area. This area is zoned
134 General Development Three (GD3).
135

PLANNING OUR NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS

138 Individual neighborhood areas are assigned land use categories from the above descriptions. While
139 community members apply both broader (“The Bay,” “The Village,” “The Fort”) and more specific
140 (Broad Lake, Norses Corners, Warners Corners, Chimney Corners, Creek Farm, etc.) it was necessary
141 to create “Neighborhood Areas” for the purpose of the Town Plan. Neighborhood Areas were selected
142 to create adjacent areas that internally relate from an adjacent land use perspective. Individual
143 Neighborhood Areas are described from multiple perspectives. They vary greatly including historical
144 land use based on geographic and water features, development density which significantly impacts the
145 amount of infrastructure and proximity to stores, transportation, cultural and natural resources.
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147 Private sector infrastructure includes electric, land and wireless phone, cable and natural gas.
148 Government fee based infrastructure includes water and sewer. Areas are described in terms of
149 characteristics and opportunities. The reader should understand that land use is regulated by the Town
150 but almost all development is made by the private sector and driven primarily by markets.
151 Neighborhood Areas provide implementation strategies for future land use planning. The Neighborhood
152 Area Map outlines locations of these areas.
153

154 **GROWTH CENTER: Severance Corners**

155 Severance Corners is located at the center of our vast town at the intersection of Roosevelt Highway
156 and Blakely/Severance Roads. As the Town's designated growth center, Severance Corners is the focal
157 point for the community's growth during the term of this plan and the long term. The area is served by
158 both municipal fee based water and fee based sewer. Properties outside the growth center are low and
159 rural density zoning districts. The Town adopted General Development Three, form-based-zoning for
160 this area, to promote a dense, mixed use village type development pattern suited for its planned growth
161 center future land use designation. The area is intended to contain pedestrian amenities and
162 connectivity, community space, and access to public transportation.
163

164 The Town obtained State designations for Severance Corners as a New Town Center in 2007 and a
165 Growth Center in 2009. Benefits of designation include exemption from Act 250 and prime agricultural
166 soil mitigation rights which makes it advantageous to develop within growth centers. The growth center
167 designation has been beneficial to realizing plans for Severance Corners and renewal of the
168 designations will be pursued again after the adoption of this plan.
169

170 Development for this area should attempt a balance of residential and commercial uses, respecting
171 markets which ultimately determine this balance. Roof top solar may be appropriate in this area, however,
172 ground mounted alternative energy production is not, given the planned building density. Form based
173 zoning was implemented in 2013 to encourage higher densities and additional commercial development.
174 This area is served by fee based sewer, fee based water, and remains a location where traffic volumes and
175 densities warrant a significant intersection improvement and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.. The Town
176 will continue to work with VTrans to implement transportation improvements in the area. While civic
177 and recreational uses are encouraged in the growth center, no new civic uses are anticipated in this area
178 during the term of the plan. Privately owned but public facilities, religious institutions, and private
179 schools could be developed within the growth center as it grows.
180

181 **BUSINESS CENTER: Exit 16**

182 Exit 16 is a densely developed commercial and industrial business use area bounded on the south by the
183 City of Winooski, on the east by Camp Johnson, the Fort Neighborhood, on the north by Severance
184 Corners, and on the west by Interstate 89. Exit 16 of Interstate 89 and Roosevelt Highway bisect this area.
185 It is geographically separated from Severance Corners by the Sunny Hollow ravine. Fee based municipal
186 water and municipal sewer serves the area. Commercial, Industrial, and Business Districts are the
187 dominant zoning in this neighborhood.
188

189 This area is the current center of business within Colchester with several hotels, a national retailer, a
190 grocery store, heavy industry, a quarry operation, numerous small businesses, Class A office space, and
191 the University of Vermont's medical research facility. A residential neighborhood, Sunderland Woods,
192 was constructed within a high-density R3 residential zone on the northern cusp of this neighborhood.
193 As this area will remain the center of large-scale commercial and industrial expansion for Colchester,
194 no extension of residential uses will be considered during the term of this plan Alternative energy
195 production is appropriate in this are provided that it enhances existing uses and does not detract from,

196 the commercial and industrial development opportunities, the aesthetics of the gateway or negatively
197 impact the natural areas present. Separations of commercial uses and heavy industrial uses should
198 remain to ensure the continued viability of both uses. Integration of mutually sustaining uses such as
199 fitness centers and daycares within employment centers is encouraged. Current projections demonstrate
200 that this area has the potential to accommodate many additional years of continued commercial and
201 industrial growth. The Exit 16 area contains the majority of commercial and industrial land within
202 Colchester. Areas for expansion include undeveloped sites at Water Tower Hill, the area surrounding
203 the former Rathe landfill and brownfields along Hercules Drive. The synergy of the Albany College of
204 Pharmacy, the University of Vermont's research facility and the State of Vermont Health Laboratory
205 provide high-tech employment in the area.
206

207 The Town of Colchester is working with the State of Vermont Agency of Transportation to advance the
208 Exit 16 diverging diamond intersection and associated improvements on Roosevelt Highway. Although
209 capacity and safety issues have made these transportation improvements vital, development should
210 continue while these improvements are made. The project includes gateway enhancements including
211 pedestrian and aesthetic improvements recognizing Exit 16 and Roosevelt Highway are primary
212 entrances to the community. No changes should be made to the zoning in this area during the term of
213 this plan.
214

OUR VILLAGE MIXED USE NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS

Colchester Village

217 The Colchester Village Neighborhood Area begins with the historic Colchester Village at the
218 intersection of Main Street/Mill Pond and East Road. It extends from the Interstate to the Essex Town
219 Line along Creek Farm Road and Main Street (Route 2A). It is bounded on the north by the Northeast
220 Quadrant, on the west by the East Lakeshore Drive Neighborhood, and on the south by the Mill Pond
221 and Poor Farm Road Neighborhoods. It is accessed by Roosevelt Highway and is designated village
222 mixed use. The area includes a mix of zoning ranging from industrial to high density residential: R1,
223 R2, R3, GDI, COM, & IND). The entire area is served by fee based municipal water and private on-site
224 septic except for Creek Farm Plaza and Brault's Mobile Home Park which have fee based municipal
225 sewer, funded primarily by Brault's.
226

227 The historic core begins along Roosevelt Highway and proceeds easterly along Main Street to the
228 vicinity of the intersection of Mill Pond Road and East Road. This area has much of the character
229 expected of New England villages but not found elsewhere in Colchester, including old homes close to
230 the road, churches, small businesses, the Burnham Library, the Historical Society, the Colchester Food
231 Shelf, and Union Memorial Elementary School. This area is designated as village mixed use and zoned
232 General Development One to preserve this blend of commercial and residential development and
233 encourage infill that preserves the historic character of the area. Alternative energy facilities should be
234 small in scale and held to the same standards as commercial and residential development. No rezonings
235 are appropriate for this neighborhood during the term of this plan.
236

237 The greater Village area includes some commercial properties but mostly consists of residential
238 neighborhoods. With the exception of the existing commercial/industrial properties along the railroad
239 right-of-way that is planned for business use, commercial growth outside the Village core should be
240 limited in keeping with the mixed use future land use designation, and respective of the impact of
241 additional truck traffic on the village. Those properties fronting along the railroad right-of-way are the
242 only properties in Colchester that have the opportunity to have a rail-siding for freight and therefore are
243 appropriate for business use.
244

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245 The natural corridors of Indian and Pond Brook should be maintained and enhanced and deer wintering
246 yards should be kept open. The greater Village area is in need of improved pedestrian and bicycle
247 facilities between neighborhoods outlying such as Country Meadows. The development of the Village
248 Park during the term of this plan may encourage informal off-road pedestrian connections between this
249 area and the core which may later be formalized. The Library is growing its stewardship of the Town
250 Green from the Library to the Historical Society Building. This provides opportunities for increased
251 inside and outside use and event programming. The Green should be cultivated as a community
252 gathering spot.
253

254 The Fort

255 This neighborhood area occupies the southeastern part of Colchester bounded on the east by the Town
256 of Essex, on the south by South Burlington, on the west by the City of Winooski and the Exit 16
257 neighborhood, and on the north by the Severance neighborhood. Fort Ethan Allen is accessed from
258 Colchester by Severance Road or Route 15. Either access requires that one cross through either Essex
259 or Winooski. The Fort is separated from South Burlington by the Winooski River ravine. The
260 neighborhood is designated as mixed use on the Future Land Use Map and the majority is zoned
261 General Development Two. No changes to zoning designations are appropriate during the term of this
262 plan.
263

264 Three major institutions occupy this neighborhood and have a significant impact on land use patterns
265 within the area and the greater community's economy: Saint Michael's College, UVM Medical Center's
266 Fanny Allen Campus, and Camp Johnson. Fort Ethan Allen is the historic military outpost of the area
267 that has transitioned into the Vermont National Guard at Camp Johnson. The historic Fort is mostly in
268 Colchester but also partially in the Town of Essex. These historic National Register structures which
269 define the area and overtime have been repaired, rehabilitated and renovated for reuse including multi-
270 family housing, small businesses, educational and cultural organizations. Development shall not cause
271 undue adverse impact to the historic properties and scenic views of this area. Alternative energy
272 production within the National Register District must be sympathetic to the historic structures. Outside
273 the District, energy production may be accommodated in this neighborhood in a manner that does not
274 detract from existing development or scenic views. A variety of electronic communication
275 organizations occupy the historic Fort creating a communications sector within the Fort. Outside the
276 mixed-use Fort area, there are also several residential developments within the area such as Winchester
277 Place and the State of Vermont owned mobile home park. The historic parade grounds are now a park
278 jointly managed by the Town of Colchester and the Town of Essex. The Fort is a cultural center for
279 Colchester with the Saint Michaels Colleges Elly Long Music Center which houses the Vermont Youth
280 Symphony Orchestra, Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program, the Islamic Society of Vermont and the
281 Vermont Genealogy Center. The balance among the businesses, residences, and educational and
282 cultural facilities are continually shifting based on market changes. This area should be maintained and
283 enhanced to include community gathering places and other amenities that would foster the development
284 of the neighborhood as a cultural center. The Fort neighborhood is served by fee based municipal water
285 and fee based sewer.
286

287 Saint Michael's College is a private, Catholic, liberal arts school that confers both bachelor's degrees in
288 addition to as graduate degrees. The majority of its 2,000 students live on campus along the northern
289 edge of Route 15. The College contributes to the community as a major employer, a cultural and
290 recreational resource, and through its volunteer fire and rescue services, which are coordinated with the
291 Town.
292

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The Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph founded the Fanny Allen Hospital in 1894. Through the twentieth century, nuns affiliated with this Catholic Order staffed the Hospital. The hospital consolidated in 1995 with the UVM Medical Center. The site provides out-patient surgery, diagnostics, medical rehabilitation, medical offices, and a commuter parking lot for the main UVM Medical Center Campus in Burlington. The former convent has housed a variety of uses and now functions as a school.

Camp Johnson is the main facility of Vermont’s National Guard, “the Green Mountain Boys.” In 1894 the U.S. Army established a cavalry post at Fort Ethan Allen authorizing a portion of the Fort for National Guard training. The Fort was deactivated in 1944. Most structures on the base are used for administration on State-owned land while the undeveloped training areas are located on federally owned land. The Green Mountain Boys, or the Vermont Brigade, the 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team are known for their mountain warfare skills. The Town is supportive of the Guard, its mission and the many military families in the community. While the Camp contains a significant amount of undeveloped land, no change in use for this area is expected during the term of this plan. The Town will continue to work on implementing bicycle and pedestrian improvements along Route 15. Green Mountain Transit, with financial support from the Town provides the State’s highest level of public transit service along this corridor.

The Town should continue to work with the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission to implement the Route 15 Corridor Study and the various bike and pedestrian improvements called for in this corridor plan. It is recognized that a full interchange at Exit 15 would benefit the Exit 16 neighborhood in concert with a road connection through Camp Johnson. This is not likely to occur during the term of this plan.

Exit 17

This neighborhood area is bounded on the north by the Milton Town Line, on the south and east by the rural lands of the Northeast Quadrant, and on the west by Niquette Bay Road, Route 2, and the Lamoille River. It is bisected by the Interstate 89 Exit 17 interchange and US Route 2, a limited access highway. The character of the area is influenced by the movement of US Route 2 from Jasper Mine Road to its current alignment. Businesses do not have direct access on the route. This leaves the area appearing devoid of development and very rural. This neighborhood is classified as village mixed use and allows a variety of residential, commercial, and industrial uses however the scattered original development pattern presents difficulties in infill and the majority of this area will not be able to achieve the density needed to create a true village center.

This area is a mixed use area which may be developed incrementally over time notably after Severance Corners is complete.. It is largely undeveloped with some light industrial and residential uses scattered within the area east of Interstate 89 and North of US 2. Development within this area is influenced by topography and soil conditions and a lack of municipal fee based water and sewer. The Town should work to ensure that as development continues to occur within this neighborhood area, it is compatible with the goals of the village mixed use future land use including provisions for recreation and pedestrian/bicycle circulation especially along the Route 7 corridor. Development, including alternative energy facilities, should not detract from the scenic views of the area as identified in the current GD4 open space overlay district. The Town should also continue to work with the State to implement traffic improvements within the area to preserve capacity for the future and sufficiently handle background growth in traffic. Given the current dispersed development patterns, the current mixed use zoning, GD4, should be evaluated during the term of the plan to consider opportunities for development, such as alternative energy facilities, that in the near term, would not negatively impact economic growth opportunities for the Town in this neighborhood area. If the area becomes considerably denser over a

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longer time frame than this plan, bike and pedestrian infrastructure could be explored to link the neighborhood internally and add connections to Milton along Route 7 and Colchester Village.

The low density residential area north of Route 2 lacks sufficient water to sustain build-out under current R1 zoning. Residential densities should remain for the term of this plan and into the future. If a decision is made in the future to create greater density, a water system would need to be developed and financed in the area. Existing private well served properties would then be required to connect to the fee based system. The village mixed use area zoned GD4 and GD1 between Route 2 and Jasper Mine Road is also challenged by geography which has limited development and no fee based water and sewer. Therefore development should continue to be of a limited scale.

INNER BAY

This area includes the lands west of Interstate 89 from Malletts Creek to Prim Road. Williams Road, portions of Bay Road, Blakely Road, West and East Lakeshore Drives are included in this area.

The Lakeshore Drive area is the center of recreational access to Malletts Bay. West Lakeshore Drive includes the Town beach, boating opportunities, a variety of commercial uses and the Hazelett Stripcasting Company. This area is designated village mixed use on the Future Land Use Map and is served by fee based municipal water and private on-site septic. Alternative energy facilities should be small in scale and held to the same standards as commercial and residential development. The southern boundary of this neighborhood has significant natural resources.

In 2015, new zoning was created for the West Lakeshore Drive area: Lakeshore One and Lakeshore Two Districts. The Malletts Bay Initiative, begun in 2015, included a comprehensive look at bike/ped improvements, the road corridor, stormwater, and wastewater disposal along the Bay. Since the adoption of the new districts, the Town has developed a preferred design alternative for the West/East Lakeshore and Blakely Roads intersection, is developing stormwater remediation plans, bike/ped improvements, and is developing for consideration, an extremely limited sewer system to provide for environmental clean-up in the inner bay. General plans for the redevelopment of the Town's Bayside Park and the development of Town's Bayside Hazelett parcel will be gradually implemented as funding allows. During the term of this plan, it is anticipated that many of these projects will be advanced

West Lakeshore Drive carries heavy traffic volumes. While a bypass road was discussed in previous plans, the traffic benefit to cost makes pursuing such a road unwarranted and the abandonment of the circumferential highway further removes this possibility. Given the lack of a parallel road to West Lakeshore Drive, an alternative emergency connection from Malletts Bay Avenue to Prim/Heineberg Roads, perhaps in combination with or using a future recreational path should be explored, not on its own, but as opportunities arise.

The West Lakeshore Drive neighborhood area will remain a focal point for tourism and recreation with opportunities for infill development as designated on the future land use map. Commercial uses in this area serve recreational activities, local residents and regional commuters. Alternative energy facilities should be small in scale and held to the same standards as commercial and residential development. Services and recreational access for residents and tourists should be improved. The Hazelett Company should remain as an employment center in this area and expand as needed. Small businesses are important to maintaining the economic vibrancy of this neighborhood area. Development must be balanced with environmental impacts. Views and access to the Bay should be preserved and enhanced. Green infrastructure requirements for redevelopment and new development will help to improve or maintain water quality. With existing on-site septic, this goal for infiltration may prove difficult given

391 some of the smaller lot sizes; however, the planned sewer service area will help create more space for
392 infiltration.

393
394 The development of the parks and the limited sewer system for environmental remediation, are
395 extremely limited in their ability to support additional development. The LS1 and LS2 zoning districts
396 create a framework for the type and scale of development planned for the neighborhood and no changes
397 to this zoning is warranted during the term of this plan. The planned infrastructure will enable the
398 village mixed use long envisioned for the West Lakeshore Drive area.
399

400 East Lakeshore Drive serves as an arterial roadway and an alternative commuting choice to Route 127
401 (Blakely Road). The area has almost contiguous summer seasonal and year-round residences. Non-
402 conforming and failing private on-site septic, as evidenced by DNA testing indicating human bacteria in
403 the Bay, indicate that the wastewater systems are not adequate. The area between East Lakeshore Drive
404 and the Lake is constrained often requiring more structural solutions for shoreline stabilization.
405 Shoreline stabilization in this neighborhood should continue to balance structural needs with the need to
406 maintain and enhance the aesthetics of the Shoreland and include native vegetation and deemphasize
407 mass of structures. The area east of East Lakeshore Drive and surrounding Williams Road functions as
408 suburban residential with R2 zoning as does much of the area along Bay Road. North of Bay Road is
409 the seasonal campground Lone Pine, zoned GD1 that still brings in many summer residents to the
410 community. The areas west and north of Lone Pine are zoned R1 are significantly less dense with a
411 scattered collection of summer seasonal and year round homes in a rural setting.
412

413 The areas south of Bay Road function cohesively as a walkable medium density residential
414 neighborhood area. The presence of seasonal camps along East Lakeshore Drive preserves the historic
415 summer seasonal culture of Colchester and contributes to the character of the area with the majority of
416 residences between the road and the Lake still occupied only seasonally. These area attributes should be
417 sustained. Recent rebuilding of homes between the Lake and the road has inhibited views of the Lake.
418 During the term of this plan, zoning should be examined to address view preservation as rebuilds
419 continue in this area. Existing properties should be redeveloped in compliance with the Development
420 Regulations. Alternative energy facilities should be small in scale and held to the same standards as
421 commercial and residential development.
422

423 If the Lone Pine campground transitions into a more permanent use, care should be taken to tie it into
424 the existing neighborhood to the south while limiting effects on the rural areas to the north and west.
425 Although existing development often exceeds current zoning densities, no up-zoning shall be
426 considered as the uses often exceed the capacity of the land to provide adequate septic and stormwater
427 treatment as well as parking and other basic site amenities. Environmental concerns arising from the
428 close proximity of the area to the Lake, roadway capacity, and rugged geography north of Bay Road
429 limit densities in this area. Care should be taken not to increase traffic on East Lakeshore Drive. No
430 additional densities or development shall be considered for Bay Road, Williams Road, and East
431 Lakeshore Drive areas given the existing site constraints.
432

433 The Public facilities including the Town Office Building, Police Department, Colchester High School,
434 Colchester Middle School, Malletts Bay School, and the Colchester School District Offices are almost
435 contiguous along Blakely Road. The Town's facilities provide a base of operations to serve the entire
436 community. The school facilities contain recreational amenities including the playing fields for the high
437 school and community functions that accompany sporting events. The Town's Post Office lies on the
438 southern edge of this neighborhood. A number of small businesses, predominantly professional office
439 space, line Blakely Road within this neighborhood. Surrounding neighborhoods are medium density in

440 nature. Alternative energy facilities should be small in scale and held to the same standards as
441 commercial and residential development. The current Lakeshore Two and General Development One
442 District incorporates existing businesses and services around current sites along Blakely Road
443 surrounded by residential uses R2 zoning. No changes are anticipated to zoning for the Blakeley Road
444 area.
445

446 The Bay

447 As distinguished from the water area of inner and outer Malletts Bay, this neighborhood area spans the
448 area from the Winooski River north to the West Lakeshore Drive and Marble Island Neighborhoods
449 bounded on the west by the Winooski River and Lake Champlain and on the east by the Malletts Bay
450 Ave. Neighborhood. It is a gateway from the City of Burlington and is developed with a mixture of
451 retail, commercial and professional office uses along the Heineberg / Prim Road corridor surrounded by
452 medium density residential neighborhoods and the large floodplains to the south and east. This corridor
453 is designated as mixed use with the surrounding area designated at suburban residential.
454

455 The majority of the properties along the Heineberg Drive and Prim Road corridor are zoned General
456 Development One. These roads function as regional arterial roads as part of the Route 127 Corridor and
457 also serve local road functions. Porters Point Road functions as an arterial road. Planned improvements
458 include an upgrade to the West Lakeshore/Prim intersection, an extension of the West Lakeshore Drive
459 Path from Church Road to Prim Roads, and in the more distant future, a path along Prim Road.
460

461 Commercial development of an appropriate scale to serve the neighborhood should continue around
462 Warners Corners. This area at the intersection of Prim Road and Heineberg Drive should also continue
463 to see redevelopment of existing commercial sites. Alternative energy facilities should be small in scale
464 and held to the same standards as commercial and residential development. Many of these wetlands in
465 this neighborhood will continue to be protected by the State through wetland buffer requirements and
466 the Town's Water Protection Overlay District. Over the term of this plan, this District is anticipated to
467 be changed to better address fluvial erosion hazard areas such as the banks of the Winooski River. This
468 is an area that could also benefit from public transportation linking the neighborhood to downtown
469 Burlington. During the term of this plan, grants to study public transportation options should be
470 evaluated to explore if there is a cost effective service that could provide reasonable service time to
471 Burlington.
472

473 The Porters Point Road area is a mostly built-out suburban residential neighborhood containing a
474 significant number of homes that were constructed in the mid to late twentieth century. Medium to high
475 density residential R2 and R3 zoning is typical within this neighborhood although flood plain zoning is
476 present in the more environmentally sensitive portions of this area. The majority of the neighborhood
477 has fee based municipal water and private on-site septic. While not on the Lake, Airport Park is a
478 significant resource for the entire Town. The lakeshore and river access points make the area vibrant in
479 the summer months. A variety of sensitive natural areas exist in this area, including Delta Park, Rossetti
480 Natural Area, Half Moon Cove, and sandplains. Minor infill development as open lots are built and a
481 few multi-family residences are built. This area contains affordable housing with smaller older homes
482 as well as the designated "senior only" apartments. While infill opportunities should be encouraged in
483 this area, care should be taken to ensure that infill development does not erode the affordable housing
484 stock in this area or adversely impact the infrastructure of the area. The character of the area should be
485 maintained and care taken to ensure that lakeshore and river frontage development does not detract
486 from this character or present environmental concerns.
487

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The Macrae and Bean Road area has drainage issues and marginal soils that restrict densities to existing R1 zoning. The steep and eroding banks of the Winooski River should be evaluated under fluvial erosion hazard standards in the future. The flood plains and the Winooski Valley Park District's Macrae Park provide for continuity between the habitats of this neighborhood with the larger Intervale and Malletts Bay Avenue floodplains. No changes are suitable to the zoning during the term of the plan.

THE LANDS BETWEEN

Malletts Bay Ave

This is the area between Interstate 89 and the Flood Plain, south of the East/West Lakeshore neighborhood area, along Malletts Bay Avenue and Lavigne Road extending south to Winooski including agricultural lands known as Shipman Hill, farmlands and floodplains along the bottom of the hill, an industrial park, a quarry, active farms, and residential areas.

Climate, soils, location and property ownership have made this area a center of farming operations which produce vegetables, fruits, eggs, dairy products, livestock, flowers and landscape plantings for the community. The level topography, well drained soils and proximity to population centers that make this area ideal for truck farms also makes the land very attractive for residential development. Larger scale alternative energy facilities may be appropriate in this area as long as conflicts with existing uses and natural areas are minimized.

Zoning varies accordingly from industrial to agricultural to low-density R1 residential to high-density R3 residential to Floodplain. The highest residential density is along the Winooski Town Line. Residential development has been allowed with the stipulation that property owners be made aware of the pre-existing industrial and agricultural uses in the area although this does not seem to mitigate neighbor complaints. Within the Shipman Hill area, the Agricultural Mixed Use (AMU) Zoning District was created specifically for this neighborhood to recognize the opportunities in this area for agri-tourism and complimentary commercial uses. During the term of this plan, the AMU zoning should be revisited for the remainder of the rural lands in this neighborhood that are not precluded from development by floodplains. It is recognized that the floodplains contribute to agriculture in this area and should continue to be protected from any development including alternative energy siting. The AMU District should continue to be a versatile tool for farmers as farming practices grow more complex. No other zoning changes are warranted during the term of this plan.

Blakely / Poor Farm Roads

This area is between the Severance Corners on the east, the Inner Bay neighborhood area and Interstate 89 on the west, the Village Neighborhood Area along Bay Road on the north, and the Exit 16 neighborhood on the south. The properties included in this area are: 1) suburban residential, R1, properties along Blakely Road and in the Edgewood neighborhood which loops off of Blakely Road; and 2) larger rural properties zoned R10 or Agricultural along Poor Farm Road.

The rural area along Poor Farm Road is valued as an outstanding rural setting as the topography and soils have left the area more rural. Deeryards and a gravel road help define the character of this neighborhood. The maintenance of or addition to agricultural operations along Poor Farm Road should be encouraged. Alternative energy production that does not negatively impact the rural character or existing agricultural operations may be appropriate for this area. No changes are warranted for this neighborhood during the term of the plan.

Severance / Mill Pond Roads

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This neighborhood area lies east of the Severance Corners and Roosevelt Highway, south of the Village, north of Camp Johnson extending to the Essex Town Line. The parcels along Severance Road are predominately suburban residential with a range of low to medium density neighborhoods including a mobile home park, with the residences along Mill Pond Road becoming more scattered and rural in character.

The more rural lands of the Mill Pond Road corridor are important for east-west connectivity of natural areas along Indian Brook. The low-density residential and agricultural uses along Mill Pond Road are well suited to the rolling terrain and marginal soils of this area and serve to limit residential infill which could diminish the character of the area and the connectivity of natural areas. In the distant future, Severance Road may serve as a pedestrian and bicycle connection from Severance Corners to the Suzie Wilson Road area in Essex. As agricultural uses transition, outdoor recreational uses may be appropriate that do not diminish this character. Alternative energy production that does not negatively impact the rural character or existing agricultural operations may be appropriate for this area. No changes should be made during the term of the plan to the suburban residential (R1,R3, and MHP) along Severance Road or the rural area along Mill Pond Road (R1 and AGR) during the term of this plan.

Marble Island

This is the headland extending into Malletts Bay defining inner and outer Malletts Bay. Malletts Head has low density residential uses with commercial recreational uses at the Marble Island Marina and Brown Ledge Camp. Natural areas in this neighborhood include three undeveloped hills which are prominent natural land features as seen from the water. Marble Island and Cave Island are part of the Lake Champlain Paddlers Trail which encompasses this area.

While this area is designated as suburban residential on the Future Land Use Map, R5 low-density residential zoning exists. Low-density residential uses along the shoreline assist in preserving lake views. The Marble Island Resort has transitioned to a residential community. Any additional development should be sensitive to existing uses such as Brown Ledge Camp, sensitive to the natural features and resources of the area, and have sufficient emergency access. Alternative energy facilities shall be limited in scale and held to the same standards as other development with particular sensitivity to scenic views of and from the lake. The existing marina is an important private recreational amenity as is the paddlers trail. New development should preserve views of the lake and from the lake to the greatest extent possible and enhance access to the Lake. The natural area, with views, at the crest of Malletts Head should be considered for acquisition by a Land Trust if private funding is available. Over the term of this plan, the zoning for this area should be reevaluated to determine if a better zoning could be created that would preserve the rural character but maintain residential densities and setbacks.

OUR RURAL LANDS

Clay Point

This area includes all land west of I-89, south of Route 2 and north of Malletts Creek excluding the Exit 17 Neighborhood Area. The Clay Point Area is geographically rugged, with striking lakeshore ledges, thick forests and numerous rock outcrops, beaver ponds and other wet areas. This area is attractive due to its natural beauty and sparser development. Private development in the area has been limited by the geography resulting in lower density development along with private roads private water and on-site septic systems which have lower capital costs but higher ongoing costs. This is contrasted with other developments where infrastructure is installed by developers with the cost passed on to home buyers before being turned over to government. Property owners and residents should be aware that the Town does not plan to add road infrastructure or municipal water and sewer lines in this area. A significant

586 portion of this neighborhood has been set aside as Niquette Bay State Park. This area is zoned for low
587 density residential use, R1, and is designated rural for future land use. W Alternative energy production
588 that does not negatively impact the rural character or scenic lake views may be appropriate for this area.
589 During the term of this plan, the zoning for this area should be re-evaluated to determine what zoning
590 would best maintain the character of the area considering its natural limitations, the desires of current
591 residents, and the planned rural land use.
592

593 Northeast Quadrant

594 This area is the most rural area of Colchester and is characterized by small farms, large residential lots,
595 and on-site septic systems, and difficult terrain to develop. The area is bounded on the east by the Essex
596 and Westford Town Lines, on the north by the Milton Town Line, on the west by the Exit 17
597 neighborhood area and Interstate 89, and on the south by the Colchester Village Neighborhood. The
598 northwestern edge of this area has naturally occurring radioactive properties within the bedrock causing
599 issues for potable water and radon. The area contains the only railroad line in Colchester and has three
600 main transportation routes bisecting the area: Roosevelt Highway, East Road, and Middle Road. East
601 Road is becoming more of a commuter route to Milton. This area is home to Colchester Pond and the
602 Wolcott Natural Area that are owned by the Winooski Valley Park District. These areas include the
603 most significant forestry blocks within the community including the historic Town Forest at Colchester
604 Pond. The preservation of additional land surrounding these parks is encouraged. The area is
605 designated as rural for future land use.
606

607 The rural and agricultural character of this area shall be preserved. While the area contains a rail line,
608 railyards and rail spurs are not in keeping with the rural character of the area and should not be
609 permitted. The marginal soils and limited areas of fee based municipal water and the presence of
610 radioactive properties in the bedrock serve to discourage additional development. Property owners and
611 residents should be aware of the radioactive bedrock properties and new development should not increase
612 the degree of human exposure to these properties. The high level of connectivity between forestry blocks
613 and natural features, particularly between Colchester Pond and Essex's Indian Brook Park which fosters
614 wildlife habitat, should be recognized and maintained. The rise of horse farms and equestrian facilities
615 in this area should be recognized and encouraged. Outdoor recreational opportunities and on-the-farm
616 enterprises and events should be evaluated for further inclusion in the existing zoning during the term of
617 this plan. Care should be taken to recognize the limitation of the land, transportation corridors, and
618 existing character of the area. Primitive overland trails for pedestrian, bicyclists, horses, snowmobiles, and
619 ATVs are appropriate that do not detract from existing agricultural uses. The area should continue to be
620 zoned as agricultural or low density R5 and R10 residential during the term of this plan. Fixed area
621 developments, opportunities for recreational uses, on-the-farm enterprises, and event facilities may be
622 considered during the term of this plan. Alternative energy production that does not negatively impact
623 the rural character or existing agricultural operations may be appropriate for this area.
624

625 **POLICIES**

- 626 1. No rezonings should occur during the term of this plan except as called for herein.
- 627 2. Severance Corners should remain a Growth Center and be the focus of new development over the
628 term of this plan.
- 629 3. The Town will continue to work with the State on advancing intersection and bike/ped
630 improvements at Severance Corners and Exit 16 during the term of this plan.
- 631 4. The Town will work with the State to advance regional projects such as the Exit 17 Scoping Study
632 and Route 15 Corridor plan to address the impacts of traffic growth on the community.
- 633 5. Continued cooperative efforts between the Towns of Colchester and Essex to support the Fort as a
634 cultural center, and the expansion and vitality of businesses and institutions located here.

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- 635 6. At such time as feasible, a connection should be made between Exit 16 and the Fort.
- 636 7. The Malletts Bay Initiative infrastructure improvements should begin under the term of this plan and
- 637 remain a priority to maintain and improve water quality.
- 638 8. The Route 127 Corridor Plan should continue to be implemented as funding allows and within the
- 639 context of town-wide transportation priorities. Preservation of right of ways along the abandoned
- 640 circumferential highway, for the possibility of limited emergency access and or bike / ped
- 641 connections is encouraged.
- 642 9. Affordable public transit to the growth center should be maintained. Private development of
- 643 walking and biking infrastructure within the center should be required to connect the center to
- 644 surrounding neighborhoods.
- 645 10. Infill of village mixed use areas is to be encouraged to make best use of land and to be compatible
- 646 with bike/ped infrastructure
- 647
- 648

ACTIONS

- 649 1. The Planning Commission shall not consider rezoning except as called for in this plan or that
- 650 correct spot zones or split lots.
- 651 2. The Town should apply for renewal of the Growth / New Town Center with the State as
- 652 necessary over the term of this plan
- 653 3. Within three years of adoption of this plan, fluvial erosion hazard standards should be evaluated
- 654 for incorporation into the Development Regulations. Development shall continue to be prohibited
- 655 in the floodplain and redevelopment only allowed that addressed Development Regulation
- 656 requirements for floodproofing.
- 657 4. The AMU zoning should be revisited within six years of adoption of this plan. The remainder of the rural
- 658 lands in this neighborhood that are not precluded from development by floodplains should be considered
- 659 for AMU zoning.
- 660 5. The zoning on East Lakeshore Drive and similar areas should be examined within two years of
- 661 adoption of this plan to address view preservation as rebuilds along the Shoreline continue.
- 662 6. The zoning for Clay Point should be re-evaluated within two years of adoption of this plan to
- 663 determine what zoning would best maintain the character of the area and the planned rural land
- 664 use.
- 665 7. The GD4 zoning at Exit 17 should be evaluated within five years of the adoption of this plan to
- 666 consider opportunities for development that would not negatively impact economic growth
- 667 opportunities for this neighborhood over the long-term.
- 668 8. Within seven years of adoption of this plan, the zoning for Marble Island should be reevaluated
- 669 to determine if better zoning could be created that would maintain the rural character but
- 670 maintain residential densities and setbacks.
- 671 9. Within five years of adoption of this plan, the zoning of the Northeast Quadrant should be
- 672 reviewed for possible incorporation of fixed area based density cluster developments and more
- 673 opportunities for recreational uses and on-the-farm enterprises and event facilities.
- 674 10. During the term of this plan, grants to evaluate public transportation options for the Bay should
- 675 be explored to see if there is a cost effective service that could provide reasonable service time
- 676 to Burlington.
- 677
- 678