



**TOWN  
OF COLCHESTER**

**2007 TOWN PLAN**

**COLCHESTER  
SELECT BOARD**

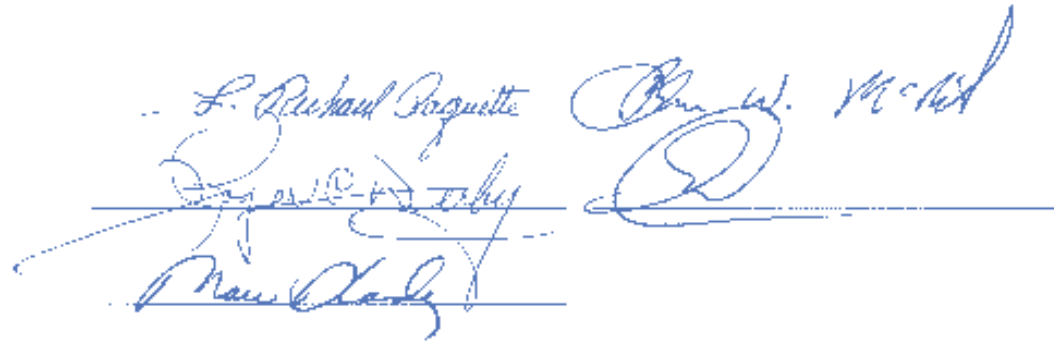
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Roger Derby  
Marc Landry  
Brian McNeil  
Edward Ploof, Jr.

**COLCHESTER  
PLANNING  
COMMISSION**

Zafir Bludevich, Chair  
Thomas Berry  
Fran Keyser III  
Richard Paquette  
Thomas Mulcahy

**COLCHESTER COMPREHENSIVE  
TOWN PLAN**

We, the Colchester Select Board, hereby adopt this comprehensive town plan for the Town of Colchester. The plan shall expire five years from this date unless revised or readopted before that time.



Dated at Colchester, County of Chittenden, State of Vermont,  
Adoped this 10th day of July, 2007.

**COLCHESTER SELECT BOARD**

COLCHESTER, VT.  
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Asst. Town Clerk

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# PROLOGUE

This is the Town Plan for the municipality prepared under the enabling authority of the Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act. The authority to prepare and implement this comprehensive plan is granted to the Town through the Vermont Planning and Development Act, Title 24 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated, Chapter 117. It is the intent and purpose of the Act to "... encourage the appropriate development of all lands in this state... in a manner which will promote the public health, safety against fire, floods, explosions and other dangers ... and to provide means and methods for the municipalities and regions of this state to plan for the prevention, minimization and future elimination of such land development problems as may presently exist or which may be foreseen and to implement those plans when and where appropriate.

This comprehensive plan is designed for use by Town boards, commissions, residents and businesses. The plan shall be: the framework for planning the future of Colchester, a guide for decision making in development review, a basis for evaluating zoning and subdivision and other bylaws, a tool for coordinating Colchester's activities with those of other municipalities and governmental bodies, a guide for development of capital improvement programs, and a reference for other plans developed by the Town. These recommendations are not mandates but are guidelines to help the Town with its long-range planning. Where conflicts between this plan and the adopted bylaws exist, the Town's bylaws will take precedent. However, the recommendations in this plan should be undertaken by the Town to help Colchester realize its vision.

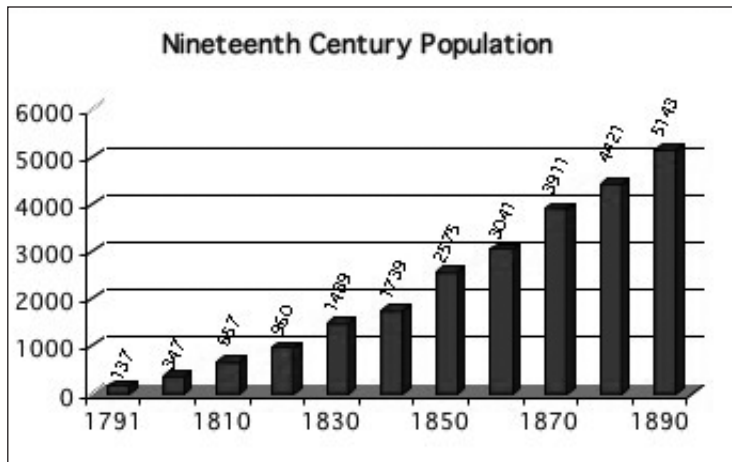
This Town Plan represents a substantially updated version of the 2002 Town Plan and is a continuation of the comprehensive planning process that was begun in Colchester with the adoption of the 1964 Colchester Town Plan. The Plan is meant to lay out a long-term vision for the Town with updates and clarifications provided every five years but with the long term vision for the Town remaining intact. This revision was informed by a year of public input sessions. Community organizations, Town Departments, and the general public were invited to share their thoughts at a series of topical public meetings. Written comments were also provided through white papers, letters, and a web log. A Town Plan Survey was also randomly mailed out to the community through the assistance of Professor Vincent Bolduc's Saint Michael's College Spring 2006 class. The survey was scientific and represented a good cross-section of the community. The Commission strove to inform itself from a variety of sources and a diversity of people. Over the Winter of 2007 the Commission reviewed drafts chapter by chapter, making revisions where necessary and adding background information to various topics.

Following the revision process, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the cumulative changes to the Town Plan and forwarded the Plan to the Select Board which held two public hearings adopting the Plan at the second hearing. The Plan is scheduled to be updated again in 2011 in time for re-adoption in 2012.

# 1 : COLCHESTER'S COMMUNITY: : PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE

## PAST

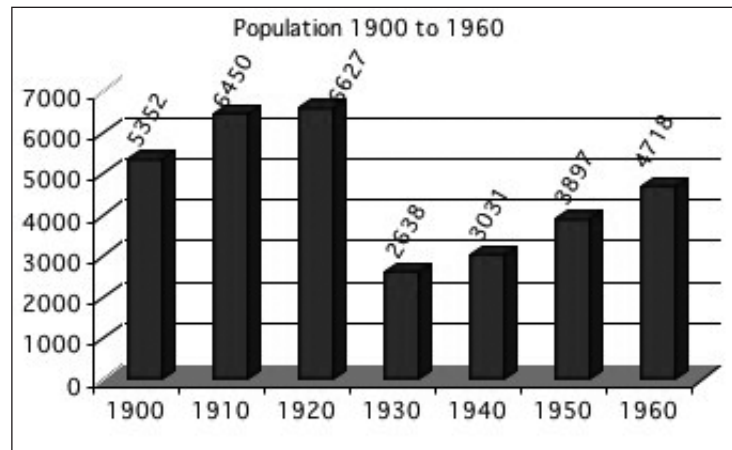
Colchester's location has made it a desirable place for settlement since prehistoric times. Colchester was chartered in 1763 and was previously inhabited by native peoples. Historic records lack information on demographics; however, what can be gleaned from historic records is that Colchester was a rural farming community primarily settled by families of European descent born in southern New England.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Census of Population & Housing, 2000 Summary File 1 Table P1

By the mid-nineteenth century, rudimentary censuses were performed. Agricultural censuses performed at this time provide information on farming operations in Colchester, family possessions, and acreage of farms. These historic censuses can be found at the University of Vermont's Bailey-Howe Library in Burlington and in the future may be available online. For the majority of the nineteenth century, Colchester's population saw a steady increase that mirrored statewide trends with the exception that Colchester did not see a significant decrease in population

in the late nineteenth century attributed to the Civil War. Colchester's population began to blossom in the late nineteenth century as industrialization along the Winooski River brought mills and workers to Town. When the urban center of Colchester, what is now known as the City of Winooski, separated from the rest of Colchester in 1922, it removed two-thirds of the community's population and its industry. The new Colchester greatly reflected its historic self as it remained relatively rural and agrarian. During

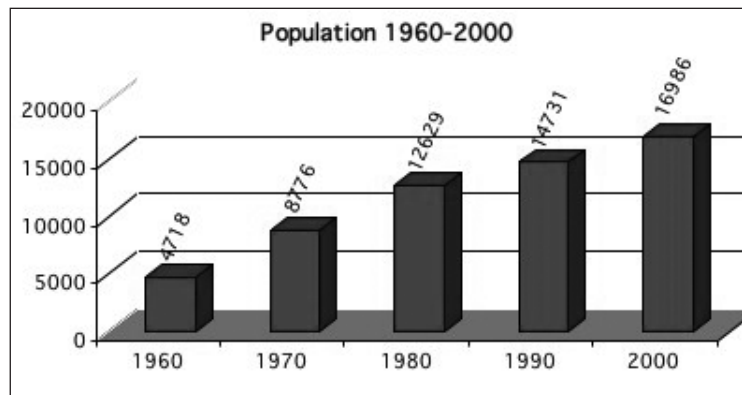


Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Census of Population & Housing, 2000 Summary File 1 Table P1

the early 1900's the Town did see significant growth in its summer seasonal community due to its lakeside location. This growth during this time is not adequately reflected in the census due to its seasonal nature. The separated Colchester maintained steady population growth until 1960.

## PRESENT

Colchester's year-round population nearly doubled in the 1960s with the introduction of International Business Machines in the neighboring Town of Essex. This was the beginning of Colchester's suburbanization as it quickly became a bedroom community for the greater Burlington area. The population increase seen during this decade was primarily from in-migration as residential developments surged and Colchester's natural amenities made it attractive for people to move to. Since 1970, the rate of growth continued at a more gradual rate. During the

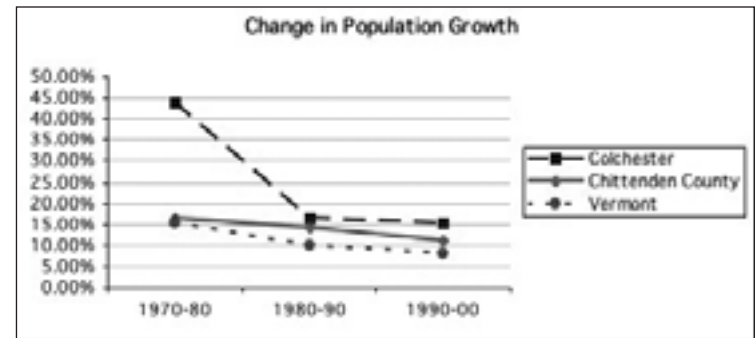


Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Census of Population & Housing, 2000 Summary File 1 Table P1

1980s and 1990s, the Town's population grew by an average of 218 persons per year, compared with an average of 395 persons per year during the preceding 20-year period. Colchester's annual growth during this time period surpassed that of County and State. The 2000 U.S. Census showed Colchester's year-round population as of April 1<sup>st</sup> reached 16,986. By the end of 2000, Colchester's population surpassed Rutland's to make it the third largest town and second largest municipality in the State. The Town now possesses 12% of the County's population. Although Colchester's growth rate has been gradually slowing since the 1970s, its population has increased so substantially that during the 1990s it was still ranked second for absolute population growth among

towns in the County, only being surpassed by Williston. Colchester's annual growth rate is currently 1.24% indicative of a more stable and sustainable growth rate and perhaps also reflects Colchester's transition during the 1990s from a bedroom community to an employment center. For further detail on daytime populations and employment data please refer to the Economy Chapter.

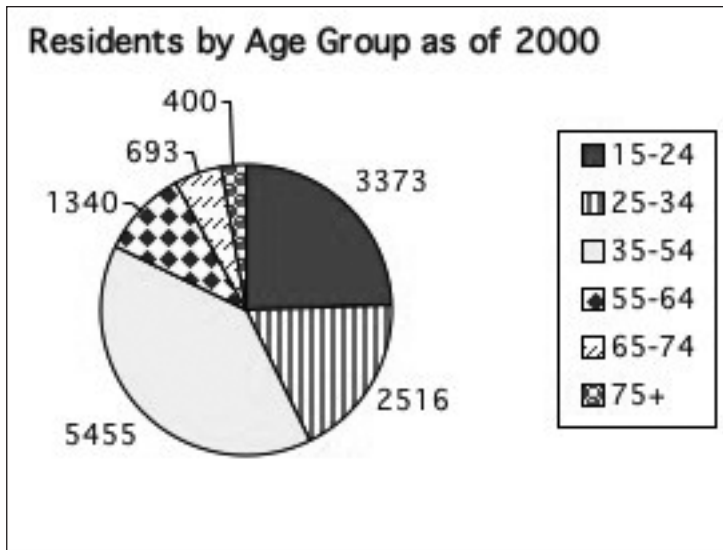
The 2000 Census is perhaps the best tool for analyzing the composition of the current population. Colchester's immigration has declined gradually since 1980 with natural



Source: Calculation with U.S. Census Bureau's Total Population

increases accounting for the majority of growth (62% during the 1990s). While Colchester has become more self-sustaining, the impacts of the rapid growth of the late twentieth century will continue to have a significant impact on the composition of the community. As of 1995, 48% of Colchester's population over the age of five has moved to Colchester from elsewhere with only half of this number being from within Chittenden County.

Colchester's population mirrors state and national trends toward an aging population. The Baby Boom Generation (born 1946 – 1964), the largest demographic nationwide, has a lower birth rate creating a smaller Echo Boom or Y Generation (1976 into the early 1990s). The State is also seeing a decline in young workers or Generation Xers (1961 to 1981) as many leave the state for better economic



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Census of Population & Housing, Table DP-1, 2000 Profile of General Demographic Characteristic

opportunities. Colchester's population is aging, birth rates are declining and there has been a decrease in younger households.

While it will take a while for Colchester to see the full effect of these trends, it has already seen changes in household size and type. Colchester had a more traditional household makeup with household sizes higher than the County average: 2.62 persons in 1990 while the County average was 2.53. By 2000, Colchester's average household size was 2.5, just slightly higher than the County's 2.47. While 68% of the total households in 2000 were still family households, only 25% of all households consisted of "traditional" family households: married couples with children. In 1990, 30% of all households were "traditional". Traditional households also saw the slowest rate of growth from 1990 to 2000 at 2% while non-family households had the fastest rate of growth at 30%. The growth in non-traditional households has contributed to an increase in smaller households. In 2000, one and two-person households comprised 59% of all Colchester households. These factors contributed to create greater growth in



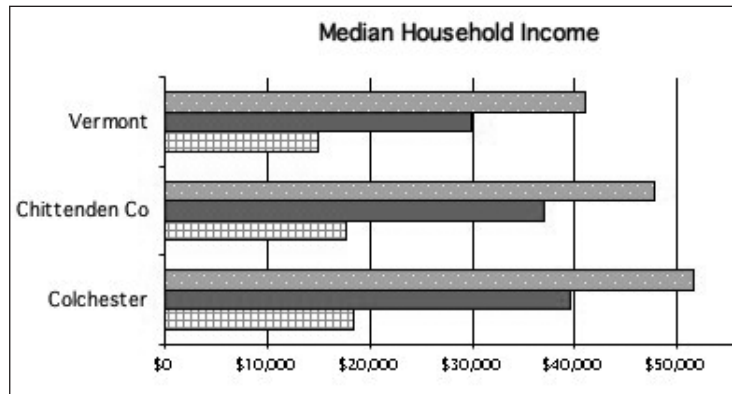
Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Census of Population & Housing, 2000 Summary File 1 Table H12

household formation than local population growth: 21.7% versus 15.3%.

Within household subsets, there are trends worth noting. Ten percent of Colchester's population lives in group quarters: a student population at Saint Michaels College and the University of Vermont. Colchester does not have a nursing home, prison, or similar institution (the nursing home on the border of Essex was excluded from Colchester's population).

"Special needs" populations are persons that may require special living arrangements or housing including the elderly, disabled, and low-income. In 2000, 6% of Colchester residents lived below the poverty line. Eleven percent of the working-age population reported a disability. Six percent of were residents over the age of 65. Of this particular segment, 10% were living below the poverty line and 33% reported a disability. A trend that will be important to watch in the future is the increase in households with seniors versus households with children: 48% versus 9.7%.

A positive outlook for Colchester is the median household income: \$51,429 in 2000. Since 1980 Colchester's median household income has tracked higher than County and State averages. During the 1980s median household income grew by 116% or \$21,076 according to the Census. The 1990s saw income increase by another 31% or \$12,121 significantly outpacing the County's and State's median incomes: 108% of the County and 126% of the State's averages. While income continued to surge and the number of households in lower income categories decreased, the total rate of income growth stabilized in the 1990's. The 2000 Census shows the largest income increase in upper income brackets: households earning between \$75,000 and \$99,999. It should be noted that median incomes of families living in Colchester are not representational of wages paid to workers in Colchester.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Census of Population & Housing, 2000 Summary File 1 Table P1

A variety of trends in Colchester's population indicate it will continue to be a vibrant and dynamic community. Colchester's minority population continues to increase at a higher rate than the State's: 3% in 2000 Census versus 1%. This is due in part to the location of the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Center in Colchester. The majority of Colchester's adult population has at least some college education with 29% possessing a college degree. While

Colchester's population is growing at a more stable and self-sustaining rate, it is increasingly dynamic and increasingly tied to regional, state, and even nationwide trends. Trends such as more and smaller household sizes will continue to drive the increasing need for housing. An aging population will have an impact on the type of housing desired. Decreases in youth will limit available workers for employers. As Colchester grows and transforms, the composition of the community will have a significant impact on the Town's future land use and what sort of community Colchester becomes.

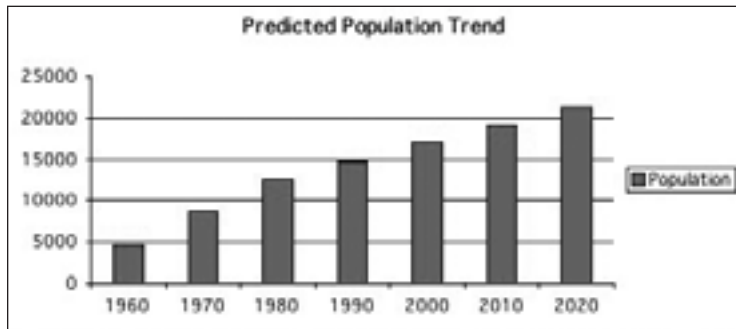
## FUTURE

There are no standard predicative population models in place for Vermont Towns. The best source of data for intercensus population estimates is provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission commissioned Economic & Policy Resources Inc. to provide a regional economic forecast in 2001 overstated the predicted population increase. The 2001 report's finding that Colchester's population would increase between 1400 and 3000 persons by 2010 is overstated especially when the U.S. Census Bureau's estimated population for 2003 was only 17,175 or 179 persons more than the 2000 Census.

If the population growth rate continues in Colchester similarly to the 1990's the population rate of growth will be 1.24% annually. This is in keeping with a basic linear projection and is in line with the Census's estimated intercensus population. A linear projection of Colchester's population results in an estimated annual increase of 220 persons a year or 2,200 a decade. Following this projection, Colchester would have a population of 19,139 in 2010 and 21,318 in 2020. It should be noted that the farther out the population is forecast, the less accuracy can be assured. Using this methodology it is tantalizing to forecast a population of approximately 30,000 in 2050 and

Burlington's population by 2100 but these numbers are a long-range forecast that should be adjusted for changes in demographic, household sizes, and economic realities.

If household size remains constant at 2.5 persons per unit, it is estimated that between 420 and 1020 new households will be created by 2010. This rate of household increase will drive the need for between 70 and 80 new housing units a year within the community. A decrease in household size will result in an increase in the number of households and create a higher need for new housing units without perhaps having a significant impact on overall population growth. Given a steady rate of growth and a constant household size, it is expected that there will be 6,890 housing units in Colchester by 2010 and 7,674 by 2020.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Census of Population & Housing, 2000 Summary File File 1 Table P1 and Colchester Department of Planning & Zoning

Colchester's population will likely follow state-wide and national demographic trends over the next twenty years. While there may be minor room for Colchester to affect its own destiny, Colchester's population will shift to an older demographic with fewer traditional households. Colchester's population will continue to be dynamic with a high percentage of non-native residents. If Colchester continues to hold its place as an employment center endowed with higher learning institutions, its population will continue to be more highly educated and more affluent than the

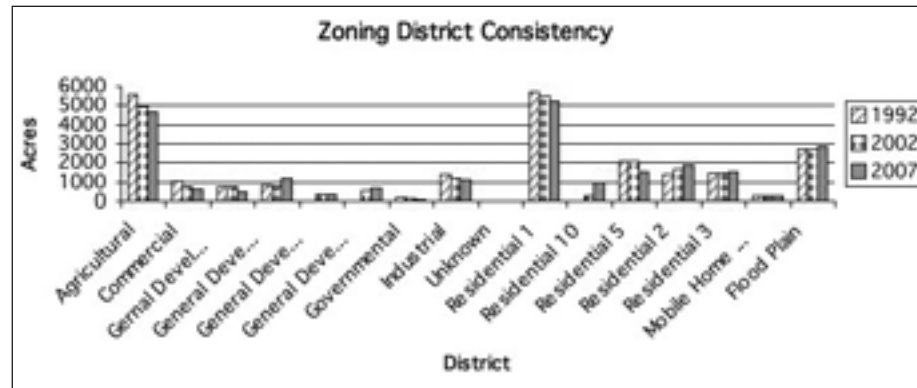
greater northwest Vermont region. As these trends will have a significant impact on the Town's land use patterns, rate of growth, and prosperity, the Town should continue to carefully monitor the community's population growth and its effects and adapt its plans accordingly.

## 2 : LAND USE

Colchester has a unique diversity of land types and uses including: seasonal residential, residential, agricultural, recreational, commercial, industrial, institutional, and natural areas. It is important to preserve this diversity to maintain and enhance the character of the Town.

### BACKGROUND

Colchester was primarily an agricultural community through the mid-1960's. Agricultural uses and lands remain an integral part of the economy and character of the community. About 20% of the land area in Colchester



Source: 2002 Colchester Town Plan & 2005 Colchester Zoning Map

is currently zoned for agricultural use. The economic viability of agricultural uses has declined regionally in recent years while demand for residential development has remained high creating substantial development pressures on the rural areas surrounding developed portions of the community. The chart above demonstrates the impact of these development pressures in Colchester over the past fifteen years.

The original zoning map for Colchester included a limited number of uses including commercial, industrial, residential, and resort. All of these land uses are still present as predominant land uses with the exception of resort. This land use classification was utilized for summer seasonal camp communities which, although somewhat scattered, exist in areas such as Sand Dunes, Colchester Point, Mills Point, Spauldings West Shore, Porters Point, Coates Island and Goodsell Point. These communities were generally constructed in the 1940's and 1950's and owned by successive generations of the same families; however, over the past decade, these seasonal summer cottages, or camps, have transitioned to year-round occupation. In 2002 the Town developed guidelines to allow for the conversion of camps to year-round structures provided infrastructure and access were sufficient to allow for the expansion of the use to ensure against environmental degradation and devaluation of surrounding properties.

While Colchester continues to transition, the land use patterns it historically developed since its inception continue to persist. The multiple village areas within the Town's boundaries served as commercial centers for various portions of the community at a time when travel was more infrequent and restricted. Suburban residential patterns have grown at the expense of rural areas and created demand for more urban amenities. The following section discusses the current land uses within the community and its planned growth as the community looks to the future.

## LAND USE CATEGORIES

The following narrative describes the general land use categories for Colchester. These land use categories set forth the anticipated future land uses for Colchester over the term of this plan and over the long-term. The Future Land Use Map illustrates the location of the general land use categories and should be looked to for guidance in determining the land use plan for a particular area. The uses indicated within these land use categories will be designated in more detail in the Zoning Code in order to reflect the policies and strategies of this plan and other bylaws.

**GROWTH CENTER:** This area calls for higher density, compact, well integrated, mixed use development and is intended to be the primary area for new development in Colchester. Some of the uses appropriate for the growth center include office, restaurant, civic facilities, residential, retail and a variety of businesses. There must be a high level of integration between the high density residential development and non-residential uses. Multi-family and high density single-family residential are strongly encouraged as permitted uses. Building heights within this area will be higher than other areas of Town providing they can be blended into the topography, are visually compatible with the area and include architectural features that mitigate the visual impacts. The growth center requires substantial infrastructure, including municipal water and sewer, and should be a priority area for allocations of municipal resources and public amenities.

**FUTURE GROWTH CENTER:** This area is a growth center designated for long-term development after the substantial build out of the growth center as designated by State Law.

**VILLAGE MIXED USE:** These are primarily existing developed areas and future development is meant to

be compatible with the existing diverse mix of uses. Additional infrastructure will generally not be required to support desired levels of growth and density. Uses appropriate for village mixed use include small office, restaurant, small retail, agriculture, and many businesses integrated into neighboring residential uses. Appropriate industrial uses should be conditioned on their ability to fit with neighboring uses. Although Planned developments (PUD, PRD), multi-family and higher residential densities are to be encouraged, lower densities such as R-1 and especially R-2 are also compatible in village mixed use areas. Building heights and sizes should be comparable to most areas of town other than growth centers. There is a desire to explore a new district that could provide for a broader range of mixed use during the term of this plan.

**RURAL:** These areas generally are distant from facilities and services and tend to be open and sparsely developed. Agricultural uses and low density residential uses are compatible land uses within these areas that often include significant natural resources, prime agricultural soil, and other characteristics that generally make these areas unsuitable for development. Some limited sivicultural activities, such as firewood operations, also occur within these areas although these activities tend to be small and informal. Extension of municipal infrastructure to these areas will be a low priority, and may not be permitted.

**SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL:** These areas are appropriate for residential development at a medium density of one to three units/acre, generally matching the existing development pattern. Limited development of neighborhood commercial services, such as professional offices or small stores may also be considered where appropriate.

**COMMERCIAL/ INDUSTRIAL:** This area is primarily within the Exit 16 core and serves as the dominant community commercial and industrial business center. This area also

exists in a more limited area directly abutting Colchester's railroad right-of-way along Route 2A. These areas support large scale commercial development and/or manufacturing and distribution uses. These areas are zoned either commercial or industrial with care being taken to, when necessary, separate these uses within the land use categories. Growth and expansion of existing businesses, especially research and high-tech uses, is encouraged within this area.

**AGRICULTURE / MIXED USE:** This area consists of the agricultural lands located along Malletts Bay Avenue and Lavigne Road, at the top of Shipman Hill. This area's unique characteristic is the farming community located within its boundaries. These farms are an important part of Colchester's economy, community character and heritage; the Town seeks to retain and support these farms. Land use planning for this area should promote the continued agricultural use of this area while respecting property owners' needs to access the equity in their land. Given the current State Primary Agricultural Soils, there are limited options as to what can be developed within this area. The Planning Commission should continue to work with property owners to develop a comprehensive land use plan that balances continued agricultural use with property owners' needs and also includes opportunities for agricultural tourism and the commercial elements that are necessitated by the changing face of agriculture. The Town should also encourage the work of land trusts within this area to provide land owners with fair compensation for their development rights.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD AREAS**

Within land use categories are individual neighborhood areas. Neighborhoods are more easily recognized by community members. Neighborhood areas sometimes overlap land use categories, however, more often serve as subsets of land use categories. When focusing on

individual neighborhood areas, care should be taken to ensure that continuity throughout the neighborhood areas and the larger community is examined particularly for natural resources and pedestrian and bicycle circulation. Neighborhood areas provide for specific implementation strategies for future land use plans and recognize the specific characteristics and qualities of an area as well as physical limitations and opportunities. The Neighborhood Area Map should be looked to for guidance on the location and boundaries of these areas.

### **SEVERANCE CORNERS GROWTH CENTER**

Severance Corners is located at an important transportation hub at the intersection of Route 7, Blakely/Severance Road, and the future Circumferential



Highway. The area is confined to properties around the intersection and future interchange and is surrounded by low and rural density zoning districts. The Town adopted general development three zoning for this area to promote a dense, mixed use village type development pattern for this area. The area is intended to contain pedestrian amenities and connectivity, community spaces and access to public transportation.

Development for this area should be balanced in terms of residential and commercial development. As the growth center develops, residential density increases may be considered especially to help the commercial uses be more viable. Density increases could be achieved through transfer of development rights. This area is entirely within an approved sewer district and is served by municipal water. This area is a high priority for infrastructure. The Town recently completed a study with the Metropolitan Planning Organization to determine the scope and location of pedestrian and bicycle facilities within the growth center. These recommendations should be implemented as the area develops and links to surrounding neighborhoods. While civic uses are permitted and encouraged in the growth center, the Town will maintain its core service area in the Town Services Neighborhood. Satellite town facilities, churches, and private schools could be developed within the growth center as it develops.

No changes to the zoning for this area are anticipated over the term of this plan as development is currently either under review or approved for three of the four main corners. The Town is currently pursuing State New Town Center designation and growth center designation for Severance Corners. One of the predominant benefits of State designation of a growth center is prime agricultural soil mitigation rights which makes it advantageous to develop within growth centers and infill development and more restrictive to build on agricultural soils outside of these areas. Under Vermont State Title 24 Section 2791, the Town may only designate one growth center for a period of twenty years. A growth center must accommodate the majority of the Town's growth over this twenty year period. In order to achieve this density, the Town may consider additional density bonuses such as transfer of development rights or expansion of the growth center to the east. Penalty ordinances such as growth caps in other areas of Town are not appropriate at this time. The Town

believes that the current growth center configuration should accommodate the majority of the Town's growth over the next twenty years especially when the current rate of growth is evaluated. It is hoped that the State will accept the current configuration of Severance Corners as a State Designated Growth Center; however, the density or scope of the growth center may need to be modified over the term of this plan to achieve State Designation.

As the growth center develops and background traffic continues to increase traffic improvements will be necessary including improvements to the Severance Corners intersection. The Town should continue to work with the State of Vermont and developers within the growth center to preserve options for this intersection and ensure that improvements occur in a manner that will continue to facilitate growth within the neighborhood.

#### **POLICIES**

1. No changes in the current zoning are anticipated over the term of this plan. Density bonuses beyond those permitted under current zoning or expansion of the growth center should only be considered if required by State Growth Center Designation requirements.
2. Development for this area should be balanced in terms of residential and commercial development.
3. This area is a high priority for infrastructure.
4. The Town should work to implement the recommendations of the bicycle and pedestrian study of this area conducted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization.
5. The Town should obtain State New Town Center designation and State Growth Center designation for Severance Corners.
6. The Town should continue to work with the State of Vermont and developers within the growth center to preserve options for this intersection and ensure that

improvements occur in a manner that will continue to facilitate growth within the neighborhood.

7. This area is designated as a growth center on the Future Land Use Map.

### **EXIT 17**

This neighborhood 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. Within this neighborhood is the Exit 17 future growth center as well as low-density residential and village mixed uses north of Route 2.

The Exit 17 future growth center is bounded on the south and east by the rural lands of the Northeast Quadrant, on the west by Niquette Bay Road to the south and the intersection of Raymond Road to the north, and on the north by Jasper Mine Road and the Milton Town Line. It is bisected by the Interstate 89 Exit 17 interchange and US Route 2: a limited access highway. Originally adopted as a growth center in 2000 (see Exit 17 Growth Center Plan),

this area is best characterized as a long-term economic future growth center to be fully utilized after the Severance Corners growth center is completed. It is largely undeveloped with some light industrial and residential uses scattered mostly within the area east of Interstate 89. Development within this area is inhibited by poor on-site soils, a lack of water and sewage infrastructure, and limited access opportunities. Until the Town can focus on improving the infrastructure available for this area it is unlikely that significant construction will occur here. The Town should work to ensure that as development continues to occur within the future growth center, it is compatible with the goals of the growth center including provisions for recreation and pedestrian/bicycle circulation. The Town should also continue to work with the State to implement traffic improvements within the area, such as those detailed in the 2006 Exit 17 Traffic Scoping Project, that preserve capacity for the future growth center and sufficiently handle background growth in traffic. A comprehensive development plan should be developed for this area for future development that takes into account all the required improvements: sewer, water, traffic, pedestrian, recreation, etc. The existing zoning should remain intact to preserve economic growth opportunities for the Town as it develops over the long-term.

The low density residential area north of Route 2 lacks sufficient potable water to sustain build-out even under current zoning. On-site soils vary widely in this area but are mostly marginal. Long-term municipal potable water should be planned for this area in part to provide adequate fire protection. Residential densities should remain as-is. The village mixed use area between Route 2 and Jasper Mine Road also suffers from the same infrastructure deficiencies and therefore should continue to be of a limited scale and primarily serve the immediate neighborhood.

## POLICIES

1. Zoning within the future growth center shall continue to be in accordance with the Exit 17 Growth Center Plan (2000). No substantial changes in zoning or density in this neighborhood should be considered within the term of this plan.
2. Plans should be developed to serve the land west of Interstate 89 with potable water.
3. The 2006 Exit 17 Traffic Scoping Project should be accommodated in development plans. To this end, the Town may request the Metropolitan Planning Organization to assist in reviewing traffic impacts of proposed developments. The Town should continue to work with the State to implement traffic improvements within the area that preserve capacity for the growth center and sufficiently handle background growth in traffic.
4. Development within the growth center should be in accordance with long-term plans for this area which include pedestrian, bicycle, infrastructure, and roadway improvements. Limited developments under current conditions should be planned to accommodate future infill. The 2003 Exit 17 Wastewater Study should be utilized in considering proposed development within this neighborhood.
5. Exit 17 is a gateway to Colchester, Franklin County, The Champlain Islands, and Milton. These communities should realize and respect the impact their communities have on this neighborhood. The Town will continue to work with these adjacent communities in planning for the future of Exit 17.
6. This area is designated as suburban residential, village mixed use, and growth center on the Future Land Use Map.

## EXIT 16

Exit 16 is a densely developed commercial and industrial area bounded on the south by the City of Winooski, on the east by the Fort Neighborhood, on the north by Severance Corners, and on the west by Interstate 89. Exit 16 of Interstate 89 and Roosevelt Highway bisect this area. It is geographically separated from Severance Corners by Sunny



Hollow: a ravine. Municipal water and municipal sewer serve the entire area. This area is the current center of business within Colchester with several hotels, a national retailer, a grocery store, heavy industrial, a quarry operation, numerous small businesses, Class A office space, and the University of Vermont's medical research facility. While a residential neighborhood, Sunderland Woods, was constructed within a high-density residential zone on the northern cusp of this neighborhood this zone is built out. No extension of this residential zone should be considered during the term of this plan, as this area should remain the center of large-scale commercial and industrial development for Colchester. Existing commercial and industrial uses are encouraged to grow and expand within this area. Current projections demonstrate that this area has the potential to accommodate many additional years

of continued commercial and industrial growth. The Exit 16 area contains the majority of commercial and industrial land within Colchester. Current projects show that Colchester has a sufficient supply of commercial and industrial lands to sustain continued growth through 2020. Areas for expansion include undeveloped sites at Water Tower Hill and the area surrounding the former Rathe landfill. Redevelopment of existing sites is also encouraged. The recent expansion of UVM's research facility and its business incubator space are promising developments for high-tech growth within the area.

Exit 16 currently lacks many of the gateway distinctions necessary for a business center that also serves as a primary entrance to the community. The Town is currently working to curb infrastructure deficiencies in the area that include a lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities as well as streetscape. These efforts will require the continued cooperation of the Metropolitan Planning Organization and the State of Vermont as many of these improvements must occur in the State's right-of-way. These improvements will be important to the area's continued growth as a commercial and industrial center. New developments and redevelopments should positively contribute to these planned infrastructure improvements. Traffic improvements that increase capacity within the area for the Town's economic growth will remain a high priority for the community. Improvements to State and Federal intersections should give equal priority to local traffic and through-traffic. A future connection to Route 15 and a full interchange at Exit 15 are also supported. Public transportation that connects this neighborhood to adjacent communities and the Severance Corners growth center should also be considered as a long-range transportation improvement for this area.

Separations of commercial uses and heavy industrial uses should remain to ensure the continued viability of both uses. An example is that heavy industry should remain physically separated from retail uses and Class A office space. Integration of mutually sustaining uses such as fitness centers and daycares within employment centers is encouraged. As this area becomes more fully built out in the long-term it may be appropriate to look to integrating mixed use as being mutually sustaining with certain commercial uses within pockets of the larger neighborhood area. Residential infill would need to have a minimum density so as not to create scattered, unorganized development and to maintain the current office park look to the area.

#### **POLICIES**

1. This area should continue to be the dominant commercial and business center for Colchester.
2. The Town should provide opportunities for high-tech and research uses within this area and continue to work with the University in accommodating its research facilities and other high-tech developments as well as complementary amenities within the community that will make Colchester competitive with other communities for these uses.
3. Infrastructure improvements necessary for pedestrian, bicycle, and traffic circulation as well as streetscape improvements is a priority to ensuring the continued economic viability of this area.
4. A future connection to Route 15 and a full interchange at Exit 15 are encouraged.
5. Residential development within the commercial and industrial areas is inappropriate during the term of this plan, however, the Planning Commission may consider residential in long-term planning in a comprehensive manner. Single-family residences should not be allowed.
6. This neighborhood is designated as commercial/ industrial on the Future Land Use Map.

## FORT ETHAN ALLEN

This neighborhood occupies the southeastern tip of Colchester bounded on the east by the Town of Essex, on the south by South Burlington, on the west by the City of Winooski and the Exit 16 neighborhood, and on the north by the Severance neighborhood. The neighborhood is only accessed from the rest of Colchester by Route 15 which requires that one cross through either Essex or Winooski to reach the Fort. The neighborhood is significantly impacted by the high volume of through-traffic on Route 15 and the presence of Exit 15 of Interstate 89 immediately to the west. The neighborhood is separated from South Burlington by the ravine of the Winooski River which is spanned by the newly constructed Lime Kiln Bridge.



The neighborhood is designated as village mixed use on the Future Land Use Map and the majority is zoned General Development Two.

Three major institutions occupy this neighborhood and have a significant impact on land use patterns within the area as well as the greater community's economy: Saint Michael's College, Fanny Allen Hospital, and Camp Johnson. The Fort Ethan Allen is the historic military

outpost of the area that has transitioned into Camp Johnson. The historic Fort is mostly in Colchester but partially in the Town of Essex. Adaptive reuse, rehabilitation, and repair of these historic National Register structures has occurred over the past thirty years that has allowed these structures to be used for multi-family housing, small businesses, and cultural organizations. A variety of communication facilities occupy the historic Fort making for a small yet intense high-tech sector within the Fort. The University of Vermont maintains its married student housing within the Fort Ethan Allen area. There are also several residential developments within the area such as Winchester Place and the State of Vermont owned mobile home park. The historic parade grounds



are now a park jointly managed by the Town of Colchester and the Town of Essex. In many ways the Fort is poised to serve as a cultural center for Colchester that could accommodate additional civic uses. While the entire Fort neighborhood is served by municipal water and sewer, a portion of the historic Fort is served by the Town of Essex while the remainder of the area is served by Colchester Fire District One that is supplied by the Champlain Water District and the South Burlington Airport Park Wastewater Facility.

Saint Michael's College is a private, Catholic, liberal arts school that confers bachelor's degrees as well as graduate degrees. The majority of its approximately 2,000 students live on campus which makes the campus a rather self-contained facility along the northern edge of Route 15. Recent expansions have moved some of the College functions east into the historic Fort Ethan Allen Area. The planned Campus Connector Road Project will assist the College in providing a safe means of connecting its functions at the historic Fort with the main campus. The College also maintains a volunteer fire and rescue squad as well as other facilities on the south side of Route 15. These emergency services are coordinated with the Town with the St. Michael's Fire Department acting as a subsidiary of the Colchester Center Volunteer Fire Company. As mentioned throughout this plan, the College significantly contributes to the community and its continued expansion and redevelopment plans should continue to be supported by the Town.

Fanny Allen Hospital has in recent years become a subsidiary of Fletcher Allen Health Care. The hospital complex now functions less like a traditional hospital and has a variety of missions including medical rehabilitation, medical office, commuter parking lot for the main Fletcher Allen Campus, and a senior day care program. The hospital continues to be religiously affiliated with a Catholic order of nuns maintaining the cemetery to the rear of the property.

Camp Johnson is a military facility currently used for training and administrative activities for the Vermont National Guard. The majority of the structures located on the base are on State-owned land while the undeveloped training areas are located on Federally-owned land. The Guard's operations have recently changed to become a light infantry unit and it is expected that training facilities will need to change accordingly. The Camp is also expanding its training capacities by stationing active duty

soldiers at the Camp and housing them within the community. The Town should be supportive of the expansion of the Camp's mission and provide all possible support to military families within the community as the Camp currently lacks many of the provisions of larger military installations. 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 should, in its long-term planning, address how this area could be transitioned to accommodate the existing institutions in the area as well as economic expansion that could link to Exit 16. Environmental concerns such as the presence of sandplains and brownfields could present difficulties in the adaptive reuse of the Camp should the military use be discontinued.

Traffic issues will continue to be a concern for this area as background traffic on Route 15 continues to increase, suffocating circulation of local traffic. The recent replacement of the Lime Kiln Bridge may increase the number of trucks traversing this area as an alternate route to the Burlington Airport. The Town should continue to work with the Metropolitan Planning Organization to mitigate the possible impacts of increased truck traffic. While a full interchange at Exit 15 would benefit the Exit 16 neighborhood, care should be taken to ensure that such an interchange would not overly increase truck traffic on Route 15 as well. This area is lacking sufficient bicycle and pedestrian facilities for safe access. The Town should continue to work with other Route 15 communities to ensure the construction of these facilities. Public transportation is limited to the Chittenden County Transportation Authority's Route 15 service and the Special Services it is required to maintain within one mile of its route. This public transportation links the Fort to adjacent communities and provides a safe means for people within the area to link to adjacent communities without exacerbating traffic on Route 15. As the Town is not

an active sponsor of the bus service it is unlikely that this service will be expanded in the near term. The Town should continue to be supportive of infrastructure improvements along Route 15 particularly multi-modal solutions such as a transportation hub.

## **POLICIES**

1. No changes in zoning are needed over the term of this plan for this area. The campus/ institutional uses and the historic character of Fort Ethan Allen should be maintained and enhanced.
2. The balance among the businesses, residences, and cultural facilities within this area should be maintained and enhanced to include community gathering places, civic facilities and other amenities that would foster the development of the neighborhood as a cultural center.
3. High-tech industry, such as the communications industry, should be encouraged at Fort Ethan Allen.
4. The Town should maintain its current cooperation and outreach with the various institutions of this neighborhood to encourage the expansion and vitality of these businesses within Colchester.
5. Improvements to Route 15 are needed to better facilitate current volumes of traffic; however, these improvements should not be done at the expense of local traffic and circulation. The Town should continue to work with Route 15 communities to complete bicycle and pedestrian facilities for safe access along the Route 15 corridor.
6. A full interchange at Exit 15 and connection road between Exit 16 and Route 15 should be pursued by the Town.
7. The Campus Connector Road should be completed within the term of this plan and incorporated into the Official Map.
8. The Town should continue to work with the Metropolitan Planning Organization to mitigate the possible

impacts of increased truck traffic on Route 15 and Lime Kiln Road.

9. Long term, the Town should address how Camp Johnson could be adapted should the current military use be abandoned. Reuse of this area should accommodate the existing institutions in the area as well as economic expansion that could link to Exit 16. Environmental concerns such as the presence of sandplains and brownfields could present difficulties in the adaptive reuse of the Camp.
10. This area has been designated as village mixed use on the Future Land Use Map.

## **COLCHESTER VILLAGE**

Colchester Village extends in a linear fashion from the Interstate to the Essex Town Line mostly along Main Street (Route 2A). It is bounded on the north by the Northeast Quadrant, on the west by the East Lakeshore Drive



Neighborhood, and on the south by the Mill Pond and Poor Farm Road Neighborhoods. It is bisected by Roosevelt Highway and is designated village mixed use on the Future Land Use Map. The area is currently characterized by a mix

of zoning ranging from industrial to high density residential. The entire area is served by municipal water and on-site septic (with the exception of Creek Farm Plaza and Brault's Mobile Home Park which have municipal sewer).

The historic core of the Village lies within the greater Village area. The core begins along Roosevelt Highway and proceeds easterly along Main Street to the vicinity of the intersection of Mill Pond Road and East Road. This area has much of the character expected of New England villages but not found elsewhere in Colchester, including old homes close to the road, small stores, churches, small businesses and public buildings all in a compact setting close in proximity to a rural area. Throughout public input sessions on this neighborhood, many of the business owners and residents of the Village expressed that they liked the current character. There is a mix of zoning within this area that has resulted in homes being zoned commercially and businesses being zoned residentially.

The greater Village area includes some commercial properties but mostly consists of residential neighborhoods. With the exception of the existing commercial /industrial properties along the railroad right-of-way, commercial growth outside the Village core should be limited. Those properties fronting along the railroad right-of-way should be maintained as commercial /industrial properties as indicated on the Future Land Use Map as these are the only properties in Colchester that have the opportunity of having a rail-siding; however, care should be taken to discourage additional truck traffic from these properties traversing the Village core. Completion of the Circumferential Highway will make this area more viable for commercial/industrial development as it will provide for a preferred truck route to the east on Route 2A.

Other existing commercial properties outside the Village

core should not increase in intensity and only rezonings that result in these properties transitioning to residential should be considered during the term of this plan. Opportunities for residential infill outside the Village core should be examined, although care must be taken to preserve connectivity of natural resources, minimize impacts to agriculture, and not to expand the Village north or south into rural areas. The natural corridors of Indian and Pond Brook should be maintained and enhanced and deer wintering yards should be kept open. The greater Village area, as well as the core area, are in need of improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities particularly between neighborhoods outlying the Village core such as Country Meadows and Creek Farm developments and the core. Pedestrian connections across Route 7 should be a priority.

Within the Village core are a variety of commercial buildings and businesses that are of a local scale that blends in with the historic fabric. While there is general satisfaction with the scale of the Village core there is concern that the current zoning does not encourage the retention of the existing scale and does little to preserve the historic aspect of the Village core that residents value. Mixed use zoning such as a general development district or a new district should be considered for the Village core that respects the historic character and encourages the continued development of small businesses, appropriate infill, and the retention of residential. To this end, design review guidelines may be needed to allow for a diverse possibility of businesses without detracting from the character of the Village. An example used at a public input meeting for the Town Plan was to permit chain restaurants that do not look like chain restaurants but that blend with the character of the existing Village. There is also a need for a recreational facility, such as a park, in this area. The area has a neighborhood school that should be connected to any planned or existing

recreational facilities and public facilities.

The entire Village area suffers from high traffic volumes on Route 2A which detract from its character and inhibit pedestrian movement. The Circumferential Highway has been partially completed and now terminates at Rte. 2A in Essex, just to the east of the Village, greatly increasing traffic volumes through the Village. The full remainder of the highway must be completed in order to alleviate the heavy traffic that includes large trucks in the Village. The gateway to the Village core is hampered by the intersection of Roosevelt Highway and Route 2A. While the State has plans to remedy this poorly designed intersection, it is unknown if this critical intersection will be fixed during the term of this plan. Improvements to this intersection, particularly pedestrian safety, should be undertaken as soon as possible.

#### **POLICIES**

1. The entire Village area would benefit from a comprehensive land use plan. The core of the Village should be treated separately from the greater Village area.
2. Opportunities for residential infill outside the Village core should be examined although care must be taken to preserve connectivity of natural resources, minimize impacts to agriculture, and not to expand the Village north or south into rural areas.
3. Improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities particularly between neighborhoods outlying the Village core such as Country Meadows and Creek Farm developments and the core are a priority.
4. Mixed use zoning such as a general development district or a new district should be considered for the Village core during the term of this plan that respects the historic character and encourages the continued development of small businesses, appropriate infill, and the retention of residential. To this end, design review guidelines may be needed to allow for a diverse possibility of businesses

without detracting from the character of the Village.

5. Recreational facilities, such as a park, are needed to serve the Village. Plans are currently underway for the purchase and development of a park during the term of this plan. These facilities should be connected with the school and other public buildings in the Village through pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities.
6. The Town should continue to promote the completion of the Circumferential Highway in order to curtail the dumping of regional truck and commuter traffic onto Main Street.
7. The Town should continue to work at the Regional and State levels to accelerate improvements made to the intersections of Roosevelt Highway and Route 2A.
8. This area is designated as village mixed use on the Future Land Use Map.

#### **WEST LAKESHORE DRIVE**

The area of Lakeshore Drive from the corner of Blakely Road to the corner of Prim Road is recognized as an important asset for the Town. With the Town beach and many boating opportunities, this is the center of recreational use on Malletts Bay, a variety of commercial and service uses. This area is designated village mixed use on the Future Land Use Map and is served by municipal water and on-site septic. The southern boundary of this neighborhood has significant natural communities.

A fixture of this area is the Hazelett Stripcasting Company, an existing industrial use. Lakeshore Drive through this area carries heavy traffic volumes in excess of 10,000 vehicles/day. This road serves local road functions as well as regional arterial highway functions as part of the Route 127 Corridor. The current configuration and condition of the road need significant improvement. Plans for improvements are detailed in the 1998 Route 127 Corridor Plan. Other possible road improvements that could alleviate traffic within this corridor include completion of

the Circumferential Highway and the Lakeshore Bypass. Of particular importance to the area is the continued expansion of pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

This area should be a focal point for tourism and recreation. Commercial uses in this area serve recreational



*Bayside Park*

activities, local residents and regional commuters. The neighborhood should be improved to better provide services and recreational access for residents and tourists. 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 the Bay. A comprehensive land use plan is needed for this area that addresses the current diversity of zoning within the neighborhood but that maintains the scale and sense of place of the area. At the time of the drafting of this plan, the Planning Commission was endeavoring to create a comprehensive land use plan for this neighborhood and recommended zoning. A comprehensive land use plan for this area should be a priority during the term of this plan.

#### **POLICIES**

1. At the time of the drafting of this plan, the Planning Commission was endeavoring to create a comprehensive land use plan for this neighborhood and recommended zoning. Consideration of the outcome of this effort should take place during the term of this plan.
2. Land use plans should take into account the viability of on-site septic as well as municipal sewer.
3. Development in this area should meet the highest possible standards to protect water quality in Malletts Bay.
4. This area is designated as village mixed use on the Future Land Use Map.

#### **TOWN SERVICES CENTER**

The area is located west of Interstate 89 along Blakely Road extending to the intersection of West Lakeshore Drive and East Lakeshore Drive. It is bounded on the north by the East Lakeshore Drive Neighborhood and on the south by the Shipman Hill Neighborhood. This neighborhood contains the majority of the Town's school facilities as well as the Town Office Building, Public Works Facility, and Rescue Building. The school facilities contain

significant recreational amenities including the primary playing fields for the high school and all of the community functions that accompany sporting events. The Town's only Post Office lies on the southern edge of this neighborhood. While the Town Office Building is located within this area, the Town currently holds its meetings in the Village Neighborhood and not within the Center.



Town Offices as of 2006

Current plans to construct a new Town Hall adjacent to the existing Town Office building over the term of this plan will include space for small meetings. The existing Town Office building will be rehabilitated into a Police Station. A number of small businesses, predominantly professional office space, line Blakely Road within this neighborhood. Surrounding neighborhoods are medium to high-density in nature. This neighborhood should continue to be the center for Town services. A variety of zoning districts can currently be found within this neighborhood. Zoning for this neighborhood should be considered during the term of this plan to ensure the potential of this area as a Town service center. Natural resources such as the sand plain at the rear of the high school property should be taken into account with possible rezonings.

This neighborhood is significantly tied to the West Lakeshore Drive neighborhood.

The Colchester Bike Path connects the recreational uses within this neighborhood to those in the West Lakeshore Drive neighborhood, especially Bayside Park. The recent Town purchase of an undeveloped lot that spans from Blakely Road to East Lakeshore Drive provides the opportunity for additional community facilities within this neighborhood that could link to the recreational uses of the West Lakeshore Drive neighborhood. Both of these areas are noted as "village mixed use" on the Future Land Use Map. For these reasons these neighborhoods may be combined for planning purposes. At a minimum, rezonings in one neighborhood must carefully weigh impacts to the other. While Severance Corners is designated as the Town's growth center, the Town Service Center is significantly removed from the growth center both in distance and by the presence of geographical and physical barriers. For these reasons, the Town Services Center should remain separate and distinct from the growth center.

## **POLICIES**

1. Most expansion of Town facilities should take place in this area if possible. The same is recommended for school facilities.
2. This is a high priority area for improvements to transportation infrastructure.
3. Land in this area may be considered for re-zoning from residential to other categories that allows for development of governmental facilities, recreation facilities and/or professional and small scale commercial uses.
4. This area is designated as village mixed use on the Future Land Use Map.

## **PRIM ROAD/WARNER'S CORNER/ HEINEBERG DRIVE**

This area includes parcels fronting on all of Prim Road and Heineberg Drive; as well as on Macrae Road and Porters Point Road in the immediate area of Warner's Corner. Warner's Corner is a gateway to the Town from the City of Burlington. It is currently developed with a high density of commercial and professional office uses around Warner's Corner surrounded by medium density residential neighborhoods. This area is designated as village mixed use on the Future Land Use Map.

Heineberg Drive and Prim Road function as regional arterial roads as part of the Route 127 Corridor however also serve local road functions. Porters Point Road functions as an arterial road. There is a lack of access management in this area with many curb cuts, open drainage, and a lack of pedestrian or bicycle facilities making this corridor heavily auto dependent. The Route 127 Corridor Plan, adopted by the Select Board after its completion in 1998, provides an action plan for road improvements that includes streetscape and pedestrian / bicycle improvements. Over the term of this plan the Town will implement some of these improvements immediately in the vicinity of

Warner's Corners and seek funding for implementation of the rest of the plan. Improving pedestrian circulation within this area and to the surrounding neighborhoods is crucial to linking these businesses to the residences they serve. Streetscape improvements are also a priority to improving this gateway to Colchester.



The majority of the properties along Prim Road are zoned for commercial and general development with a medium density residential neighborhood along the east side of Prim in the vicinity of Bean Road. While many of the commercial and general development properties along Prim Road are narrow, deep lots development potential of these properties is limited by a large Class Two wetland. Land along the eastern side of Prim Road north of Bean has topography limitations with steep ledge.

Commercial zoning is concentrated on Porters Point Road, Macrae Road, and Heineberg Drive in the vicinity of Warner's Corners. General development zoning lies beyond commercial zoning on Macrae and Heineberg Drives eventually transitioning into medium and high-density residential zoning. Development potential

throughout the corridor is limited by marginal on-site septic soils.

This is an area that would benefit from a comprehensive land use plan. Numerous spot zones create inequity among property owners and stymie redevelopment. Neighborhood scale commercial services should be encouraged in this corridor without allowing for chains and other high-turnover traffic uses that could further degrade traffic beyond current problems. A small business overlay district may be considered for portions of the neighborhood that allows for dense commercial without detriment to the surrounding residential uses. Multiple uses and mixed uses should be allowed on properties as long as they are in keeping with the intended village future land use for the area. Increased densities should take into account the lack of municipal sewer in this area. A comprehensive land use plan will be necessary for the area prior to any future infrastructure investments within the neighborhood to ensure adequate return upon these investments. This is an area that could also benefit from public transportation linking the surrounding neighborhoods to the north end of Burlington. Public transportation could help to mitigate the impact of increased densities upon the Route 127 corridor. At a minimum, during the term of this plan the Planning Commission should examine a series of steps to implement a comprehensive land use plan within this area beginning at the term of the next plan to be fully implemented over the next twenty years.

#### **POLICIES**

1. The Planning Commission should create a comprehensive land use plan for this neighborhood over the term of this plan that takes into account environmental restrictions and infrastructure.
2. Any rezonings within this neighborhood should be comprehensive.
3. Neighborhood scale commercial services should be encouraged in this corridor without allowing for high-turnover traffic uses that could further degrade traffic beyond current problems. To this end, a small business overlay district may be considered for portions of the neighborhood that allows for dense commercial without detriment to the surrounding residential uses.
4. Multiple uses and mixed uses should be allowed on properties as long as they are in keeping with the intended village mixed use future land use for the area.
5. Comprehensive land use plans should be in place prior to any infrastructure improvements.
6. It is important to recognize that the businesses within this neighborhood have the ability to serve the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Efforts should be made to sustain this neighborhood as the commercial service area for the adjacent medium and high density residential neighborhoods.
7. The Town will work with the Metropolitan Planning Organization and the State to implement the Route 127 Corridor Plan. The Warner's Corners portion of this plan should be implemented during the term of this plan.
8. New curb-cuts to Heineberg Drive and Prim Road are to be discouraged. Access management planning for this corridor should be a priority.
9. Completion of the Circumferential Highway between I-89 and the Northern Connector is important to provide an alternate east/west roadway to relieve traffic congestion on Prim Road and Heineberg Drive and improve traffic safety.
10. Public transportation that would link this neighborhood to the north end of Burlington is encouraged.
11. This area is designated as village mixed use on the Future Land Use Map.

## SHIPMAN HILL

This area consists primarily of the agricultural lands located along Malletts Bay Avenue and Lavigne Road at the top of Shipman Hill and also includes the floodplains along the bottom of the hill. This area's unique characteristic is the farming community located within its boundaries. Climate, soils, location and property ownership have made this area a center of farming operations which produce vegetables, fruits, eggs, dairy products, flowers and landscape plantings. Several of the farmers are able to capitalize on their location by running farm stand operations.



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. The Shipman Hill farms are seen by many residents as an important part of Colchester's community character. Land use planning for this neighborhood should promote the continued agricultural use of this area while respecting property owners' needs to access the equity in their land. Given the current State Primary Agricultural Soils regulations, there are limited options as to what can be developed within this area.

The conservation district should be renamed to a name that better reflects this unique area. The Planning Commission should analyze the development potential under the proposed conservation district zoning in light of the primary agricultural soils restrictions imposed by the State, possibly conducting market analyses of individual properties. While this area should be planned for comprehensively, sub areas within the neighborhood should be recognized. Should State restrictions on primary agricultural soils change substantially, the Planning Commission should examine any new opportunities that may accomplish the goal of balancing the continued agricultural use of this area while respecting property owners' needs to access the equity in their land. The Town authorized transfer of development rights as a potential approach to this issue, but it hasn't implemented due to unresolved concerns of landowners. The Town should continue to work with landowners on solutions.

The future of this neighborhood area should include opportunities for agricultural tourism and the commercial elements that are necessitated by the changing face of agriculture. The Town should also encourage the work of land trusts to provide land owners with fair compensation for their development rights. A local land bank that could purchase development rights for fair value should also be encouraged. To this end, the Town may consider establishing a local development rights bank either within the local government or associated organizations such as the Colchester Land Trust.

## POLICIES

1. During the term of this plan, the Planning Commission should develop a comprehensive land use plan for this neighborhood that promotes the continued agricultural use of this area while respecting property owners' needs to access the equity in their land.

2. The Planning Commission should analyze the development potential under the proposed conservation district zoning in light of the primary agricultural soils restrictions imposed by the State, possibly conducting market analyses of individual properties. While this area should be planned for comprehensively, sub areas within the neighborhood should be recognized.
3. The current transfer of development rights provision in the Zoning Regulations should be reevaluated as the Planning Commission continues to work with property owners on solutions for balancing continued agriculture use with the need of owners' to access the equity in their land.
4. Should State restrictions on primary agricultural soils change substantially, the Planning Commission should examine any new opportunities that may accomplish the goal of balancing the continued agricultural use of this area while respecting property owners' needs to access the equity in their land.
5. The future of this neighborhood area should include opportunities for agricultural tourism and the commercial elements that are necessitated by the changing face of agriculture.
6. The Town should encourage the work of land trusts to provide land owners with fair compensation for their development rights.
7. Rezoning of this area to a higher-intensity district that could not be developed under current State Primary Agricultural Soil restrictions should not be considered as this would unduly increase tax burdens on property owners without providing for a means of accessing the equity in their land.
8. Piecemeal rezoning of agricultural land in this area to residential use should be discouraged in order to avoid conflicts between residential and agricultural uses.
9. This area should continue to have a distinct designation as agriculture/mixed use on the Future Land Use Map during the term of this plan.

## **BEAN/MACRAE**

This neighborhood spans the area from the Winooski River north to the West Lakeshore Drive Neighborhood bounded on the west by the Prim / Heineberg / Warners Corner Neighborhood and on the east by the Shipman Hill Neighborhood. It includes the medium and low-density residential neighborhoods along Prim Road and the large floodplains to the south and east.



Drainage issues and marginal soils will require that densities within this area not be substantially increased although opportunities for infill may be feasible. The environmental constraints of the area should be taken into consideration with any proposed development. The steep and eroding banks of the Winooski River are in need of stabilization. The flood plains and the Winooski Valley Park District Macrae Meadows Park provide for continuity between the habitats of this neighborhood with the larger intervale and Malletts Bay Avenue floodplains. It should be noted that the State is in the process of finalizing right-of-way acquisition for the Circumferential Highway in this area. New development should accommodate plans for the highway. While pedestrian and bicycle connectivity is

important in this area, the majority of the area may be best served by informal trails that promote accessibility to the River.

The residential character of this neighborhood should be sustained and enhanced. Context sensitive infill development may be considered within this area as long as environmental constraints can be adequately addressed. The Circumferential Highway should be accommodated in short-term and long-term plans for this neighborhood.

### **POLICIES**

1. The character of the area should be sustained with no substantial changes to density.
2. Development should be sensitive to existing environmental issues such as drainage issues, marginal soils, unstable river banks, wildlife habitat, and floodplains.
3. This area is designated as suburban residential and rural on the Future Land Use Map.

### **PORTERS POINT**

This area includes the majority of the Bay area stretching from the Winooski River and Lake Champlain to the boundary of the Prim/ Heineberg/ Warners Corner neighborhood on the east to the Marble Island / Malletts Head neighborhood on the north. The majority of this suburban residential neighborhood is built-out containing a significant number of homes that were constructed in the mid to late twentieth century with a significant number of seasonal camps that have been converted to year-round use. Medium to high density residential zoning is typical within this neighborhood although low density residential and flood plain zoning are present in the more environmentally sensitive portions of this area. While the majority of the neighborhood has municipal water, the entire area is served by on-site septic.

The infrastructure in this area has been retrofitted to meet current needs with a variety of storm water improvements,



pedestrian, and bicycle improvements completed in recent years. Airport Park continues to be a significant community resource for this area. The significant amount of lakeshore and river frontage make the area vibrant in the summer months; however, present development difficulties as unstable banks and limited soils present environmental concerns. A variety of sensitive natural areas exist within this neighborhood including Delta Park, Rosetti Natural Area, Half Moon Cove, and sandplains. Infill development has been occurring with several properties converted from single-family to multi-family residences. This area is home to the majority of the community's affordable housing with smaller older homes that have typically served as starter homes as well as the Town's only senior apartments. While infill opportunities should be encouraged in this area, care should be taken to ensure that infill development does not severely erode the affordable housing stock in this area or adversely impact the infrastructure of the area. The character of the area should be maintained and care taken to ensure that lakeshore and

river frontage development does not detract from this character or present environmental concerns.

#### **POLICIES**

1. The residential character of the area should be maintained; however, increases in densities to promote residential infill should be considered.
2. Additional pedestrian and bicycle facilities in this area are planned to better connect the neighborhood internally and externally and should be addressed as part of any development application.
3. Public transportation opportunities within this neighborhood should be planned for in the long-term.
4. This area should be recognized as significantly contributing to the community's affordable housing stock and care taken to preserve these opportunities as the neighborhood continues to transition.
5. This area is shown as suburban residential on the Future Land Use Map.

#### **BLAKELY ROAD**

This area is clustered between the Severance Corners growth center on the east, Interstate 89 on the west, the Poor Farm neighborhood on the north, and the Exit 16



neighborhood on the south. The properties included in this area are low or medium density residential properties that front directly on Blakely Road or are located in the Edgewood neighborhood which loops off of Blakely Road. This neighborhood is mostly built-out and is constrained by traffic safety issues on Blakely Road particularly in the vicinity of Poor Farm Road, although a few infill opportunities exist. Expansion of the Severance Corners growth center into this area, even in the long-term, is therefore not reasonable. No substantial changes in character or increases to density should be considered for this area. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities should be constructed that connect the neighborhood to surrounding neighborhoods. Recreation areas are also encouraged.

#### **POLICIES**

1. The character of the area should be maintained. No increases in density should be considered within the time frame of this plan.
2. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities should be constructed within this area that connect to the neighborhoods to the east and west. Recreation areas are also encouraged.
3. This area is designated as suburban residential on the Future Land Use Map.

#### **SEVERANCE ROAD**

This neighborhood lies east of the Severance Corners growth center, south of Segment G of the Circumferential Highway, north of Camp Johnson extending to the Essex Town Line. It is bisected by Severance Road and is predominately suburban residential in character with a range of low to high density neighborhoods including a mobile home park, although pockets of agricultural use exist.

Increases in density to this area may be considered as long as they do not result in adverse impacts to the remaining agricultural uses or to the construction plans for the Circ Highway. Any consideration of density increases should



address traffic safety on Severance Road, storm water impairments to Sunderland Brook, and on-site septic capacity. This area is most logical for possible future expansion of the Severance Corners growth center in the long-term. It is therefore important to ensure that pedestrian and bicycle improvements are incorporated into current development projects that will facilitate connection to the Severance Corners growth center.

#### **POLICIES**

1. Any consideration of density increases should adequately address traffic safety on Severance Road, storm water impairments to Sunderland Brook, and on-site septic capacity. Density increases must not adversely impact existing agricultural uses or the planned Circ Highway.
2. A comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian network must be incorporated into both short-term and long-term plans for this area that will facilitate connection to the Severance Corners growth center.
3. This area is designated as suburban residential on the Future Land Use Map.

#### **EAST LAKESHORE DRIVE VICINITY**

This area includes the lands west of Interstate 89 from Malletts Creek to Blakely Road. Williams Road, portions of Bay Road, East Lakeshore Drive, and Sunset View Road are included in this area. East Lakeshore Drive, one of the longest sections of roads immediately abutting Lake Champlain, has several design deficiencies, although provides for many fine scenic vistas. High traffic counts on East Lakeshore Drive indicate that it serves as an



arterial roadway and perhaps a bypass to Route 127. The area is currently developed with a high density of camps and year-round residences. A number of physical deficiencies, including non-conforming sewage disposal systems, erosion and slumpage of steep banks, and chronic drainage problems make the narrow strip of land between East Lakeshore Drive and the shoreline less than an ideal setting for structures. The area east of East Lakeshore Drive and surrounding Williams Road functions as a suburban residential neighborhood as does much of the area along Bay Road. North of Bay Road is the seasonal campground Lone Pine that still brings in many summer residents to the community. The areas west and north of Lone Pine decrease significantly in density and become a

scattered collection of summer seasonal and year round homes affected by poor access and limited infrastructure in a low density residential zone.

The areas south of Bay Road are somewhat concentrated and function cohesively as a walkable medium density residential neighborhood area. The presence of seasonal camps along East Lakeshore Drive preserves the historic summer seasonal culture of Colchester and positively contributes to the character of the area with the majority of residences between the road and the Lake still occupied only seasonally. These area attributes should be sustained and enhanced. If the campground transitions into a more permanent use, care should be taken to tie it into the existing neighborhood to the south while limiting effects on the rural areas to the north and west. The current character of the area should be sustained and enhanced. Environmental concerns arising from the close proximity of the area to the Lake, roadway deficiencies, and rugged geography north of Bay Road limit densities in this area. While infrastructure should be improved in this area, increases to density should be discouraged. Care should be taken to increase traffic safety and limit overall traffic in the long term on East Lakeshore Drive.

#### **POLICIES**

1. Areas along the Lake should continue to be a priority for conservation particularly those areas immediately adjacent to existing Town or State owned lands.
2. Reconstruction of structures between East Lakeshore Drive and the Lake should preserve views from the road of the Lake and provide for adequate bank stabilization.
3. Water quality remains a high concern in this neighborhood. The Town should continue to encourage the upgrading of on-site septic systems within this area and educate homeowners on system maintenance. To this end, an on-site sewage disposal management program

could be developed.

4. Traffic safety is a high-priority issue within this area. Pedestrian and bicycle circulation should be encouraged and additional traffic should be discouraged. Design improvements to East Lakeshore Drive are a traffic safety priority; however, traffic reduction measures should also be considered.
5. This area is designated a combination of suburban residential and rural on the Future Land Use Map.

#### **MARBLE ISLAND/ MALLETT'S HEAD**

This is the headland extending into Malletts Bay and defining the boundary between the inner and outer bays. Malletts Head has low density, year round and seasonal residential uses as well as commercial recreational uses at the Marble Island Marina and Brown Ledge Camp. There are also significant natural areas, including three undeveloped hills which are prominent natural landscapes,



particularly 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, low-density residential zoning exists along the shoreline which should be preserved. Low-density residential uses along the shoreline assist in preserving lake views, water quality, and help to reduce the overall impact of development within this sensitive area. The Marble Island Resort has recently transitioned to a residential community and, although zoned for general development, should be constructed per the approved planned residential development.

Residential densities should be maintained within this area. 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 access. The existing marina is an important private recreational amenity; however, care should be taken to mitigate the impact of marina traffic on paddling resources. Views of the lake and from the lake should be preserved to the greatest extent possible.

#### **POLICIES**

1. Development applications, both residential and non-residential, in this area need to be carefully evaluated for compatibility with surrounding uses.
2. Continued development of recreational amenities in keeping with the character of the area, such as walking paths, should be encouraged to the greatest extent possible.
3. The right of Brown Ledge Camp to keep horses for their camp use should be in no way limited.
4. Existing residential densities and commercial / recreational uses should be retained and embellished; however, commercial uses not compatible with the character of the area should not be allowed. Rezoning of the area currently designated as GD1 may be considered in the long term to a new district in order to keep this balance.

5. The natural area, with views, at the crest of Malletts Head should be considered for acquisition by a Land Trust or the Town.
6. Public access to the Lake should be maintained in this neighborhood.
7. This neighborhood is designated as suburban residential on the Future Land Use Map.

#### **MALLETTS BAY AVENUE**

This is the area between Interstate 89 and the Flood Plain, south of Shipman Hill, along Malletts Bay Avenue extending south to Winooski. This area includes a pre-existing industrial park, a quarry, active farms and residential areas. Zoning varies accordingly from industrial to agricultural to low-density residential to high-density



residential. 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. Any future development must be sensitive to these pre-existing uses and the design

limitations of Malletts Bay Avenue which include curves that limit sight distance and a less than ideal cross section. As the majority of high-density residential zoning has been built out within this area, future development within this area is anticipated to be limited. Cluster developments that limit impacts to agricultural uses, natural resources, and industry are encouraged. Development should be compatible with the varied environmental conditions in this area and not create undue impacts to Malletts Bay Avenue or other infrastructure.

### **POLICIES**

1. No re-zonings within this area should be considered within the time frame of this plan.
2. The adjacent floodplains and wetlands are undevelopable and should continue to be excluded from density calculations for development.
3. Pedestrian amenities along Malletts Bay Avenue are needed due to high residential densities along the Winooski Town Line and increased traffic.
4. New development should be designed to be sensitive to pre-existing agricultural uses, natural resources, industry, and the design limitations of Malletts Bay Avenue.
5. This area is designated a combination of suburban residential and commercial/industrial on the Future Land Use Map.

### **CLAY POINT AREA**

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. While this area is attractive due to its natural beauty, development is inhibited by marginal soils, a lack of potable water, poor access, and deficient road infrastructure characterized by many long, narrow, dead-end private roads. This area is also removed from municipal

and emergency services. A significant portion of this neighborhood has been set aside as Niquette Bay State Park. This area is zoned for low density residential use.

This area should remain at a very low density of residential development with no up-zonings considered during the



*Northern Shoreline of Malletts Bay*

time of this plan. All proposed development must adequately address the existing road deficiencies within this area. Property owners and residents should be aware that the Town does not plan to significantly improve municipal services or road infrastructure in this area. Development should be context sensitive and not negatively impact the lakeshore.

### **POLICIES**

1. Frontage on public roads should continue to be required for any new subdivisions.
2. Development on existing lots without frontage should be allowed only by the Development Review Board if negative impacts to the character of the area can be mitigated and sufficient access can be constructed.
3. Agricultural uses should continue to be allowed and encouraged within this area.
4. No re-zonings within this area should be considered within the time frame of this plan. Allowed development densities should not be increased beyond the levels allowed at the time of adoption of this plan.
5. Although not currently a priority, long-term the Town should evaluate developing a unique zoning district for this area that recognizes the natural features of the area and develops target densities in-line with preserving these amenities.
6. This area is designated as rural on the Future Land Use Map.

### **POOR FARM ROAD**

This area surrounds the unpaved road of the same name that extends from Blakely Road to Route 7. It is bounded on the west by Interstate 89 and on the east by Roosevelt Highway. Parcels range in size from a little more than two acres to over 100 acres, with the majority of parcels being zoned agricultural. Low density residential zoning also exists in this area primarily in the immediate vicinity of Blakely Road. No increases to density north of Blakely Road should



be considered as this area includes one of the few sizable deeryards in Colchester as well as Quartzite Highlands. While this area is bisected by a sewer force main, all properties rely upon the marginal soils for on-site septic. This area is valued as an outstanding rural setting by those that own and live there. While the rural characteristic of the road should be preserved, safety concerns necessitate improvements to the intersections of Poor Farm Road with Blakely Road and Roosevelt Highway. The Poor Farm Road area should remain rural in character. The further development of agricultural operations within this area should be encouraged.

### **POLICIES**

1. This is an area that should not be rezoned within the time-frame of this plan.
2. Connections to the Poor Farm Road sewer line should continue to be prohibited by the Town.
3. The intersections of Poor Farm Road are a safety concern. Any additional development accessed off of Poor Farm Road should be evaluated for traffic impacts to these intersections. Improvement to Poor Farm Road and its intersections should be studied and considered in conjunction with any development proposals. New development should not be allowed to occur unless

plans for recommended road improvements also occur.

4. This area is designated as rural on the Future Land Use Map.

### **MILL POND**

This area encompasses the lands north of Segment G of the Circumferential Highway from the Essex Town Line to Roosevelt Highway bounded on the north by residential developments including Cannon Estates, Country Meadows and the rest of the Village Neighborhood. The area provides east-west connectivity for natural areas along



Indian Brook and is characterized by rolling terrain and marginal soils. Residences are scattered among small agricultural operations along Mill Pond Road and Roosevelt Highway: the two roads that currently traverse this neighborhood area. This area is currently zoned agricultural with some low-density residential zoning immediately along Mill Pond Road.

The current mix of agricultural and low-density residential zoning should continue to be preserved within this area. The planned Circumferential Highway should be taken into account when considering any changes to this area.

Over the longer term, ten to twenty years out, infill opportunities may be supported within the area if increased residential development can be clustered so as to maintain the rural feel of the area and provide open space conservation that recognizes the natural topography. This area may also be suitable for the development of outdoor recreational uses, such as a golf course, that are compatible with the low-density residential and agricultural uses.

### **POLICIES**

1. This is an area that should not be rezoned within the time-frame of this plan.
2. Efforts should be made to financially encourage those still farming to continue.
3. While road improvements such as the replacement of the Mill Pond Bridge are necessary, care should be taken to discourage the use of Mill Pond Road as an alternate commuter route to Roosevelt Highway.
4. This area is designated as rural on the Future Land Use Map.

### **NORTHEAST QUADRANT**

This area is the most rural area of Colchester and is characterized by small farms, large residential lots, limited soils for on-site septic systems, and difficult terrain to develop. The area is bounded on the east by the Essex and Westford Town Lines, on the north by the Milton Town Line, on the west by Interstate 89, and on the south by the Village Neighborhood. The northwestern edge of this area has naturally occurring radioactive properties within the bedrock underlying the area causing issues for potable water and radon. The area contains the only railroad line in Colchester and has three main transportation routes bisecting the area: Roosevelt Highway, East Road and Middle Road. East Road is becoming more of a commuter route to Milton. This area is home to Colchester Pond which is owned and managed by the Winooski Valley Park District .



The rural and agricultural character of this area shall be preserved. The area should continue to be zoned as agricultural or low density residential in order to limit growth. Large scale development is inappropriate in this neighborhood partially due to limited soils and transportation networks. The high level of connectivity between natural features, particularly between Colchester Pond and Essex's Indian Brook Park, which fosters wildlife habitat here should be recognized and maintained. The rise of horse farms and equestrian facilities in this area should be recognized and encouraged.

#### **POLICIES**

1. The zoning districts shall remain agricultural or very low-density residential.
2. The preservation of additional land surrounding Colchester Pond should be encouraged.
3. The Town should work to discourage the use of East Road as an alternate commuter route to Roosevelt Highway.
4. Residential construction and outdoor recreational opportunities should positively reinforce the agricultural activities in this area.
5. Property owners and residents should be made aware of

the radioactive bedrock properties and new development should not increase the degree of human exposure to these properties.

6. The rail line should be recognized as an important transportation corridor which should be maintained.
7. Railyards and rail spurs are not in keeping with the rural character of the area and should not be permitted.
8. This area is designated as rural on the Future Land Use Map.

# 3 : CULTURAL RESOURCES

**VISION:** The Town should continue to preserve and maintain its diverse cultural and historic resources while encouraging the development of new cultural amenities and traditions.

## OVERVIEW

Colchester is a diverse community rich in historic resources and a variety of cultural amenities. These amenities help to define the Town's community and create a sense of place. As Colchester continues to grow, it will be challenged with preserving and enhancing these amenities while incorporating new resources and cultures. The following is not meant to catalog Colchester historic and cultural amenities, but rather provide a context of the role these resources play in the current community and in planning for Colchester's future.

## HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY

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 Remember Baker in 1802.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Colchester was primarily 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 grist mills developed along waterways and dams were built to exploit water power. The Village of Colchester 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 turn of the twentieth century brought substantial change to Colchester with the advent of the automobile, but the Town remained relatively agrarian until the second half of the twentieth century when development pressures from neighboring urban areas spilled out onto the Colchester landscape.

## HISTORIC CULTURAL RESOURCES

The landscape of Colchester has changed significantly over the centuries. Remnants of Colchester's past have begun to disappear from the landscape. Gone are many of the prehistoric and early historic sites. Quickly vanishing from the landscape are structures and features associated with the agricultural history of the landscape. As new development takes place, Colchester's pre-

European contact sites and historic buildings and structures should be preserved. Archaeological sites offer insights into the most distant past when people did not write and also provide information about more recent people and activities that no one wrote about. As with archaeological sites, significant historic structures should be preserved, although some structures may not be worth preserving because of their condition or age (less than fifty years old). Preserving historic structures often requires repair or rehabilitation to provide continued use.

Pre-contact and historic period archaeological sites and historic buildings and structures constitute Colchester's rich and diverse heritage resources. The State of Vermont Division of Historic Preservation has published a State Register of Historic Places that lists the historic structures and properties in the Town of Colchester. The list includes 40 properties which range from large complexes such as Fanny Allen Hospital and Fort Ethan Allen, to historic houses, and even bridges. Fort Ethan Allen is the only National Register of Historic Places District in Colchester. The State also maintains a State Archaeological Inventory which lists known archaeological sites in Colchester. Several of Colchester's archaeological sites are also included on the State Register for their significance. The State has developed a predictive model for archaeological sites that can be utilized to help identify potential sites. Identification and protection of historic sites is generally required as part of the State's Act 250 permitting system.

### **HISTORIC RECORD**

Colchester benefits from a well-documented and preserved historical record. The Town is fortunate to have an active Historical Society that is a resource for researchers as well as an active steward of several of Colchester's historic buildings. The Historical Society maintains the Parsonage in the Village as a museum and meeting space and the School House at Airport Park as a seasonal interpretative museum

and information center. The Society is a steward for Colchester's history and its efforts to promote and educate local history should be supported. Burnham Library is another local resource for historical research. Several books have been written on Colchester including: "Colchester, Vermont from Ice Cap to Interstate" by Ruth Wright, "Look Around Colchester and Milton, Vermont" published by the Colchester Historical Society, "Colchester Center the Evolution of a Village" by Kenneth Degree, and "Images of America...Colchester" by Inge Schaefer. A variety of other organizations provide access to primary historical records such as letters, maps, and deeds. These include the Colchester Town Clerk's Office, the University of Vermont Special Collections, and the Vermont Historical Society.

Once historic cultural resources are gone they can never be replaced. For certain eras of history, cultural resources may be the only clues to our past. Destroying cultural resources can therefore permanently destroy opportunities to understand and interpret our history. As Colchester's history continues to develop, cultural resources that represent the community's past should be recognized and preserved even as we plan for the Town's future. The Town should encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of all historic structures in Colchester through its regulations, policies, and budget. Changes to historic structures should be sympathetic to the structure and, to the extent possible, in accordance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Development should be sensitive to Colchester's historic and archaeological sites and structures as these serve as visible reminders of the community's past. The Town should explore potential opportunities for funding preservation projects with not-for-profit organizations as well as State and Federal partners.

## CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

The community has a variety of cultural facilities and a variety of active social groups. Cultural facilities range from theaters such as St. Michael's Playhouse and Colchester High School to private camps such as Brownledge Camp, Camp Holy Cross or Camp Dudley. There are also a variety of community events such as Winter Carnival, the Fourth of July Parade and Fireworks, Green Up Day, and Town Meeting. Social groups include formal facilities such as the Colchester Senior Center or the American Legion to groups that meet in a variety of places such as the Rotary and the Lions Club. These community organizations contribute to



*Fourth of July Parade on Main Street*

the culture of Colchester as well as provide a range of recreational offerings and are further detailed in the Parks & Recreation Chapter of this plan.

## COMMUNITY LIBRARY

The Burnham Memorial Library in Colchester Village is a cultural facility that provides library services for the Town as well as study space, internet access, facilities for

meetings, educational programs, and children's activities. The Library is a department of the Town of Colchester and has professional staff as well as many volunteers and a five member, elected Board of Trustees. Its 53,000 volume collection includes books, maps, periodicals, and audio-visual materials such as audio books, music CDs, and DVD movies. The Library provides life-long learning opportunities as well as assistance with early childhood literacy.

The Library's Long-Range Plan directs the library's services and provides guidance for its growth. The Library is reshaping its services to become a clearinghouse for



*Computer Terminal at Burnham Library*

information on arts, culture, and related events in Colchester. It has developed services such as the Bookmobile to adapt its services to a broader audience. In changing its mission and services, the Burnham Library facility will also need to change and adapt. While the Library is evaluating options for renovation and expansion, its location on the Town's historic green presents opportunities as well as challenges for expansion. Care

should be taken to maintain and enhance the Village Green as the Library looks for ways to maintain and expand its services within its historic home. The Library began a pilot year-round bookmobile program in 2003 in an attempt to reach library users throughout the community. Satellite library facilities in the Town's growth centers and other villages should be explored as a way of broadening the Library's audience and providing additional space.

### **PRIVATE AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS**

A variety of private cultural centers and groups include Colchester's various religious organizations. These organizations include the Islamic Center at Fort Ethan Allen, Day Break Church, Jehovah's Witnesses Congregation, the United Church of Colchester, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Our Lady of Grace, Holy Cross Church, and Catholic Charities. The Catholic Church has been perhaps one of the most active religious organizations with several summer camps on Holy Cross Road, a senior housing project on Church Road, and several cemeteries. The Catholic Church also had a role in the establishment of Fanny Allen Hospital and Saint Michael's College. These organizations engage in community-building by providing services, events, and contributing to charitable causes. Religious organizations also preserve and sustain cultural and ethnic traditions. As Colchester continues to grow more diverse, these organizations will be important in facilitating a sense of community while supporting cultural diversity.

### **ETHNIC DIVERSITY**

In recent years, the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Center began operations at Fort Ethan Allen. While refugees are settled in a variety of communities, mostly within the greater Burlington area, Colchester is a center for services for these diverse ethnic groups. Saint Michael's College is a major supporter of the Vermont Council on World Affairs (VCWA) which provides educational programs as well as

hosts delegates from around the world. The future of Colchester is likely to be more culturally and ethnically diversified and the work of organizations such as the VCWA should be supported as providing exposure to and education on various cultures.

### **CULTURAL FACILITIES**

As the community becomes more diverse, the Town should look to preserve and expand upon its cultural facilities, including private facilities, in order to sustain and enhance the community's quality of life. Summer camps for children, like the Town's seasonal cottages, contribute to the Town's tourism economy and the community's sense of place as a lakeside community. The Fort area continues to evolve as a cultural center for the Town with the Elley-Long Music Center serving as the home for the Vermont Youth Symphony Orchestra and St. Michael's College looking to attract similar organizations to under-utilized properties at the Fort. Private development of cultural facilities, including religious facilities, should continue to be encouraged. Cultural facilities should continue to be integrated into the existing fabric of the community as well as incorporated in multi-use areas. As the Town looks to fulfill the need for a community center and other facilities, it should also evaluate the potential to incorporate cultural facilities such as satellite library facilities or a community theater.

### **CULTURAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION**

Colchester's historic and cultural properties are opportunities for economic development through expanded tourism and adaptive reuse of historic buildings. Historic buildings serve as attractions and destination places as they create a unique sense of place. To the extent possible, State and Federal Programs such as the Certified Local Government Program should be tapped to assist in developing local tourism and reuse

projects. A recent example of adaptive reuse is the Log School House now located at Airport Park serving as a seasonal interpretive museum and informational center. Efforts to encourage the adaptive reuse of historic properties should be continued. The current zoning for the Fort Ethan Allen area provides several exemptions for the renovation, reuse, and rehabilitation of historic properties in exchange for preserving the historic fabric of the property. A similar zoning may be looked to for Colchester Village to incentivize the reuse of historic buildings. These historic resources help to define the landscape of Colchester and should continue to be utilized in defining the community's future.



*Fort Ethan Allen Officer's Row*

## **POLICIES**

1. Predictive modeling of archaeological sites should be explored by the Town as a tool to locate potentially important sites and assist developers in recognizing archaeological resources before final plans are

developed and thereby reducing project costs. To the extent possible, the Town should encourage important archaeological sites be avoided and thereby preserved for future generations.

2. The State Register and National Register listings for the town should be used to assess the significance of historic buildings and structures. These listings should be maintained and updated by the Town to provide accurate documentation of the Town's historic resources.
3. Colchester's historic and cultural properties are opportunities for economic development through expanded tourism and adaptive reuse of historic buildings. The Town should encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of all historic structures in Colchester through its regulations, policies, and budget. Changes to historic structures should be sympathetic to the structure and, to the extent possible, in accordance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
4. The Town should explore participating in the Certified Local Government program and other State or Federal historic preservation programs.
5. Community organizations, such as the Historical Society, that serve as stewards of the Town's history and its historical and cultural resources are important community assets and should be sustained.
6. The Burnham Library should continue to provide life-long learning opportunities and assistance with early childhood literacy as it expands upon its mission to become a clearinghouse for information on arts, culture, and related events in Colchester.
7. Care should be taken to maintain and enhance the Village Green as an important amenity and public gathering place.
8. Satellite library facilities in the Town's growth centers and other villages should be explored as a way of broadening the Library's audience and providing additional space.

9. Private development of cultural facilities, including religious facilities, should continue to be encouraged. As Colchester continues to grow more diverse, religious organizations will continue to be important in facilitating a sense of community while supporting cultural diversity.
10. As the community becomes more diverse, the Town should look to preserve and expand upon its cultural facilities, including private facilities, in order to sustain and enhance the community's quality of life. Cultural facilities should continue to be integrated into the existing fabric of the community as well as incorporated in multi-use areas.
11. The work of organizations such as the VCWA should be supported as providing exposure to and education on various cultures.

# 4 : NATURAL RESOURCES

**VISION:** The Town of Colchester should continue to conserve and protect its natural resources for their intrinsic value as well as for their importance to quality of life within the community.

## OVERVIEW

From the shores of Malletts Bay and Lake Champlain to the adjacent wetlands, fertile uplands, and dry sandplains, Colchester has an abundance and diversity of natural resources rarely found within the borders of a single town. The total land area of the Town is 24,000 acres. Approximately 12% of these lands are owned by local, state, or federal government or by other public or not-for-profit entities. In addition to these lands, another 20% of Town land is characterized as floodplain, wetland, significant habitat site or other natural area. As a result of public ownership and these natural features, one third of total town acreage is "Open Space". Colchester also contains 2,662 acres of water resources just within Malletts Bay. These varied resources provide an attractive and healthy place to live and work, however, these resources can be challenging to manage and integrate into land use planning.

The following will focus on several aspects of the Town's natural resources including Open Space. While natural resources is a very broad subject that can often include discussion of parks, working lands and multi-use path corridors, these subjects are covered within the Parks and Recreation Chapter, the Agricultural section of the Land Use Chapter and the Transportation Chapter respectively. It should also be recognized that Open Space often means different things to different people. For the purposes of

this chapter, the Open Space discussion will focus on those areas that contain important natural features and those areas that enhance a natural feature or enhance access and enjoyment of a natural feature. It should be noted that within the Neighborhoods Chapter additional information may be found on specific areas of Town.

**LAKE CHAMPLAIN** - Colchester's single greatest asset is Lake Champlain. The Town has twenty-seven miles of shoreline which influences our economy, land use patterns, and everyday life in the community.

Outstanding views can be enjoyed, both from the shoreline and from the water. Views of Colchester from the Lake generally belie the developed nature of the Town. Structures that are well screened and meet the substantial setbacks from the shoreline required by current regulations minimize intrusion into these views. It is important for the town to continue to encourage new development as well as re-development that is sensitive to the Lake views.

Water quality in Malletts Bay is a community-wide concern. Increasing pollution from storm water runoff, septic contamination, invasive species, blue-green algae and acid rain are some of the variety of water quality inhibitors that plague the greater Lake. The inner bay continues to be plagued by sporadic outbreaks of high bacterial counts that close beaches to swimmers. Heavy metals have been detected in the sediments off Porters Point. The problem is of unknown origin and extent. Recent outbreaks of blue-green algae have occurred in a variety of locations. While the Lake provides for a diversity of wildlife species, pollution such as blue-green algae threatens the habitat of these animals. Exotic species such as Eurasian milfoil, Zebra

Mussels, and Alewife fish have entered the Lake and are spread by unwitting boaters and fishermen. Due to the high volume of boat traffic in Colchester, exotic species will continue to be a threat to the natural state of the Bay.



*Malletts Bay Aerial*

In 2003 the Town of Colchester developed a Strategic Water Quality Plan for the Town. This Plan comprehensively evaluates all of the water quality influences, history, and current conditions and provides recommended courses of action for the Town. The Town is currently working on securing assistance from the Environmental Protection Agency to perform several of the next steps recommended within this plan that include resource mapping, storm water studies, and evaluation of on-site septic system management. The 2001 microbial source tracking investigation the Town conducted in cooperation with the University of New Hampshire could be furthered by these next steps conclusively determining the source of E. coli pollution in the Bay through the use of DNA ribotyping. As the Town works toward a larger implementation of water quality recommendations, it will continue its current efforts to perform summer water quality testing. Several

recent changes in regulations should also serve to provide greater water quality protections. The Shoreland Overlay District section of the Zoning Regulations encourages preserving natural vegetation around the Lake and limits disturbance within 100 feet of the mean water mark (elevation 95.5') which provides opportunities for preserving natural habitat, views, and filtering runoff. The Colchester Code of Ordinances Chapter Eighteen also regulates storm water runoff and erosion control more directly.

The Town of Colchester continues to recognize that an important component of maintaining Malletts Bay as a community asset is maintaining its water quality, however, the Lake is an international asset that requires the efforts of many others to preserve. To this end, the Town will continue to work with various other organizations and governments to find long-term cost effective solutions to water quality issues.

**WINOOSKI AND LAMOILLE RIVERS** - Colchester's southern border consists of about 9 miles of frontage on the Winooski River between the Lime Kiln Gorge and Delta Park. The river corridor in Colchester upstream of the City of Winooski is undeveloped and a spectacular gorge and a hydro-electric dam exist between the Lime Kiln Bridge and I-89. Between the City of Winooski and River Road, the river bank consists of uninhabited flood plains. Between River Road and the confluence, there is a high, steep, eroding bank, with some structures close to the edge.

The lower Winooski River is currently assessed as not fully fishable or swimmable under the criteria of the Clean Water Act. The lower Lamoille is rated as fully fishable and swimmable. Given the drainage basin characteristics it is not likely that significant contamination enters either the Winooski or Lamoille River from Colchester. The State of



*Bicycle Bridge at mouth of Winooski River*

Vermont is currently assembling a Winooski River Basin plan that will evaluate the full ninety miles of river in order to identify and prioritize state and local water quality issues and implement on-the-ground watershed protection and restoration projects. The Town should utilize this opportunity to work with its other neighbors in the basin to improve water quality.

Colchester has three miles of frontage on the Lamoille River. The shoreline of the river is forested, inaccessible and sustains productive wildlife habitat. A Lamoille River Basin Plan is currently in development for the 84 miles of river. The Lamoille River Watershed Council has been formed to assist this process, similar to that of the Winooski River basin. While the quality of the Lamoille River is generally in better shape than that of the Winooski River, the Town should also participate in this larger planning process as a way of improving water quality at the mouth of this river in Colchester.

Both the Lamoille and Winooski Rivers are protected by the Shoreland Overlay District in the Zoning Regulations. In addition, the majority of parcels along the rivers are restricted by the Zoning Regulations' top of bank setback requirement. Many properties along the Winooski River were developed prior to these regulations though and are threatened by bank slumping and erosion. New development and redevelopment of these properties should stabilize the bank and meet current setbacks in order to limit threats to water quality as well as threats to public infrastructure and public welfare.

**COLCHESTER POND** - Colchester Pond is located in the far Northeast corner of Town and is one mile long and a quarter mile wide. The Pond is within the Shoreland Overlay District that prohibits most development and clearing within 100 feet of the mean water mark. The Pond results from impounded drainage. Most of the shoreline of



*Colchester Pond*

the pond is undeveloped woodland and pasture. The Pond is hydrologically isolated, has good water quality and no known exotic species. Colchester Pond and most of the surrounding land is owned by the Winooski Valley Park District. The State of Vermont has recognized Colchester Pond as an exceptional water resource and has excluded motor-boats.

**FLOODPLAINS** - Twelve percent of the land area in Colchester has been identified as wetlands or floodplains. The majority of the floodplain area in Colchester lies along Lake Champlain and the Winooski and Lamoille Rivers. The fertile floodplain of the Winooski River, often referred to as the Intervale, is involved in active agricultural production and contains a substantial portion of the Town's working lands. The 100 year flood elevation of Lake Champlain (Zone A), as determined by the Federal Flood Insurance Program is at 102 feet above sea level and is depicted on the FIRM maps. Minimum federal standards prohibit any construction within the designated "floodway" and require any development within the 100 year floodplain (Zone A) to be built on sufficient fill to avoid being subject to flood hazard. Development within the Flood Zone is now prohibited but significant development predated the regulations and there are more than 100 structures located in the flood hazard zone. In 1993 and 1994 Lake Champlain approached the 102 ft. level and many structures in the flood hazard area were damaged. In areas exposed to wave action even structures above the 102 ft. level were damaged. Inundated sewage disposal systems caused water pollution and public infrastructure was damaged. Colchester should maintain its current Flood Plain Zoning District standards prohibiting any new floodplain construction to protect the public good. In addition, the Town should maintain its cooperation with Federal Agencies in reviewing floodplain projects.

**WETLANDS** - There are extensive areas of wetlands in Colchester. Wetlands enhance water quality, are important wildlife habitats, attenuate flooding and are recreational resources. About 93% of Colchester's wetlands are functionally significant (Class 2) according to the State Wetland Rules. Class 2 wetlands are identified on National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps. These mapped wetlands, and any additional wetlands that are found to directly connect to NWI wetlands, are subject to both State and Federal regulations. Federal definitions of wetlands have expanded since the NWI maps were prepared. Additional "wet meadows" and other lands are also now considered wetlands (Class 3) under the federal definition, however remain unmapped. Several of the Natural Areas within Colchester contain significant wetland areas such as Half Moon Cove. Colchester requires a fifty-foot buffer from the edge of Class Two wetlands in keeping with State requirements through its Water Protection Overlay District. The Town maintains communications with the State and Federal permitting agencies to provide consistency in regulating these areas to the greatest extent practicable.

**WATERCOURSES** – Watercourses consist of named and unnamed streams, brook, tributaries, and drainage ways. The majority of watercourses have been mapped using remote sensing technology, however, these resources are undergoing constant changes that can alter the course of mapped resources. Mapped resources also do not accurately depict intermittent drainage ways and streams. Colchester has implemented within the Water Protection Overlay District streambank buffers that require an 85-foot setback from the centerline of watercourses. These buffers have been created with the intention of providing protection for the natural areas along the Town's surface waters and to provide improved protection for water quality and the provision of open space areas and wildlife habitat. While the buffers prohibit most disturbances within the setback, there are exemptions for pre-existing

residences which allow encroachment. Whenever feasible, encroachment should be minimized. While the buffering has worked well and should be maintained, it is likely the more restrictive State requirements will result in the Town eliminating these exemptions in the short term. The State of Vermont also regulates most aspects of watercourses.

**SIGNIFICANT HABITAT SITES** - Significant habitat sites are considered to be rare or irreplaceable natural or fragile areas or wildlife or endangered species habitat. These habitat sites are regulated by the State and Federal Governments and can carry the consequences of criminal prosecution for alteration or demolition.

**DEERYARDS** – The locations and boundaries of deeryards was determined using color infrared aerial photos by the State. Like watercourses, deeryards are dynamic and prone to change location as well as size. Deeryards are critical winter habitat for deer and other wildlife. While protection is provided to deeryards under State Act 250 permitting it generally must be found to be “necessary” habitat or habitat of high quality and not widespread for its location. There are no regulations regarding deer or other wildlife habitat. While several adjacent communities have studied wildlife corridors, experts remain mixed on how to best conserve wildlife habitat. Given the significant natural areas within the community that are publicly owned, privately protected, and permanently restricted such as floodplains, the Town should consider how to provide connectivity between these resources that might foster wildlife habitat. As described in the Parks and Recreation Chapter, wildlife habitat conservation is an important resource in Colchester that is vital to preserving passive recreation and hunting opportunities.

**ENDANGERED SPECIES SITES** - The Nongame and Natural Heritage Program (NNHP) of the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife has identified a number of sites containing

one or more rare, threatened, or endangered species or one or more significant natural communities within Colchester. The size of these sites varies and State mapping is intentionally not exact to hide the location of these sites. Since all potential areas have not been inventoried, additional sites may exist. In 2005-2006 the State adopted new rules that make the alteration or destruction of these sites criminally prosecutable. It is therefore recommended that all potential development projects seek determinations from the State as part of the development design process. Many of Colchester’s natural areas contain these endangered sites limiting recreational development opportunities. In addition, many biological natural areas such as Sand Plains contain endangered species sites.

**BIOLOGICAL NATURAL AREAS** - In 1991, the Vermont Nongame and Natural Heritage Program (NNHP) prepared a report entitled “Biological Natural Areas of Chittenden County”. Approximately 30 sites were identified in Colchester and included several sandplains, vernal woodland pools, peat bogs and other ecologically significant natural communities. The approximate dimensions of all of these areas were mapped. One additional site was identified and mapped in a 1994 sandplains report. Simultaneous to the NNHP’s effort, the Agency of Natural Resources inventoried natural areas throughout Chittenden County in 1991. Many of these areas overlap with those identified by the NNHP. Colchester, with 29 sites with statewide significance, was noted for supporting “one of the greatest biotic diversities of any town in Vermont.” Some are now under protection to a greater or lesser degree; others, some of which include irreplaceable habitat, are under direct threat of development and need protection. Both the NNHP and ANR sites areas overlap with the endangered species sites.

An important subset of the Biological Natural Areas and ANR’s Natural Areas is sand plain habitat. Colchester is the only area in Vermont with extensive areas of sandy well-

drained soils. The Pine/Oak/Heath plant community that inhabits these sandplains is largely unique to Colchester. Sandplains are characterized by flat, well-drained soil (making it desirable for development) that is acidic and nutrient-poor. They have an open canopy more characteristic of woodlands than forest. Pitch pine, white pine, black oak, red oak, and heath shrubs predominate.



Colchester's sandplains are home to 27 rare plants, including 6 grasses, 4 sedges, 13 herbs, 3 shrubs, 1 tree and 2 rare animals. Less than five percent of the original sandplain habitat exists.

Opinions differ on the minimum size of land necessary to sustain the community, ranging from a low of 25-40 acres to a high of 2000 acres. It is generally believed that with proper management, communities as small as 50 acres could preserve a large majority of the natural community's members. No sandplain communities larger than 250 acres exist in Colchester. Public and private development occurring either prior to or after the 1991 report has significantly reduced the natural portion of some mapped areas. Diminished sites include the Old Colchester Airport

(fringes of sandplain at the edge of town ballfields), Porters Point Road Sandplain (Crossfield subdivision) and the Holy Cross Church Woodland (elderly housing complex).

Because the lowest estimate of minimum size needed is 25-40 acres, the Vermont Natural Heritage program considers the following sites to be "Rare and Irreplaceable Nature Areas":

- Camp Johnson (250 acres): no legal protection; MOU governs current management
- Colchester High School Vicinity (164 acres):
- Sunderland Brook (92 acres): 25 acres protected to mitigate impact of Circ Highway
- Holy Cross Vicinity (45 acres): no protection currently in place

Other smaller parcels containing sandplains (acreage as of 1997):

- Smith Hollow Vicinity (26 acres)
- Bayside (20 acres)
- Sunny Hollow (15 acres)
- Winooski Bluff (8 acres)
- Little Gap Woods (10 acres)
- Twin Bridges (5 acres)
- Macrae Road (5 acres)

Though the largest remaining local habitat at Camp Johnson has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) covering ecological management, none of these sandplains have permanent legal protection. Since sandplains are unique to Colchester, there are many challenges in how to manage these areas. Sandplains exist on public as well as private property and can restrict the potential use of these areas. The Town will continue to work with State agencies to determine suitable alternatives for these areas.

## **OPEN SPACE PROTECTION METHODS**

A variety of techniques are appropriate for the protection of open space resources including education, regulation and public policy. One of the most important open space protection techniques is simply a general public awareness of natural resources. Colchester's natural resources serve a variety of purposes from enjoyment of open space to animal habitat to storm water filtration. Colchester's many natural areas under public or not-for-profit ownership often include a variety of educational signage and interpretative materials. Efforts to sustain and enhance on-site interpretive resources and awareness of these resources should be supported by the Town. Another educational tool is Geographic Information Systems (GIS). GIS is a software tool that can depict the location of natural resources on the land in relation to landmarks, roads, property lines, and geographic features allowing users to easily visualize the scope of the resource. The Town of Colchester maintains a GIS system in ArcGIS that is used in-house by staff in reviewing projects and long-term planning, however, efforts are



underway to expand this system for public use. These efforts should be sustained and enhanced to better delineate and define geographic data as well as involve the public in management and stewardship of natural resources. Wildlife habitat mapping is a data set that is currently deficient in Colchester and deserving of development.

## **REGULATING OPEN SPACE**

Federal, State, and Local Regulations also provide for open space preservation techniques. Local Regulations most often guide new development, resource protection, and sustainable land use patterns and therefore can have significant impacts on open space preservation. Local Regulations impacting open space range from the broader goals for Planning Areas in the Town Plan to the specific Zoning District requirements of the Zoning Regulations.

## **ZONING & OPEN SPACE**

The minimum requirement of 25 acres per dwelling unit in the Agricultural District is in keeping with the Rural Planning Areas' goal to be open, sparsely developed and low-density. This District, due to its high minimum lot size requirement, is very effective at conserving open space and overall rural character. It is also important to take natural resource limitations into consideration with zoning as an area zoned for high density but containing significant natural resources such as wetlands or rare and endangered species may not permit the area to be developed in keeping with the high density expectations. Similarly, natural resources should be taken into consideration when designing infrastructure such as sewers as natural resources can change anticipated designs and expected densities. Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) are a type of development allowed under the Zoning Regulations that allows for clustering of development and dimensional waivers. PUDs are effective at fitting development in areas that have limitations due to natural resources and are an effective open space conservation tool. PUDs often result

in the creation of open space lots or recreational amenities that are privately held by an association in perpetuity. As development occurs on smaller and smaller lots, thought should be given to the minimum lot size requirements for PUDs. The PUD regulations should also be reviewed from time to time to ensure that the goals of these regulations to enable and encourage flexibility of design and development of land is being maintained. Large tracts of undeveloped land that are being considered for development should be encouraged to comprehensively plan for the entire parcel and connectivity to adjacent parcels and natural areas. Well-thought-out conservation plans are encouraged and piece-meal developments of large tracts of land are discouraged. To this end, it may be advantageous for applicants to utilize the PUD regulations to subdivide large tracts of land.

### **OPEN SPACE & TOWN POLICY**

Public policy may include a variety of funding and other decisions. Public policy includes sustaining current efforts of cooperation among Town Boards and Departments to conserve open space. Support should be provided to re-activating the Colchester Land Trust to assist the Town in open space conservation efforts and to work with these Boards and Departments to achieve Town open space goals. This category also includes developing and sustaining management plans for the Town's various natural areas, parks, conserved land, and public parcels that include significant natural resources. The Town also encourages the development of management plans for privately held lands that contain significant natural resources as well as privately conserved land such as PUD open space lots. The Winooski Valley Park District has recently undertaken several wildlife surveys of its lands that will contribute to the stewardship of its natural areas.

### **OPEN SPACE TAXATION**

State and local tax policy also affects private ownership and protection of open lands. An often criticized State law is that all property must be taxed at "fair-market" value. This results in land being taxed based upon development value rather than the current use value as working land or other open space. The necessitated development of property as a result of skyrocketing taxes is not a desirable outcome. While the Town could put into practice a localized current use program that reduces taxes for properties committed to a multi-year stewardship program, this would not substantially reduce taxes for property owners as the majority of tax burden is the State property tax. While the State has current-use programs available for properties that are currently worked, a more comprehensive restructuring of State tax laws is perhaps needed.

### **FUNDING OPEN SPACE**

Most often local public policy is set by funding priorities. Public funding can be used to acquire land outright, acquire the development rights of a parcel of land, or to purchase easements. In the purchase of development rights, a landowner retains the right to work the land but loses all rights to develop the land. In the purchase of easements, these easements are usually used for trails or for view protection along scenic corridors. Public funds are limited though and prioritization must be given to the use of funds as well as given to which properties are acquired. Often the Town is offered undevelopable lands that do not contain significant natural resources or recreation potential and that will become a liability to the Town in terms of cost of ownership and maintenance. Preference for acquisition should be given to those projects where money can be leveraged or stretched to accomplish several goals such as the purchase of easements or development rights in conjunction with other not-for-profit entities. The Town should develop a policy of prioritization for land acquisition and study preferred financing options. Local funds, derived

primarily from the tax dollar, are limited, however could be supplemented through fees, partner organizations with outside funds, and State and Federal funding sources.

## COLCHESTER'S OPEN SPACE PLAN

The 2000 Colchester Open Space Plan identified parcels that are considered to be high-priority parcels for conservation based upon their importance as natural areas and their risk of significant alteration. The 2000 Open Space Plan should be referenced for specific parcels and conservation techniques. Below is a listing of the areas mentioned in the 2000 Open Space Plan that are identified as having a high priority for further identification of natural resources, public funding for conservation, creation of tax policy that encourages retention of open space, conservation of specific areas through the PUD development review process, and / or development of appropriate maintenance plans for the areas:

- Camp Holy Cross Vicinity
- Sunny Hollow Area
- Smith Hollow Area
- Camp Johnson Vicinity
- The undeveloped lands to the north and east of Segment I of the Circumferential Highway Right-of-Way including those undeveloped lands in the Shipman Hill vicinity along Malletts Bay Avenue.

The following areas that have been identified by the Town as sites of natural resource significance that, should development be proposed within these areas, care should be taken to conserve these features and mitigate any long term adverse impacts to these resources:

- Cave Island contained within parcel: 57-012002
- Cave West of Indian Brook contained within parcel: 08-014003
- Clay Point Road Caves contained within parcels: 16-057000 and 16-042000
- Colchester Bog contained within parcels: 33-056002,

33-058002, 34-100002, 34-101002, 44-004072, 43-034002, 43-026002, 44-045012, 44-007022, 44-007002, 43-009002, 31-007062, and 30-002002

- Colchester Point Rush meadow contained within parcel: 29-002002
- Colchester Pond Ridge contained within parcels: 12-036000, 12-030000, 15-001000, 12-035000, and 15-011000
- Colchester Sea Caves contained within parcels: 14-007020 and 14-007010
- Devil's Den Caves contained within parcels: 08-014003 and 08-014013
- Malletts Head contained within parcel: 56-004002
- Malletts Bay North Shore Headlands – From Niquette Bay State Park westwardly along the shoreline terminating on parcel 77-020000
- Malletts Creek Marsh – Munson Flat contained within parcels: 11-016020, 11-020000, 11-017010, 11-025000, 14-020000, 14-022000, 11-004003, and 14-026020
- Marble Island contained within parcel: 57-013002
- Parrot Jasper Mine contained within parcel: 13-003000
- Walnut Ledge Cave contained within parcels: 16-028000 and 16-032010
- Pine Island Flood Plain contained within parcels: 06-013002, 02-026052, and 02-006002

## POLICIES

1. The Town should continue to encourage new development as well as re-development that is sensitive to the Lake views.
2. The Town will continue to work with other organizations and governments to find long-term cost effective solutions to water quality issues.
3. The Town should work with its neighbors within the Winooski River Basin to improve water quality per the Basin Plan under development by the State.

4. The Town should also participate in this Lamoille River Basin planning process.
5. New development and redevelopment of properties along the Winooski and Lamoille Rivers should stabilize the banks and meet current setbacks in order to limit threats to water quality as well as threats to public infrastructure and public welfare.
6. Colchester should maintain its current Flood Plain Zoning District standards prohibiting any new floodplain construction to protect the public good.
7. The Town should maintain its cooperation with Federal Agencies in reviewing floodplain projects.
8. The Town should continue to maintain communications with the State and Federal permitting agencies to provide consistency in regulating wetlands to the greatest extent practicable.
9. Colchester should maintain its Water Protection Overlay District and adapt these regulations as needed to comply with all applicable State requirements.
10. The Town should evaluate connectivity between significant natural resources that would foster wildlife habitat.
11. The Town will continue to work with State agencies to determine suitable alternatives for Sandplain areas.
12. Efforts to sustain and enhance on-site interpretive resources and awareness of Open Space resources should be supported by the Town.
13. The Town of Colchester should continue to maintain and enhance its GIS system in part to better delineate and define geographic data as well as involve the public in management and stewardship of natural resources.
14. Wildlife habitat mapping should be enhanced.
15. As development occurs on smaller and smaller lots, PUD minimum lot size and other requirements should be reviewed to ensure continued compliance with the intent of these regulations.
16. Large tracts of undeveloped land should be comprehensively planned for connectivity to adjacent parcels and natural areas. Well-thought-out conservation plans are encouraged and piece-meal developments of large tracts of land are discouraged.
17. The Colchester Land Trust should assist the Town in open space conservation efforts and to work with these Boards and Departments to achieve Town open space goals.
18. Management plans should be developed or sustained for the Town's various natural areas, parks, conserved land, and public parcels that include significant natural resources.
19. The Town encourages the development of management plans for privately held lands that contain significant natural resources as well as privately conserved land such as PUD open space lots.
20. The Town should develop a policy of prioritization for land acquisition and study preferred financing options.
21. The 2000 Open Space Plan should be referenced for specific, high-priority parcels for conservation and recommended conservation techniques.
22. Care should be taken to conserve important features and mitigate any long term adverse impacts of development to natural resource areas of significance listed within this Chapter.

# 5 : PARKS & RECREATION

**VISION:** The Town of Colchester should continue to develop, encourage, and maintain its diverse offerings of recreational, cultural, and wellness opportunities for the community. The Town will continue to serve as a regional recreational center and care should be taken to foster secondary benefits, such as tourism, while, when necessary, mitigating adverse impacts of overuse.

## OVERVIEW

Colchester's various natural resources and open spaces provide for a variety of recreational opportunities. Many of Colchester's parks incorporate important natural features and serve as open spaces for public enjoyment. These recreational opportunities factor significantly into the quality of life of many Colchester residents. There are several entities that provide structured recreation opportunities in Colchester with the Colchester Parks and Recreation Department being first and foremost. Other organizations such as private health clubs, the International Sailing School, and various marinas provide specialized recreational opportunities. There are, however, many recreational opportunities in Colchester that do not require participation in a club or program. These opportunities include various water sports, hunting, fishing, hiking, snowmobiling, and bicycling.

## COLCHESTER PARKS AND RECREATION

The Colchester Parks and Recreation Department provides programs in sports, fitness, arts and crafts, wellness, educational and cultural activities, and many other recreational activities for community members. These programs are designed for a range of people from youth to the elderly and include active involvement programs such as youth day camps to more passive programming

such as horticultural skill workshops. In addition to year-round programming, the department plans and organizes various events including Winter Carnival, the Fourth of July Parade, and the Colchester Triathlon, with assistance from volunteer committees. The Department also provides oversight of all Town recreational facilities, staffs the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board that helps to provide policy and planning guidance, and runs the Colchester After School Program.



*Sailing on Lake Champlain*

## MANAGING TOWN FACILITIES

Management and maintenance of the Town's recreational facilities and natural areas often falls to this Department. While the Town has, in the past, accepted ownership or responsibility for small neighborhood parks such as private parks and mini-parks, these parks and small open spaces are generally best owned and maintained by the homeowners associations they serve. To maintain the Town's current parks and natural areas, the Department often works with various State entities, not-for-profits, and private organizations to develop, manage, and maintain the Town's parks and natural areas. Each park or natural area has had some form of management plan created,

however, all of these areas would benefit from comprehensive management plans. The Recreation Department maintains a Capital Budget and Parks Plan to purchase and furnish new parks as well as to maintain the current park system. It should be noted that the Parks Plan is contingent upon voter approval every five years.

## **PARK TYPES**

The Town would greatly benefit from the establishment of guidelines for park and natural area acquisition. Parks and natural areas are acquired by the Town through Town initiatives, donation by not-for-profits, and through the development review process. The Town should develop a prioritized list of where these resources should be acquired. The following is a general list of types and sizes of parks and in what circumstances they are recommended.

- 1. PRIVATE PARK:** Generally contained within a development and maintained by a homeowners' association for members of the association. These parks generally contain recreational amenities such as tot lots, basketball courts, swimming pools, etc.
- 2. MINI-PARK:** Ranging from 2500 square feet to one acre in size these parks are generally used for passive recreation and include greens, flag lots, and dog parks.
- 3. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK:** These parks range from five to ten acres in size and serve an adjacent area encompassing ¼ to 1-mile in distance. National standards recommend two acres of neighborhood park space for every 1,000 residents. These parks generally focus on passive recreation and are connected to adjacent neighborhoods through paths or trails.
- 4. COMMUNITY PARKS:** Between 20 and 50 acres in size, these parks serve a broader purpose than neighborhood parks providing for recreation fields, play structures, game courts, and parking lots as well as passive recreational uses. Six and a half acres of community park space is recommended per 1,000 residents.

- 5. REGIONAL PARKS:** While these parks serve Colchester residents they generally also serve the larger community of a defined region. An example is the Winooski Valley Park District that maintains several parks and natural areas in the Winooski River Valley for residents within that geographic region. Seven and a half acres of regional park space is recommended per 1,000 residents.



*Colchester Causeway*

**6. NATURAL AREAS:** These are lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, open spaces, visual aesthetics and buffering that may also include passive recreation such as walking paths or canoe launches. While there are no size requirements for natural areas, these areas must generally be of sufficient size to preserve the natural resources contained on site.

## **PATHS**

Not listed within park types, but of significant recreational value, are various types of paths. The Transportation Chapter of this Plan details multi-use paths, however, it is worth noting the significant recreational value of these paths herein. Multi-use paths provide space not only for alternative transportation but for jogging, rollerblading, cross-country skiing, walking, and recreational bicycling. Multi-use paths that do not follow a road corridor but travel cross-country, such as the Causeway Trail, are often tourist corridors and a way for residents to enjoy the outdoors in a way that is similar to visiting a Natural Area. Multi-use paths often connect parks and other destinations. The Colchester Causeway is a park and is also part of a multi-use trail system that connects Colchester to South Hero and Burlington. The Colchester Recreation Path connects the schools to the Village.

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES**

While Town facilities are designed to meet community needs, other public facilities also provide significant resources to community members and attract many from outside the area to Colchester to enjoy its parks and natural areas. State boat launches, Niquette Bay State Park, the University of Vermont Bog, and the various areas of the Winooski Valley Park District are well-utilized by residents. Contained within the maps section is an inventory of all natural areas currently owned and maintained by the Town as well as those owned and operated by not-for-profits and the State of Vermont. Here is a listing of Town-owned facilities:

- 1. AIRPORT PARK:** Airport Park is a 64.5-acre park located on Colchester Point Road. Facilities include a 1.3 mile jogging/x-c ski trail, parking, restrooms, picnic area, pavilion, playground, 4 ball fields, 2 soccer fields, 2 sand volleyball courts, 6 horseshoe pits, 2 tennis courts, 1 basketball court and lighted ice skating in the winter. More facilities may be installed here in the future although access to the rear of the park is hampered due to wet soil conditions.
- 2. BAYSIDE PARK:** Bayside Park is located on both sides of Lakeshore Drive at the intersection with Malletts Bay Avenue. 22-acres including parking, restrooms, bathhouse, picnic area, pavilion, skateboard park, playground, swimming beach, Senior Center, 2 shuffleboard courts, 4 tennis courts, 1 basketball court, 2 sand volleyball courts, 1 small baseball field, 1 lighted softball field and 2 horseshoe pits.
- 3. BONANZA PARK:** Bonanza Park is located on Bonanza Park Road off Heineberg Drive. .6 acre neighborhood park with a limited playground and all-purpose field.
- 4. CAUSEWAY PARK & RECREATION PATH:** Causeway Park & Recreation Path is a 4 mile path that connects to the original Rutland Railroad bed and causeway across the lake (constructed during 1897-1900). Renovated gravel path suitable for walking, biking and fishing access. Duck hunting allowed (in season). Parking is available at Airport



Park or in the new Mills Point Road lot. While a ferry is run for a portion of the summer to connect Colchester to South Hero, a more permanent solution such as a permanent ferry is being pursued.

5. **COLCHESTER RECREATIONAL PATH:** Colchester Recreational Path is a 3.3-mile handicap accessible paved path that starts at Bayside Park and ends at Creek Farm Road. This path was completed in 2001. This path connects the village of Colchester to the Malletts Bay area.
6. **HEINEBERG/BILLADO PARK:** Heineberg/Billado Park is a 4-acre, Town and State access to the Winooski River off Heineberg Drive. Improvements are planned to provide accessible fishing access, non-motorized boat ramp, picnic area, path and additional parking.
7. **HERITAGE PARK:** Heritage Park is located off Main Street on Heritage Drive in the Village. 1-acre park with a limited playground, 1 tennis court, 1 basketball court and parking area.
8. **LAW ISLAND:** Law Island Natural Area is west of the Causeway off Colchester Point. The island is 8.5 acres in size, owned by the State of Vermont, and managed by the Town of Colchester. Camping is permitted and duck hunting is allowed (in season). There is no access by land.
9. **PORTER NATURAL AREA:** Porter Natural Area is a 56-acre parcel that has no master plan at this time.
10. **ROSSETTI NATURAL AREA:** Rossetti Natural Area is a 47 acre natural area between Lake Champlain and Lakeshore Drive/Holy Cross Road/Church Road intersection. Work is currently underway to construct a boardwalk/trail that will improve access to the Lake.
11. **SUNNY HOLLOW NATURAL AREA:** Sunny Hollow Natural Area is located off Hercules Drive. This 80-acre diverse area has limited parking and three miles of walking and x-country trails.
12. **VALLEYFIELD PARK:** Valleyfield Park is a .65 acre park located off Malletts Bay Avenue. This neighborhood park has a limited playground and all-purpose field.

## PLANNING FOR FUTURE FACILITIES

Future plans to expand the Town's parks system include the purchase of land for a neighborhood park within the Village area. It is hoped that land for the park will be acquired within two years of adoption of this Plan with construction of improvements following shortly thereafter. This acquisition will be partially funded through the use of recreation impact fees. The recreation impact fees for the Town are charged to each new unit of housing through the building permit process and are a flat fee that does not change from year to year. It is recommended that this fee be revisited to reflect current costs of services and planned projects. While the Town currently has a Senior Center, there is also an identified need for a Teen Center



*Snowshoeing at Winter Carnival*

and a Community Recreation Center, although plans for these facilities have not been significantly advanced. The Town's recently purchased property on East Lakeshore Drive and Blakely Road has the possibility of accommodating recreational amenities in the future, however, the Select Board has resolved that the design process for the

property shall include significant community involvement to determine what is done with the property. Connectivity between this parcel and Bayside Park along the lakeshore should be considered a priority if the opportunity presents itself. Future recreation plans could also incorporate water resources such as a boat house or transient dock slips or moorings. With these possible projects and the need to prioritize park infrastructure as stated before, the Town should undertake a comprehensive capital planning process for future parks and recreation needs.

### **NON-STRUCTURED RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The physical location of Colchester lends itself to many unstructured recreational opportunities. From hiking to swimming, the natural features of the Town provide a variety of recreational possibilities that do not necessarily require participation in a program or even venturing outside of your neighborhood. With 26 miles of shoreline, Lake Champlain perhaps has the most profound impact on the community offering recreational opportunities from boating, fishing, swimming, and birding to ice skating. It is important to recognize these unstructured recreational opportunities as positively and significantly contributing to the character of the community.

### **SNOWMOBILING**

On land there is competition for non-structured recreational opportunities such as snowmobiling, hunting, mountain biking, and four-wheeling. These uses are often in conflict with most types of development. Snowmobile clubs often seek out permission from property owners for corridors for passage to destinations. These corridors are not secured through permanent easements and may change year to year. Where snowmobile trails are present or anticipated, the Town should work with local snowmobile clubs to minimize conflicts between anticipated development and these recreational opportunities. Four-wheeling

is a relatively new form of recreation that often mimics snowmobiling in its need for corridors yet lacks formal clubs to secure trails. Like mountain biking, four-wheeling often carves trails on private property in rural areas with little formality or oversight. As four-wheeling and mountain biking increase in Colchester, the Town may need to address these uses and work with proponents to plan for these recreational uses in a more structured manner that provides sufficient opportunities but that minimizes property damage and other conflicts.

### **HUNTING & FISHING**

Hunting and fishing are important local traditions that have historically had a significant contribution to the development of Colchester and care should be taken not to preclude these traditions from the town's future plans. These traditions have historically relied upon the right to use private lands for these activities. It is the right of individual property owners to post land limiting use for hunting and other non-structured recreation. Most park lands and natural areas prohibit hunting to prevent conflicts with hiking and other recreational uses. This has led to diminished areas available for hunters. To the extent possible, large landowners should be encouraged not to post property and developments within rural and outlying areas should be designed so as to be sensitive to these types of recreation.

### **MANY USES OF MALLETT'S BAY**

Non-structured recreation such as boating and camping not only contribute to the community's quality of life but to its economy. There are three State Boat Launches in Colchester with two on the Winooski River and one in the heart of Malletts Bay. Each year thousands of boaters visit Colchester, purchase boating supplies and vitals, and use services such as boat mooring, storage, and repair. Each winter the Bay becomes a center for ice fishing, snowmobiling, and skating. Many people do not directly participate in any of these

recreational opportunities yet simply visit Colchester for the atmosphere as beach-goers. Fostering these opportunities and environment are public access points to the Lake. As Colchester continues to grow, care should be taken to preserve and enhance public access to the Lake. It is worthwhile to note that historically Colchester was home to a substantial summer seasonal community with many summer vacation homes, camps, lining the shoreline. Over the past decade a substantial number of these camps have been converted to year-round residences reducing the effect of summer campers on the community.

### **MALLETTS BAY: COMPETITION FOR WATER SPACE**

With the Town's increasing population and the increasing number of recreational uses competing within relatively small areas, non-structured recreational opportunities often compete for space with each other as well as development and non-recreational uses. The Bay has many competing recreational uses just among boaters. Paddlers,



motorboat operators, and sailors compete for open water within a congested area dotted with docks and moorings. The Town of Colchester operates a special police patrol of the Bay during the summer months to supplement state-

wide organizations such as the Vermont State Police Marine Patrol and the U.S. Coast Guard operation out of Burlington. The waters of the Lake are often regulated by State and Federal entities with little authority left to municipalities. As competition for the Bay increases, the Town may need to closely examine local regulation of moorings and other issues. Currently it is possible for moorings to be placed throughout the Bay with no oversight as to location or number. This is an issue of concern for many boaters as well as responsible lakefront property owners and commercial marinas. The importance of the Lake to the community and its economy should be continually recognized and action taken where necessary to keep this resource available and attractive for future generations.

### **PRIVATE INDUSTRY & WELLNESS PROGRAMS**

Within Colchester there are a variety of opportunities for structured recreation that are provided by private industry for the general population. These opportunities range from gyms and fitness clubs to studios and schools. Gyms and fitness clubs provide fitness training and equipment for members. While some clubs expand upon these services and provide racquetball, pools, or climbing walls there are currently no clubs providing these expanded services in Colchester. Currently there is one gym and two fitness studios in Colchester. There is also a martial arts studio and a sailing school within the community. These schools, while serving the community, often draw from a larger regional community. The sailing school hosts meets that often include teams from outside Colchester and Chittenden County. These types of recreational opportunities, while important for community members, can also draw tourism.

### **MARINAS**

Examples of private recreational industry that also significantly impact tourism are the various marinas in Malletts Bay. These marinas range from private residential

marinas and private clubs such as the Malletts Bay Boat Club to larger commercial marinas such as the Moorings. Colchester provides the majority of moorings and boat slips for Northwestern Vermont. While most of these moorings and slips are reserved, there are a number of transient spaces available for the passing boater to stop and visit Colchester. There are no statistics on the users of the reserved boat slips and moorings and if these spaces are used mostly by residents or non-residents but it is likely that Colchester provides a significant number of boating opportunities to non-residents.

### **CULTURAL & SPORTING FACILITIES**

Other private recreational opportunities can be found at Saint Michael's College and the University of Vermont. These institutions provide private venues for sporting and cultural events within Colchester and the greater community. Two major venues that are located on the St. Michael's Campus are the St. Michael's Playhouse and the Ross Sports Center. The Vermont Youth Symphony Orchestra at Fort Ethan Allen has another significant private venue for cultural events at the Elley-Long Music Center. While not private, Colchester Schools also offer venues for sports and cultural events that are generally accessible for a fee. These school venues are centered around the High School on Blakely Road.

### **HEALTH & FITNESS**

All of these recreation opportunities contribute to Colchester being a healthy community. Within the planning and recreation fields, there is increasing emphasis on creating opportunities for personal wellness within community planning and design to counteract national obesity trends. These opportunities for personal wellness are often generated through recreational opportunities. An example is the Federal Highway campaign for Safe Routes to School that encourage children to develop healthy habits by walking to school.

While the Colchester Department of Parks and Recreation provides several types of wellness programs, there are also a variety of private wellness programs, activities, and services. Private wellness services include the Colchester Health Center, Fanny Allen Hospital Campus, and a variety of other medical offices, physical therapy services, and mental health organizations. Private wellness programs range from programs offered by employers that may include gym memberships and health insurance to private support groups. Also contributing to the health of the community are services such as Colchester Rescue and medical research being conducted by the University of Vermont in the Exit 16 vicinity. The Town should continue to support the range of wellness services and activities that serve the community as these organizations, programs, and services combine to make Colchester a healthier community.

### **COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**

Colchester is home to a variety of community organizations that directly or indirectly contribute to the Town's recreational and cultural amenities. Burnham Library and the Colchester Historical Society sponsor educational events open to the public including speakers and workshops. Other organizations include the Colchester Lions Club, the Colchester Rotary, the Colchester American Legion, and the Colchester Community Chorus. To some extent, Colchester's religious organizations also provide recreational and cultural events and activities for the community. Participation in these various organizations can often be viewed to be recreational as can attending the events of these organizations. These community organizations provide depth to the range of recreational offerings within the community and often contribute to the Town's diverse culture and community spirit.

## **POLICIES**

1. The Town should undertake a comprehensive capital planning process for future parks and recreation needs including the need for a Community Recreation Center. Prioritized guidelines for park and natural area acquisition should be developed noting where resources should be acquired.
2. As part of the capital planning process the Town should continue to plan and secure appropriate levels of funding that reflect the current costs of services and planned projects. The recreation impact fee should continue to be an appropriate part of this process.
3. Multi-use paths and trails have significant recreational value and should be encouraged as both transportation and recreational amenities.
4. Non-town owned public facilities provide significant resources to community members and should be encouraged.
5. Unstructured recreational opportunities contribute positively and significantly to the character of the community and care should be taken to preserve these opportunities.
6. The importance of the Lake to the community and its economy should be continually recognized and action taken where necessary to keep this resource available and attractive for future generations. To this end, care should be taken to manage and balance competing recreational needs within the Bay.
7. Where snowmobile trails are present or anticipated, the Town should work with local snowmobile clubs to minimize conflicts between anticipated development and these recreational opportunities.
8. As it is deemed necessary, the Town should plan for four-wheeling and mountain biking uses in a manner that provides sufficient opportunities but that minimizes property damage and other conflicts.
9. Hunting and fishing are important local traditions. To preserve these traditions, large landowners should be encouraged not to post property and developments within rural and outlying areas should be designed so as to be sensitive to these types of recreation
10. Private recreational industries, such as marinas, should be recognized as creating important recreational opportunities for the community and also significantly impacting tourism.
11. Private sporting and cultural venues that positively contribute to community recreational opportunities should be encouraged.
12. The Town should continue to support the range of wellness services and activities that serve the community as these organizations, programs, and services combine to make Colchester a healthier community.
13. Community organizations should continue to be encouraged as these organizations provide depth to the range of recreational offerings within the community and often contribute to the Town's diverse culture and community spirit.
14. As Colchester continues to grow, care should be taken to preserve and enhance public access to the Lake especially within the area connecting Bayside Park to the recently purchased Town-owned parcel on East Lakeshore Drive.

# 6 : ECONOMY

**VISION:** The Town of Colchester will continue to encourage sustainable and diverse economic growth that creates well-paying, livable-wage jobs with at least one job in Colchester for every household in Colchester. As Colchester looks to the future, businesses should be encouraged that will establish roots in the community and will not be prone to out-sourcing, off-shoring, or similar volatilities. The community's attributes should be utilized to foster economic development through the use of such tools as tourism and recreation. Economic development should continue to occur in a diversified manner utilizing the Town's land use plan as a map to locate areas appropriate for various sectors. An example is the potential for agri-tourism in rural areas and high-tech industry within established commercial areas with ready-made sites that have municipal infrastructure.

## HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY'S ECONOMY

Colchester's economic beginnings were grounded in agriculture with smaller sectors such as milling, quarrying, maritime trade, and retail contributing to the agricultural economy. As the twentieth century approached, industrialization flourished along the Winooski River as woolen mills were constructed in the Town's urban core of Winooski. In 1922 the City of Winooski separated from the rest of Colchester removing two-thirds of the community's population and its industry, converting the Town of Colchester back to an agrarian community. During the mid-twentieth century Colchester became home to a significant summer seasonal cottage community as the Town's natural relationship with Lake Champlain became a source of tourism. This summer seasonal influx increased the service economy of Colchester. With the introduction of International Business Machines in the neighboring Town of Essex

in the 1960's, Colchester transitioned to a suburban bedroom community for the greater Burlington area. Colchester remained without a significant commercial or industrial base well into the 1980s.

## RECENT HISTORY

The 1980s saw the development of Exit 16 as a commercial and industrial center. Since that time, Colchester has transitioned to an employment center from a bedroom community. The number of jobs per capita increased from 0.15 in 1980 to 0.33 in 1990, to 0.50 in 2000 indicating that Colchester is now becoming part of the employment center of Chittenden County. As of the writing of this plan, there are now 1.25 jobs per household in Colchester.



*Colchester Business Park*

The majority of job growth was within the private sector with the trade, transportation, and utility sector excelling as well as education /health and manufacturing. During

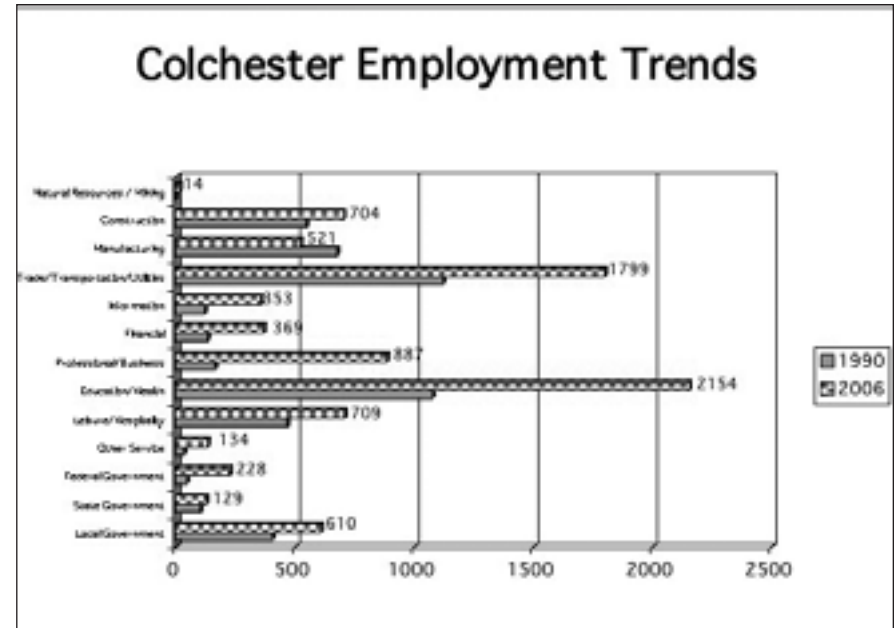
the past decade job growth increased in every sector except manufacturing which saw a decline. The trade, transportation, and utility sector as well as education /health sector nearly doubled the number of jobs in each sector between 1990 and 2006. The local economy during this time reflects regional and national trends toward decreases in manufacturing and increases in service sector jobs.

### JOB GROWTH

Recently, local job growth has stabilized with trends toward increases in services and decreases in manufacturing continuing. It should be noted that the service sector includes medical services, such as those provided by the Visiting Nurses Association, as well as retail and personal service jobs. The Town currently has 8,611 jobs or 9.07% of the County's total employment. Employment growth has outpaced population growth for the past decade with one-and-a-quarter job now for each household. Current projections are that jobs will continue to grow within the Town. The Town wishes to maintain, at a minimum, one job per household.

### INDUSTRIAL SPACE: INVENTORY, NEEDS AND GROWTH

According to 2005-2006 Allen & Brooks survey data the Town currently has 1,478,000 square feet of industrial inventory with 38,000 square feet or a 2.5% vacancy rate. This is a lower vacancy rate than the County with an uncomfortable 8% vacancy: 80% of that vacancy consisting of eight properties. Industrial space is expected to continue to grow at a 3% rate County-wide. Given current employment trends and rates of growth as well as national standards for floor to area ratios, the Town will require a total of 286 acres of industrially zoned land by the year 2020. The Town has 1152 acres



Source: Vermont Department of Labor, Labor Market Information: "Covered Employment and Wages"

of industrially zone land for a surplus of 866 acres of industrial land. Larger industrial spaces have been recently transformed from single-occupancy to multi-tenant or suite-style facilities. This trend has provided valuable incubator space for start-up companies and has attracted a variety of locally owned and operated businesses. While the development of incubator space should be encouraged, the Town should work with owners of industrial facilities to ensure that there is adequate opportunity for businesses to grow within Colchester as they expand and require larger spaces.

### OFFICE SPACE: INVENTORY, NEEDS AND GROWTH

A total of 762,000 square feet of office space currently exists in Colchester with 6.3% vacancy or approximately 48,000 sq. ft. Colchester's vacancy rate very closely mirrors that of the regional vacancy rate at 6.5%. The regional market may currently be overinflated with a 3.7% growth

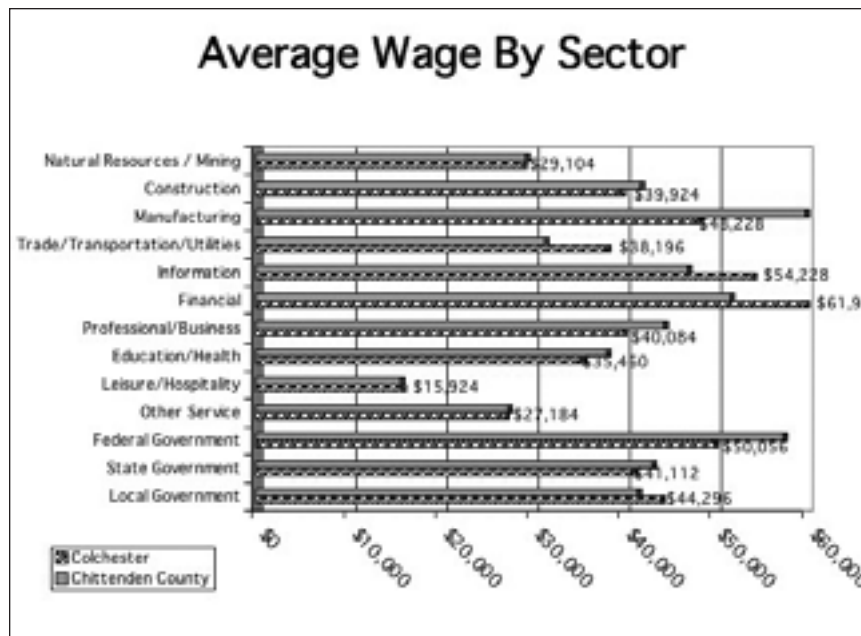
rate adding to an existing eight year supply of office space. While the market is strengthening, absorption seems to be in high-end Class A office space in high-demand locations such as the Burlington lake front. This past year the Bombardier facility on Water Tower Hill was vacated creating a significant Class A office space vacancy of 45,070 sq. ft. and doubling Colchester's vacancy rate to over 12%. The Town is expected to require 325 acres of commercially zoned land dedicated to office use by 2020. The Town currently has 1,563 acres of land appropriately zoned for office use for an excess of 1,238 acres within the Commercial and General Development Districts.

### RETAIL SPACE: INVENTORY, NEEDS AND GROWTH

Colchester has 305,000 square feet of retail space with 27,000 square feet of that vacant (8.85% vacancy). A 4.6% growth rate is anticipated regionally with vacancies below average, approximately 5.2%, and low levels of supply. By 2020, the Town will require 194 acres of retail space. Currently the Town has 1,766 acres of land appropriately zoned for retail for a surplus of 1,572 acres within the Commercial and General Development Districts. Among Colchester's retail uses are single-occupancy retail structures greater than 75,000 square feet. These facilities are often referred to as "big box" stores. These facilities are accommodated within the Exit 16 commercial / industrial center; however, there are few undeveloped or greenfield sites available for new big box stores. On-site expansion of existing big box stores should therefore be encouraged as well as redevelopment of suitable sites that would remain otherwise underutilized.

### WAGES

Historically jobs within Colchester paid less than average for Chittenden County with the 1978 wage 84.7% of the County's average. By 2006 wages in Colchester had progressed to \$38,900 or 97.3% of the County's average wage. Service sector jobs, a category that continues to grow rapidly, now pay higher average annual wages than



Source: Vermont Department of Labor, Labor Market Information: "Covered Employment and Wages"

the County average. As the Town continues to grow, the quality of jobs should continue to be enhanced as well as the number of jobs. The development of well-paying, livable wage jobs should be encouraged. The development of specialized sectors, such as bio-medical research, that have a history of paying livable wages should be promoted.

## **DIVERSIFYING ECONOMIC GROWTH**

The Town of Colchester encourages sustainable and diverse economic growth that creates well-paying, livable-wage jobs. The community's attributes should be utilized to foster economic development through the use of such tools as tourism and recreation. Colchester's land use planning should shape appropriate areas for economic development with diverse economic opportunities such as agri-tourism in rural areas and opportunities for high-tech industry in appropriately infrastructured areas such as Exit 16. To this end, the community should continue to be supportive of small business development and foster the growth of emerging technologies.

## **IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES**

As Colchester continues to grow it would benefit from a Strength/Weakness/Opportunities/Threat (SWOT) analysis for economic development. Its unique location along Lake Champlain and its proximity to Burlington are a strength that should be greatly drawn upon in marketing the community. The Town's rural character, recreation, parks, bike paths, and natural areas are important attributes to the community and create a high quality of life for the



*Colchester Causeway*

Town's residents. Tourism opportunities that draw from the Town's attributes should be explored and capitalized upon. Agri-tourism combines tourism and education specifically relating to agricultural operations. For the remaining agricultural operations in Colchester, agri-tourism should be an available economic opportunity.

Weaknesses such as a lack of public transportation and starter homes or affordable housing for workers should be assessed. Opportunities to attract and retain younger trained workers with families should be identified and acted upon to sustain the community's schools, social fabric, and attractiveness to major employers. In 2005 the Town participated in the Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation's Community Economic Development planning process which identified countywide opportunities and challenges for economic development. The Town should continue to participate in such regional and statewide conversations about economic development as it exists within these larger markets and, to some extent, the Town's economic development will be dependent upon the health of these larger markets.

## **LAND USE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

A SWOT analysis or similar economic development plan and the Town's land use planning should complement each other and provide specific direction for where and how economic development should continue to occur. Colchester's economic development should continue to be focused within its existing commercial / industrial area at Exit 16 and its growth center at Severance Corners. These areas have been designated for commercial growth, benefit from municipal infrastructure, and should be where growth continues to be focused. Once Severance Corners is built-out, the future growth center at Exit 17 should succeed the Corners as a prioritized area for growth. Village areas such as the Fort, Colchester Village, West Lakeshore Drive, and Prim / Warner's Corners /

Heineberg Drive should continue to focus on the development of small businesses and neighborhood services. The Fort has potential as a cultural center and also a media center for Colchester given its current variety of television and radio stations. West Lakeshore Drive, given its location, has the potential for increased recreation and tourism opportunities. These village locations provide opportunities to create individualized business districts specializing in aspects of economic development that may not be suited to the larger Exit 16 commercial/industrial center or the mixed use of the growth center.

### **LOCALLY GROWN BUSINESS**

As Colchester looks to the future, businesses should be encouraged that will establish roots in the community and will not be prone to out-sourcing, off-shoring, or similar volatilities. Colchester should continue to be supportive of opportunities that promote technology transfer such as the University of Vermont's research facility at Exit 16. The



University's Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies has recently established a presence adjacent to its research facility that bodes well for the future of the Exit 16 area as an incubator space for high-tech industry. The Town should continue to encourage this development and ensure that there are sufficient opportunities to grow these businesses within the community.

Colchester has a history of supporting small business development which should be continued. Area businesses benefit from a small business loan program called the Partnership Fund. This fund was administered by the defunct Colchester Community Development Corporation. During the term of this plan the fund should be administered by Community Capital of Vermont which will offer loans up to \$50,000. The Town should take measures to ensure that small businesses have access to similar services as it seeks to encourage continued economic development. There is a community desire to maintain and enhance neighborhood commercial services and amenities such as restaurants. Small "mom and pop" stores should be maintained and new ones encouraged. Home offices that blend with existing residential uses should also be encouraged. Home offices contribute to an expanded and diversified employment base without the detractions of added traffic and therefore are community assets. It should be emphasized that telecommunications is important infrastructure to support and sustain growth of home offices as many of these offices rely upon high-speed internet to conduct business.

### **CHILD CARE**

A community asset is the diversity of childcare opportunities. There are thirty-two registered family child care homes in Colchester providing 266 slots and eleven licensed child care centers providing 439 slots. In addition to these private programs, the Colchester Parks and Recreation Department runs the Active Creative

Enrichment before and after school program (ACEs program) at all three elementary schools as well as summer and vacation camps. There are an unknown number of private organizations that operate non-regulated care programs such as vacation camps at churches. These diverse opportunities are necessary to support Colchester's workforce. Of the approximately 1,264 children in Colchester between the ages of zero and five, 62% of their parents are in the workforce. This number increases to 72% for children ages zero to twelve. Without adequate child care opportunities, Colchester's workforce would be impaired and inhibited. Childcare is often the hardest to find for the youngest children. Infant childcare (ages zero to two) have the lowest childcare vacancy with 6% which is one percent more than the County's. The average vacancy rate for childcare in Colchester is currently 8% or 64 openings which is better than the County's average of only 3%. Colchester should continue to allow for home-based and intermediate child care facilities within its residential and mixed-use districts and allow for child care facilities within its mixed-use and commercial / industrial areas where appropriate. Employers should be encouraged to offer child care services either on-site or through sponsorships. A possible threat to sufficient child care opportunities that has emerged is a worker shortage. Colchester should continue to collaborate regionally to provide necessary technical education and training opportunities for workforce development.

#### **POLICIES**

1. As the Town continues to grow, the quality of jobs should continue to be enhanced as well as the number of jobs. The development of well-paying, livable wage jobs should be encouraged.
2. Colchester's unique location along Lake Champlain and its proximity to Burlington are strengths that should be greatly drawn upon in marketing the community.
3. Tourism opportunities that draw from the Town's

attributes should be explored with care taken to preserving these attributes, such as the Lake, while capitalizing upon these resources.

4. As Colchester continues to grow it would benefit from a SWOT analysis for economic development. A SWOT analysis or similar economic development plan and the Town's land use planning should complement each other and provide specific direction for where and how economic development should continue to occur.
5. The Town should maintain, at a minimum, one job per household.
6. Land should continue to be appropriately zoned for responsible economic development needs; however, care should be taken not to diminish the residential quality of life that is so important to the community.
7. Colchester's economic development should continue to be focused within its existing commercial / industrial area at Exit 16 and its growth center at Severance Corners. Village locations possess opportunities to create individualized business districts specializing in aspects of economic development that may not be suited to the larger Exit 16 commercial/industrial center or the mixed use of the growth center.
8. While the development of incubator space should be encouraged, the Town should work with owners of industrial facilities to ensure that there is adequate opportunity for businesses to grow within Colchester as they expand and require larger spaces.
9. On-site expansion of existing big box stores should be encouraged within the Exit 16 area as well as redevelopment of suitable sites within this area that would remain otherwise underutilized.
10. The Town should continue to encourage the development of high tech businesses, such as those the University of Vermont and the Vermont Center for Emerging Technology are creating, and ensure that there are sufficient opportunities to grow these businesses within the community.

11. Agri-tourism should be an available economic opportunity for the Town's agricultural operations.
12. The community should retain and attract young, trained workers.
13. Small business development should continue to be supported. Neighborhood commercial services and amenities, including "mom and pop" stores should be maintained and new ones encouraged.
14. Home offices that blend with existing residential uses should continue to be encouraged as these offices contribute an expanded and diversified employment base without the detractions of added traffic.
15. The Town should continue to participate in such regional and state-wide conversations about economic development as it exists within these larger markets and, to some extent, the Town's economic development will be dependent upon the health of these larger markets.
16. Safe and affordable childcare opportunities should be fostered within the community. Employers should be encouraged to provide childcare onsite for their workers where feasible and appropriate.

# 7 : EDUCATION

**VISION:** Education will continue to significantly influence the community through its contribution to the economy, the shaping of students, and its impact on the quality of life within the community. Growth and expansion of higher educational institutions should be encouraged. Care should be taken to preserve and enhance public school educational opportunities within the community as funding becomes scarce. Short term cost benefits should not be taken at the expense of long term problems. The Town shall continue to work together with its educational institutions to create an atmosphere that encourages expansion in the educational and business sectors.

## OVERVIEW

Colchester is significantly influenced by its educational institutions. The Colchester School District oversees elementary and secondary education for the community within its five school facilities with a total capacity of 2600 students. Saint Michael’s College is a small, private, Catholic, residential liberal arts college located within the Fort Ethan Allen neighborhood that has an estimated student population of 1900 full time undergraduate students and 500 graduate students. The University of Vermont is also of significant influence in Colchester with married student housing facilities at Fort Ethan Allen and research facilities at Exit 16. Colchester is both impacted by the numerous students of these institutions as well as the economy these institutions create as major employers.

## COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Colchester School District is an independent governmental body, politically distinct from the Town of Colchester. The District is governed by an elected School

Board. There are five school facilities in Colchester: Union Memorial (K 2), Porters Point (K 2), Malletts Bay (3 5), Colchester Middle School (6 8), and Colchester High School (9 12). The District has 369 employees and is one of the largest employers in Colchester.

## SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

School	Capacity	Actual 1997-1998	Actual 2002-2003	Actual 2006-2007	Estimate 2007-2008
Union Memorial	320	343	247	247	230
Porters Point	304	284	274	254	235
EEE	24	22	N/A	33	N/A
Malletts Bay	650	532	591	495	475
<b>Total Elementary</b>	<b>1298</b>	<b>1181</b>	<b>1112</b>	<b>1029</b>	<b>940</b>
Middle School	572	585	599	562	499
High School	761	742	798	795	830
<b>Total Secondary</b>	<b>1333</b>	<b>1327</b>	<b>1397</b>	<b>1357</b>	<b>1329</b>
<b>Total School System</b>	<b>2631</b>	<b>2508</b>	<b>2509</b>	<b>2386</b>	<b>2269</b>

Source: Colchester School District 2006

## HISTORY OF COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Prior to the establishment of the School District’s current facilities, Colchester tuitioned its high school students to adjoining school municipalities. Historically, Colchester and Winooski’s educational systems were linked until the Colchester High School was completed in 1975. While these communities often shared schools, Colchester had a variety of independent school districts within its bounds that were consolidated when the Colchester School District was formed in 1972. While Colchester now has

three elementary schools, there were once fourteen neighborhood schools scattered throughout Colchester. School standards implemented in the early 1900s forced the consolidation of these schools into more modern facilities. The Colchester Historical Society has recently undertaken the preservation and renovation of one of Colchester's earliest schools that has been moved to Airport Park. The Log School House was constructed in 1815 to serve Colchester's South Beach #14 District and was originally located on West Lakeshore Drive. The Log School House will continue to serve as an educational



*Colchester Log School House*

facility for the interpretation of Colchester's educational and historical past.

### **SAINT MICHAEL'S COLLEGE**

Saint Michael's College was founded by Edmundite priests in 1904 as an Institute. It has grown from just over thirty students to approximately 2000 within the span of its first 100 years. It employs over 400 full time employees including 150 faculty and occupies over 440 acres within Colchester. Traditionally the school was male with women

being admitted as students only in 1970. Now the school's student population is 54% female and enrollment has stabilized. The mission of Saint Michael's College is to contribute through higher education to the enhancement of the human person and to the advancement of human culture in the light of the Catholic faith. This mission has made the College a strong member of the community with many students and faculty volunteering to serve within the community of Colchester in various capacities from rescue squads to hosting forums in conjunction with the Vermont Council on World Affairs.

### **UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT**

The University of Vermont has a presence in Colchester at Fort Ethan Allen and at Exit 16. The University's married student housing occupies an area adjacent to St. Michael's College although far detached from the University's own main campus. Recently the University's housing at the Fort was renovated. There are no plans at this time to significantly alter or change the University's presence at the Fort. The University also owns several historic properties at the Fort, albeit on the Essex side, that have yet to be redeveloped. The families of the University will continue to play an important role in the atmosphere and culture of the Fort. The University's research facilities at Exit 16 are a relatively new development with the University recently purchasing property it had leased with an eye toward expansion. This new development has the potential of positively influencing industry within Colchester.

### **FUNDING OUR SCHOOLS**

The nationwide demographic shift occurring over the next decade will lead to fewer students among all levels of the educational system and perhaps competition for students at least at the post-secondary level. The educational sector is dependent upon its students as revenue generating clients. Statewide school funding is generated by the local school property tax. Act 68 structures statewide public

school funding based in part upon how many students a school has in an attempt to provide educational equity. As student population goes down so does a community's public school funding. A school's operational cost is partially dependent upon the cost of utilities, supplies, personnel, and benefits and does not generally decrease proportionally as the student population decreases. Utilities and benefits have seen steady increases in recent years. This leaves many public schools in the difficult situation of having to increase local taxes to make up the difference between their operational costs and state funding or reduce educational services. Act 68 requires towns to keep current assessments and collect taxes based upon the value of a person's property. In Colchester this results in high school taxes as house values are relatively high comparatively statewide. Colchester under Act 68 will continue to see high school taxes with less return of



these funds to the community. This is a trend that many do not see as sustainable and various statewide solutions have been proposed such as shifting the property tax burden to the income tax as the value of a person's property is not always indicative of the individual's ability to pay. More local solutions include the implementation of local sales

taxes such as in Williston. It is feared without a State solution to school funding that increasing school taxes will drive out the families from Colchester that are needed to sustain enrollment numbers. The average cost per student for all Colchester Schools in 2006-07 was \$8,595.70. Colchester was ranked 213th in the state out of 284 school districts for per pupil equalized educational spending. In recent years only 80% of the children born into the community graduate from Colchester High School as the schools lose a net of twenty children a year. This trend is expected to continue.

### **SCHOOL FUNDING SOLUTIONS**

Short-term solutions to school funding include attracting tuition students from other communities to bolster enrollment numbers. While some have advocated for trying to encourage more single-family homes to increase the



*Union Memorial School's Playground*

number of children in the community, both single and multi-family forms of housing are needed as many multi-family dwellings such as townhouses have become starter homes for many families. Mid-term solutions to

school funding include forming a school facilities committee to evaluate the efficiency of the current school infrastructure and how the infrastructure can be economically adapted for future needs. Long-term solutions include attracting former students back to the community to raise their families with the necessary quality jobs and affordable housing.

### **HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES**

To this end, the cultivation of Colchester's higher educational institutions and their resources is important. These institutions provide the area with a trained and educated workforce that enables the creation and attraction of business to Colchester. In recent years a regional technical academy was proposed; however, the regional vote on the academy failed and no further action has been taken although the need for technical training still exists. The expansion of the University of Vermont's research facilities in Colchester will present the Town with the opportunity to supply technical workers for this endeavor as well as take advantage of technology spin-offs and attract business with similar pursuits and interests. To this end, Colchester must create an attractive atmosphere for these businesses and their employees.

Saint Michael's College is pursuing opportunities to enhance the Fort Ethan Allen area for its students and faculty. The College has partnered with not-for-profits to renovate some of the College's properties at the Fort into cultural opportunities such as the Vermont Youth Symphony Orchestra. The College continues to be involved in the culture of the Fort and encouraging an environment within Colchester that promotes academic and cultural growth. The College is also concerned with affordable housing opportunities for its faculty within Colchester that will enable the College to continue to increase its roots within the community. To this end, Saint Michael's College is indicative of the struggle private industry faces.

### **POLICIES**

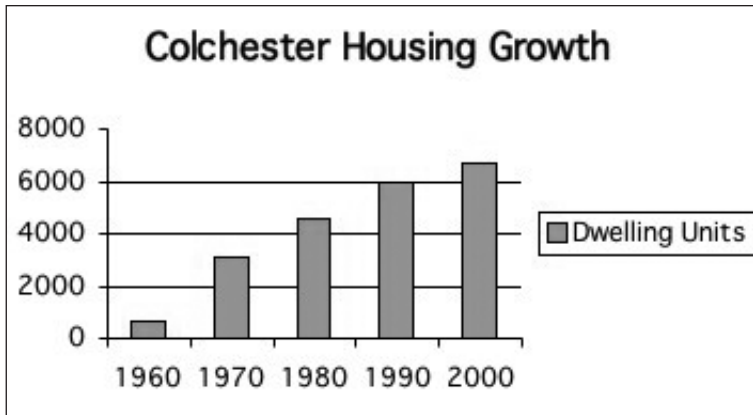
1. As part of any Town effort to quantify costs and benefits of residential development, costs associated with school capital projects, which are attributable to a development, should be paid by the permittee. The Town and School District should work together to monitor and maintain capital plans, budgets, and impact fees to ensure that this occurs.
2. The Town should seek opportunities for mutually beneficial sharing of services, facilities and personnel with the School District.
3. Facility proposals by the School District should be reviewed by the Development Review Board for conformance with the Town's land use regulations.
4. The School Board should continue to examine all alternatives such as consolidated supervisory unions or regional negotiations to keep per student costs as low as possible while still providing a quality education.
5. The Town supports the development of a regional technical center that will provide a skilled workforce for Town businesses and future businesses.
6. The Town will continue to work with Saint Michael's College and the University of Vermont to encourage the continued investment of these institutions within the community.
7. While current trends are in the opposite direction, the Town should continue to evaluate the impact of new residential development on school capacity. If it becomes apparent that additional residential development will exceed the School's ability to provide services for the Town, the Select Board, in conjunction with the School Board and Planning Commission, should take whatever steps it determines are necessary to stabilize or mitigate the impacts of residential development. Major residential projects shall continue to be sent by the applicant to the School District's Business Manager for review and comment.

# 8 HOUSING

**VISION:** Colchester should continue to provide a wide variety of housing options. A sustainable rate of residential growth of approximately 88 new dwelling units a year should be maintained to meet local housing needs as well as to accommodate regional housing needs. It should be recognized that 88 units is an annual average and over the term of this plan there may be years where the number of units annually is exceeded or not met. Housing growth should occur in conformance with the Town’s land use plan. As the community grows, care should be taken to maintain residential affordability and housing quality. Senior housing and starter homes should be a priority housing need for the community over the term of this plan.

## OVERVIEW

Colchester is fortunate to have a diverse housing stock that offers a variety of both rental and homeownership opportunities. Colchester has close to 12% of the County’s housing stock with 7,209 housing units that includes over 600 mobile homes and approximately 1,800 rental units.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Census of Population & Housing, 2000 Summary File

The majority of Colchester’s homes were constructed during Colchester’s population boom in the 1960s and 1970s at a time when an average of over 200 new dwelling units were constructed each year. Over the past decade, Colchester’s housing market has stabilized and has added, on average, 88 new dwelling units annually.

## HISTORIC HOUSING TRENDS

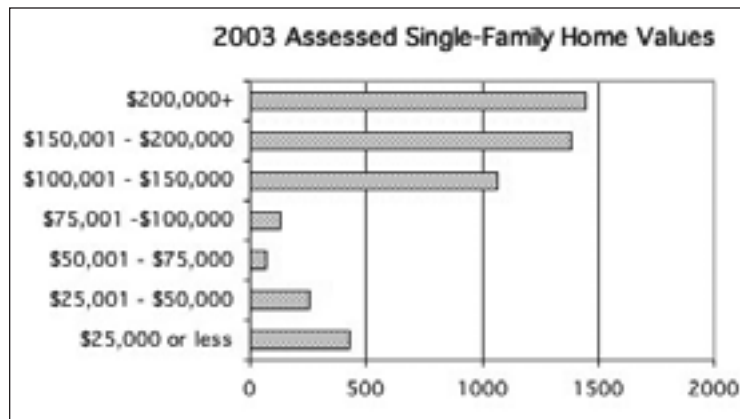
While the number of dwelling units added annually has tapered off, dwelling units have increased in overall size. Approximately 60% of Colchester’s dwelling units are single-family homes. The single-family homes constructed during the 60’s and 70’s ranged from 1,000 square feet to 2,000 square feet while current construction ranges now from 2,500 to 3,000 sq. ft. Older and smaller dwellings are diminishing in number while new construction creates larger homes. Mobile homes decreased by over 28% between 1990 and 2000 from 727 units to 595 units. The past decade has seen a decrease in summer seasonal residences with these camps now totaling less than 7% of the Town’s housing stock. In 1990 summer residences made up close to 10% of the Town’s housing stock. While declining in number, Colchester has 36% of the County’s seasonal residences and 33% of the County’s mobile homes.

Traditionally, Colchester’s housing stock has been scattered throughout the Town located near resources such as waterways and tillable fields and infrastructure such as major roads. During the housing boom of the 1960s and 1970s large housing developments were located in the Bay and by Colchester Village close to major roads, potable water, and services. Developments were also scattered throughout Town in areas with potable water and

perable soils. The zoning during this time period was fairly basic and frequently revised based upon development pressures. Mobile home parks, apartment complexes, and a range of single-family homes were built during Colchester's housing boom. Development during the 1980s and 1990s focused on increasingly larger single-family homes, duplexes, and townhouse developments.

## AFFORDABILITY OF HOUSING

A significant portion of Colchester's housing stock is affordable due to its diversity. An affordable housing unit

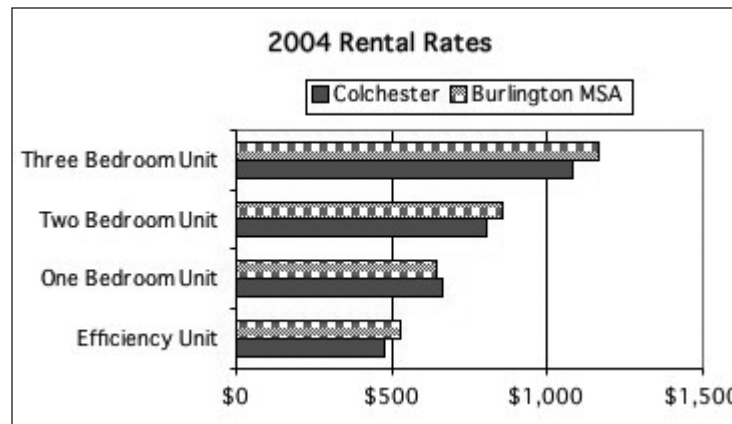


Source: Town of Colchester 2003 Reappraisal

is one that a household spends no more than 30% of their household income on. Included in this 30% are mortgage or rent as well as insurance, taxes, and homeowners' association fees. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimated that the median income for a family of four in the Burlington Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), including Colchester, was \$68,800 in 2004 thereby making 84% of the Town's existing housing stock affordable to the median family. Local rental rates in Colchester, with the exception of one bedroom units, are also less than the Burlington MSA rates. Influencing the local rental rate are 314 subsidized apartments located within Colchester. The 2003 Town reassessment listed 18%

of the Town's single-family homes at less than \$100,000 and 69% less than \$200,000.

It should be noted that affordability differs significantly for a one or two person household. The 2004 median income for a two person household was \$55,040 and for a one person household was \$48,160. As household sizes continue to decline, local housing affordability will decline as well. A cruel twist is that decreases in household size increase the number of households thereby creating more demand for homes without creating a significant increase



Source: Town of Colchester 2003 Reappraisal and 2004 HUD estimated Fair Market Rents  
Note: Colchester rates were adjusted upward 20% from 2002 reappraisal data

in overall population. Smaller households, more households, and increases in population have contributed to low vacancy rates in both the owned and rental units: less than half a percent and two percent respectively according to the U.S. 2000 Census. A healthy housing market has a vacancy rate of three to four percent.

A need for moderately affordable homes for workforce housing has arisen within the County due to these factors. Moderately affordable units are those units affordable for households making up to 120% of the median family household income. As of 2004, 92% of the homes in Colchester were moderately affordable for the median

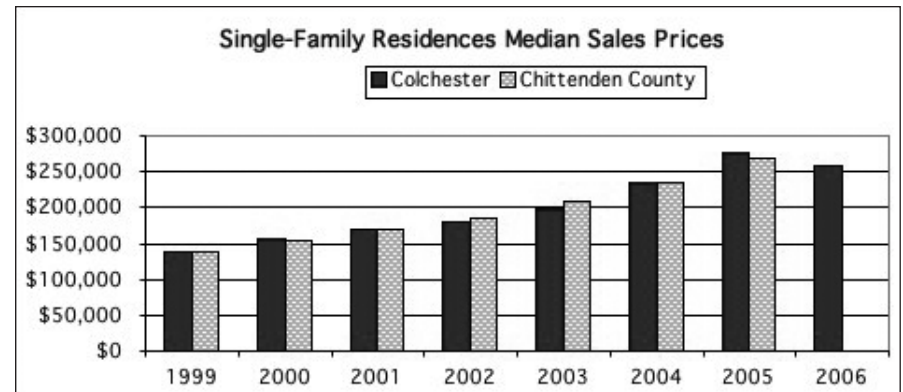
family household. Low income affordable units are those affordable for households making less than 80% of the median family household income and very low affordability is for households making less than 50% of the median family household income. Need for affordable units for low income families continue to persist as at least 6% of Colchester's population lives below the poverty line; however as of 2004 71% of the homes in Colchester were affordable to low income families.

### CONDITION OF HOUSING STOCK

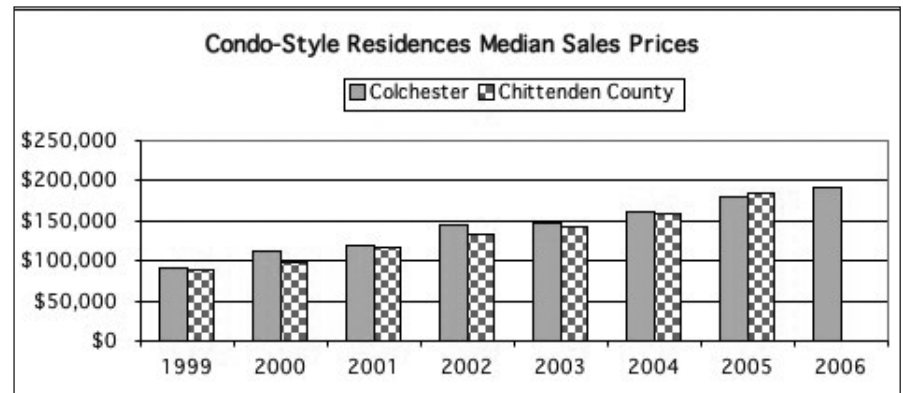
Colchester's housing stock is generally in good condition based upon traditional measures. These measures include median age of housing units and Census information on units lacking plumbing or kitchen facilities. The 2000 U.S. Census stated that all units within Colchester have indoor plumbing and kitchen facilities and the median age of housing units was 23 year with approximately 18% of the housing stock being constructed between 1990 and 2000. Also contributing to the good condition of the community' housing is the Town's building code and inspection process. First adopted in 1960, Colchester's building code has ensured that the majority of the Town's housing stock meets construction standards. Colchester's on-site septic regulations, first adopted in 1967, also have ensured the quality of residential infrastructure. The Town has recently taken over the State's Wastewater Program and now inspects for local as well as State septic permits. In recent years, the implementation of a Town managed revolving loan fund for septic systems has provided residents with low-interest loans to upgrade systems. These programs will continue to ensure the quality of Colchester's homes as safe and decent places to live.

### HOME VALUES

Home values are quantified through the U.S. Census, sales prices, and local assessment data. Sale prices of homes perhaps most accurately reflect current market conditions. Local sale prices track closely to the regional market and have experienced significant gains over the past five years as shortage in supply and increased demand has driven prices up significantly compared to the steady 1.5% annual increase in home values seen during the mid-1990s. While home values seem to be leveling out, it is expected that home values will continue to see a less dramatic increase in value similar to that of the mid-90's.



Source: Town of Colchester Office of the Assessor and the Vermont Housing Data web site (<http://www.housingdata.org/>)



Source: Town of Colchester Office of the Assessor and the Vermont Housing Data web site (<http://www.housingdata.org/>)

## **HOUSING GROWTH: CURRENT AND FUTURE TRENDS**

Colchester is expected to continue to see approximately 88 new housing units annually over the next decade. This rate has become sustainable to the community and will accommodate anticipated housing needs. Assuming an average household size of 2.5 persons, this rate of supply should be more than sufficient to meet local demand of 70 to 80 units a year as well as provide for regional housing accommodation. Utilizing these assumptions, Colchester will add 746 dwelling units between 2000 and 2010 and 784 units between 2010 and 2020 for 7,674 total dwelling units in 2020. Currently the Town is tracking ahead of these estimates with 7,209 dwelling units.

## **REGIONAL NEEDS**

The Chittenden County Regional Plan indicates that there is a shortage of 10,000 residential units regionally noting low vacancy rates, increasing home values, and high population projections. The Plan, adopted in 2006, does not take into account recent stabilizations in home values, increasing vacancy rates, and lowered expectations of regional population increases anticipated by 2010. The Regional Plan recommends that Colchester increase residential unit production to approximately 166 units per year for the next four years to accommodate the anticipated shortfall. Given that this goal would double the Town's current rate of growth without providing for additional resources such as sewerage, it has been determined that this increase is an unrealistic goal. Colchester has recently increased its housing production and is currently producing more units than the Town's population demands thereby accommodating regional housing needs.

The Regional Plan also recommends that municipalities ensure that 10% of new dwelling units be moderately affordable and 10% be affordable to low-income

households. In 2005 Colchester conducted a Housing Needs Assessment to specifically analyze the Town's housing needs. This study indicated that Colchester's existing supply of modestly priced homes provides substantial opportunities for families of moderate and low-incomes with 71% of Colchester's homes affordable to low-income families. As Colchester continues to grow, it will be challenged with maintaining this level of affordability as well as meeting specialized housing needs such as senior housing and starter homes. Trends in recent years toward larger homes has created more expensive homes and not sufficiently provided opportunities for smaller households such as young couples and retirees. To meet this need, smaller dwellings on small lots should be encouraged. Recently, the Town changed its zoning regulations to promote the creation of accessory apartments. This regulation change has provided for new small dwellings within existing residential areas.

## **CHALLENGES TO MEETING HOUSING NEEDS**

Several challenges exist to meeting existing and anticipated housing needs. These include a lack of building lots, a lack of centralized wastewater treatment capacity, the uncertainty of appeals in the permitting process, public perception of density and affordable housing, and infrastructure and design requirements. These challenges are further detailed in the 2005 Colchester Housing Needs Assessment which also recommends opportunities for overcoming these obstacles to meeting housing needs. The Town can not significantly affect the regional housing market or overcome all of the challenges to meeting housing needs in and of itself. To this end, the Town will continue to work with regional and state entities and organizations to seek housing solutions. A healthy regional housing market is important to Colchester's future and to the future of economic development within the region.

## MAINTAINING WHAT WE HAVE

There are also challenges to keeping Colchester's housing stock in good condition. Overcrowding of dwelling units in



Colchester is low however on the rise: increasing from 1.2% in 1990 to 1.8% in 2000. Overcrowding is defined as units that contain more than one occupant per room and can perhaps be attributed to increases in housing demand during the 1990's. With a tight housing market it is

anticipated that overcrowding will continue to rise slightly over the next decade. Recently, the Town has seen an increase in health requests for action related to rental properties. As the housing market remains competitive with low vacancy rates, it is anticipated that concerns regarding overcrowding and other health-related issues will also continue to increase as more people compete for fewer housing opportunities. Several other communities with localized building codes have also implemented rental housing inspection programs. The Town may wish to explore the possibility of an inspection program or other preventative programs if housing concerns continue to increase.

## HOUSING DEMAND & SUPPLY

Colchester has a more than sufficient supply of residentially zoned land to sustain the current housing growth through 2020. It is anticipated that there will be greater demand for high-density residential zoning and lesser demands for moderate-density zoning such as R1 and R2 zoning as the need for smaller and more affordable dwellings increase. Colchester's land use plan should be looked to for guidance in meeting the community's residential needs. The land use chapter of this plan denotes areas appropriate for additional residential growth: Growth Center, Suburban Residential, and Village planning areas. High density residential development will be primarily accommodated within the Severance Corners growth center. As mentioned in the land use chapter, this growth center is anticipated to contain the majority of the Town's growth over the 20 year horizon. In order to accommodate this growth, increases in density may be considered within this planning area. Village planning areas may also be suited to provide additional residential opportunities; however not all village areas are currently conducive to additional residential opportunities and additional development should not detract from the character of these areas.

Suburban Residential planning areas will continue to be appropriate areas for residential infill.

## **RISING TO THE NEED**

Other local initiatives for addressing housing needs include public education, developing a wastewater allocation ordinance that allocates future reserve capacity for housing, increasing wastewater treatment capacity, density bonuses for affordable housing, streamlining the permitting process, decreasing required public infrastructure for residential developments, and re-evaluating fire prevention, fire protection, and life safety standards and related costs. The Town should also continue to participate in regional housing efforts and form public/private partnerships that promote affordable housing development. Two specific housing needs that will warrant further analysis are the need for affordable starter homes and senior housing. These are two sectors that have significant unmet needs in the community; however it is unclear how these two specific areas of the housing sector can be positively affected by the Town. While the Town should continue to promote accessory apartments to help meet this need, over the course of this plan the Town should evaluate other possible initiatives and look implement appropriate measures that will address the community's housing needs.

## **POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION**

1. Colchester's land use plan should continue to guide residential development.
2. Residential density increases within the Severance Corners growth center, above and beyond the existing receiving area for transfer of development rights, may be considered if required by State Growth Center Designation Requirements.
3. Village planning areas may be suited to additional residential opportunities; however not all village areas are currently conducive to additional residential

opportunities and additional development should not detract from the character of these areas.

4. Infill residential development should continue to occur within the Suburban Residential planning area.
5. The Town should consider developing a wastewater allocation ordinance that allocates future reserve capacity for housing.
6. The Town should continue to pursue additional wastewater treatment capacity to assist in meeting residential demands in the designated growth center.
7. Density bonuses and other incentives for affordable housing, particularly starter homes and senior housing, should be considered to assist in meeting the Town's housing needs within medium and high density areas.
8. Owner occupied residential opportunities are encouraged over rental for infill development.
9. Current programs such as the Town's building code program, on-site wastewater program, and on-site wastewater revolving loan program should be continued and enhanced as these programs help to ensure the quality of Colchester's homes as safe and decent places to live.
10. If concerns regarding the quality of housing continue, the Town should consider exploring the possibility of additional preventative programs. The Town may take measures to ensure the safety of rental units.
11. Opportunities for affordable homes and senior housing, such as smaller dwellings on small lots, should be encouraged within the limits of zoning.
12. The Town should continue to work with regional and state entities and organizations to seek solutions for regional housing needs and affordable housing needs. A healthy regional housing market is important for the future of economic development within the region.
13. The Town should consider forming public/private partnerships, such as revolving loan funds for mobile home replacement, which promote affordable housing.

# 9 : ENERGY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

**VISION:** The Town shall work to ensure that adequate, safe, and affordable energy systems and services are available to all residents and businesses and encourage the efficient use of energy. The Town shall also work to ensure a reliable, fast, and efficient telecommunications system. The community needs to have an adequate supply of energy and a reliable telecommunications system to ensure long-term sustained economic vitality.

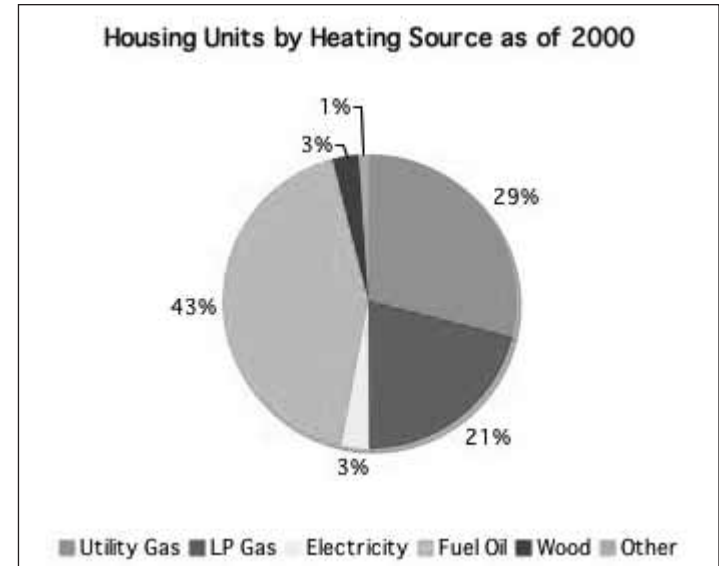
## OVERVIEW

The Town of Colchester's geography has historically limited telecommunications infrastructure. The low lands of Colchester at the mouths of the Lamoille and Winooski Rivers have not historically allowed for local power production beyond that of individual, residential-scale wind turbines. The historical settlement patterns, rural character, and somewhat hilly terrain have made the efficient installation of telecommunications infrastructure challenging. As Colchester looks to the future, energy and telecommunications are increasingly important resources that must be considered in comprehensive land use planning.

## ENERGY UTILITIES

The Town of Colchester's energy history and outlook is very much tied to that of the State of Vermont. In 2007 the State of Vermont received one third of its power from Hydro Quebec, one third of its power from Vermont Yankee, one sixth of its power from local power generation such as dams, and one sixth from other market sources. These sources dictate pricing throughout the state with little variation. While Vermont historically has had high energy prices in the last two decades, recently prices have moderated to \$.11 per kWh for residential and commercial

rates ranging from \$.11 to \$.14 per kWh in Colchester. Variation in pricing lies with the fact that Colchester is served by two power companies: Green Mountain Power (GMP) with 7,396 customers and Central Vermont Public Service (CVPS) with 664 customers. The northern edge of the Colchester Pond Brook Watershed is the dividing line between the service areas. In a state with a seven month heating season, the cost of energy has a high impact on the overall cost of living and doing business.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau's 2000 Census

## THE GRID

Power is brought into Colchester via three transmission lines. A GMP transmission line runs from the Burlington border across the Winooski River to a substation on Bay Road. Vermont Electric Power Company (VELCO) maintains two transmission lines in the northern half of Colchester:

the first line running from the Essex station to Sandbar at 22KV and the second line running from the Essex station to Georgia at 21KV. Recently several residential scale wind turbines have been installed by individual property owners to serve residential or agricultural needs on-site. Some of these facilities feed back into the grid; however, do not at this time significantly contribute to the Town's overall need.

## ENERGY SOURCES

A variety of other energy sources are also utilized in the community from gasoline to natural gas to wood pellets. There are currently thirteen gasoline service stations and two fuel distributors within the community. Vermont Gas Systems serves the majority of the Bay, Severance Corners, the Village, Exit 16, the Fort, Severance Road, and Malletts Bay Avenue by the Winooski Town Line. The main transmission line for Chittenden County runs through Colchester north to south originating at the Canadian Border from the TransCanadian System which brings natural gas from Alberta. This is one of three transmission lines in the community: 1) the first line originating in Burlington across the Winooski River and terminating at Exit 16, 2) the second line originating in Winooski in the Exit 16 area and running north along the Routes 2 & 7 corridor to the Milton Town Line at Exit 17, and 3) the third line running from Winooski along Route 15 into Essex. A peak shaving facility at Exit 16 serves to boost supply using storage tanks during hours of peak natural gas use.

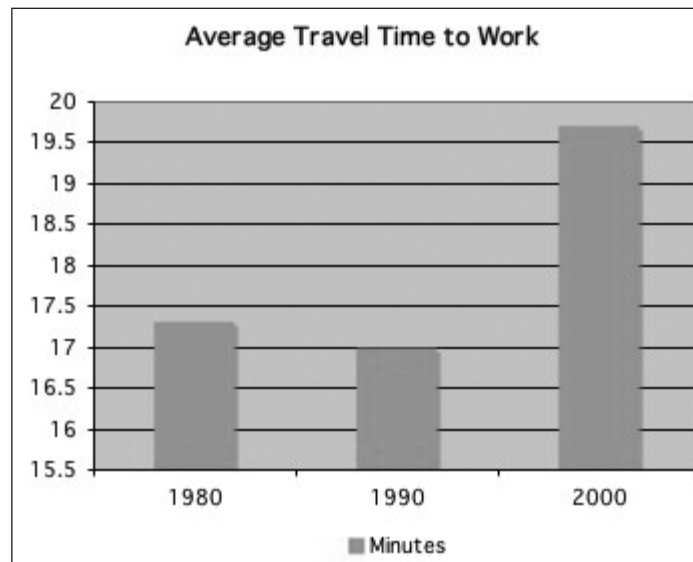
## TELECOM SERVICES

Telecommunications facilities in Colchester include NYNEX phone lines, Verizon Digital Subscriber Loop (DSL), Comcast Cable TV and internet, satellite television and radio, various cellular phone service antennas, and shortwave radio frequencies that are operated by amateur operators and emergency services. There are also radio and

television broadcasting facilities within Colchester that broadcast in both AM and FM frequencies and use microwave communications as well as larger broadcast towers. Historically, telecommunication growth in Colchester has been fragmented which is perhaps most evident in the fact that Colchester does not have its own phone exchange but shares the exchanges of Burlington, Essex, and Milton. As with energy pricing, Colchester is subject to larger market forces in the pricing of tele-communications services and suffers from a lack of sufficient mass to create a competitive market for services such as cellular providers.

## FUTURE ENERGY PRICES

Over the next five years, it is likely that Vermont will see some unsettling in pricing as Vermont Yankee's license expires in 2012 and the State's contract with Hydro Quebec expires shortly thereafter in 2015. While the majority of the State's energy demand is within the transportation sector, commercial demand will continue to increase and may become the State's largest energy demand by 2015 according to the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan



Source: U.S. Census Bureau's 2000 Census

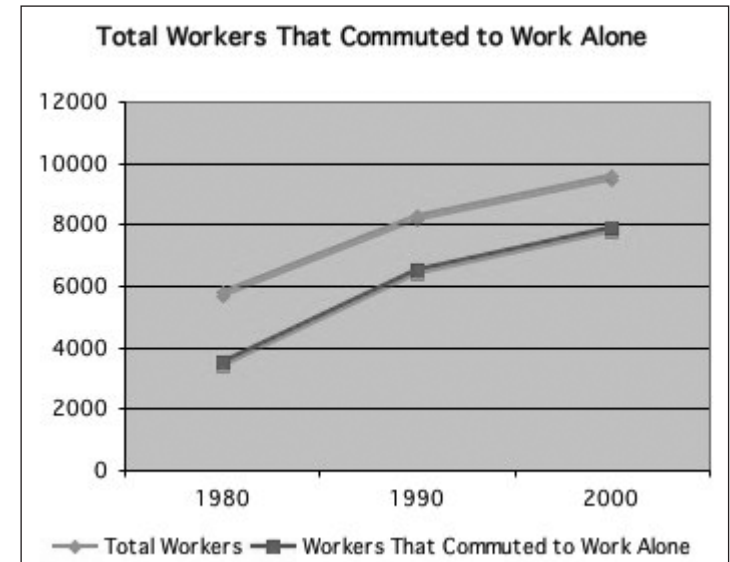
published by the Vermont Department of Public Service. While power reliability has been an issue of late in northern Vermont with transmission line projects occurring in southern Chittenden County to serve growth in peak loading as well as required redundancies, VELCO has no plans to substantially upgrade transmission lines in Colchester or create new ones within the next 20 years.

### DIVERSIFICATION OF ENERGY SOURCES

Other sources of energy continue to diversify with bio-diesel and hydrogen now available within northwest Vermont. It is likely that gasoline will continue to be in high demand with higher pricing during the course of this plan with no one ready alternative in sight. Small scale wind turbines within Colchester will continue to be viable; however, at this time it is generally thought that Colchester's low level elevations will make larger scale wind operations not economically viable. Alternative and renewable energy sources will continue to grow in importance as traditional energy sources become more limited and more expensive. To this end, the Colchester Zoning Regulations should continue to encourage the use of solar collectors and wind turbines as well as other alternative energy sources such as geothermal. Colchester has several wood harvesting operations that serve residences. There is also an opportunity for a methane facility at the closed landfill at Exit 16. Vermont Gas Systems anticipates continued expansion within Colchester specifically focusing on areas of growth such as Severance Corners. It is important to note that Vermont Gas Systems may need to loop off of its main transmission line to provide necessary redundancies in the future. The peak shaving facility will also continue to be of importance in helping the main transmission line function at over 100% capacity during peak winter usage.

### ENERGY CONSERVATION

Energy conservation efforts can help offset increasing pricing and usage. Energy conservation efforts are also seen as environmentally friendly as increasing concerns about global warming have sparked dialogues about reducing carbon dioxide emissions. Land use planning can generate sustainable development patterns that are



Source: U.S. Census Bureau's 2000 Census

inherently efficient. Most new construction in Colchester is required to meet or exceed the Vermont Residential Energy Standards through the use of insulation, heating systems, and weatherproof windows and doors. Current building codes provide basic energy efficiency requirements for buildings; however, technology advancements have generated higher standards such as zero energy construction standards in which buildings generate as much energy as they consume. Green construction and LEED Construction (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards promote the use of natural, recycled, and durable building materials as well as energy efficiency. These efficiency standards are also applied to landscaping,

advocating for native plantings that are low maintenance. Alternative transportation initiatives are also viewed as energy conservation measures, especially within a State where the transportation sector is the major consumer of energy. As energy prices continue to escalate, higher levels of energy efficiency will become increasingly advantageous in order to maintain affordability.

## **IMPROVING TELECOM SERVICES**

As telecommunications continue to become a vital part of everyday functions both at home and at work, pressures to increase the speed, reliability, and affordability of these networks will continue to escalate. Northwest Vermont is currently served by one internet transmission line originating to the south. While there is discussion of bringing a second transmission line to Vermont via the Albany, New York area for redundancy requirements it is unlikely to occur in the near term. On a local level, there are several isolated pockets of Colchester that are currently not served by high speed internet or cellular service. The Town has become increasingly involved in advocating for service for the entire community through services such as Wireless Broadband. The City of Burlington has recently begun a local telecommunications company, but benefits from a larger population in a smaller geographic area. In several more metropolitan areas, all-in-one lines have become prevalent with internet, phone, and television provided through one provider such as a phone service. Following the lead of the City of Burlington, the Town is exploring partnerships, both public and private, to expand wired and wireless broadband delivery options for economic development, security, and educational purposes. As cellular and microwave broadcasting devices become smaller it has become more feasible to site these facilities with greater frequency. Due to the existing industry in Colchester, cutting edge telecommunications will continue to be a priority for the community. Reliable high speed Internet access is a priority

for Colchester to be a leader in the emerging global creative economy. Verizon, a telecommunications provider of high-speed internet, phone service and wireless phone service, has steadily been increasing its services within Colchester specifically focusing on areas of growth such as Severance Corners. Future growth should be coordinated with telecommunications providers to ensure that areas of expansion are adequately served.

## **POLICIES**

1. The Town will promote sustainable development patterns that minimize energy use through internal and external connectivity and the promotion of alternative transportation options.
2. The Town will continue to require, through its Building Codes and inspection program that construction meets or exceeds accepted energy conservation standards. To this end, efficient building operation, maintenance and landscaping should be encouraged in design.
3. The Town should adopt a comprehensive energy plan that addresses energy conservation in the construction, operation, and maintenance of its facilities and equipment. The Town should be a leader in demonstrating energy conservation with the community, particularly in the construction of the new town office facility.
4. The Town should partner with energy conservation organizations and programs such as the 10% Challenge, LEED, the Champlain Valley Weatherization Service, and Shareheat to ensure the continued availability of adequate, safe, and affordable energy resources for the community.
5. The Town will continue to encourage the development of renewable energy resources in Colchester such as wind turbines, biomass fuels, methane, silvicultural operations, and geothermal cooling.
6. Utility infrastructure should be upgraded and expanded as necessary; however, care shall be taken to

appropriately site and screen this infrastructure. Wherever possible, new or relocated electric cables, communication cables, transmission lines, switches and similar equipment shall be located underground.

7. The extension of natural gas service to areas not currently served is encouraged by the Town.
8. The Town will continue to foster a continued variety of telecommunications infrastructure. To this end, the Town will encourage solutions that minimize possible conflicts that might arise from these varied sources. Emergency broadcasting capabilities should be preserved first and foremost.
9. The Town shall continue to work toward a comprehensive, fast, and reliable telecommunications network for the community. To this end, partnering with public and/or private companies may be appropriate.
10. The Town will continue to promote co-location of telecommunication facilities and appropriate siting and screening of these facilities from larger towers to smaller residential dishes.
11. As Colchester has a substantial telecommunications industry presence, it should continue to foster the growth and development of these businesses and, as appropriate, participate in regional, State, and Federal dialogues regarding telecommunications.
12. The Town should, to the greatest extent possible, utilize its telecommunications infrastructure and networking technology to increase community outreach efforts. Current examples are the broadcasting of Town meetings and forums on local access television. Possible future examples include emerging Internet news syndication protocols, access to Public Information stored digitally on Town servers.
13. Future growth should be coordinated with telecommunications providers to ensure that areas of expansion are adequately served.
14. The Town will leverage its investment in digital technology and access to high-speed networks to

expand the concept of “e-government” in Colchester. This on-line technology could make Town services and information available 24/7, 365 days a year.

# 10 : TRANSPORTATION

**VISION:** The Town shall plan for, provide, and maintain a safe and efficient transportation network that implements its land use planning goals.

## OVERVIEW

Transportation systems are among the most important considerations as the Town works to manage its future. Planning should drive infrastructure (as opposed to letting infrastructure determine planning). Over the past decade, vast improvements have been made in Colchester's transportation system that further the Town's Land Use Planning goals with projects such as retrofitting existing roadways with pedestrian facilities and new bike paths. In the future as the Town looks to create and serve sustainable development, this link between planning and infrastructure will become of increasing importance.

## HISTORY OF THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The Town of Colchester was historically served by boat along its waterfront and foot or horse transportation throughout the rest of Town. While there is train service in the northeastern and southeaster corners of Colchester, the Town never had a rail station. A small airport existed in the mid-twentieth century at Airport Park. While there is no formal airstrip in Colchester now, the Bay is often used by planes fitted with water landing equipment. The Town has, over the past fifty years, transitioned from a rural community to an employment center and a suburb with heavy automobile use of its roads. With the introduction of Interstate 89 in the 1960s and improvements to Route Two in the 1970s, Colchester has also become a through route for travel, especially for freight trucking.



*Boat Launching on Malletts Bay*

Many of Colchester's existing roads were developed without pedestrian or bicycle facilities and often followed historic routes such as Roosevelt Highway. While recent legislation has put an emphasis on identifying historic or ancient roads that may have been abandoned over time, Colchester has a clear knowledge of its lands with detailed parcel mapping clearly identifying rights-of-way, both in use and not in use. Bringing these existing roads up to current standards that include sidewalks, stormwater permitting, and acceptable geometries and grades can be challenging.

## MAINTAINING THE SYSTEM

Current deficiencies need to be dealt with as the projected rate of growth and development will increase the demand placed on transportation systems. Maintenance and improvement of transportation infrastructure is the most

costly service provided by the Town and has a tremendous effect on public health and safety. To this end, the Town developed a five year Capital Plan in 1993 to maintain and improve transportation infrastructure as well as various maintenance programs. One of the biggest challenges facing the Town is to maintain a safe and efficient transportation network as cost effectively as possible.

The automobile will continue to be the primary means of transportation in Colchester for the foreseeable future; however, Colchester has also begun to provide for alternate transportation modes such as park and rides, bicycle routes, and bus pull-offs. Modes of transportation other than the private automobile include walking, bicycling, ride-sharing, buses, and other public transportation. There are benefits associated with alternative transportation modes including reduced traffic, reduced air and water pollution, less land required for parking, energy conservation and promoting healthy lifestyles. While the community is served by two through bus routes, one at Exit 17 and one at the Fort, intercommunity public transportation is limited to special-needs services such as SSTA. Safe and efficient transportation alternatives are of limited extent at this time and face several barriers such as a lack of sufficient density to provide low-cost diversified solutions.

### **PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF THE SYSTEM**

In recent years, the Town has taken a much more active role in planning for its infrastructure. In 1993 a comprehensive alternative transportation path plan was developed for the community by the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization. In 2002 the Town developed an Official Map that shows proposed multi-modal paths, roads, and other public facilities. Future roads include completion of the Circumferential Highway, the Lakeshore Bypass, and other road connections. The Official Map draws from the Alternative Transportation Path Plan,



but is more specific and creates an opportunity to preserve rights-of-way. It should be noted that generally all roads are planned to have sidewalks, although the Capital Plan provides a specific list of Town sidewalk implementation projects planned in the short term. There are also several other important planning connections within the Town's various Departments and Town standards that directly influence the transportation network and how it relates to land use. Bus pull-offs are required to be addressed by new projects within mixed use zoning districts through the Zoning Regulations. The Public Works Specifications and Standards require sidewalks and/or multi-use paths along new roads. The Town's Traffic Calming Manual potentially impacts improvements to existing roads. The Town has a variety of policies, regulations, and departments that affect land use planning and infrastructure and care must be taken to achieve coordination among these various regulations and policies.

### **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

In its planning efforts for transportation infrastructure, the Town is a member of the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) and Regional Planning

Commission. The CCMPO maintains a 20-year Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the County that provides goals and objectives, analysis of regional trends and planned improvement projects throughout the county in all modes of transportation.

The CCMPO assists municipalities with transportation planning and provides a forum for interagency cooperation and public input into funding decisions. The CCMPO maintains a three year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that prioritizes funding to various transportation projects throughout the County. Several Colchester projects are included in the TIP: construction of the Campus Connector Road, the reconstruction of Route 2A, improvements to Route 15 that include repaving, a multiuse path, and a pedestrian crossing, and implementation of the Route 127 Corridor Plan. Colchester has several projects listed within the TIP that currently expires in 2010. This is one of the primary sources of funding transportation projects that often exceed local funding capacity and have regional impacts. While there has been a shift at the State level to prioritize maintenance, rehabilitation, and repair of existing transportation infrastructure, Colchester will continue to work with the CCMPO to ensure that these projects as well as important new construction projects such as the Circumferential Highway are completed to provide critically needed capacity to the Town's infrastructure. It is thought that the funding of new projects will become increasingly dependent upon local funding sources.

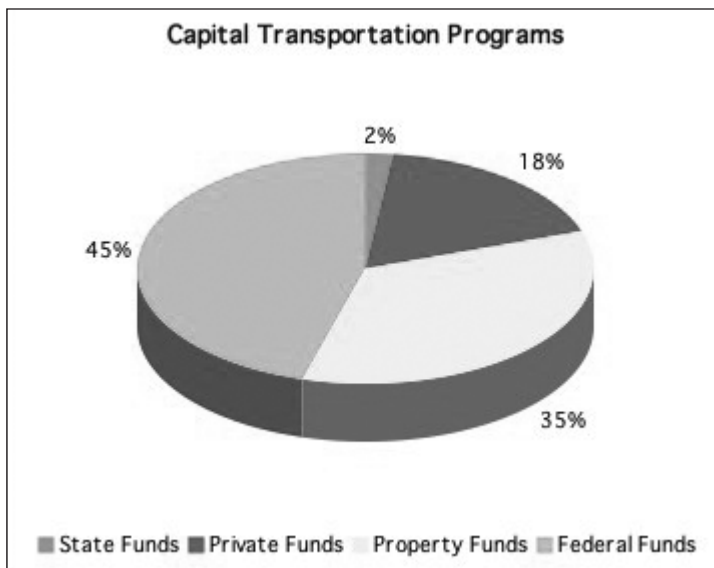


## FUTURE OF COLCHESTER'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The following subsections focus on the various aspects of the current transportation infrastructure. Colchester's transportation infrastructure will continue to become more diversified and more sophisticated and it is anticipated that there will be additional components to the infrastructure not listed herein at this time. This should not preclude consideration of inclusion of new components within the community in the future.

### PUBLIC ROADS

The existing highway network is shown on the transportation map (map one). The Town has 109.2 miles of public roads, 22.9 miles of which are State Highways. There are also approximately eight miles of Federal Highway: Interstate 89.



Source: Colchester Department of Public Works

The Town has adopted a Capital Transportation Plan partially in an effort to preserve the Town's public transportation system with an estimated replacement

value of approximately \$200 million. The Town's sustained effort of rehabilitation has been effective at avoiding more costly complete reconstruction costs and preserving the community's investment within the transportation system. While the Town authorizes funding of the Capital Transportation Plan every five years, local tax dollars are used to leverage State and Federal funding.

The Capital Transportation Plan includes various paving and guardrail projects and several road projects including the construction of the Campus Connector Road at Saint Michael's College. Stormwater and pedestrian improvements are also included in the Plan. The Campus Connector Road is expected to be completed within three years as it is included in the current TIP.

The Town's Public Works Standards and Specifications provide specific requirements for transportation infrastructure design and construction. These standards provide different designs for road widths based upon a variety of factors including function, average traffic, and land uses served. Pedestrian, street lighting, and storm-water options are also included in these standards. These regulations provide standards for traffic studies that are often required as part of the Zoning or Subdivision Regulations review. Sometimes, as a result of these processes, a development may be required to help implement improvements to the transportation infrastructure in order to offset adverse impacts caused by the development or facilitate full build out of the project. While the Town does not presently have formal road impact fees, payment in lieu of construction of improvements has precedent within the Town and may continue to be utilized by the Town at the Town's discretion.

The Town has, in practice, limited curb cuts for new developments and required the connection of roads wherever possible. While the Town does not have a formal

regulation limiting curb cuts as long as sight distances are met, limiting curb cuts is part of good access management practice. Roadway connectivity eliminates redundancies in maintenance and integrates neighborhoods. Roads should be connected wherever possible, however, and rights-of-way for new roads should extend fully to the outbound property line of a project to facilitate future road connections.

## **ARTERIAL ROADS**

Arterial roadways carry traffic through an area to destinations outside the immediate neighborhood or community. Direct access to property should not be a function of arterial roadways, although in Colchester these roadways also carry local traffic and provide the only means of access to large areas of developed and undeveloped land.

The conflict between arterial and local road functions is especially pronounced for Route 127 which serves as a regional arterial highway although it is not designed or constructed to meet the standards of such a highway. This route also serves as the local road for very densely developed residential and commercial areas. An increase in local road functions will accompany the development of Severance Corners. The Route 127 Corridor Study provides direction for improving this corridor's design including bicycles and pedestrian improvements; however, this plan has not been implemented due to a lack of funding although the project has been listed in the current TIP and it is hopeful that this project will be begun within the next three years. The Town recently completed a sidewalk installation along West Lakeshore Drive to address immediate pedestrian needs within the Route 127 Corridor. The improvements of the Route 127 Corridor Study would result in improving the safety of the corridor, however, do not address capacity. It is the Town's desire to decrease traffic and the need for capacity on this local road. The

Town has, since at least 1964, recognized the need for a new east-west arterial route and the Circumferential Highway plan has been adopted by the Town to meet that need.

The proposed route for the Circumferential Highway through Colchester is, at the time of this writing, at various levels of definition. Full right-of-way acquisition has occurred for the route east of I-89 to the Essex Line. The majority of the right-of-way from I-89 to Heineberg Drive has been acquired by the State as well. Obtaining funding for this portion of the route is a Colchester priority as this will help to alleviate freight truck traffic on local roads and a majority of the through-traffic on local roads in Colchester.

## **COLLECTOR ROADS**

Collector roads provide land access, movement within neighborhoods, and a link between local and arterial roads.

## **LOCAL ROADS**

Local roads serve primarily for land access, with links to collector and arterial roadways, including streets within subdivisions as well as roads in more remote areas. Design speeds are typically 25 mph. The existing local streets have been largely developed in conjunction with residential subdivisions. The local road system is not well interconnected, creating problems with maintenance, efficient traffic flow and public safety. Widths of local roads are inconsistent, varying from less than 20 to 30 feet. A number of local roads are unpaved. While unpaved roads help areas retain their rural character maintenance expenses for unpaved roads are much greater than those for paved roads.

Recently, State requirements for permitting existing stormwater facilities for local streets has identified a host



of maintenance and responsibility issues for the Town and homeowners throughout the community. The Town is working to resolve these permitting and stormwater issues

and to develop long term maintenance and responsibility plans for existing stormwater facilities. Stormwater treatment for all impervious surfaces, including parking lots, is a good practice to preserve and enhance water quality.

## **PRIVATE ROADS**

Private roads are common in several areas, especially the points of land into the Lake. These roads are typically unpaved, of substandard width and have poor drainage. Some private roads serve a significant number of residences. The Town often receives applications to develop existing lots on private roads. The majority of older private roads are plowed by the Town per a 1970 Town-wide non-binding referendum.

Problems associated with private roads include substandard design, unreliable maintenance, lack of emergency access, poor traffic safety, and property

disputes among owners. Private owners are often unable or unwilling to fund improvements or maintenance. Current Subdivision Regulations require minimum frontage on a Public Road to subdivide. Current Public Works Specifications and Standards require access to be a public road if it serves more than three dwelling units. Chapter Seven of the Colchester Code of Ordinance (Fire Regulations) specifies necessary improvements to private roads for year-round access on proposed camp conversions. The current policies combine to ensure that existing situations are not made worse or repeated. While new private roads should generally be discouraged, the Town should be afforded the opportunity to consider the use of private transportation infrastructure to facilitate sustainable development patterns or innovative development such as high density new urbanism development.

## INTERSECTIONS

Road intersections must be properly designed and controlled in order to ensure safe and efficient traffic flow and pedestrian crossing. Improvements are needed at a number of intersections including Creek Road/Route 7,



*Roosevelt Highway at Exit 16*

Bay Road/Route 7, Route 2A/ Mill Pond Road, Malletts Bay Ave./Blakely Road, Lakeshore Drive/Prim Road and others. A number of these are State intersections and therefore dependent upon State approval and funding for upgrades. The first two intersections are listed in the current TIP and are planned for construction in FY2009-10. The latter two intersections mentioned above are within the Route 127 corridor. The Capital Transportation Plan provides for other planned intersection improvements such as East Road and Depot Road.

As background traffic in Colchester continues to grow and development continues to occur it is certain that additional intersections, such as the one at Severance Corners, will need to be addressed. The Town should continue to work with the CCMPO and the State to develop solutions for these intersections prior to large problems developing. While traffic circles and roundabouts are eligible for higher levels of funding, these designs may not be appropriate for all intersections and care should be taken to examine all strengths and weaknesses of an intersection design besides cost as part of the design process.

The Town has begun working with the CCMPO to implement Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Architecture on a regional basis. ITS is the application of advanced technology to address transportation needs and includes everything from timing of lights to pre-emption of lights for emergency vehicles. As intersections are improved and roads upgraded, the Town should utilize ITS to the greatest degree possible to promote local and regional efficiencies. The Town should continue to work with the State and agencies providing mutual aid to ensure standardization of pre-emption devices.

## BRIDGES

The Town has several bridges such as Lime Kiln Bridge that are an integral part of its transportation infrastructure.

The Town participates in Vermont's Highway Bridge



*Historic Lime Kiln Bridge*

Program to assist in funding projects. It is anticipated that The Mill Pond Road Bridge will be replaced in FY2009 through the State's program; however, design of the project is pending the outcome of the upstream dam analysis. It is the Town's desire to protect its investment in its transportation infrastructure and to that end the dam may need to be removed to ensure the safety of this corridor.

## SIDEWALKS

Sidewalks provide for safe pedestrian circulation and are especially important in a residential community like Colchester. A sidewalk network is useful for transportation purposes only when it connects between residential, public, and commercial destinations. Sidewalks are important even in remote areas considering the School policy that children may be expected to walk up to 1/2 mile to a bus stop.



*Shadow Cross Pedestrian Bridge Dedication*

With few exceptions, sidewalks are currently located mostly on local residential streets, having been installed by developers when subdivisions were built. Sidewalks are generally lacking along our collector and arterial roadways. Over the past decade the Capital Transportation Plan has substantially expanded the Town's network of sidewalks with new sidewalks being added to West Lakeshore Drive, Blakely Road, and Williams Road as well as others. Additionally, new developments are required to include sidewalks and/or multiuse paths as well as provide easements for future pedestrian connections. These requirements are found in the Zoning Regulations, Subdivision Regulations, and Public Works Standards and Specifications. Several of the projects planned for the current Capital Transportation Plan include: 1) Phase One of the Exit 16 Pedestrian and Landscape Improvement Project, 2) Warner's Corner Intersection, 3) Blakely Rd (Williams Rd. to I89), 4) Holy Cross (Porters Pt. to Prim Rd.), 5) East Lakeshore (W. Lakeshore to Williams).

## **MULTIUSE PATHS**

Multiuse paths support alternative modes of transportation which are to be encouraged. The Town has envisioned an east-to-west trunk-line multiuse path from Colchester Pond to Airport Park and similarly, a north-to-south route from Milton to Winooski. These routes, as well as various other feeder multiuse paths, are designated on the Town's Official Map.

There are several classes of multiuse paths; Class I are fully separated from roads, Class II paths are striped lanes along roads, Class III paths are roadways that are signed but otherwise not improved for bicycle travel. Roadway improvements that accommodate bicycle use are important for public safety as many long-distance-bicyclists, touring bicyclists, and bike-commuters will utilize roads to avoid slower moving recreational users on multiuse paths. The Town of Colchester is part of the Lake Champlain Bikeways network that uses a majority of on-road routes to link with adjacent communities throughout the Lake Champlain Basin.

Class I and II multiuse paths exist along Porters Point Road, between Bayside Park and Creek Road, and from Delta Park to the Causeway. The extent of Class II paths has been significantly increased through the Capital Transportation Plan. Bay Road, Prim Road, portions of Malletts Bay Avenue, Church Road, Severance Road, Hercules Drive and Heineberg Drive have Class II multiuse paths. Sections of Lakeshore Drive and Blakely Road are signed as Class III multiuse paths but are generally unsuitable for bicycle travel due to the heavy volume of traffic and turning movements. Many arterial and collector roads, including Route 15, Route 2A, Lakeshore Drive, and Routes 2 & 7 at Exit 16 are not uniformly constructed to accommodate bicycle travel. To the greatest extent possible, all areas of Colchester should connect its multiuse paths and tie into the paths of adjacent Towns.

Planned Multiuse paths include those shown on the Official Map including a Class I multiuse path along the Circumferential Highway. The Town has undertaken several sections of the trunk-line from Colchester Pond to Airport Park and plans to construct more components of this route through the Capital Transportation Plan and the TIP including Prim Road and Route 2A. Severance Corners is currently under construction and multiuse paths are being constructed as part of this project. Other projects likely to be completed within the near term include multiuse paths along Route 15 and the first phases of the Exit 16 Pedestrian and Landscape Project along Roosevelt Highway.

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

Existing public transit consists of bus service provided by the Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA) along the Route 15 corridor and a Chittenden County to Franklin County transit line stop at the park and ride at Exit 17. The Town is not currently a member of CCTA and voters have rejected proposals that the Town join CCTA on several occasions. The CCTA is continuing to explore funding alternatives to the property tax. As alternative funding sources are identified, the Town should work with CCTA to increase service within Colchester perhaps developing a Roosevelt Highway route to tie in with Severance Corners, Exit 16, and the Village. To this end, developments within these areas as well as other mixed use zoning districts will incorporate planning for future bus facilities.

The Special Services Transportation Agency provides accessible and affordable door-to-door transportation for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. The demand for this service will continue to increase as the community's population ages and distances to services from residences increase. The Town partially funds this service.

## **RIDESHARING**

There is a park and ride lot at Exit 17 and another designed as part of the Circumferential Highway. CCTA administers a regional ridesharing program which includes Colchester. Demand exists for additional rideshare opportunities. The Town, working with the Metropolitan Planning Organization and a consultant, has incorporated future park and ride facilities into the Town's Official Map.

## **RAIL**

The Town of Colchester has two sections of rail with one in the Northeast Quadrant and one along Route 15. Both of these sections are designed to support heavy rail. Although light rail could function on the existing tracks, current design does not allow for faster speeds usually associated with commuter rail.

The section of rail along Route 15 leads from Essex through Winooski to Burlington. In the past, this section has been studied for commuter rail with the possibility of a multi-modal facility in Colchester along Route 15. Preliminary analysis of the corridor has indicated that current densities would not support a commuter rail line in this vicinity; however, as traffic continues to increase on Route 15, commuter rail may become economically viable.

The northern section of rail travels from Milton into Essex Junction where there is a rail station. Within Colchester the tracks pass through a relatively removed and rural portion of the Town. As the rail track approaches Route 2A there are a few industrial properties which front on Route 2A that have the benefit of spurs or the potential for rail spurs. These properties are adjacent to residences and care has been taken to ensure that these uses are well-screened and unobtrusive to the residential uses as much as practical. While there has been discussion in the past about relocating Burlington's rail yard to this area of Colchester, this concept is no longer feasible due to the encroachment

of suburban residential use and the establishment of substantial horse farming operations. The northeast quadrant and village neighborhood areas are ill-suited to further expansion of industrial uses or rail tracks.

## **POLICIES**

1. Roadway construction and reconstruction projects should address stormwater treatment and required stormwater permitting. Stormwater treatment for all impervious surfaces, including parking lots, is a good practice to preserve and enhance water quality.
2. The Official Map delineates future transportation network improvements and other facilities. Developments, road projects, and all other plans shall take into consideration the Official Map and should implement the proposed improvements to the greatest extent possible.
3. The Town planning process shall address the expansion of utilities and provide guidance for the reconstruction of roadways, including the Route 127 corridor.
4. Traffic studies that address both capacity and safety issues shall continue to be required as part of the development review process. Where necessary, improvement to the transportation infrastructure will be required as part of development projects.
5. The capital transportation program is a significant benefit to the community which should be sustained.
6. The Town may impose development impact assessments where private projects are anticipated to necessitate transportation improvements. The Town should evaluate methods for fairly distributing the cost of road improvements and maintenance associated with new development or redevelopment.
7. New curb-cuts to arterial roadways should be avoided, with shared curb-cuts and side streets utilized for access wherever possible. The Town should develop a policy on access management that includes recommended methods and addresses the circumstances under which access management should be implemented.

8. The Town should continue to work with the CCTA, Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization, and Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission to assess the feasibility of expanding bus service within Colchester. To this end, the Town should support alternative sources to the local property tax for the funding of public transportation and the incorporation of bus facilities in the design of development projects within potential areas of bus service.
9. Light-rail solutions should be explored where feasible. If light-rail mass transit solutions are proposed through Colchester, stations or stops within the Town should be encouraged. Expansion of freight rail should be limited to existing rail corridors with the creation of rail yards being prohibited.
10. The development of alternative transportation infrastructure such as commuter lots will be encouraged by the Town.
11. New subdivisions and other developments should provide for and encourage bicycle access, circulation and parking. Bicycle paths may be required to be built as part of subdivisions. Easements may be required to be dedicated to the Town for future bicycle paths.
12. The Town will consider bicycle path improvements in designing, scheduling and constructing roadway improvement projects. Where possible and practical, the Town will strive to provide Class I paths along arterial and collector roadways as well as on-road facilities.
13. Sidewalks should be implemented along all streets and roadways. The need for sidewalks is particularly important on roads carrying heavy traffic volumes through developed areas including Prim Road, Lakeshore Drive, Malletts Bay Avenue, and Blakely Road.
14. While new private roads should generally be discouraged, the Town should be afforded the opportunity to consider the use of private transportation infrastructure to facilitate sustainable development patterns or innovative development such as high-density new urbanism.
15. The Zoning and Subdivision Regulations should continue to require minimum public road frontages and prohibit creation of parcels without public road frontage.
16. The Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Improvement Plan as well as other State and Federal funds are important sources of funding for transportation infrastructure and Colchester should continue to take advantage of these opportunities to bolster local funding for improvements to the transportation network. As non-local funding sources diminish or shift priorities, it will become increasingly important for the Town to develop creative solutions for funding projects that are more self-reliant.
17. The Town shall work to implement the recommendations of the Route 127 Corridor Study.
18. The entire Circumferential Highway through Colchester, between Essex and the Heineberg Bridge shall be completed. The Town will pursue and promote this project with the Metropolitan Planning Organization and State of Vermont. Purchase of rights-of-way for the Circumferential Highway and preservation of existing rights-of-way shall be a priority for the community.
19. Interconnectivity between developments shall be required to the greatest extent feasible. The creation of cul de sacs should be discouraged. New cul de sacs should be designed to be temporary and to provide future connections whenever possible. Future connections between neighborhoods shall be addressed by all development projects.
20. A new arterial roadway connecting Hercules Drive and Rte. 15 would decrease travel time, increase efficiency, and reduce traffic volumes in the Exit 16 area and in Winooski's central business district. This is a project with regional significance and should be pursued in conjunction with the Regional Planning Commission,

the Metropolitan Planning Organization, and the U.S. Army Administration.

21. The Public Works Standards and Specifications provide diversified standards based in part on land use. These Standards shall be updated as needed to reflect changes in land use planning and evolving technologies.
22. Current Zoning Regulations promote Transportation Demand Management principles through the use of parking standards for large parking facilities, the requirement of bicycle parking, and enabling shared parking concepts. These efforts should be sustained and strengthened.
23. The efforts of the SSTA to provide transportation services for the disabled and the elderly should be sustained; however, efficiencies should be looked to as demand continues to escalate.
24. A bicycle path between Colchester Pond and Airport Park shall be the priority bicycle path for Colchester to complete. This route shall act as a trunk line that all other bicycle routes shall strive to tie into. The Town shall strive to integrate this trunk-line and other bicycle paths with bicycle routes of adjacent communities.
25. While the maintenance and repair of the existing transportation network will remain a priority, the construction of new projects that build capacity shall also be of importance to the community.
26. The Lake Champlain Byways program should continue to be supported for its importance in promoting alternative transportation and tourism.
27. The Town shall continue to partner with the Vermont's Highway Bridge Program to maintain its infrastructure.
28. ITS Architecture shall be utilized to the greatest degree possible to promote local and regional efficiencies. The Town should continue to work with the State and agencies providing mutual aid to ensure standardization of pre-emption devices.

# 11 : UTILITIES & SERVICES

**VISION:** The community should continue to be provided with the utilities and services necessary to sustain and implement its land use plan. The land use plan should guide infrastructure investments.

The following chapter details the various utilities and services provided within the Town of Colchester. Utilities discussed in this section include sewage disposal, water supply, solid waste disposal, and stormwater treatment. Services discussed herein include Town Government, Fire Protection, and Regional Government. Telecommunications, electric utilities, natural gas utilities, and other power sources are detailed in the Energy and Telecommunications Chapter. It should be noted that not all of the utilities and services discussed herein are provided by the Town of Colchester.

## TOWN GOVERNMENT

The Town of Colchester is governed by an elected Select Board of five members. The Select Board oversees the Town's annual budget, over \$20,000,000 in assets, and the general functions of the Town's government. The Board has appointed a Town Manager to oversee the day-to-day operations of the Town government including its staff of approximately 100. The majority of the staff are full-time although several positions are shared or part-time. It should be noted that this number does not include the many seasonal positions within the Town or its wealth of volunteers, including over 30 volunteers of the Rescue Squad.

The staff of the Town is divided into 12 departments each operating under the supervision of a department head. These departments include the Manager, Finance, Assessor,



*Colchester Police Station*

Planning and Zoning, Clerk / Treasurer, Rescue, Public Works, Building and Grounds, Recreation, Technology, Library, and Police Departments. Of these departments, 11 department heads report to the Town Manager. The Clerk/Treasurer is the only elected department head within Town government. Two of the 11 departments that report to the Town Manager are also governed by individual elected Boards: the Library's Board of Trustees and the Rescue Squad's Board.

These departments provide a variety of functions for the community including: police and rescue services; the maintenance and construction of infrastructure such as roads and sidewalks the issuing of licenses such as marriage, liquor and pet licenses; comprehensive planning; record keeping such as property deeds, birth, and death certificates; the administration of local building codes;

the administration of state and local wastewater permits; development review; the administration and enforcement of health and zoning regulations; regulation of elections; issuance of passports; assessment and tax collection; and the administration of parks and recreation programs as is further detailed in the Parks and Recreation Chapter. These services are housed primarily within the municipal offices located at 835 Blakely Road as well as the adjacent Public Works Garage and Rescue Building. The Burnham Memorial Library is located in the Village adjacent to the Town Meeting House at which most Boards and Commissions meet. In November of 2006 the voters of Colchester approved the construction of a new Town Hall to be located adjacent to the existing Town Offices as well as an upgrade and expansion of the Town Garage facility. This project was begun in 2007 and is expected to be completed in 2008. The existing Town Office building will be converted to a Police Station subsequent to the completion of the new Town Hall.



Town government relies upon the functions of several volunteer boards and commissions. The majority of these

boards and commissions are appointed by the Select Board and serve for little if any compensation. These volunteers assist the Town with everything from long-term planning, development review, planning community events, overseeing public facilities, to interment of the dead. While the community has been fortunate to have had the service of many citizens over the years, it has become increasingly difficult to find volunteers to fill vacancies on these boards in recent years. Without the service of volunteers, the Town may be faced with delaying project reviews for lack of quorums at meetings, decreasing levels of service, or fulfilling these roles with paid assistance increasing the costs of services to the Town. The following Boards and Commissions currently serve the Town:

- Planning Commission
- Development Review Board
- Parks and Recreation Board
- Cemetery Commission
- Board of Trustees, Burnham Memorial Library
- Board of Listers
- Conservation Commission

## **SEWAGE**

Historically, Colchester has relied upon onsite wastewater disposal systems to serve development. The majority of Colchester continues to be served by on-site wastewater with municipal sewer only available within the Exit 16, Severance Corners, and Fort Ethan Allen (Route 15) neighborhoods. Over 5,000 individual onsite wastewater systems exist within the Town. A functioning onsite system provides excellent sewage treatment. Municipal infrastructure to provide treatment for 5,000 sites would be exorbitant to construct and operate. Onsite systems represent an enormous deferred cost for the Town. The Town, therefore, has an interest in ensuring that these onsite systems are kept in good shape.

A 1997 wastewater facility plan commissioned by the Town found that existing development in Colchester was generally concentrated in areas favorable for individual onsite wastewater; however, many of the onsite systems were approaching the end of their useful lives. Telephone interviews undertaken in 1997 indicated that the majority of homeowners did not maintain their onsite systems through pump-outs or other methods. The 2003 Colchester Strategic Water Quality Plan provided several findings and recommendations for maintaining and enhancing water quality within the Town. These recommendations include considering more stringent design and construction standards for onsite wastewater and the implementation of an expanded onsite wastewater management

noted though, that the design and construction standards for onsite wastewater are dictated by the State of Vermont and the Town has limited ability to specify additional requirements. The concept of an onsite wastewater management program has yet to be explored by the Town. An onsite wastewater utility would require a due cost benefit analysis by the Town. Such a program could ensure public health and safety as well as provide for the continued viability of individual onsite systems which are often the most cost effective means of sewage disposal. The expansion of innovative onsite wastewater technologies and community systems will expand the opportunities to serve higher volumes of effluent within areas removed from municipal sewage infrastructure. With



*Town Seal*

In 2005 the Town of Colchester became the first community in the State of Vermont to take over the administration of State wastewater permits, providing the Town with additional authority over wastewater systems and providing the community with one-stop-shopping for State and local wastewater permits. It should be duly



increased volumes and technology will come increased maintenance requirements of onsite systems that may necessitate a utility or other management form. Community systems are currently in place within the Mills Point area of Colchester and have been evaluated for other areas such as Exit 17. The Town's 2002 Exit 17 Wastewater Study evaluated the feasibility of serving this future growth center with onsite technologies. While the costs of

implementing this study rival those of municipal sewer options, this study should be taken into account as development is proposed for this area and the costs associated with each option fluctuate. For these reasons, the Exit 17 future growth center area is included in the Town's approved sewer service area, although not currently constructed. Community systems, as they increase in frequency, may become more cost effective solutions to serving Colchester's decentralized developments than municipal sewerage.

Historically, a sewage treatment plant within Colchester was operated on the Winooski River until the 1980s. This plant was converted into a pump station in the late 1980's at the time an agreement was reached with the City of South Burlington to provide 650,000 gallons per day (g.p.d.) of wastewater treatment capacity for Colchester with 340,000 gallons of this allocation controlled by the Town and the remaining 310,000 being controlled by Fire District One. The historic plant provided limited capacity and the South Burlington agreement was seen as providing the most cost effective solution to providing the Town with additional wastewater capacity. In the 1990's several properties within the Exit 16 area that flowed to the Winooski sewage treatment plant were converted to flow into the Town's system.

Municipal sewers are currently available in the Exit 16, Severance Corners, and Fort Ethan Allen (Route 15) neighborhoods. A small portion of the Colchester Village neighborhood is also served by municipal sewer: the Breezy Acres and Hillcrest mobile home parks on Roosevelt and the Creek Farm Plaza. These areas are the Town's priority areas for growth as stated in the land use chapter as well as historic village areas that required sewer to rectify pre-existing problems. The collection system is owned and maintained by the Town of Colchester with the exception of the historic portion of Fort Ethan Allen that flows to the tri-town sewage treatment plant in Essex.

The Town of Colchester does not currently have surplus wastewater disposal capacity. Fire District One has approximately 130,000 g.p.d. surplus capacity however this capacity is restricted to the geographic area of the District which encompasses the Winooski Park area of Colchester (Route 15 area minus the historic Fort Ethan Allen area). The Town is in the process of applying for 350,000 additional g.p.d. allocation from South Burlington and hopes to obtain this allocation within the term of the plan. Care should be taken to develop priorities for this additional allocation and update the Town's wastewater management plan accordingly. The Town's Sewage Ordinance should prioritize wastewater allocation based on land use goals instead of a first-come first-served method of distributing allocation. This will allow infrastructure to be directed toward accomplishing land use priorities for the Town first and foremost.

It should be noted that there are three individual Fire Districts within Colchester. Fire Districts are authorized sewer service providers. While these Districts currently only provide water, the Districts are within their authority to establish sewer service independent of the Town. Fire District Two has indicated that it may consider becoming a sewer provider in the future although not during the term of this plan. The Town has a strong interest in being involved in any consideration of sewer service expansion. Sewer service areas are designated by the Town as part of its planning process. Any expansion of these areas impacts the Town's land use planning and will significantly impact land use patterns. The Fire Districts would need to work with the Town to designate sewer service areas. Designation of sewer service areas are subject to review and approval by the Town and should only be granted if such designation reinforces the Town's land use and environmental goals as stated within this plan and the Town's bylaws.

As the Town continues to develop and evaluate its options for providing a cost-efficient and environmentally sound method of treating wastewater, it should promote regional discussions regarding wastewater. The challenges Colchester faces are not unique and are shared by other growing communities such as Williston that also lack a wastewater treatment facility. While Colchester should consider constructing its own wastewater treatment facility if the need and opportunity arise, the Town should evaluate if this is the most cost-effective solution for the community. Phosphorus caps on wastewater plant discharges severely limit the potential for new wastewater treatment facilities, thereby necessitating a regional dialogue on how best to make use of current wastewater resources. Regionalization of wastewater treatment may prove to be the most environmentally sound and cost effective long-term solution for the majority of communities within the greater Burlington area. To this end, Colchester should advocate within organizations such as Chittenden County Regional Planning to analyze the feasibility of regional utilities.

### **POTABLE WATER**

The Town of Colchester has a variety of potable water sources that range from private dug wells to municipal water distribution systems. These diverse solutions are a result of the Town's geographically diverse areas and scattered development. While many properties are located within a fire district that provides municipal water, these districts have many areas that are not served by water infrastructure and are reliant upon wells. It should be noted that the Town Government does not currently provide potable water, but relies upon independently-operated fire districts to provide this service.

While the largest concentration of properties served by private potable water systems are within the Town's rural areas, there are also a variety of properties scattered



*Historic Water Tank at Fort Ethan Allen*

throughout Colchester that rely upon pumping water from Lake Champlain or other means of private water service.

Complicating the integrity of these systems are often the presence of inadequate or aging onsite septic systems, seasonal fluctuations in water supply, and in some areas, the presence of naturally occurring radioactive properties in bedrock. While the Federal Regulations regarding private water systems have recently increased the requirements for regular testing of private water systems implementation of these requirements often fall to homeowners' associations that lack the resources and technological expertise to accomplish compliance. As the Town continues to grow, it should ensure that property owners have access to municipal water supply systems in an effort to provide safe, efficient, and affordable potable water for the community.

Municipal water is distributed by five water systems: Colchester Fire District #1, Colchester Fire District # 2, Colchester Fire District #3, Malletts Bay Fire District, and the

Colchester Fire District. The later two water systems are currently owned and operated by the Champlain Water District (CWD), a regional water utility based out of South Burlington. However, the Town is in negotiations with CWD to purchase these two systems. All of the systems own their distribution systems and purchase water from other companies. Champlain Water District provides water to all of the water systems except Fire District #2 which purchases water from the City of Burlington. The fire districts are each independent, self-governing, municipal organizations. While the Town of Colchester does not currently manage water utilities, it does have authority over water supply and design through its administration of local building and zoning codes as well as the State water and wastewater permits and its Public Works Standards and Specifications.

There are currently conflicts between Town standards for water infrastructure and the standards permitted by the water systems. Generally, it is agreed that water lines should be looped wherever feasible to ensure continuity of water pressure. The Town recognizes these conflicts and will continue to work with the water systems to minimize conflicts whenever feasible. Due to the diversity of water systems, it has also been difficult to undertake comprehensive water needs planning for the community. This has come to light in recent years with the need for sufficient water storage for the community. While a twin water tank was placed on Water Tower Hill during the term of the previous plan, a new 500,000 gallon water tank will be necessary within the same geographic area as the twin tank during the term of this plan. As a result of this need, the Town has begun a 20-year water needs analysis in cooperation with the water systems. It should be noted that Fire District Two recently completed a master plan that anticipates the District has sufficient capacity for the near term to serve the infill development. The Town's cooperative process has been based upon the

Town's anticipated growth as it looks to implement its land use plan and the services necessary to fully implement these plans. As the Town continues to grow and looks to expand municipal water infrastructure and opportunities, the efficiency of scale of municipal fire districts should be examined. The Town should take appropriate actions to ensure adequate water supply for the implementation of its land use goals.

## **SOLID WASTE**

Colchester is a member community of the Chittenden Solid Waste District which disposes of the county's trash and oversees recycling, waste reduction and recently instituted composting program. While Colchester once had an active landfill within the Exit 16 vicinity, Colchester now exports its waste and recycling via the District.

Recycling is mandatory for all communities within the Solid Waste District. Waste and recycling curbside pickup is provided within Colchester by private companies which contract with the District. District drop-off centers are available to those wishing to self-haul waste and recycling. While a drop-off center recently existed within the Colchester municipal complex on Blakely Road, this facility needed to be upgraded and relocated to accommodate the approved Town Hall and Town Garage projects. This facility should be relocated within Colchester. Drop-off facilities are located in the adjacent communities of Essex, Milton, South Burlington, and Burlington. Rover pick-ups for specialized waste, such as household hazardous waste, are available from time to time in Colchester; however, permanent hazardous waste drop-off services are available at the Burlington facility. Each year, in May, Colchester participates in Green Up Day and holds a collection at the Town Offices. This event helps to stem the tide of illegal dumping in Colchester and should continue to be supported by the Town and the District.



*East Lakeshore Drive Stormwater Repair*

## **STORMWATER**

The Town of Colchester has many great assets with the more prominent features being Malletts Bay, the lake and its many streams. Protection of the water's quality has become a prominent goal community wide. In 2003, the Colchester Strategic Water Quality Plan was produced in an effort to help the Town achieve this goal. Stormwater has been identified as posing a threat to water quality as various community land uses can result in erosion, flooding and a reduction of the time available for adequate treatment of stormwater runoff and can cause periods of unacceptable levels of contamination of surface waters. Stormwater is a serious problem that should be examined under all planning and development activities.

Colchester is a MS4 community with stormwater impaired watersheds. The Town has collaborated with several other communities to form the Chittenden County Regional Stormwater Education program in an effort to educate the greater community about stormwater runoff. The Town has developed several action plans regarding stormwater including an integrated water resources plan, a stormwater management plan, an illicit discharge detection plan, and a stormwater outfall assessment plan. Some of the various on-going actions the Town has taken to ensure against stormwater becoming a threat to public health, the environment and the economy of the community include water quality monitoring, maintenance plans for public infrastructure, storm drain stenciling, the implementation of various ordinances, and capital plans such as the Belwood Drainage Project and the planned Fort Ethan Allen Stormwater Improvements Plan.

The Town has recently adopted Chapter 18 of the Colchester Code of Ordinance regulating stormwater. This regulation ensures that projects which can impact water quality but do not trigger State review are reviewed at the local level for stormwater management and erosion

control. New stormwater treatment facilities that treat runoff from public infrastructure constructed as a part of developments are required to enter into co-applicancy agreements with the Town to define responsibilities, ownership, and permitting obligations. The Town is continually seeking methods to effectively and efficiently treat stormwater. During the term of this plan the Town will begin to implement an Environmental Protection Agency Demonstration Grant that will look to town-wide water quality issues and holistic solutions. These solutions may possibly include the development of a comprehensive stormwater utility in the long-range planning of the Town that could address the various and evolving issues concerning water quality.

### **FIRE FIGHTING AND PREVENTION**

The community is served by volunteer fire fighting and prevention services consisting primarily of the Colchester Center Volunteer Fire Company and the Malletts Bay Fire Department. These organizations are independent from the Town and are contracted to provide fire fighting and prevention services for the community. A portion of the Town budget funds these organizations in exchange for their services. Colchester Center main-tains a station in the Colchester Village as well as the Clay Point neighborhoods while Malletts Bay maintains a station on Church Road in the Porters Point neighborhood.

Saint Michael's College (SMC) operates a Fire Department that is a brigade to the Colchester Center Volunteer Fire Company. While this Department is primarily responsible for calls within the vicinity of the college campus on Route 15, the Company and the Department operate within a contiguous area. Saint Michael's also has a Rescue Department that operates in conjunction with the Colchester Rescue Squad for operations within Colchester. SMC Rescue also serves the greater Burlington area and is one of the busiest volunteer



rescue services in Vermont, answering over 2000 calls per year.

The Colchester Technical Rescue Team operates in cooperation with the Colchester Rescue Squad and provides swift-water rescues and dive recoveries for the greater region. This volunteer team often participates in lost or missing person searches and operates a Mobile Support Unit for the State Department of Public Safety. The Team utilizes the Colchester Rescue Squad's facilities

and stores its equipment at this location. Additional space may be required to adequately and appropriately store the Team's equipment out of the elements during the term of this plan.



*Colchester Rescue CPR Course*

Colchester is fortunate to have a high level of service from these volunteer organizations that have resulted in Colchester obtaining an Insurance Services Organization Rating of Class Three in 2000 (Class 1 being the safest and Class 10 lacking fire protection). This rating results in low fire insurance premiums for community members, homeowners, and business owners. Colchester also benefits from mutual aid agreements with adjacent municipalities that result in additional fire support from neighboring towns in times of need.

These fire protection organizations rely upon volunteers to perform critical, demanding and potentially dangerous services. As noted in the Town Government section, volunteers are becoming tougher to come by for service to the Town. As training requirements become more demanding and the percentage of daytime calls increases,

it will continue to become more difficult to staff these emergency services with volunteers. The Town may, in its long range planning, need to evaluate the implementation of paid staff similar to what has been done with the Rescue Squad to help meet emergency service needs. In

2005 Colchester Center responded to over 650 calls while Malletts Bay responded to over 400 calls.

As the Town continues to develop, fire protection measures should continue to be evaluated to minimize threats to life and property. Colchester has adopted within Chapter Seven of the Colchester Code of Ordinance fire protection standards that often exceed State code requirements. Sprinklers are always recommended and often required for construction within Colchester. The Town will continue to work with the Metropolitan Planning Organization and the State to ensure that pre-emption devices are installed on all new and retrofitted traffic lights. The effect of land use goals and fire protection services on one another should be recognized and a balance sought. Scattered development patterns often serve to strain fire protection services and delay response time while dense development such as anticipated within a growth center can offer new challenges to fire protection. As Colchester strives to implement its land use goals, the Town should continue the dialogue with fire protection agencies to minimize adverse impacts to fire services while fulfilling its land use goals.

## REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

The Town of Colchester participates in or provides funding for a number of regional agencies including:

- Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
- Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Winooski Valley Park District
- Chittenden Solid Waste District
- Chittenden County Court System
- Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation
- Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce
- Howard Center for Human Services
- Local Motion
- Special Service Transportation Agency

These agencies provide a variety of services for the community including transportation services for the physically impaired and elderly, mental health services, tourism promotion, stewardship of natural areas, and



regional traffic planning. A variety of other community service organizations provide services within the community including the United Way of Chittenden County, the Women's Rape Crisis Center, and the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf. These agencies and

organizations assist the Town in maintaining the fabric of the community, providing services for individuals with special needs, and planning for the future of the Town within its greater regional community. For these reasons, the Town will continue to work cooperatively with various agencies and organizations to the best of its ability.

## POLICIES

1. The Town should continue to work with the State to successfully administer the State's water and wastewater permitting program. To this end, the State should be encouraged to create efficiencies and improvements to this program that better facilitate permitting efficiencies at the local level.
2. The Town should investigate the feasibility of a local onsite wastewater management program.
3. On-site septic systems will continue to be cost-effective solutions for providing wastewater disposal outside of Colchester's sewer service areas during the term of this plan. The Town should continue to encourage upgrades and new technologies that improve the environmental soundness of onsite systems.
4. The 2002 Exit 17 Wastewater Study should be a reference for development within this area until such time as plans may be considered to establish municipal sewer service within this area.
5. The Town will obtain 350,000 additional wastewater g.p.d. allocation from South Burlington during the term of the plan.
6. Care should be taken to develop priorities for wastewater allocation and update the Town's wastewater management plan accordingly during the term of this plan. The Town's Sewage Ordinance should prioritize wastewater allocation based on land use goals instead of a first-come first-served method of distributing allocation.

7. Sewer service areas shall be planned to implement the community's land use planning goals as provided within this plan and to maximize the cost-effectiveness of investments.
8. The Town shall participate in any consideration of sewer service expansion by other organizations, such as Fire Districts, as any expansion of sewer service areas impacts the Town's land use planning and has the potential to reprioritize priority areas for growth.
9. The Town shall participate in and encourage regional discussions regarding wastewater and regional wastewater utilities.
10. As the Town continues to grow, it should ensure that property owners have access to municipal water supply systems in an effort to provide safe, efficient, and affordable potable water for the community where possible.
11. Water lines should be looped wherever feasible to ensure continuity of water pressure.
12. The Town should take appropriate actions to ensure adequate water supply for the implementation of its land use goals. During the term of this plan, the Town should work to implement, in conjunction with the Fire Districts, the recommendations of the current 20-year water needs analysis project.
13. As the Town continues to grow and looks to expand municipal water infrastructure and opportunities, the efficiency of scale of municipal fire districts should be examined.
14. The Town should continue to work with the Chittenden Solid Waste District to upgrade and relocate the community's drop-off center.
15. The Town should continue its current efforts regarding stormwater and, where feasible, expand these efforts.
16. The Town should evaluate the feasibility of a comprehensive stormwater utility in its long-range planning.
17. The Town will continue to work to ensure that pre-emption devices are installed on all new and retrofitted traffic lights.
18. The effect of land use goals and fire protection services on one another should be recognized and a balance sought. As Colchester strives to implement its land use goals, the Town should continue the dialogue with fire protection agencies to minimize adverse impacts to fire services while fulfilling its land use goals.
19. The Town will continue to work cooperatively with the various agencies and organizations that assist the Town in maintaining the fabric of the community, providing services for individuals with special needs, and planning for the future of the Town within its greater regional community.
20. Protecting surface water from stormwater impacts is a high priority in review of proposed developments.

# 12 : IMPLEMENTATION

Throughout this Plan policies are recommended that will implement the intent of this Plan. Many of these policies are broad and speak to diversified efforts already underway. The best way to determine the intent of the recommended policy is to comprehensively read through the Plan to understand the context for these recommendations. The following is intended to be a summary of the various policies of this plan and the tools that may be required to implement them.

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

A variety of implementation techniques should be evaluated to assist in implementing this plan. The Implementation Summary notes several broad categories of implementation techniques that range from education to regulatory changes to funding priorities. There are several recommended policies that are long-range and not intended to be implemented during the term of this plan. These policies are noted in the Summary. Other policies within this plan are meant to reinforce current regulations, policies, and practices and do not require any substantial actions. It should be recognized that while maintenance of current policies and regulations should not change the intended principles of the policies or regulations, maintenance does often require flexibility to evaluate and include regular housekeeping changes. Educational efforts include working with individuals and organizations to promote certain opportunities or programs. Coordination includes sustaining local, regional and state dialogues with various governmental agencies, not-for-profits, and groups. Planning and studies are recommended actions for policies that need to be further developed through such efforts as land use planning, strategic planning, studying capacity,

and a wide range of investigative techniques and research. Some policies will require changes to current regulations, such as land use regulations, or policies such as sewer allocation. Still other policies will require funds in order to implement. The funding priority category is not limited to local funding but includes regional, state, and private enterprise sources.

While there are many policies recommended within this plan, the principal concept at the core of this plan is that the land use plan for the Town should govern the future actions of the Town. Not all policies will be implemented during the five year term of this plan. Many policies are more long-range and designed to implement the land use plan for the Town as the Town gradually evolves. For this reason, care should be taken in changing the course of this plan even though the term of the plan is set at five year intervals. Long term benefits should generally outweigh short-term gains. No one policy should be evaluated in and of itself. In implementing the Town Plan, the whole should always outweigh the sum of its parts.

POLICIES BY CHAPTER	NO ACTION WARRANTED DURING TERM OF PLAN	MAINTAIN CURRENT POLICIES & REGULATIONS	EDUCATION	COORDINATION	PLANNING & STUDIES	REGULATORY & POLICY CHANGES NEEDED	FUNDING PRIORITY
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LAND USE</b>							
<b>SEVERANCE CORNERS</b>							
1. No changes in the current zoning are anticipated over the term of this plan. Density bonuses beyond those permitted under current zoning or expansion of the growth center should only be considered if required by State Growth Center Designation requirements.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>					
2. Development for this area should be balanced in terms of residential and commercial development.		<b>X</b>					
3. This area is a high priority for infrastructure.						<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
4. The Town should work to implement the recommendations of the bicycle and pedestrian study of this area conducted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization.				<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>
5. The Town should obtain State New Town Center designation and State Growth Center designation for Severance Corners.				<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		

<b>POLICIES BY CHAPTER</b>	<b>NO ACTION WARRANTED DURING TERM OF PLAN</b>	<b>MAINTAIN CURRENT POLICIES &amp; REGULATIONS</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>COORDINATION</b>	<b>PLANNING &amp; STUDIES</b>	<b>REGULATORY &amp; POLICY CHANGES NEEDED</b>	<b>FUNDING PRIORITY</b>
6. The Town should continue to work with the State of Vermont and developers within the growth center to preserve options for this intersection and ensure that improvements occur in a manner that will continue to facilitate growth within the neighborhood.				X			X
7. This area is designated as a growth center on the Future Land Use Map.		X					
<b>EXIT 17</b>							
1. Zoning within the future growth center shall continue to be in accordance with the Exit 17 Growth Center Plan (2000). No substantial changes in zoning or density in this neighborhood should be considered within the term of this plan.	X	X					
2. Plans should be developed to serve the land west of Interstate 89 with potable water.	X				X		

POLICIES BY CHAPTER	NO ACTION WARRANTED DURING TERM OF PLAN	MAINTAIN CURRENT POLICIES & REGULATIONS	EDUCATION	COORDINATION	PLANNING & STUDIES	REGULATORY & POLICY CHANGES NEEDED	FUNDING PRIORITY
<p>3. The 2006 Exit 17 Traffic Scoping Project should be accommodated in development plans. To this end, the Town may request the Metropolitan Planning Organization to assist in reviewing traffic impacts of proposed developments. The Town should continue to work with the State to implement traffic improvements within the area that preserve capacity for the growth center and sufficiently handle background growth in traffic.</p>				X	X		
<p>4. Development within the growth center should be in accordance with long-term plans for this area which include pedestrian, bicycle, infrastructure, and roadway improvements. Limited developments under current conditions should be planned to accommodate future infill. The 2003 Exit 17 Wastewater Study should be utilized in considering proposed development within this neighborhood.</p>		X					
<p>5. Exit 17 is a gateway to Colchester, Franklin County, The Champlain Islands, and Milton. These communities should realize and respect the impact their communities have on this neighborhood. The Town will continue to work with these adjacent communities in planning for the future of Exit 17.</p>				X			

<b>POLICIES BY CHAPTER</b>	<b>NO ACTION WARRANTED DURING TERM OF PLAN</b>	<b>MAINTAIN CURRENT POLICIES &amp; REGULATIONS</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>COORDINATION</b>	<b>PLANNING &amp; STUDIES</b>	<b>REGULATORY &amp; POLICY CHANGES NEEDED</b>	<b>FUNDING PRIORITY</b>
6. This area is designated as suburban residential, village mixed use, and growth center on the Future Land Use Map		X					
<b>EXIT 16</b>							
1. This area should continue to be the dominant commercial and business center for Colchester.		X					
2. The Town should provide opportunities for high-tech and research uses within this area and continue to work with the University in accommodating its research facilities and other high-tech developments as well as complementary amenities within the community that will make Colchester competitive with other communities for these uses.		X		X			
3. Infrastructure improvements necessary for pedestrian, bicycle, and traffic circulation as well as streetscape improvements is a priority to ensuring the continued economic viability of this area.		X		X			X
4. A future connection to Route 15 and a full interchange at Exit 15 are encouraged.	X			X			

<b>POLICIES BY CHAPTER</b>	<b>NO ACTION WARRANTED DURING TERM OF PLAN</b>	<b>MAINTAIN CURRENT POLICIES &amp; REGULATIONS</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>COORDINATION</b>	<b>PLANNING &amp; STUDIES</b>	<b>REGULATORY &amp; POLICY CHANGES NEEDED</b>	<b>FUNDING PRIORITY</b>
5. Residential development within the commercial and industrial areas is inappropriate during the term of this plan, however, the Planning Commission may consider residential in long-term planning in a comprehensive manner. Single-family residences should not be allowed.	<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>		
6. This neighborhood is designated as commercial/industrial on the Future Land Use Map.		<b>X</b>					
<b>FORT ETHAN ALLEN</b>							
1. No changes in zoning are needed over the term of this plan for this area. The campus/institutional uses and the historic character of Fort Ethan Allen should be maintained and enhanced.		<b>X</b>					
2. The balance among the businesses, residences, and cultural facilities within this area should be maintained and enhanced to include community gathering places, civic facilities and other amenities that would foster the development of the neighborhood as a cultural center.		<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>		

<b>POLICIES BY CHAPTER</b>	<b>NO ACTION WARRANTED DURING TERM OF PLAN</b>	<b>MAINTAIN CURRENT POLICIES &amp; REGULATIONS</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>COORDINATION</b>	<b>PLANNING &amp; STUDIES</b>	<b>REGULATORY &amp; POLICY CHANGES NEEDED</b>	<b>FUNDING PRIORITY</b>
3. High-tech industry, such as the communications industry, should be encouraged at Fort Ethan Allen.		X		X			
4. The Town should maintain its current cooperation and outreach with the various institutions of this neighborhood to encourage the expansion and vitality of these businesses within Colchester.				X			
5. Improvements to Route 15 are needed to better facilitate current volumes of traffic; however, these improvements should not be done at the expense of local traffic and circulation. The Town should continue to work with Route 15 communities to complete bicycle and pedestrian facilities for safe access along the Route 15 corridor.				X	X		X
6. A full interchange at Exit 15 and connection road between Exit 16 and Route 15 should be pursued by the Town.	X			X			
7. The Campus Connector Road should be completed within the term of this plan and incorporated into the Official Map.		X		X			X

<b>POLICIES BY CHAPTER</b>	<b>NO ACTION WARRANTED DURING TERM OF PLAN</b>	<b>MAINTAIN CURRENT POLICIES &amp; REGULATIONS</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>COORDINATION</b>	<b>PLANNING &amp; STUDIES</b>	<b>REGULATORY &amp; POLICY CHANGES NEEDED</b>	<b>FUNDING PRIORITY</b>
8. The Town should continue to work with the Metropolitan Planning Organization to mitigate the possible impacts of increased truck traffic on Route 15 and Lime Kiln Road.				X			
9. Long term, the Town should address how Camp Johnson could be adapted should the current military use be abandoned. Reuse of this area should accommodate the existing institutions in the area as well as economic expansion that could link to Exit 16. Environmental concerns such as the presence of sandplains and brownfields could present difficulties in the adaptive reuse of the Camp.	X				X		
10. This area has been designated as village mixed use on the Future Land Use Map.		X					
<b>COLCHESTER VILLAGE</b>							
1. The entire Village area would benefit from a comprehensive land use plan. The core of the Village should be treated separately from the greater Village area.					X	X	

<b>POLICIES BY CHAPTER</b>	<b>NO ACTION WARRANTED DURING TERM OF PLAN</b>	<b>MAINTAIN CURRENT POLICIES &amp; REGULATIONS</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>COORDINATION</b>	<b>PLANNING &amp; STUDIES</b>	<b>REGULATORY &amp; POLICY CHANGES NEEDED</b>	<b>FUNDING PRIORITY</b>
2. Opportunities for residential infill outside the Village core should be examined although care must be taken to preserve connectivity of natural resources, minimize impacts to agriculture, and not to expand the Village north or south into rural areas.					<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
3. Improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities particularly between neighborhoods outlying the Village core such as Country Meadows and Creek Farm developments and the core are a priority.					<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
4. Mixed use zoning such as a general development district or a new district should be considered for the Village core during the term of this plan that respects the historic character and encourages the continued development of small businesses, appropriate infill, and the retention of residential. To this end, design review guidelines may be needed to allow for a diverse possibility of businesses without detracting from the character of the Village.					<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
5. Recreational facilities, such as a park, are needed to serve the Village. Plans are currently underway for the purchase and development of a park during the term of this plan. These facilities should be connected with the school and other public buildings in the Village through pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities.				<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>

<b>POLICIES BY CHAPTER</b>	<b>NO ACTION WARRANTED DURING TERM OF PLAN</b>	<b>MAINTAIN CURRENT POLICIES &amp; REGULATIONS</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>COORDINATION</b>	<b>PLANNING &amp; STUDIES</b>	<b>REGULATORY &amp; POLICY CHANGES NEEDED</b>	<b>FUNDING PRIORITY</b>
6. The Town should continue to promote the completion of the Circumferential Highway in order to curtail the dumping of regional truck and commuter traffic onto Main Street.				X			X
7. The Town should continue to work at the Regional and State levels to accelerate improvements made to the intersections of Roosevelt Highway and Route 2A.				X			X
8. This area is designated as village mixed use on the Future Land Use Map.		X					
<b>WEST LAKESHORE DRIVE</b>							
1. At the time of the drafting of this plan, the Planning Commission was endeavoring to create a comprehensive land use plan for this neighborhood and recommended zoning. Consideration of the outcome of this effort should take place during the term of this plan.					X		
2. Land use plans should take into account the viability of on-site septic as well as municipal sewer.					X		
3. Development in this area should meet the highest possible standards to protect water quality in Malletts Bay.					X	X	

<b>POLICIES BY CHAPTER</b>	<b>NO ACTION WARRANTED DURING TERM OF PLAN</b>	<b>MAINTAIN CURRENT POLICIES &amp; REGULATIONS</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>COORDINATION</b>	<b>PLANNING &amp; STUDIES</b>	<b>REGULATORY &amp; POLICY CHANGES NEEDED</b>	<b>FUNDING PRIORITY</b>
4. This area is designated as village mixed use on the Future Land Use Map.		X			X		
<b>TOWN SERVICES CENTER</b>							
1. Most expansion of Town facilities should take place in this area if possible. The same is recommended for school facilities.							X
2. This is a high priority area for improvements to transportation infrastructure.				X			X
3. Land in this area may be considered for re-zoning from residential to other categories that allows for development of governmental facilities, recreation facilities and/or professional and small scale commercial uses.						X	
4. This area is designated as village mixed use on the Future Land Use Map.		X					
<b>PRIM ROAD / WARNER'S CORNERS / HEINEBERG DRIVE</b>							
1. The Planning Commission should create a comprehensive land use plan for this neighborhood over the term of this plan that takes into account environmental restrictions and infrastructure.					X		

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2. Any rezonings within this neighborhood should be comprehensive.					X	X	
3. Neighborhood scale commercial services should be encouraged in this corridor without allowing for high-turnover traffic uses that could further degrade traffic beyond current problems. To this end, a small business overlay district may be considered for portions of the neighborhood that allows for dense commercial without detriment to the surrounding residential uses.					X	X	
4. Multiple uses and mixed uses should be allowed on properties as long as they are in keeping with the intended village mixed use future land use for the area.					X	X	
5. Comprehensive land use plans should be in place prior to any infrastructure improvements.					X		
6. It is important to recognize that the businesses within this neighborhood have the ability to serve the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Efforts should be made to sustain this neighborhood as the commercial service area for the adjacent medium and high density residential neighborhoods.					X	X	

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7. The Town will work with the Metropolitan Planning Organization and the State to implement the Route 127 Corridor Plan. The Warner's Corners portion of this plan should be implemented during the term of this plan.				X			X
8. New curb-cuts to Heineberg Drive and Prim Road are to be discouraged. Access management planning for this corridor should be a priority.				X		X	
9. Completion of the Circumferential Highway between I-89 and the Northern Connector is important to provide an alternate east/west roadway to relieve traffic congestion on Prim Road and Heineberg Drive and improve traffic safety.				X			X
10. Public transportation that would link this neighborhood to the north end of Burlington is encouraged.				X			
11. This area is designated as village mixed use on the Future Land Use Map.		X			X		
<b>SHIPMAN HILL</b>							

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1. During the term of this plan, the Planning Commission should develop a comprehensive land use plan for this neighborhood that promotes the continued agricultural use of this area while respecting property owners' needs to access the equity in their land.					X		
2. The Planning Commission should analyze the development potential under the proposed conservation district zoning in light of the primary agricultural soils restrictions imposed by the State, possibly conducting market analyses of individual properties. While this area should be planned for comprehensively, sub areas within the neighborhood should be recognized.					X		
3. The current transfer of development rights provision in the Zoning Regulations should be reevaluated as the Planning Commission continues to work with property owners on solutions for balancing continued agriculture use with the need of owners' to access the equity in their land.					X		
4. Should State restrictions on primary agricultural soils change substantially, the Planning Commission should examine any new opportunities that may accomplish the goal of balancing the continued agricultural use of this area while respecting property owners' needs to access the equity in their land.				X	X		

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5. The future of this neighborhood area should include opportunities for agricultural tourism and the commercial elements that are necessitated by the changing face of agriculture.			X		X	X	
6. The Town should encourage the work of land trusts to provide land owners with fair compensation for their development rights.			X	X			X
7. Rezoning of this area to a higher-intensity district that could not be developed under current State Primary Agricultural Soil restrictions should not be considered as this would unduly increase tax burdens on property owners without providing for a means of accessing the equity in their land.					X		
8. Piecemeal rezoning of agricultural land in this area to residential use should be discouraged in order to avoid conflicts between residential and agricultural uses.					X		
9. The Campus Connector Road should be completed within the term of this plan and incorporated into the Official Map.		X			X		
<b>BEAN / MACRAE</b>							

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1. The character of the area should be sustained with no substantial changes to density.	<b>X</b>						
2. Development should be sensitive to existing environmental issues such as drainage issues, marginal soils, unstable river banks, wildlife habitat, and floodplains.		<b>X</b>					
3. This area is designated as suburban residential and rural on the Future Land Use Map.		<b>X</b>					
<b>PORTERS POINT</b>							
1. The residential character of the area should be maintained; however, increases in densities to promote residential infill should be considered.		<b>X</b>					
2. Additional pedestrian and bicycle facilities in this area are planned to better connect the neighborhood internally and externally and should be addressed as part of any development application.							<b>X</b>
3. Public transportation opportunities within this neighborhood should be planned for in the long-term.				<b>X</b>			
4. This area should be recognized as significantly contributing to the community's affordable housing stock and care taken to preserve these opportunities as the neighborhood continues to transition.		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		

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5. This area is shown as suburban residential on the Future Land Use Map.		X					
<b>BLAKELY ROAD</b>							
1. The character of the area should be maintained. No increases in density should be considered within the time frame of this plan.	X						
2. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities should be constructed within this area that connect to the neighborhoods to the east and west. Recreation areas are also encouraged.							X
3. This area is designated as suburban residential on the Future Land Use Map.		X					
<b>SEVERANCE ROAD</b>							
1. Any consideration of density increases should adequately address traffic safety on Severance Road, storm water impairments to Sunderland Brook, and on-site septic capacity. Density increases must not adversely impact existing agricultural uses or the planned Circ Highway.					X		

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2. A comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian network must be incorporated into both short-term and long-term plans for this area that will facilitate connection to the Severance Corners growth center.					X		
3. This area is designated as suburban residential on the Future Land Use Map.		X					
<b>EAST LAKESHORE DRIVE VICINITY</b>							
1. Areas along the Lake should continue to be a priority for conservation particularly those areas immediately adjacent to existing Town or State owned lands.		X					X
2. Reconstruction of structures between East Lakeshore Drive and the Lake should preserve views from the road of the Lake and provide for adequate bank stabilization.						X	
3. Water quality remains a high concern in this neighborhood. The Town should continue to encourage the upgrading of on-site septic systems within this area and educate homeowners on system maintenance. To this end, an on-site sewage disposal management program could be developed.			X		X		

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4. Traffic safety is a high-priority issue within this area. Pedestrian and bicycle circulation should be encouraged and additional traffic should be discouraged. Design improvements to East Lakeshore Drive are a traffic safety priority; however, traffic reduction measures should also be considered.			X	X			X
5. This area is designated a combination of suburban residential and rural on the Future Land Use Map.		X					
<b>MARBLE ISLAND / MALLETT'S HEAD</b>							
1. Development applications, both residential and non-residential, in this area need to be carefully evaluated for compatibility with surrounding uses.		X					
2. Continued development of recreational amenities in keeping with the character of the area, such as walking paths, should be encouraged to the greatest extent possible.		X					
3. The right of Brown Ledge Camp to keep horses for their camp use should be in no way limited.		X					

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4. Existing residential densities and commercial/recreational uses should be retained and embellished; however, commercial uses not compatible with the character of the area should not be allowed. Rezoning of the area currently designated as GD1 may be considered in the long term to a new district in order to keep this balance.		X					
5. The natural area, with views, at the crest of Malletts Head should be considered for acquisition by a Land Trust or the Town.				X			X
6. Public access to the Lake should be maintained in this neighborhood.							X
7. This neighborhood is designated as suburban residential on the Future Land Use Map.		X					
<b>MALLETTS BAY AVENUE</b>							
1. No re-zonings within this area should be considered within the time frame of this plan.	X	X					
2. The adjacent floodplains and wetlands are undevelopable and should continue to be excluded from density calculations for development.	X	X					

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3. Pedestrian amenities along Malletts Bay Avenue are needed due to high residential densities along the Winooski Town Line and increased traffic.							<b>X</b>
4. New development should be designed to be sensitive to pre-existing agricultural uses, natural resources, industry, and the design limitations of Malletts Bay Avenue.		<b>X</b>					
5. This area is designated a combination of suburban residential and commercial/industrial on the Future Land Use Map.		<b>X</b>					
<b>CLAY POINT AREA</b>							
1. Frontage on public roads should continue to be required for any new subdivisions.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>					
2. Development on existing lots without frontage should be allowed only by the Development Review Board if negative impacts to the character of the area can be mitigated and sufficient access can be constructed.		<b>X</b>					
3. Agricultural uses should continue to be allowed and encouraged within this area.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>					

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4. No re-zonings within this area should be considered within the time frame of this plan. Allowed development densities should not be increased beyond the levels allowed at the time of adoption of this plan.	X	X					
5. Although not currently a priority, long-term the Town should evaluate developing a unique zoning district for this area that recognizes the natural features of the area and develops target densities in-line with preserving these amenities.	X						
6. This area is designated as rural on the Future Land Use Map.		X					
<b>POOR FARM ROAD</b>							
1. This is an area that should not be rezoned within the time-frame of this plan.	X	X					
2. Connections to the Poor Farm Road sewer line should continue to be prohibited by the Town.	X	X					

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<p>3. The intersections of Poor Farm Road are a safety concern. Any additional development accessed off of Poor Farm Road should be evaluated for traffic impacts to these intersections. Improvement to Poor Farm Road and its intersections should be studied and considered in conjunction with any development proposals. New development should not be allowed to occur unless plans for recommended road improvements also occur.</p>		X		X			
<p>4. This area is designated as rural on the Future Land Use Map</p>		X					
<b>MILL POND</b>							
<p>1. This is an area that should not be rezoned within the time-frame of this plan.</p>	X	X					
<p>2. Efforts should be made to financially encourage those still farming to continue.</p>			X	X			X
<p>3. While road improvements such as the replacement of the Mill Pond Bridge are necessary, care should be taken to discourage the use of Mill Pond Road as an alternate commuter route to Roosevelt Highway.</p>				X			X

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4. This area is designated as rural on the Future Land Use Map.		X					
<b>NORTHEAST QUADRANT</b>							
1. The zoning districts shall remain agricultural or very low-density residential.	X	X					
2. The preservation of additional land surrounding Colchester Pond should be encouraged.		X	X	X			
3. The Town should work to discourage the use of East Road as an alternate commuter route to Roosevelt Highway.				X			
4. Residential construction and outdoor recreational opportunities should positively reinforce the agricultural activities in this area.		X					
5. Property owners and residents should be made aware of the radioactive bedrock properties and new development should not increase the degree of human exposure to these properties.			X				
6. The rail line should be recognized as an important transportation corridor which should be maintained.		X					
7. Railyards and rail spurs are not in keeping with the rural character of the area and should not be permitted.		X					
8. This area is designated as rural on the Future Land Use Map		X					

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<b>CHAPTER THREE: CULTURAL RESOURCES</b>							
1. Predictive modeling of archaeological sites should be explored by the Town as a tool to locate potentially important sites and assist developers in recognizing archaeological resources before final plans are developed and thereby reducing project costs. To the extent possible, the Town should encourage important archaeological sites be avoided and thereby preserved for future generations.			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			
2. The State Register and National Register listings for the town should be used to assess the significance of historic buildings and structures. These listings should be maintained and updated by the Town to provide accurate documentation of the Town's historic resources.			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			
3. Colchester's historic and cultural properties are opportunities for economic development through expanded tourism and adaptive reuse of historic buildings. The Town should encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of all historic structures in Colchester through its regulations, policies, and budget. Changes to historic structures should be sympathetic to the structure and, to the extent possible, in accordance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>				

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4. The Town should explore participating in the Certified Local Government program and other State or Federal historic preservation programs.			X	X			X
5. Community organizations, such as the Historical Society, that serve as stewards of the Town's history and its historical and cultural resources are important community assets and should be sustained.		X		X			
6. The Burnham Library should continue to provide life-long learning opportunities and assistance with early childhood literacy as it expands upon its mission to become a clearing-house for information on arts, culture, and related events in Colchester.		X		X			
7. Care should be taken to maintain and enhance the Village Green as an important amenity and public gathering place.		X		X			
8. Satellite library facilities in the Town's growth centers and other villages should be explored as a way of broadening the Library's audience and providing additional space.					X		

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9. Private development of cultural facilities, including religious facilities, should continue to be encouraged. As Colchester continues to grow more diverse, religious organizations will be continue to be important in facilitating a sense of community while supporting cultural diversity.		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>			
10. As the community becomes more diverse, the Town should look to preserve and expand upon its cultural facilities, including private facilities, in order to sustain and enhance the community's quality of life. Cultural facilities should continue to be integrated into the existing fabric of the community as well as incorporated in multi-use areas.		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>			
11. The work of organizations such as the VCWA should be supported as providing exposure to and education on various cultures.				<b>X</b>			
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: NATURAL RESOURCES</b>							
1. The Town should continue to encourage new development as well as re-development that is sensitive to the Lake views.		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>				
2. The Town will continue to work with other organizations and governments to find long-term cost effective solutions to water quality issues.				<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		

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3. The Town should work with its neighbors within the Winooski River Basin to improve water quality per the Basin Plan under development by the State.				X			
4. The Town should also participate in this Lamoille River Basin planning process.				X			
5. New development and redevelopment of properties along the Winooski and Lamoille Rivers should stabilize the banks and meet current setbacks in order to limit threats to water quality as well as threats to public infrastructure and public welfare.		X		X			
6. Colchester should maintain its current Flood Plain Zoning District standards prohibiting any new floodplain construction to protect the public good.		X		X			
7. The Town should maintain its cooperation with Federal Agencies in reviewing floodplain projects.		X		X			
8. The Town should continue to maintain communications with the State and Federal permitting agencies to provide consistency in regulating wetlands to the greatest extent practicable.		X		X			
9. Colchester should maintain its Water Protection Overlay District and adapt these regulations as needed to comply with all applicable State requirements.		X		X			

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10. The Town should evaluate connectivity between significant natural resources that would foster wildlife habitat.					X		
11. The Town will continue to work with State agencies to determine suitable alternatives for Sandplain areas.				X			
12. Efforts to sustain and enhance on-site interpretive resources and awareness of Open Space resources should be supported by the Town.			X				
13. The Town of Colchester should continue to maintain and enhance its GIS system in part to better delineate and define geographic data as well as involve the public in management and stewardship of natural resources.		X	X				
14. Wildlife habitat mapping should be enhanced.					X		
15. As development occurs on smaller and smaller lots, PUD minimum lot size and other requirements should be reviewed to ensure continued compliance with the intent of these regulations.		X					

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16. Large tracts of undeveloped land should be comprehensively planned for connectivity to adjacent parcels and natural areas. Well-thought-out conservation plans are encouraged and piece-meal developments of large tracts of land are discouraged.		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>			
17. The Colchester Land Trust should assist the Town in open space conservation efforts and to work with these Boards and Departments to achieve Town open space goals.				<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>
18. Management plans should be developed or sustained for the Town's various natural areas, parks, conserved land, and public parcels that include significant natural resources.			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		
19. The Town encourages the development of management plans for privately held lands that contain significant natural resources as well as privately conserved land such as PUD open space lots.			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			
20. The Town should develop a policy of prioritization for land acquisition and study preferred financing options.					<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
21. The 2000 Open Space Plan should be referenced for specific, high-priority parcels for conservation and recommended conservation techniques.				<b>X</b>			

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22. Care should be taken to conserve important features and mitigate any long term adverse impacts of development to natural resource areas of significance listed within this Chapter.		X		X			X
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: PARKS &amp; RECREATION</b>							
1. The Town should undertake a comprehensive capital planning process for future parks and recreation needs including the need for a Community Recreation Center. Prioritized guidelines for park and natural area acquisition should be developed noting where resources should be acquired.				X	X		X
2. As part of the capital planning process the Town should continue to plan and secure appropriate levels of funding that reflect the current costs of services and planned projects. The recreation impact fee should continue to be an appropriate part of this process.					X		X
3. Multi-use paths and trails have significant recreational value and should be encouraged as both transportation and recreational amenities.				X			X
4. Non-town owned public facilities provide significant resources to community members and should be encouraged.			X	X			

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5. Unstructured recreational opportunities contribute positively and significantly to the character of the community and care should be taken to preserve these opportunities.			X	X			
6. The importance of the Lake to the community and its economy should be continually recognized and action taken where necessary to keep this resource available and attractive for future generations. To this end, care should be taken to manage and balance competing recreational needs within the Bay.		X	X	X		X	
7. Where snowmobile trails are present or anticipated, the Town should work with local snowmobile clubs to minimize conflicts between anticipated development and these recreational opportunities.				X			
8. As it is deemed necessary, the Town should plan for four-wheeling and mountain biking uses in a manner that provides sufficient opportunities but that minimizes property damage and other conflicts.				X		X	
9. Hunting and fishing are important local traditions. To preserve these traditions, large landowners should be encouraged not to post property and developments within rural and outlying areas should be designed so as to be sensitive to these types of recreation			X	X			

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10. Private recreational industries, such as marinas, should be recognized as creating important recreational opportunities for the community and also significantly impacting tourism.		X		X			
11. Private sporting and cultural venues that positively contribute to community recreational opportunities should be encouraged.				X			
12. The Town should continue to support the range of wellness services and activities that serve the community as these organizations, programs, and services combine to make Colchester a healthier community.				X	X		X
13. Community organizations should continue to be encouraged as these organizations provide depth to the range of recreational offerings within the community and often contribute to the Town's diverse culture and community spirit.	X			X			
14. As Colchester continues to grow, care should be taken to preserve and enhance public access to the Lake especially within the area connecting Bayside Park to the recently purchased Town-owned parcel on East Lakeshore Drive.		X		X			X
<b>CHAPTER SIX: ECONOMY</b>							

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1. As the Town continues to grow, the quality of jobs should continue to be enhanced as well as the number of jobs. The development of well-paying, livable wage jobs should be encouraged.				X			
2. Colchester's unique location along Lake Champlain and its proximity to Burlington are strengths that should be greatly drawn upon in marketing the community.				X			
3. Tourism opportunities that draw from the Town's attributes should be explored with care taken to preserving these attributes, such as the Lake, while capitalizing upon these resources.					X		
4. As Colchester continues to grow it would benefit from a SWOT analysis for economic development. A SWOT analysis or similar economic development plan and the Town's land use planning should complement each other and provide specific direction for where and how economic development should continue to occur.					X		
5. The Town should maintain, at a minimum, one job per household.				X			

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6. Land should continue to be appropriately zoned for responsible economic development needs; however, care should be taken not to diminish the residential quality of life that is so important to the community.		<b>X</b>					
7. Colchester’s economic development should continue to be focused within its existing commercial / industrial area at Exit 16 and its growth center at Severance Corners. Village locations possess opportunities to create individualized business districts specializing in aspects of economic development that may not be suited to the larger Exit 16 commercial/industrial center or the mixed use of the growth center.		<b>X</b>					
8. While the development of incubator space should be encouraged, the Town should work with owners of industrial facilities to ensure that there is adequate opportunity for businesses to grow within Colchester as they expand and require larger spaces.		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>			
9. On-site expansion of existing big box stores should be encouraged within the Exit 16 area as well as redevelopment of suitable sites within this area that would remain otherwise underutilized.			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			

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10. The Town should continue to encourage the development of high tech businesses, such as those the University of Vermont and the Vermont Center for Emerging Technology are creating, and ensure that there are sufficient opportunities to grow these businesses within the community.				X			
11. Agri-tourism should be an available economic opportunity for the Town's agricultural operations.					X		
12. The community should retain and attract young, trained workers.				X			
13. Small business development should continue to be supported. Neighborhood commercial services and amenities, including "mom and pop" stores should be maintained and new ones encouraged.				X	X		
14. Home offices that blend with existing residential uses should continue to be encouraged as these offices contribute an expanded and diversified employment base without the detractions of added traffic.		X					
15. The Town should continue to participate in such regional and state-wide conversations about economic development as it exists within these larger markets and, to some extent, the Town's economic development will be dependent upon the health of these larger markets.				X			

POLICIES BY CHAPTER	NO ACTION WARRANTED DURING TERM OF PLAN	MAINTAIN CURRENT POLICIES & REGULATIONS	EDUCATION	COORDINATION	PLANNING & STUDIES	REGULATORY & POLICY CHANGES NEEDED	FUNDING PRIORITY
16. Safe and affordable childcare opportunities should be fostered within the community. Employers should be encouraged to provide childcare onsite for their workers where feasible and appropriate.		X	X	X			
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN: EDUCATION</b>							
1. As part of any Town effort to quantify costs and benefits of residential development, costs associated with school capital projects, which are attributable to a development, should be paid by the permittee. The Town and School District should work together to monitor and maintain capital plans, budgets, and impact fees to ensure that this occurs.		X					
2. The Town should seek opportunities for mutually beneficial sharing of services, facilities and personnel with the School District.				X			
3. Facility proposals by the School District should be reviewed by the Development Review Board for conformance with the Town's land use regulations.		X		X			

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4. The School Board should continue to examine all alternatives such as consolidated supervisory unions or regional negotiations to keep per student costs as low as possible while still providing a quality education.				X			
5. The Town supports the development of a regional technical center that will provide a skilled workforce for Town businesses and future businesses.				X			
6. The Town will continue to work with Saint Michael's College and the University of Vermont to encourage the continued investment of these institutions within the community.		X		X			
7. While current trends are in the opposite direction, the Town should continue to evaluate the impact of new residential development on school capacity. If it becomes apparent that additional residential development will exceed the School's ability to provide services for the Town, the Select Board, in conjunction with the School Board and Planning Commission, should take whatever steps it determines are necessary to stabilize or mitigate the impacts of residential development. Major residential projects shall continue to be sent by the applicant to the School District's Business Manager for review and comment.		X		X			

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<b>CHAPTER EIGHT: HOUSING</b>							
1. Colchester’s land use plan should continue to guide residential development.		<b>X</b>					
2. Residential density increases within the Severance Corners growth center, above and beyond the existing receiving area for transfer of development rights, may be considered if required by State Growth Center Designation Requirements.		<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>		
3. Village planning areas may be suited to additional residential opportunities; however not all village areas are currently conducive to additional residential opportunities and additional development should not detract from the character of these areas.					<b>X</b>		

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4. Infill residential development should continue to occur within the Suburban Residential planning area.		<b>X</b>					
5. The Town should consider developing a wastewater allocation ordinance that allocates future reserve capacity for housing.						<b>X</b>	
6. The Town should continue to pursue additional wastewater treatment capacity to assist in meeting residential demands in the designated growth center.				<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>
7. Density bonuses and other incentives for affordable housing, particularly starter homes and senior housing, should be considered to assist in meeting the Town's housing needs within medium and high density areas.					<b>X</b>		
8. Owner occupied residential opportunities are encouraged over rental for infill development.				<b>X</b>			
9. Current programs such as the Town's building code program, on-site wastewater program, and on-site wastewater revolving loan program should be continued and enhanced as these programs help to ensure the quality of Colchester's homes as safe and decent places to live.		<b>X</b>					

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10. If concerns regarding the quality of housing continue, the Town should consider exploring the possibility of additional preventative programs. The Town may take measures to ensure the safety of rental units.					X		
11. Opportunities for affordable homes and senior housing, such as smaller dwellings on small lots, should be encouraged within the limits of zoning.		X	X	X			
12. The Town should continue to work with regional and state entities and organizations to seek solutions for regional housing needs and affordable housing needs. A healthy regional housing market is important for the future of economic development within the region.				X			
13. The Town should consider forming public/private partnerships, such as revolving loan funds for mobile home replacement, which promote affordable housing.				X			X
<b>CHAPTER NINE: ENERGY &amp; TELECOMMUNICATIONS</b>							
1. The Town will promote sustainable development patterns that minimize energy use through internal and external connectivity and the promotion of alternative transportation options.			X	X			

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<p>2. The Town will continue to require, through its Building Codes and inspection program that construction meets or exceeds accepted energy conservation standards. To this end, efficient building operation, maintenance and landscaping should be encouraged in design.</p>		X	X				
<p>3. The Town should adopt a comprehensive energy plan that addresses energy conservation in the construction, operation, and maintenance of its facilities and equipment. The Town should be a leader in demonstrating energy conservation with the community, particularly in the construction of the new town office facility.</p>					X		
<p>4. The Town should partner with energy conservation organizations and programs such as the 10% Challenge, LEED, the Champlain Valley Weatherization Service, and Shareheat to ensure the continued availability of adequate, safe, and affordable energy resources for the community.</p>				X			
<p>5. The Town will continue to encourage the development of renewable energy resources in Colchester such as wind turbines, biomass fuels, methane, silvicultural operations, and geothermal cooling.</p>		X	X				

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6. Utility infrastructure should be upgraded and expanded as necessary; however, care shall be taken to appropriately site and screen this infrastructure. Wherever possible, new or relocated electric cables, communication cables, transmission lines, switches and similar equipment shall be located underground.		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>			
7. The extension of natural gas service to areas not currently served is encouraged by the Town.				<b>X</b>			
8. The Town will continue to foster a continued variety of telecommunications infrastructure. To this end, the Town will encourage solutions that minimize possible conflicts that might arise from these varied sources. Emergency broadcasting capabilities should be preserved first and foremost.		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>			
9. The Town shall continue to work toward a comprehensive, fast, and reliable telecommunications network for the community. To this end, partnering with public and/or private companies may be appropriate.				<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>

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10. The Town will continue to promote co-location of telecommunication facilities and appropriate siting and screening of these facilities from larger towers to smaller residential dishes.		<b>X</b>					
11. As Colchester has a substantial telecommunications industry presence, it should continue to foster the growth and development of these businesses and, as appropriate, participate in regional, State, and Federal dialogues regarding telecommunications.		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>			
12. The Town should, to the greatest extent possible, utilize its telecommunications infrastructure and networking technology to increase community outreach efforts. Current examples are the broadcasting of Town meetings and forums on local access television. Possible future examples include emerging Internet news syndication protocols, access to Public Information stored digitally on Town servers.		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			
13. Future growth should be coordinated with telecommunications providers to ensure that areas of expansion are adequately served.				<b>X</b>			

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14. The Town will leverage its investment in digital technology and access to high-speed networks to expand the concept of "e-government" in Colchester. This on-line technology could make Town services and information available 24/7, 365 days a year.				X			X
<b>CHAPTER TEN: TRANSPORTATION</b>							
1. Roadway construction and reconstruction projects should address stormwater treatment and required stormwater permitting. Stormwater treatment for all impervious surfaces, including parking lots, is a good practice to preserve and enhance water quality.		X					
2. The Official Map delineates future transportation network improvements and other facilities. Developments, road projects, and all other plans shall take into consideration the Official Map and should implement the proposed improvements to the greatest extent possible.		X					
3. The Town planning process shall address the expansion of utilities and provide guidance for the reconstruction of roadways, including the Route 127 corridor.		X			X		

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<p>4. Traffic studies that address both capacity and safety issues shall continue to be required as part of the development review process. Where necessary, improvement to the transportation infrastructure will be required as part of development projects.</p>		X					
<p>5. The capital transportation program is a significant benefit to the community which should be sustained.</p>		X					
<p>6. The Town may impose development impact assessments where private projects are anticipated to necessitate transportation improvements. The Town should evaluate methods for fairly distributing the cost of road improvements and maintenance associated with new development or redevelopment.</p>		X			X		
<p>7. New curb-cuts to arterial roadways should be avoided, with shared curb-cuts and side streets utilized for access wherever possible. The Town should develop a policy on access management that includes recommended methods and addresses the circumstances under which access management should be implemented.</p>						X	

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<p>8. The Town should continue to work with the CCTA, Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization, and Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission to assess the feasibility of expanding bus service within Colchester. To this end, the Town should support alternative sources to the local property tax for the funding of public transportation and the incorporation of bus facilities in the design of development projects within potential areas of bus service.</p>				X			
<p>9. Light-rail solutions should be explored where feasible. If light-rail mass transit solutions are proposed through Colchester, stations or stops within the Town should be encouraged. Expansion of freight rail should be limited to existing rail corridors with the creation of rail yards being prohibited.</p>				X	X		
<p>10. The development of alternative transportation infrastructure such as commuter lots will be encouraged by the Town.</p>			X	X			

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<p>11. New subdivisions and other developments should provide for and encourage bicycle access, circulation and parking. Bicycle paths may be required to be built as part of subdivisions. Easements may be required to be dedicated to the Town for future bicycle paths.</p>		X					
<p>12. The Town will consider bicycle path improvements in designing, scheduling and constructing roadway improvement projects. Where possible and practical, the Town will strive to provide Class I paths along arterial and collector roadways as well as on-road facilities.</p>		X					X
<p>13. Sidewalks should be implemented along all streets and roadways. The need for sidewalks is particularly important on roads carrying heavy traffic volumes through developed areas including Prim Road, Lakeshore Drive, Malletts Bay Avenue, and Blakely Road.</p>		X					X
<p>14. While new private roads should generally be discouraged, the Town should be afforded the opportunity to consider the use of private transportation infrastructure to facilitate sustainable development patterns or innovative development such as high-density new urbanism.</p>						X	

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<b>15.</b> The Zoning and Subdivision Regulations should continue to require minimum public road frontages and prohibit creation of parcels without public road frontage.		<b>X</b>					
<b>16.</b> The Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Improvement Plan as well as other State and Federal funds are important sources of funding for transportation infrastructure and Colchester should continue to take advantage of these opportunities to bolster local funding for improvements to the transportation network. As non-local funding sources diminish or shift priorities, it will become increasingly important for the Town to develop creative solutions for funding projects that are more self-reliant.				<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>
<b>17.</b> The Town shall work to implement the recommendations of the Route 127 Corridor Study.				<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>

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<p>18. The entire Circumferential Highway through Colchester, between Essex and the Heineberg Bridge shall be completed. The Town will pursue and promote this project with the Metropolitan Planning Organization and State of Vermont. Purchase of rights-of-way for the Circumferential Highway and preservation of existing rights-of-way shall be a priority for the community.</p>				X			X
<p>19. Interconnectivity between developments shall be required to the greatest extent feasible. The creation of cul-de-sacs should be discouraged. New cul-de-sacs should be designed to be temporary and to provide future connections whenever possible. Future connections between neighborhoods shall be addressed by all development projects.</p>		X					
<p>20. A new arterial roadway connecting Hercules Drive and Rte. 15 would decrease travel time, increase efficiency, and reduce traffic volumes in the Exit 16 area and in Winooski's central business district. This is a project with regional significance and should be pursued in conjunction with the Regional Planning Commission, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, and the U.S. Army Administration.</p>	X	X		X			

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21. The Public Works Standards and Specifications provide diversified standards based in part on land use. These Standards shall be updated as needed to reflect changes in land use planning and evolving technologies.		<b>X</b>					
22. Current Zoning Regulations promote Transportation Demand Management principles through the use of parking standards for large parking facilities, the requirement of bicycle parking, and enabling shared parking concepts. These efforts should be sustained and strengthened.		<b>X</b>					
23. The efforts of the SSTA to provide transportation services for the disabled and the elderly should be sustained; however, efficiencies should be looked to as demand continues to escalate.		<b>X</b>					
24. A bicycle path between Colchester Pond and Airport Park shall be the priority bicycle path for Colchester to complete. This route shall act as a trunk line that all other bicycle routes shall strive to tie into. The Town shall strive to integrate this trunk-line and other bicycle paths with bicycle routes of adjacent communities.				<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>

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25. While the maintenance and repair of the existing transportation network will remain a priority, the construction of new projects that build capacity shall also be of importance to the community.		<b>X</b>					<b>X</b>
26. The Lake Champlain Byways program should continue to be supported for its importance in promoting alternative transportation and tourism.				<b>X</b>			
27. The Town shall continue to partner with the Vermont's Highway Bridge Program to maintain its infrastructure.				<b>X</b>			
28. ITS Architecture shall be utilized to the greatest degree possible to promote local and regional efficiencies. The Town should continue to work with the State and agencies providing mutual aid to ensure standardization of pre-emption devices.				<b>X</b>			

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<b>CHAPTER ELEVEN: UTILITIES &amp; SERVICES</b>							
1. The Town should continue to work with the State to successfully administer the State's water and wastewater permitting program. To this end, the State should be encouraged to create efficiencies and improvements to this program that better facilitate permitting efficiencies at the local level.		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>			
2. The Town should investigate the feasibility of a local onsite wastewater management program.				<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		
3. On-site septic systems will continue to be cost-effective solutions for providing wastewater disposal outside of Colchester's sewer service areas during the term of this plan. The Town should continue to encourage upgrades and new technologies that improve the environmental soundness of onsite systems.		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>				
4. The 2002 Exit 17 Wastewater Study should be a reference for development within this area until such time as plans may be considered to establish municipal sewer service within this area.		<b>X</b>					

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5. The Town will obtain 350,000 additional wastewater g.p.d. allocation from South Burlington during the term of the plan.				X			X
6. Care should be taken to develop priorities for wastewater allocation and update the Town's wastewater management plan accordingly during the term of this plan. The Town's Sewage Ordinance should prioritize wastewater allocation based on land use goals instead of a first-come first-served method of distributing allocation.						X	
7. Sewer service areas shall be planned to implement the community's land use planning goals as provided within this plan and to maximize the cost-effectiveness of investments.						X	
8. The Town shall participate in any consideration of sewer service expansion by other organizations, such as Fire Districts, as any expansion of sewer service areas impacts the Town's land use planning and has the potential to reprioritize priority areas for growth.				X			
9. The Town shall participate in and encourage regional discussions regarding wastewater and regional wastewater utilities.				X			

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10. As the Town continues to grow, it should ensure that property owners have access to municipal water supply systems in an effort to provide safe, efficient, and affordable potable water for the community where possible.				X			
11. Water lines should be looped wherever feasible to ensure continuity of water pressure.						X	
12. The Town should take appropriate actions to ensure adequate water supply for the implementation of its land use goals. During the term of this plan, the Town should work to implement, in conjunction with the Fire Districts, the recommendations of the current 20-year water needs analysis project.				X			X
13. As the Town continues to grow and looks to expand municipal water infrastructure and opportunities, the efficiency of scale of municipal fire districts should be examined.					X		
14. The Town should continue to work with the Chittenden Solid Waste District to upgrade and relocate the community's drop-off center.				X			
15. The Town should continue its current efforts regarding stormwater and, where feasible, expand these efforts.		X			X		

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16. The Town should evaluate the feasibility of a comprehensive stormwater utility in its long-range planning.					X		
17. The Town will continue to work to ensure that pre-emption devices are installed on all new and retrofitted traffic lights.				X			X
18. The effect of land use goals and fire protection services on one another should be recognized and a balance sought. As Colchester strives to implement its land use goals, the Town should continue the dialogue with fire protection agencies to minimize adverse impacts to fire services while fulfilling its land use goals.			X	X			
19. The Town will continue to work cooperatively with the various agencies and organizations that assist the Town in maintaining the fabric of the community, providing services for individuals with special needs, and planning for the future of the Town within its greater regional community.				X			
20. Protecting surface water from stormwater impacts is a high priority in review of proposed developments.		X		X			

# APPENDIX A : REGIONAL COOPERATION

**VISION:** The Town of Colchester seeks to work together with other municipalities and the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission in order to achieve the vision and policies called for in this plan and assist other municipalities and the Regional Planning Commission in meeting their goals.

The Town of Colchester is a member community of the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission and actively participates in policy making within this organization that affects the land use of Colchester as well as other municipalities. This plan has been developed so as to be in accordance with the 2006 Regional Plan although there are instances noted in this plan, specifically within the Housing Chapter, where the Town's plan varies slightly from the Regional Plan. The Town also recognizes that implementation of its land use goals impacts adjacent communities and it strives to maintain open dialogues with these communities. The following details the communities abutting Colchester and anticipated impact of this plan upon these communities.

## **SOUTH HERO**

The 2004 Town Plan for South Hero notes the areas adjacent to Colchester as Shoreland and Residential. Colchester abuts South Hero along the Colchester Causeway which originates within the Suburban Residential Future Land Use area of Colchester. The designations are compatible as they both encourage residential development. South Hero's Shoreland designation is similar to Colchester's Shoreland District that also lines the shoreline of Lake Champlain. These districts both encourage a protective buffer around the Lake. Colchester will continue to work with surrounding municipalities to link multi-use paths

such as the causeway. Page 41 of South Hero's Town Plan states: "The South Hero Town Plan supports the creation and maintenance of town trails and coordinating with regional trail projects."

## **MILTON**

The Milton border stretches along the Town of Colchester's northern edge from the Lamoille River to the eastern boundary of the Town with Westford. This area includes a range of Future Land Use areas within Colchester but predominantly consists of Rural Future Land Use areas. The Northeast Quadrant of Colchester borders Milton from the Westford line to the Exit 17 vicinity. This Quadrant is designated as Rural. "Agricultural uses and low density residential uses are compatible land uses within these areas that often include significant natural resources, prime agricultural soils, and other characteristics that generally make these areas unsuitable for development." The 2003 Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Milton designates the adjacent land in Milton as Agricultural / Rural Residential and Flood Hazard. These areas are described in the East Milton and Cobble Hill Planning Areas. The Cobble Hill Planning Area "encourages a diversity of agricultural uses" and "encourages low density well, planned residential development which enhances the character of the area" as detailed on page 60 of the plan. The East Milton area also states the same intended goals on page 66 of the plan. Colchester's Rural Future Land Use designation is compatible with the proposed future land use areas of Milton within this vicinity.

The Exit 17 vicinity of Colchester is designated as Future Growth Center in Colchester's Future Land Use plans. This area is a growth center designated for long-term development after substantial build out of the growth center at

Severance Corners is completed. The future land use areas in Milton which abut the Future Growth Center include General Industrial and Low Density Residential. These areas are detailed in the Catamount Area Planning Area on pages 58 through 60 of Milton's Plan. The goals for this area are to: "encourage high quality industrial development in a subregional growth center, which will provide greater employment opportunities and broaden tax base" and to "ensure an aesthetically pleasing approach into Milton." The Exit 17 neighborhood planning area within Colchester is characterized as a long-term economic future growth center which provides for a range of uses including light industrial and residential. In this manner, the proposed uses in Colchester and Milton are in keeping with one another. The current zoning employed at Exit 17, which will be maintained for the duration of this plan, includes design review elements that also seek to ensure high quality designs and site development within this area.

West of Interstate 89 to the Lamoille River, the lands bordering Milton are designated as Rural and Suburban Residential within Colchester's Future Land Use plans. These areas abut areas that the Town of Milton designates the adjacent land in Milton as Agricultural / Rural Residential and Flood Hazard within the Lamoille Planning Area. This area "encourages innovative neighborhood planning concepts" including "medium and low density planned residential developments" as detailed on page 64 of Milton's plan. This is in keeping with the intended low residential densities of the Rural Future Land Use area and the medium residential densities of the Suburban Residential Area.

Along the Lamoille River, Colchester has designated the area abutting Milton as Rural. These areas are designated as Agricultural / Rural Residential and Flood Hazard in Milton and are located within the West Milton Planning Area. The goals for this area in Milton include "encourages

a diversity of agricultural uses" and "encourages low density well, planned residential development which enhances the character of the area" as detailed on page 65 through 66 of Milton's plan. This is in keeping with the intent of Colchester's Rural Future Land Use area.

The 2003 Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Milton is mute to multi-use paths and connections with adjacent municipalities. Colchester has designated path corridors in accordance with the 1993 Alternative Transportation Plan developed by the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization which include linkages to Milton within the Exit 17 vicinity. Colchester will continue to participate in regional dialogues to link its proposed pedestrian and bicycle corridors to adjacent communities.

## **WESTFORD**

Westford abuts Colchester at its most northeastern corner. The area which abuts Colchester is designated as Agricultural, Forestry, and Residential I in Westford's 2004 Town Plan. This area is very similar to Colchester's Rural Future Land Use area which it abuts. Both districts promote agricultural uses and are appropriate for low density residential development. The area of Colchester that abuts Westford lacks public infrastructure including roads and trails.

## **ESSEX TOWN**

Colchester is bounded on the east by the Town of Essex. The area ranges from the Rural areas of Colchester's Northeast Quadrant, to Village designated areas along Routes 2A and 15 to Suburban Residential along Severance Road and a small portion of Commercial Industrial along the rail corridor. The majority of the lands bordering Colchester are designated a Conservation, Agricultural / Residential, and Open Recreation in Essex. This area, north of Route 2A and south of the Westford border includes the natural area of Indian Brook Reservoir. On the Colchester

side of the boundary, this area is designated as Rural and includes the Colchester Pond Natural Area. The designations are compatible as both seek to maintain low densities that are appropriate for the stewardship of the natural areas within this vicinity. The presence of the Open Recreation area in Essex and the Colchester Pond area provide an opportunity to facilitate primitive path connections and environmental stewardship within the greater area. A dialogue on this possibility was begun between the Planning Commissions of the two towns as part of updating the respective communities' plans. This dialogue should be built upon as each town looks to implement these plans.

Within the vicinity of Route 2A south to the Fort, Essex has designated land as medium density residential then industrial. The medium density residential abuts Rural designated lands within Colchester. The medium density residential area is a small pocket of land area that is not likely to have an adverse impact on the Rural lands of Colchester. The majority of the land from Route 2A to the Fort is categorized in Essex as industrial. In Colchester some of this land is categorized as Commercial / Industrial, which is compatible with Essex's industrial classification. The remainder of the land is either Village or Rural in previous plans. Colchester's Village designation includes light commercial and residential which may conflict with more heavy industrial uses. The lands south of the Village and north of the proposed Circumferential Highway right-of-way are classified as Rural which conflicts with Essex' industrial classification. South of the Circ, Colchester has designated the land abutting Essex as Suburban Residential along Severance Road as in previous plans. As this road transitions to Kellogg Road in Essex, it is designated as industrial. The residential and industrial within this area are mostly preexisting and do not generate substantial conflict at this time. As Essex looks to build out its industrial area, Colchester should continue its dialogue

with the Town to minimize potential impacts to its Rural, Village, and Suburban Residential areas.

In the vicinity of Fort Ethan Allen, Essex has designated the area a combination of Retail Business, Industrial, Open Recreation, and Design Control. Colchester's designation of this area as Village Mixed Use includes all of these various uses from residential to commercial to light industrial. The current zoning for this area, GD2, which is not expected to change during the duration of this plan, includes design control elements for the historic fort area. During discussions between the Towns' Planning Commissions, there was generally support for a multi-use path in the Fort between Colchester and Essex. The Parade Grounds, split between the two communities, is an important recreation area for the vicinity and should be tied into existing development. Concerns exist regarding the development of vehicular connections within this area. The Town of Colchester is currently working with the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization as well as the Town of Essex to address needed improvements to the Route 15 corridor which bridges this area. During the term of this plan, the Town should continue dialogues with Essex and the MPO on improvements to Route 15 as well as stewardship of the Fort Ethan Allen area.

The Town of Colchester should continue to work with the Town of Essex as well as other Circumferential Highway communities to ensure the completion of the highway and reduce the unintended consequences of a partially completed highway that increases traffic volumes on Route 2A as well as Severance Road and Route 15.

## **SOUTH BURLINGTON**

The City of South Burlington abuts Colchester along the Fort Ethan Allen neighborhood in the very southeastern tip of Colchester. The Fort neighborhood area is designated as the Future Land Use designation Village Mixed

Use. The 2006 South Burlington Comprehensive Plan designated the area abutting Colchester as Industrial and Residential. The Industrial area, as noted on pages 27 through 28 of South Burlington's plan "is intended to consist predominantly of industrial and office uses however, it may include a mix of commercial and limited residential use." "This area of the City is most appropriate for industrial and office uses as it provides direct, easy access to the airport and is compatible with airport activities such as airplane noise and approach cones." While the Fort neighborhood includes light Commercial, the area directly abutting South Burlington is predominantly institutional in character. The natural ravine of the Winooski River which separates Colchester from South Burlington provides a significant natural buffer between these somewhat differing land uses. With the reconstruction of Lime Kiln Bridge there are concerns that traffic will increase between Exit 15 of Interstate 89 and South Burlington's industrial area possibly having a detrimental effect on pedestrian circulation within these institutional campuses. The specific area of concern is along Lime Kiln Road. The area immediately abutting Lime Kiln Road in South Burlington is classified as residential. Any detrimental effects to Colchester's institutions as a result of increased traffic will also have an impact on South Burlington's residential area. As South Burlington continues to develop its industrial area, it will need to balance the effects of this area on its residential community. This process will most likely mitigate any concerns that Colchester has regarding the build out of the industrial area. Colchester and South Burlington have established a strong dialogue on many matters including wastewater disposal and the reconstruction of the Lime Kiln Bridge. These dialogues should be continued and enhanced as the communities seek to build out in accordance with their future land use plans. The completion of the Lime Kiln Bridge project will improve pedestrian circulation within this area in both communities.

## **WINOOSKI**

The City of Winooski borders Colchester at its southern tip. The 2003 Winooski Municipal Development Plan notes the majority of the lands as bordering Colchester as being designated residential. These lands abut the Suburban Residential area of Malletts Bay Avenue and are compatible uses. Within the Exit 16 area of Colchester, Winooski abuts Colchester's Commercial / Industrial Future Land Use area. The Winooski Town Plan notes the area abutting Exit 16 as a combination of industrial, public, and park. A small portion of residentially designated land abuts the Commercial / Industrial lands of the pre-existing quarry operation. This is an existing situation that will not be made worse by the proposed plan. The industrial area of Winooski is compatible with the Commercial / Industrial area of Colchester and shares the same types of uses. Through its zoning, Colchester has sought to mitigate any negative impacts to the public lands in Winooski by prohibiting new drive-up businesses within 300 feet of a school, library, or hospital. Should the public use in Winooski be altered, Colchester will likely consider lifting these conditions from current zoning. The City and the Town should work together to ensure that any changes within this area are compatible and conflicts are minimized.

Along the eastern edge of Winooski, Saint Michael's College Campus consumes most of the border area in Colchester within the Village Mixed Use area at Fort Ethan Allen. A combination of park and residential future land use areas, including a small portion of industrial, exist in Winooski as it abuts this Village Mixed Use area. These future land use areas are compatible with Village Mixed Use as it includes all of these land uses. Saint Michael's College is an existing presence as it abuts Winooski's residential area. There are no plans to expand the campus westward and care has been taken to mitigate the impact of the existing campus on adjacent residential areas. For

these reasons, Colchester's proposed future land use plans are compatible with Winooski's.

It should be noted that Winooski has a proposed cycleway network that will implement a city-wide system of bicycle ways that will connect to bike routes in Burlington and Colchester. Colchester should continue to work with the Metropolitan Planning Organization and the City of Winooski to ensure that its planned pedestrian ways and multi-use paths tie into Winooski's plans and the larger regional network.

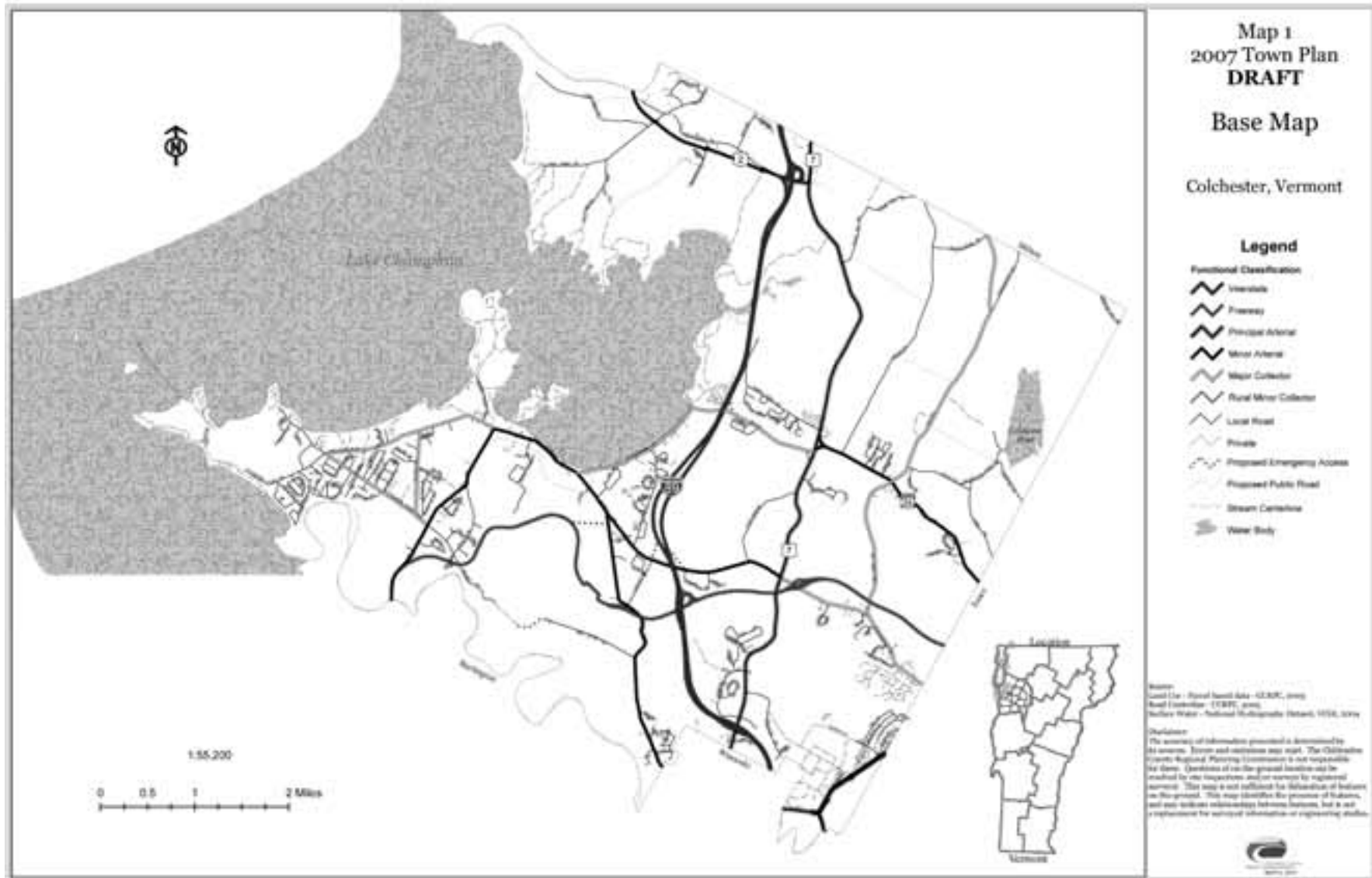
## **BURLINGTON**

The City of Burlington lies across the Winooski River and its floodplain from Colchester. Within Colchester, two future land use areas border Burlington: Agricultural Mixed Use and Suburban Residential. Agricultural Mixed Use runs from the Winooski border to the end of Macrae Road. This area borders farm land and a park in Burlington that are within the greenspaces designation of its future land use plan and are compatible with Colchester's Agricultural Mixed Use designation that seeks to balance continued agricultural practices with commercial and low density residential opportunities.

From Macrae Road to the mouth of the Winooski River is designated as Suburban Residential on the Colchester side of the river. Burlington has designated the abutting area as a combination of greenspaces and residential. The greenspaces area is in proximity to the Winooski River and follows the floodplain on the Colchester side. Beyond the floodplain on the Burlington side is the New North End and on the Colchester side is the Porters Point and Bean / Macrae neighborhoods. These areas are already significantly developed, compatible, residential neighborhoods where little change is expected during the term of this plan.

Colchester will continue to work with Burlington to ensure that issues such as traffic congestion, connectivity of multi-use paths, and water quality are adequately addressed. While Colchester's Village Mixed Use area designated along the Route 127 corridor has the potential to impact traffic in Burlington, background traffic from commuters from the north end of Burlington heading north has drastically increased in recent years and will continue to be a problem until such time as the Circumferential Highway is completed. The recent completion of the bike bridge over the Winooski River linking Colchester's Causeway to the Burlington Bike Path has become a popular route for cyclists and more opportunities such as this should be looked to in order to provide alternative transportation routes and recreational opportunities for persons from both communities.

# MAPS



Map 2  
2007 Town Plan  
DRAFT

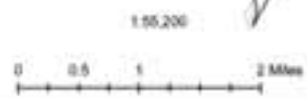
Existing Land Use

Colchester, Vermont

Legend

- Primary Land Use Activity**
- Residential purposes
  - Shopping, business or trade activities
  - Industrial, manufacturing, and water-related activities
  - Stock, construction, or construction-related activities
  - Tourism/recreation activities
  - Mass assembly of people
  - Leisure activities
  - Recreational resource-related activities
  - No further activity or unresolvable activity
- Road Classification**
- Interstate
  - US or State
  - Class 2 - 4
  - Private
  - Proposed State Highway
  - Emergency Access
  - Proposed Public Road
- Stream Classification**
- Stream
  - Water Body

**APN Land-Based Classification System - Activity Dimension**  
Activity refers to the actual use of the land based on an observable characteristic. It describes what actually takes place in physical or observable terms (e.g., farming, shopping, manufacturing, vehicular movement, etc.). And office activity, for example, refers only to the physical activity on the premises, which could apply equally to a law firm, a nonprofit institution, a tourist home, a corporate office, or any other office use. Similarly, residential uses in single-family dwellings, multi-family structures, manufactured homes, or any other type of building, would all be classified as residential activity.



**Notes:**  
Land Use - Rural Land Use - USMC, 2000  
Road Classification - USMC, 2000  
Surface Water - National Hydrographic Survey, USCG, 2000

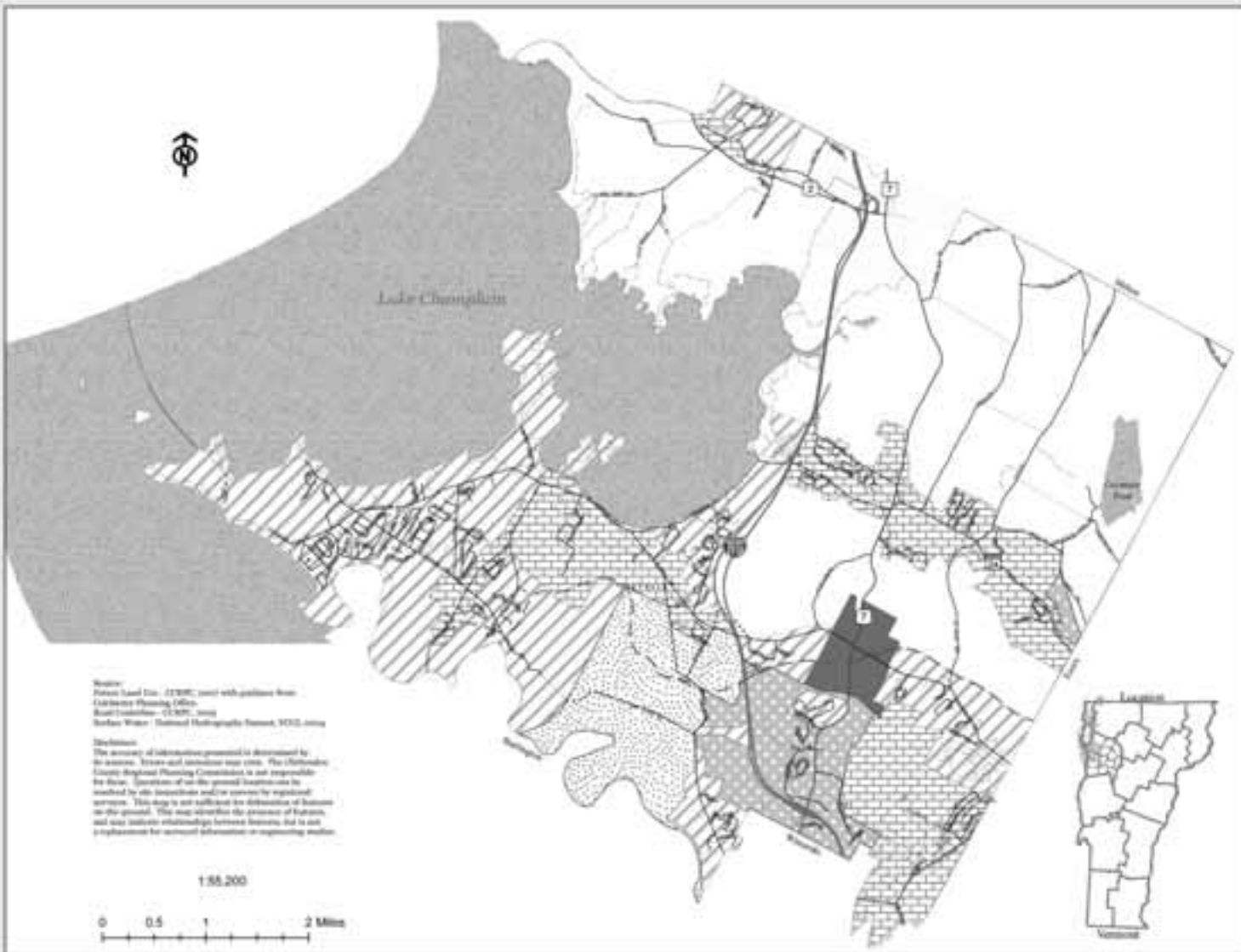
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Map 3  
2007 Town Plan  
**DRAFT**  
Future Land Use  
Colchester, Vermont

**Legend**

- Land Use Category
- Growth Center
  - Future Growth Center
  - Village Mixed Use
  - Suburban Residential
  - Agricultural Mixed Use
  - Rural
  - Commercial/Industrial
- Road Centerline
- Interstate
  - US or State
  - Class 2 - 4
  - Private
  - Proposed State Highway
  - Proposed Emergency Access
  - Proposed Public Road
  - Stream Centerline
  - Water Body



Notes:  
Future Land Use - (2007) overlaid with position from  
Colchester Planning Office  
Road Centerline - (2007) - 2007  
Surface Water - Detailed Hydrographic Survey, 2002, 2004

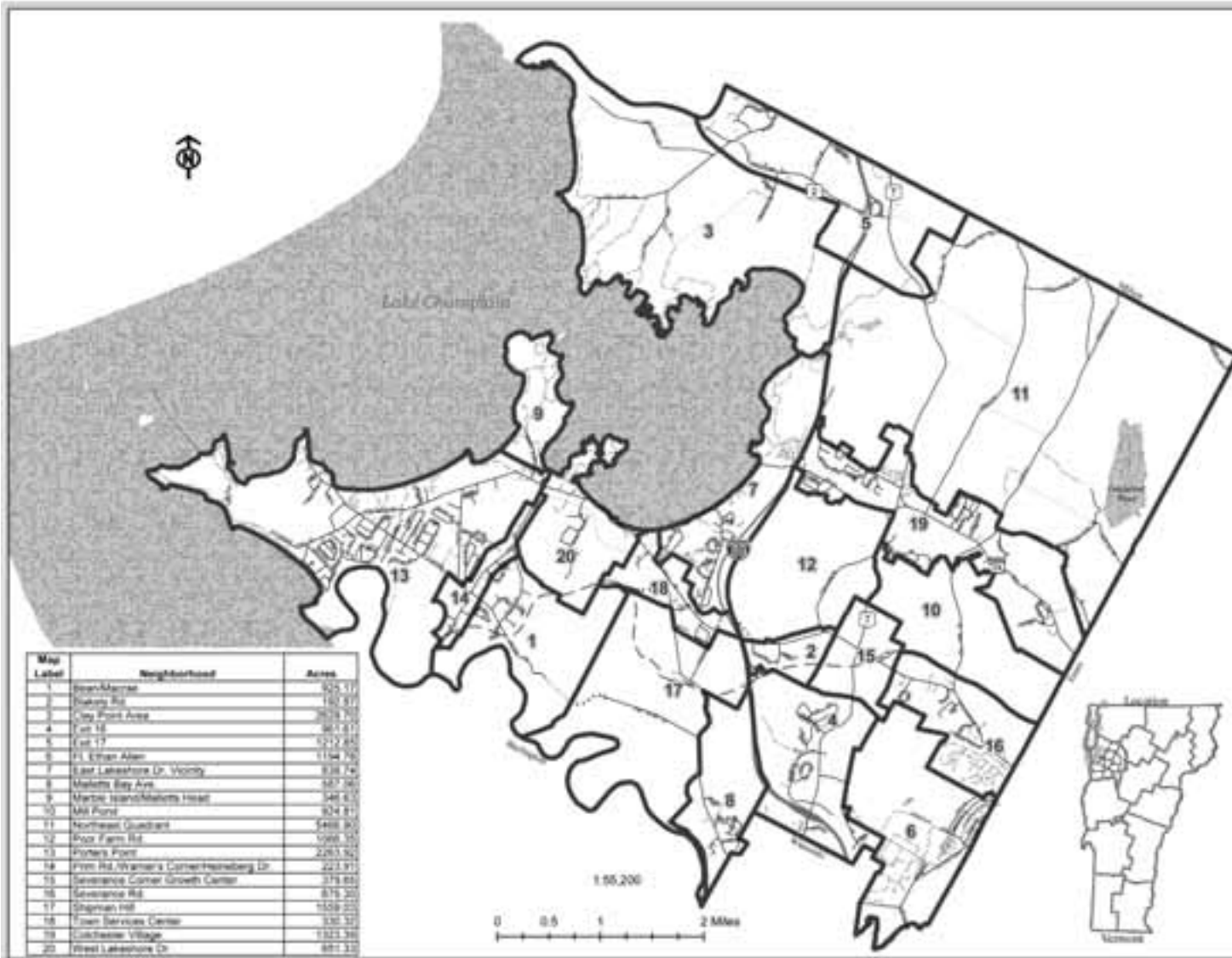
Disclaimer:  
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Map 4  
2007 Town Plan  
DRAFT  
Neighborhoods

Colchester, Vermont

Legend

- Neighborhood
- Road Centerline
- Interstate
- US or State
- Class 2 - 4
- Private
- Proposed State Highway
- Emergency Access
- Proposed Public Road
- Stream Centerline
- Water Body



Map Label	Neighborhood	Acres
1	Beach-Merrill	62
2	Beacon St.	150.97
3	City Point Area	207.0
4	East 16	96.71
5	East 17	122.24
6	Fl. Ethan Allen	1194.74
7	East Lakeshore Dr. Vicinity	838.74
8	Mallett Bay Area	147.74
9	Mallett Island/Mallett Road	344.13
10	Mt. Ford	824.13
11	Northwest Quadrant	448.90
12	Pool Farm Rd.	1066.55
13	Proctor Point	2263.50
14	From Rd. Warner's Corner/Hessberg Dr.	223.97
15	Sevenside Corner Growth Center	378.88
16	Sevenside Rd.	875.20
17	Shapman Hill	1029.20
18	Town Services Center	336.37
19	Colchester Village	1323.39
20	West Lakeshore Dr.	881.33



Source:  
Neighborhoods - CDOT, 2001; 2002, 2006  
Colchester Planning  
Road Centerline - CDOT, 2001  
Surface Water - National Hydrographic Survey, 1933, 2004

Disclaimer:  
The accuracy of information presented is guaranteed for no reason. Errors and omissions may occur. The Colchester County Regional Planning Commission is not responsible for them. Questions of title should be referred to the appropriate and/or correct legal jurisdiction. This map is not sufficient for delineation of boundaries or the ground. This map identifies the presence of features and does not indicate relationships between features, but is not a replacement for accurate information or engineering studies.



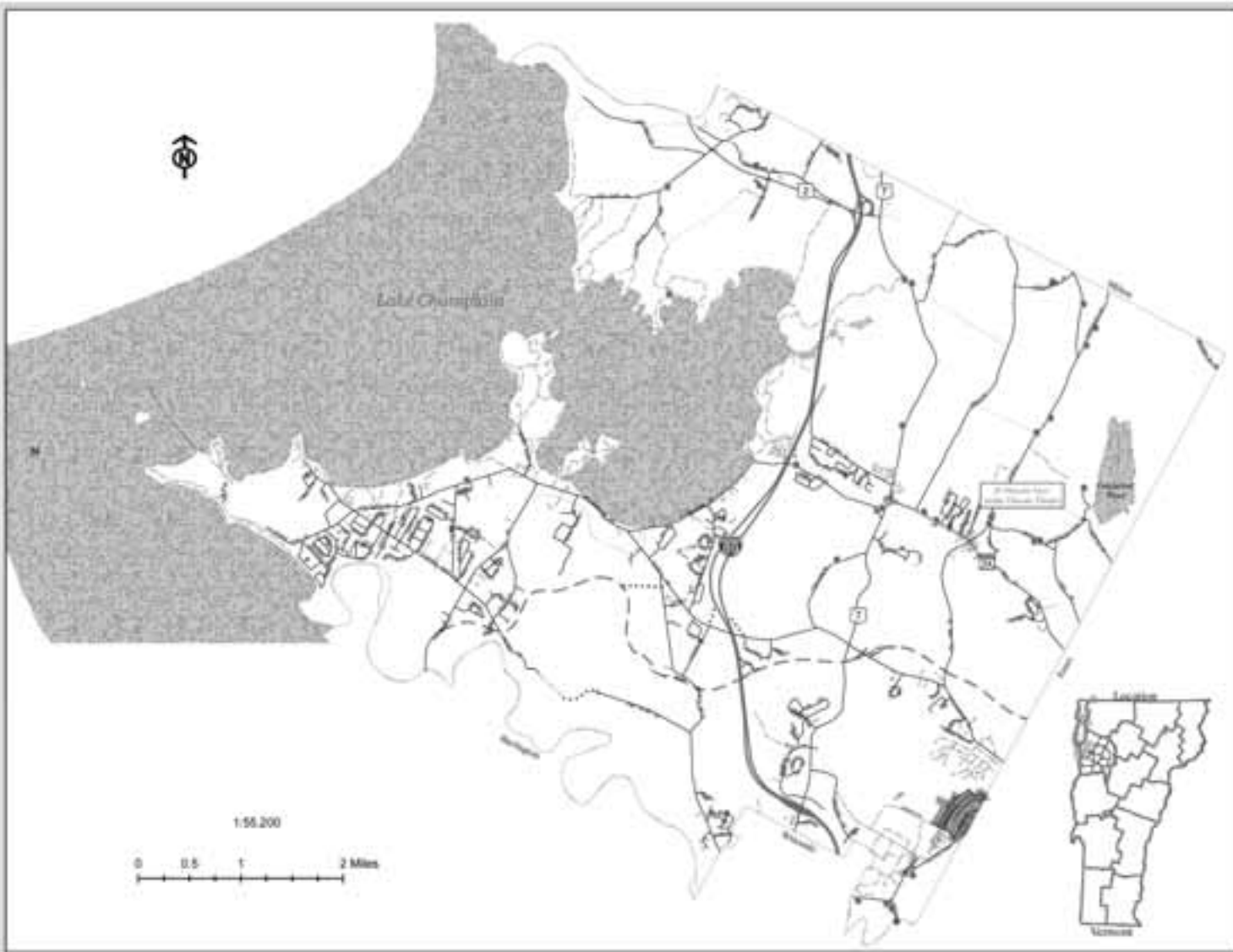
Map 5  
2007 Town Plan  
**DRAFT**  
Historic Sites  
Colchester, Vermont

**Legend**

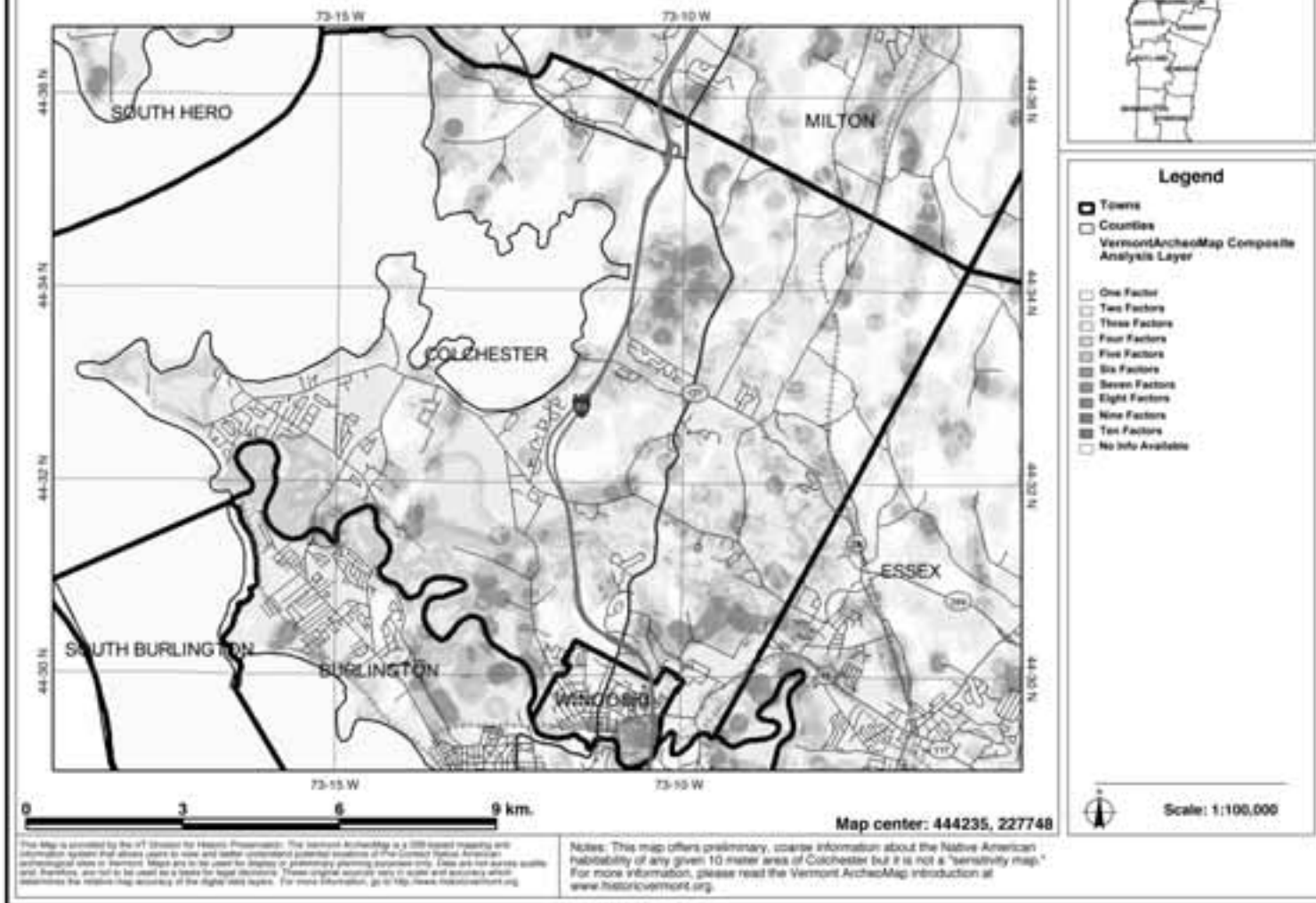
- Historic Site**
- N National
  - \* State
- Historic District**
- State Register
  - National Register
- Road Centerline**
- Interstate
  - US or State
  - Class 2 - 4
  - Private
  - Proposed State Highway
  - Proposed Emergency Access
  - Proposed Public Road
  - Stream Centerline
  - Water Body

**Source:**  
 State Register - updated by USDP, 2002  
 National Register - updated by USDP, 2002  
 Road Centerline - USDP, 2002  
 Surface Water - National Hydrography Dataset, 2002, 2004

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## Map 6 Archeological Sites: Environmental Factors

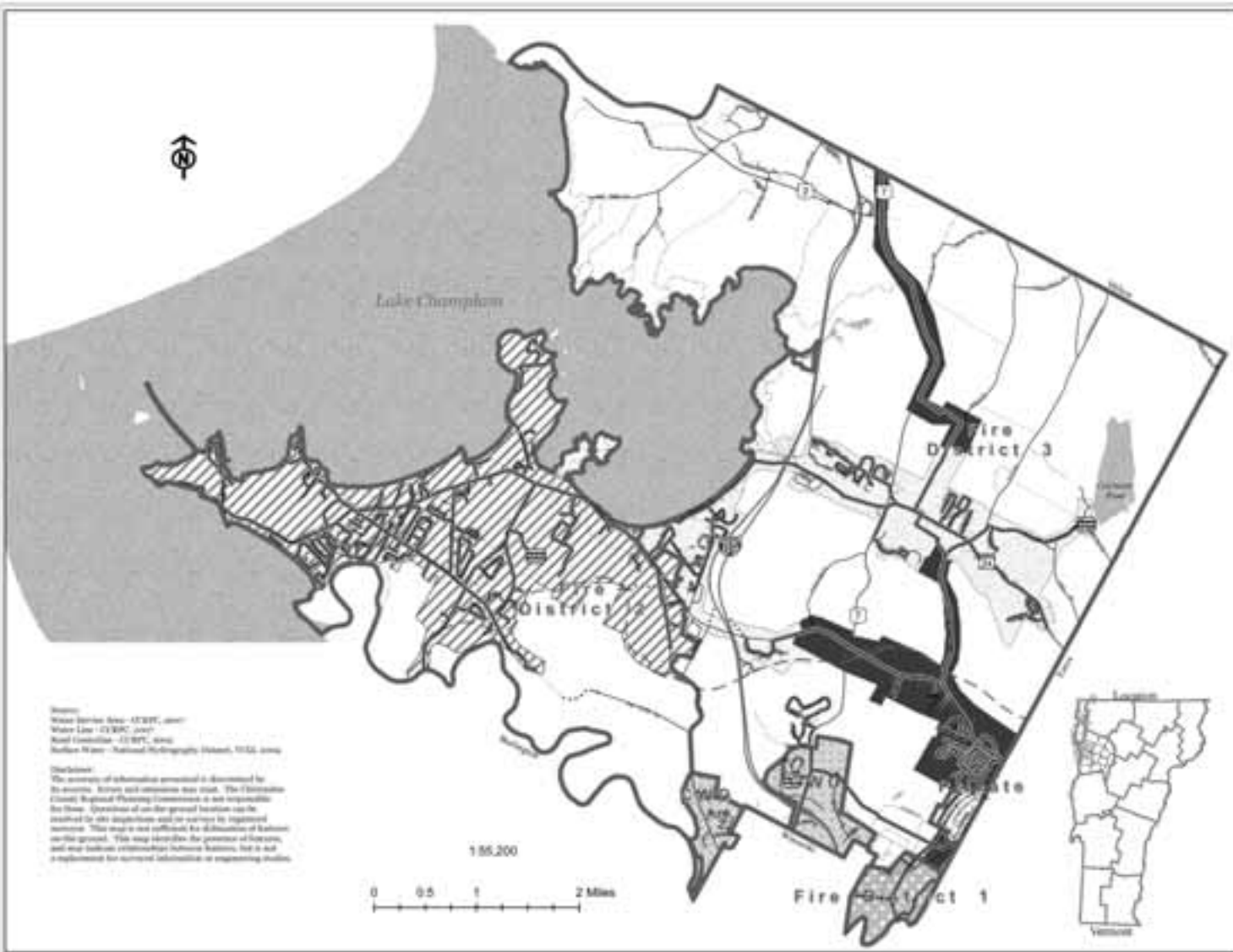


Map 7  
2007 Town Plan  
DRAFT

Water System  
Service Area  
Colchester, Vermont

Legend

- Water Storage
- Water Line
- Water District Service Area**
- Fire District #1
- Fire District #2
- Fire District #3 - High Pressure
- Fire District #3 - Low Pressure
- Champlain Water District
- Private - Fort Ethan Allen
- Fire District Boundary
- Road Centerline**
- Interstate
- US or State
- Class 2 - 4
- Private
- Proposed State Highway
- Proposed Emergency Access
- Proposed Public Road
- Stream Centerline
- Water Body



Source:  
Water Storage Area - USGS, 1997  
Water Line - USGS, 1997  
Road Centerline - USGS, 1997  
Surface Water - National Hydrography Dataset, 1982, 2004

Disclaimer:  
The accuracy of information presented is guaranteed by its source. Screen and on-screen map data. The Colchester Council Regional Planning Commission is not responsible for those. Operation of on-line ground location may be required for other applications and/or services by registered members. This map is not sufficient for determination of boundaries or other ground. This map identifies the general location, and may include other information. Features, but is not a replacement for current information or engineering studies.

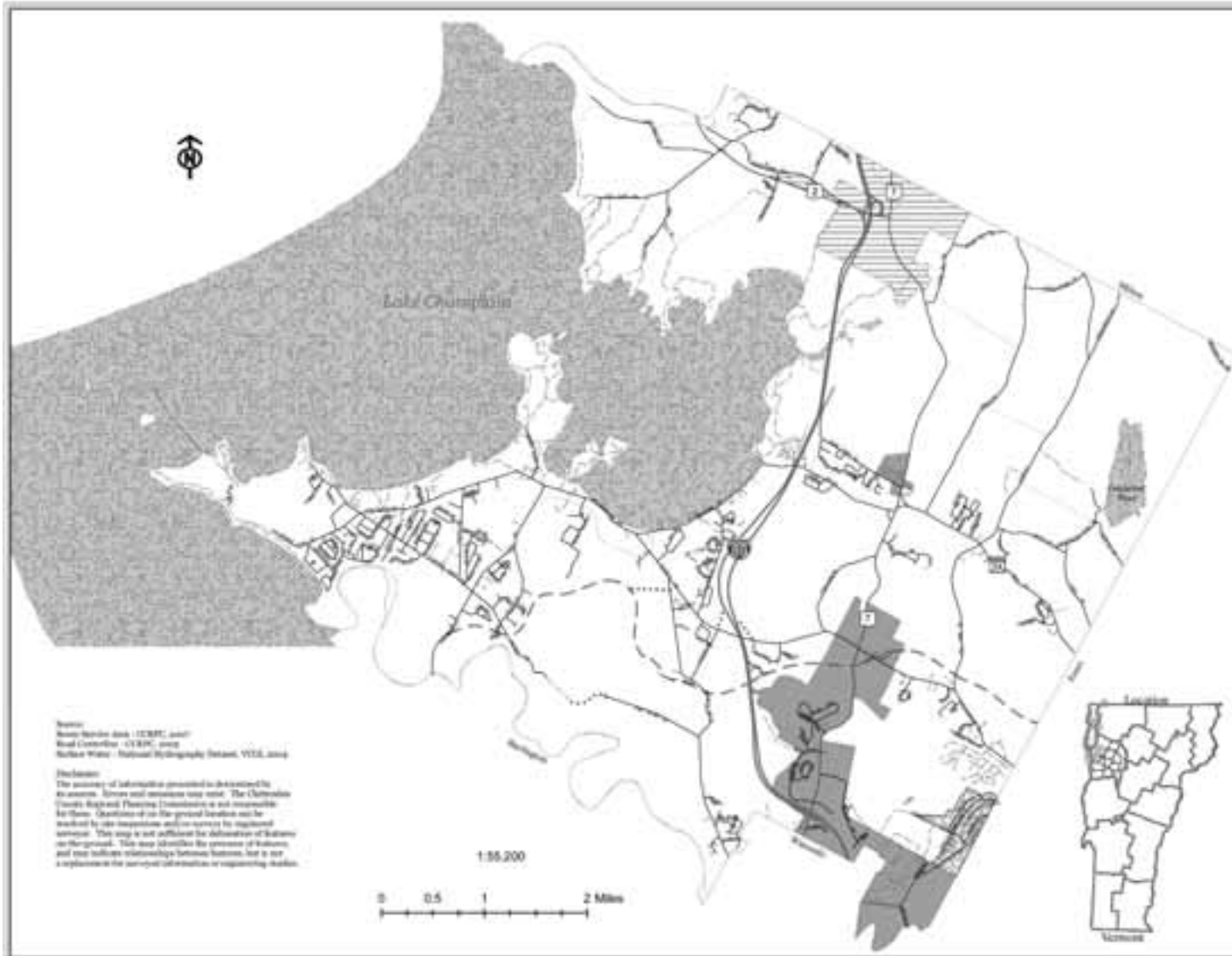
1:55,200  
0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Map 8  
2007 Town Plan  
DRAFT

Sewer  
Service Area  
Colchester, Vermont

Legend

- Service Area**
- Constructed - Town Ownership
  - Constructed - Fort Ethan Allen
  - Unconstructed
- Road Centerline**
- Interstate
  - US or State
  - Class 2 - 4
  - Private
  - Proposed State Highway
  - Proposed Emergency Access
  - Proposed Public Road
- Stream Centerline
- Water Body



**Notes:**  
 Sewer Service Area: USGS, 2001  
 Road Centerline: USGS, 2001  
 Surface Water: National Hydrography Dataset, VIGL, 2004

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1:55,200



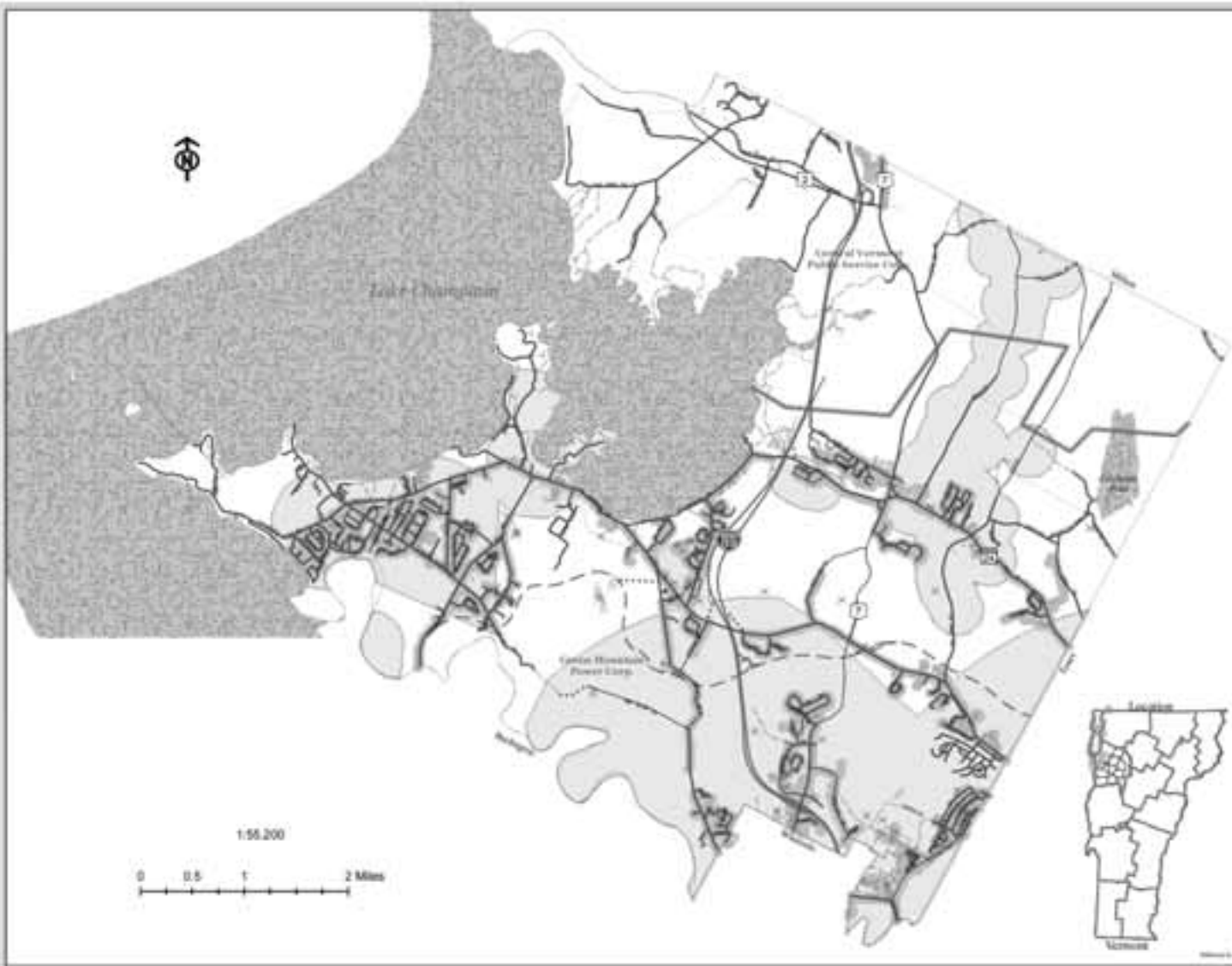
Map 9  
2007 Town Plan  
**DRAFT**  
**Utilities**  
Colchester, Vermont

**Legend**

- Telecommunication**
- ✱ Antenna
  - Tower
  - ~ Broadband - Cable
  - DSL Service Area
  - Vermont Gas Service Area
  - ~ Electric Company Coverage
- Road Centerline**
- ~ Interstate
  - ~ US or State
  - ~ Class 2 - 4
  - ~ Private
  - ~ Proposed State Highway
  - ~ Proposed Emergency Access
  - ~ Proposed Public Road
  - ~ Stream Centerline
  - ~ Water Body

**Notes:**  
 Telecommunication - VT Environmental Board area  
 Broadband - Colby Dept. of Public Service, 2006  
 DSL - Dept. of Public Service, 2006  
 Electric Company Coverage - 2006  
 Vermont Gas Service Area - 10/2007, 2006  
 Road Centerline - 10/2007, 2006  
 Surface Water - National Hydrographic Survey, 1982, 2000

**Disclaimer:**  
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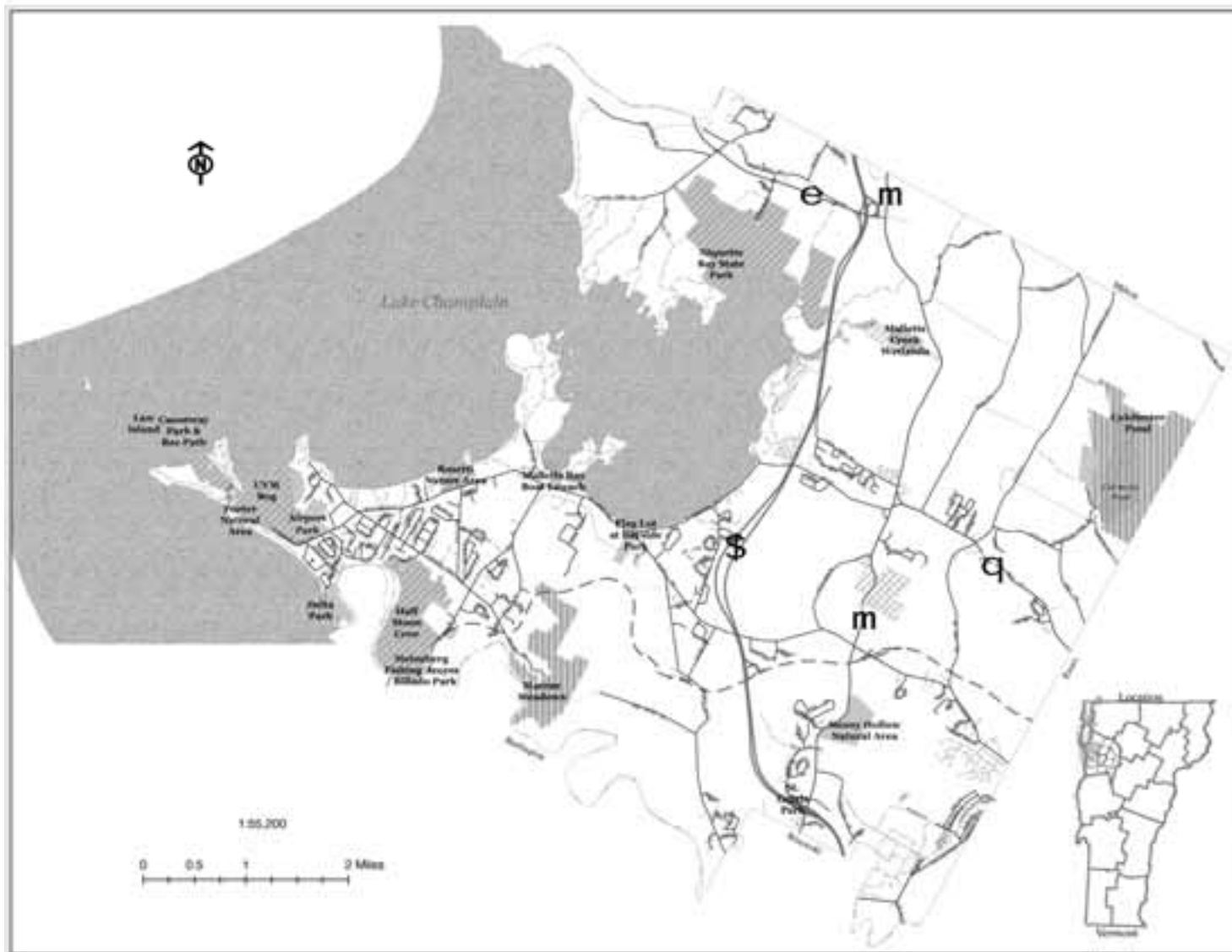
Map 10  
2007 Town Plan  
**DRAFT**  
**Public and  
Conservation  
Land**  
Colchester, Vermont

**Legend**

- Conserved Land
- Conserved-Limited Access
- Park
- Road Centerline
  - Interstate
  - US or State
  - Class 2 - 4
  - Private
  - Proposed State Highway
  - Proposed Emergency Access
  - Proposed Public Road
- Stream Centerline
- Water Body

Source:  
Conserved Land - 1780 Spatial Information Lab, 2004  
Park - 10000000  
Road Centerline - USDOT, 2004  
Surface Water - National Hydrographic Dataset, 2002, 2004

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Map 11  
2007 Town Plan  
DRAFT

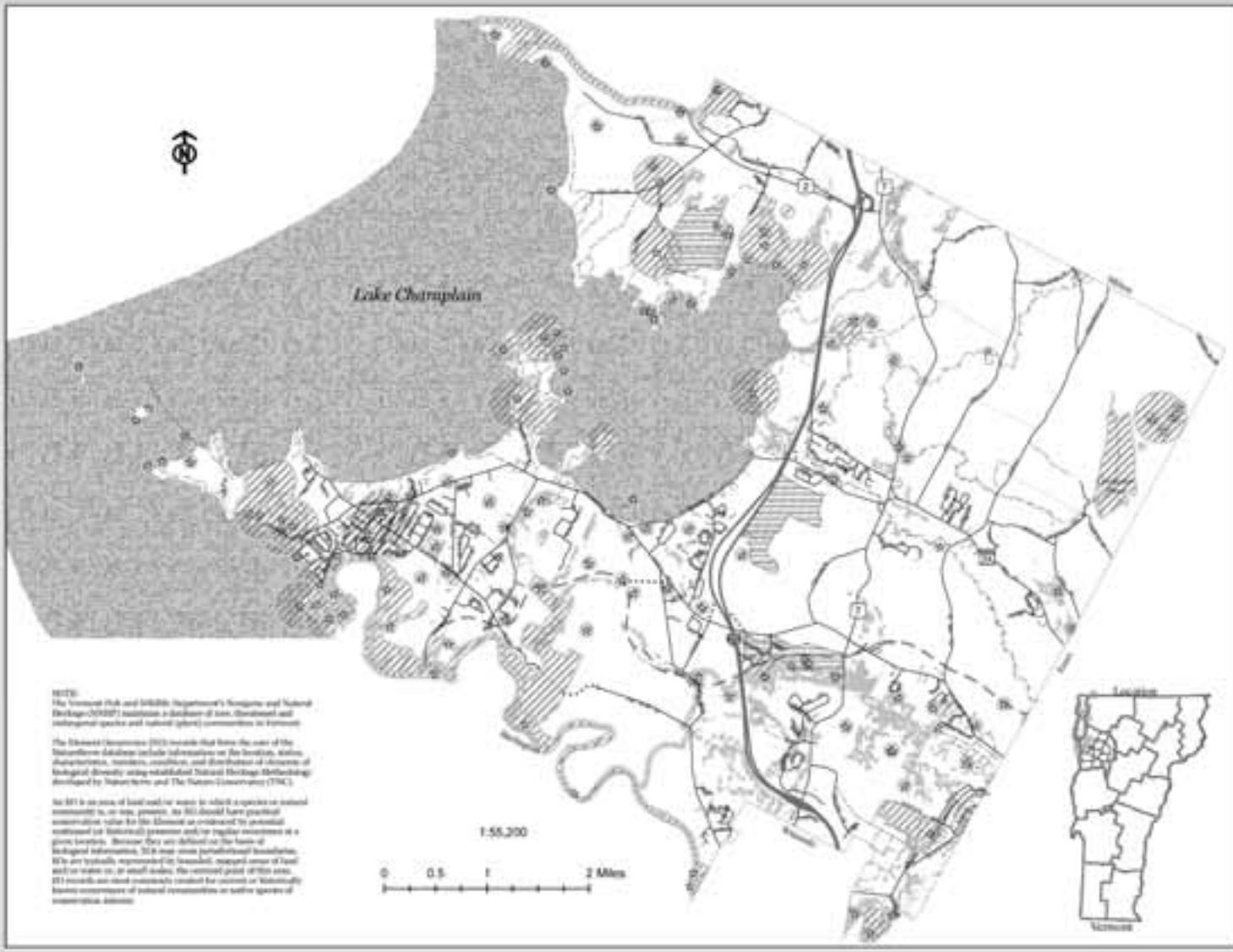
Natural Features  
Colchester, Vermont

Legend

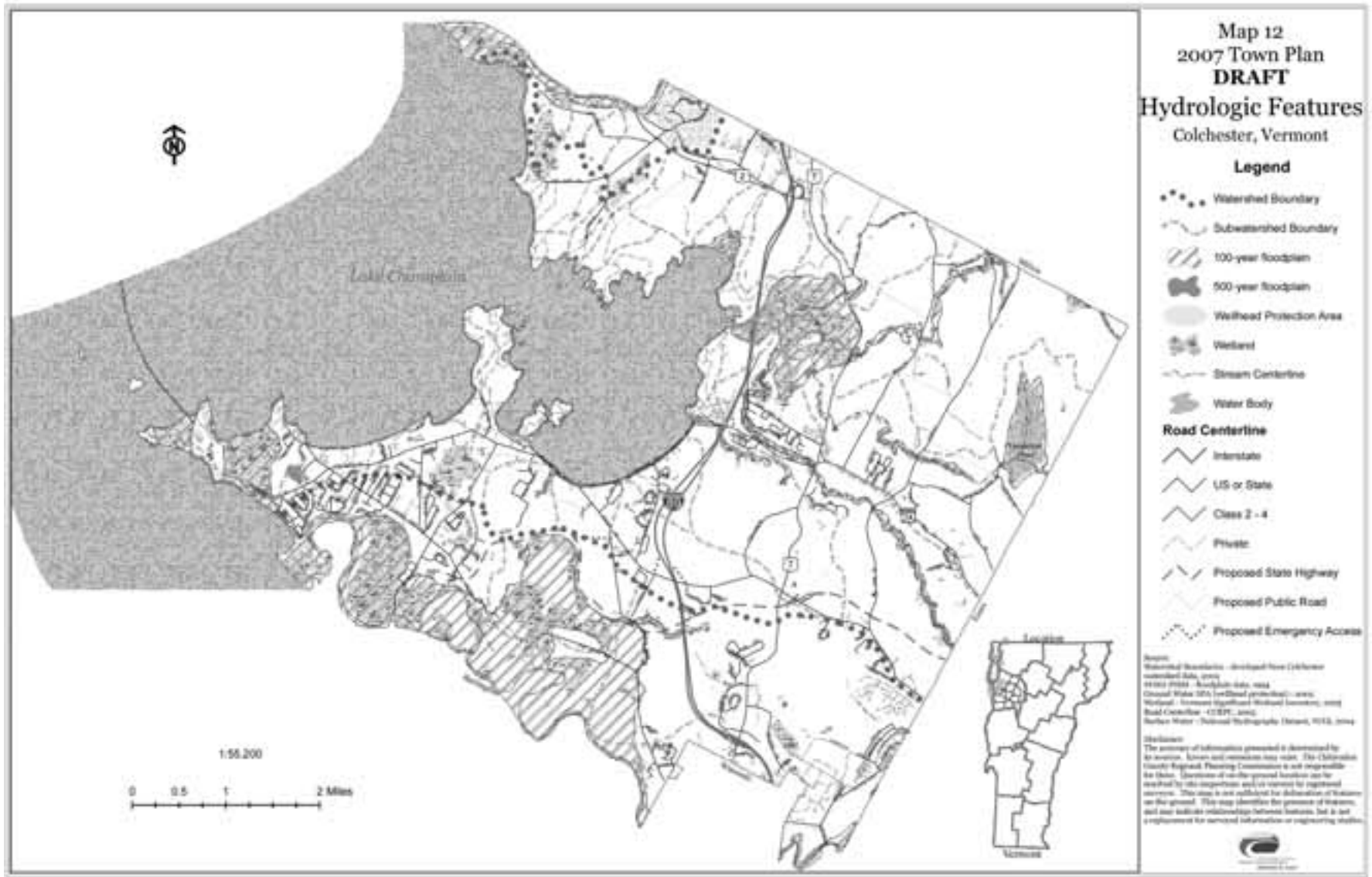
- Rare, Threatened &/or Endangered Species
- ▨ Significant Natural Community &/or Rare Species Site
- ▨ Deer Wintering Area
- ▨ Steep Slope in Non-Residential Zoning District
- Road Centerline
- Interstate
- US or State
- Class 2 - 4
- Private
- Proposed State Highway
- Proposed Public Road
- Emergency Access
- Stream Centerline
- ▨ Lake Champlain

Notes:  
 Rare, Threatened &/or Endangered Species - VT Department of Natural Resources, 2002  
 Significant Natural Community &/or Rare Species Site - Vermont Department of Natural Resources, 2002  
 Deer Wintering Area - VT Fish & Wildlife, 2007  
 Steep Slope - Steep slope for non-residential and rural zoning districts was defined as 4% or greater in the Colchester field use, 10% or more.  
 Road Centerline - GISVTC, 2005  
 Surface Water - National Hydrography Dataset, 2002, using

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NOTE:  
 The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department's Rare and Endangered Species (RES) database includes information on the location, status, distribution, trends, conditions, and distribution of elements of biological diversity using established National Heritage Classification developed by the Vermont and The Nature Conservancy (TNC).  
 The Element Occurrence (EO) records that form the core of the National Heritage database include information on the location, status, distribution, trends, conditions, and distribution of elements of biological diversity using established National Heritage Classification developed by the Vermont and The Nature Conservancy (TNC).  
 An EO is an area of land and/or water in which a species or natural resource is, or was, present. An EO should have practical conservation value for the element as evidenced by potential watershed or National Heritage presence and/or regular occurrence at a given location. Because they are defined on the basis of biological information, EO's are more precise than traditional boundaries. EO's are typically represented by bounded, regular areas of land and/or water on, or near, water. The natural point of this area, EO records are used primarily created for current or National Heritage forms necessary of federal requirements or other species of conservation interest.



**Map 12**  
**2007 Town Plan**  
**DRAFT**  
**Hydrologic Features**  
**Colchester, Vermont**

**Legend**

- Watershed Boundary
  - - - Subwatershed Boundary
  - ▨ 100-year floodplain
  - ▩ 500-year floodplain
  - ◻ Wetland Protection Area
  - ◻ Wetland
  - - - Stream Centerline
  - ◻ Water Body
- Road Centerline**
- ▬ Interstate
  - ▬ US or State
  - ▬ Class 2 - 4
  - ▬ Private
  - ▬ Proposed State Highway
  - ▬ Proposed Public Road
  - ▬ Proposed Emergency Access

**Notes:**  
 Watershed Boundaries - developed from Colchester watershed data, 2006  
 100-year Flood - ArcSWat data, 2004  
 500-year Flood - ArcSWat data, 2004  
 Classified Wetland Data - (unclassified/unclassified) - 2004  
 Wetland - Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, 2004  
 Road Centerline - CDELT, 2004  
 Surface Water - National Hydrography Dataset, 2004, 2006

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Map 13  
2007 Town Plan  
DRAFT

Soils

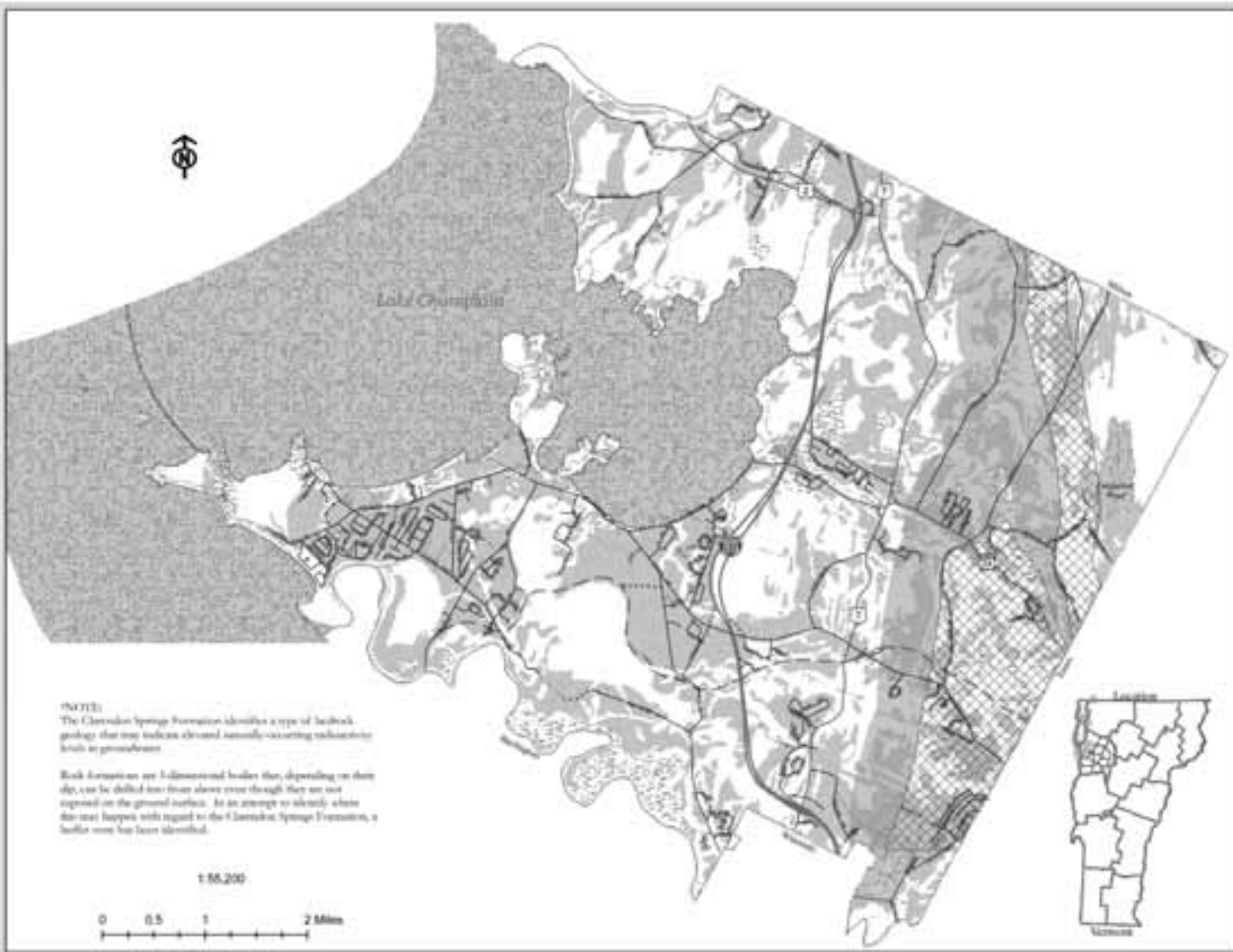
Colchester, Vermont  
Legend

- Road Centerline**
- Interstate
  - US or State
  - Class 2 - 4
  - Private
  - Proposed State Highway
  - Proposed Emergency Access
  - Proposed Public Road
  - Stream Centerline

- Bedrock\***
- Clarendon Springs Formation
  - Buffer Zone
  - Prime Agricultural Soil
  - Statewide Agricultural Soil
  - Water Body

Source:  
Soils - NRCS maps  
Road Centerline - VTDP, 2005  
Water Body - National Hydrography Dataset, 1:250,000

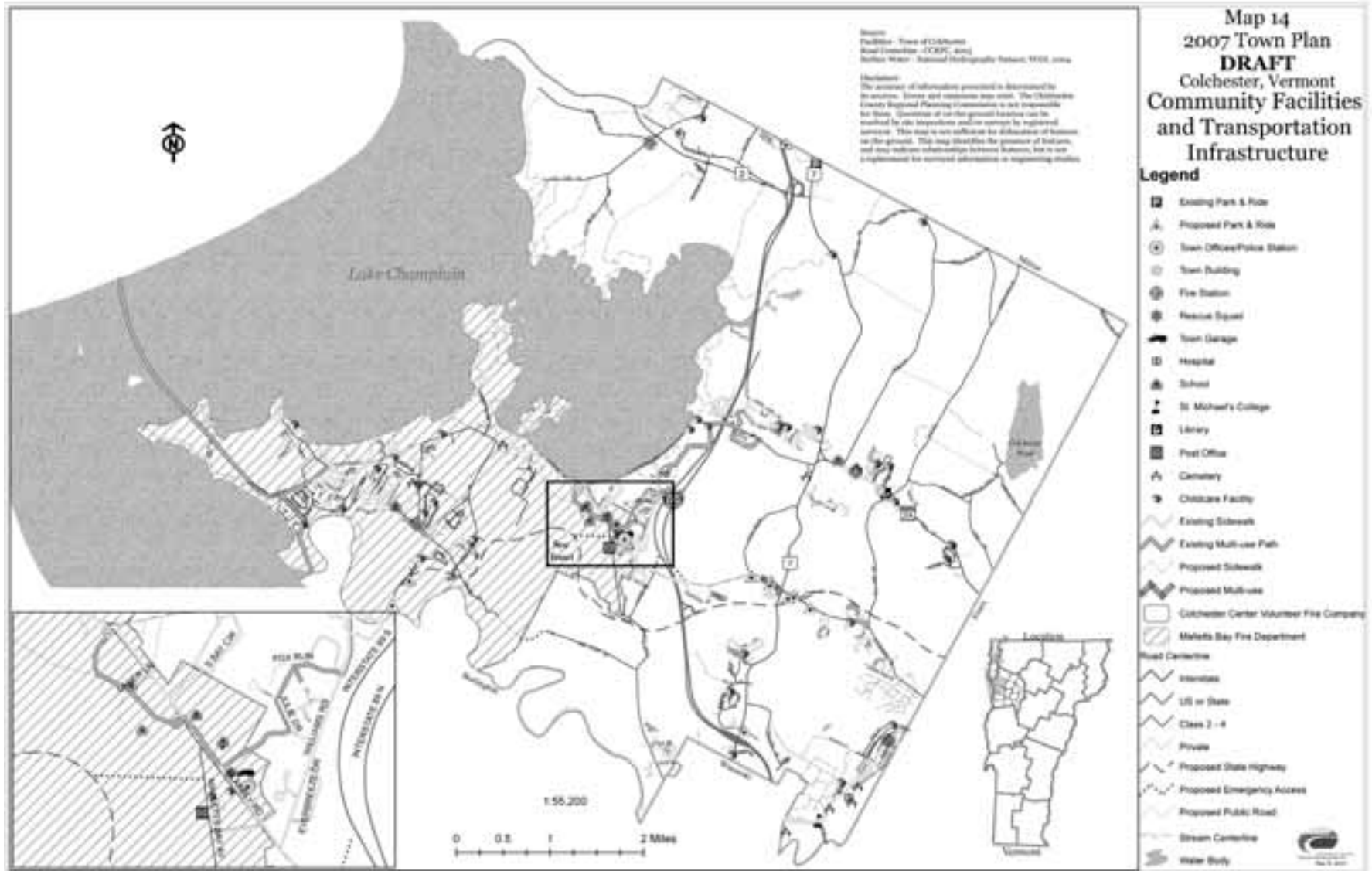
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**NOTE:**  
The Clarendon Springs Formation identifies a type of bedrock geology that may indicate elevated naturally occurring radon concentrations in groundwater.

Rock formations are 3-dimensional bodies that, depending on their dip, can be drilled into from above even though they are not exposed on the ground surface. In an attempt to identify where this may happen with regard to the Clarendon Springs Formation, a buffer zone has been identified.





**PREPARED BY:**

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