



Town of Essex
81 Main Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452

802.878.1341
www.essexvt.org

Vermont Village Center Designation Program
c/o Natalie Elvidge
Division for Community Planning and Revitalization
Department of Housing and Community Development
One National Life Drive, 6th Floor
Montpelier, VT 054620

January 2, 2025

Dear Natalie,

Please accept this letter and application materials for a state of Vermont Village Center designation for Essex Center from the Town of Essex.

The Town seeks this Village Center Designation to implement its Town Plan and to make the advantages of the Village Center designation available to the owners of historic properties, commercial multi-family property owners. Village Center designation fits into the larger framework for the Town for land use and historic preservation of historic Essex Center. Specifically, Essex recognizes the need for revitalization and increased economic development opportunities for the existing and potential future businesses and multi-family housing in Essex Center. The Center contains many historic structures that would benefit from the tax credits, training and technical assistance available through the Village Center Designation program. With a Village Center Designation, and since the Town has an approved Master Plan for its Essex Town Center area, the Town could potentially take advantage of Downtown Transportation funds for Essex Center Village revitalization efforts such as improvements and/or additions to streetscaping and bike and pedestrian facilities.

The common village center characteristics of Essex Center include:

- municipal facilities,
- other civic uses such as schools and churches,
- small commercial uses,
- multi-family housing
- compact development patterns,
- pedestrian oriented development with sidewalks with buildings close to the streets, and
- a historic district.

The application for Village Center designation includes the following materials.

1. A signed resolution from the Essex Selectboard authorizing the Town to apply for a Village Center designation.

TOWN MANAGER	PARKS AND RECREATION	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	PUBLIC WORKS	ASSESSOR	FINANCE	TOWN CLERK	LIBRARY	FIRE	POLICE
878-1341	878-1342	878-1343	878-1344	878-1345	878-1359	879-0413	879-0313	878-5308	878-8331

2. Letters of support for applying for a Village Center Designation for Essex Center from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) and the Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation (GBIC).
3. A letter from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission confirming the planning process of the Town of Essex.
4. A map showing the boundaries of the proposed village center, including buildings and properties that are within the district. The map identifies streets, significant buildings and businesses indicated by number, locations of attached photographs, land and building uses identified with colors that indicated the various land use, north arrow, scale, current date, and property lines within the Essex Center Historic District boundary.
5. Photographs showing key areas of the Essex Center Village Center district. These photographs are keyed to the project boundary map.
6. A map showing the zoning districts within the proposed district boundaries and corresponding zoning bylaw language.
7. A State Register Historic District boundary map and supporting documentation for the Essex Center Historic District.
8. Excerpts from the 2024 Essex Town Plan providing evidence of the Town's intention to apply for a Village Center designation for Historic Essex Center and how the Village Center designation with further the goals of the Town Plan and statewide planning goals.
9. Excerpts from the Essex Land Use Regulations.

Recent revitalization efforts include improvements to the Essex Free Library and Memorial Hall, and a sidewalk extension along Towers Road. There has been little revitalization efforts, to buildings, historic sor not in the proposed Village Center area.

The proposed Essex Center village center has both municipal water and wastewater systems. The water system is the Champlain Water District, and the wastewater system is the Tri-Town Wastewater Treatment Facility.

I am the primary contact for this application, with the following contact information.

Katherine Sonnicks
Community Development Director
Town of Essex
81 Main Street
Essex Jct, VT 05452
(802) 878-1343 (w)
ksonnick@essex.org

Thank you for your attention on this matter,

Katherine Sonnicks

Katherine Sonnicks
Town of Essex Community Development Director

**TOWN OF ESSEX SELECTBOARD RESOLUTION
REGARDING ESSEX CENTER VILLAGE CENTER DESIGNATION**

WHEREAS the Town of Essex, Vermont is applying for Village Center Designation from the state of Vermont for Essex Center;

WHEREAS the ETC NEXT Master Plan and the 2024 Town Plan recommend applying for a Village Center Designation for Essex Center; and

WHEREAS the Town of Essex will benefit from the Village Center Designation through the following ways: availability of tax credit programs for commercial and multi-family property owners, receive priority for state grants, and be eligible for Neighborhood Development Area designation.

NOW BE IT RESOLVED that the Selectboard of the Town of Essex agrees to and supports the application for Village Center Designation.

Passed this 16th day of December 2024

LEGISLATIVE BODY

(name)

(signature)

Tracey Delphia

Tracey A Delphia
Tracey A Delphia (Dec 17, 2024 11:41 EST)

Andy Watts

Andrew J Watts
Andrew J Watts (Dec 17, 2024 19:23 EST)

Kendall Chamberlin

Kendall Chamberlin
Kendall Chamberlin (Dec 18, 2024 08:39 EST)

Dawn Hill-Fleury

Dawn Hill-Fleury
Dawn Hill-Fleury (Dec 18, 2024 19:30 EST)

Ethan Lawrence



CHITTENDEN COUNTY RPC
Communities Planning Together

110 West Canal Street, Suite 202
Winooski, Vermont 05404-2109
802-846-4490
www.ccrpcvt.org

December 3, 2024

Gary Halloway, Downtown Program Manager
Community Planning and Revitalization
Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development
1 National Life Dr.
Davis Building, 6th Floor
Montpelier, VT 05620-0501

Re: Essex's Village Center Designation

Dear Gary,

The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission is pleased to support the Town of Essex's application for a Village Center Designation. CCRPC approved Essex's Comprehensive Plan and confirmed its planning process on March 20, 2024; the plan is valid until March 19, 2032.

Essex's Village Center is within the Metro planning area on the Future Land Use map of the *2018 ECOS Plan* (Chittenden County's Regional Plan), which is an area planned for growth. Therefore, these designations will also help implement Strategy 2 of the *ECOS Plan*, which calls for 80% of new development in the areas planned for growth.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charlie Z Baker".

Charlie Baker
Executive Director



GBIC

Good Jobs In A Clean Environment

Katherine Sonnick
Community Development Director
Town of Essex
81 Main Street
Essex Junction, VT 05452

December 2, 2024

Dear Katherine,

The Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation (GBIC) is pleased to write a letter of support for the Town of Essex's application for Village Center Designation. Since separating from the City of Essex Junction, the Town has been working diligently to enhance its unique identity. Part of that development is seeking a Village Center designation from the State of Vermont.

As noted in the State program, this "designation brings financial incentives, training and technical assistance needed to attract new business and vitality to Vermont's smaller communities." These are tools the Town finds imperative as they move forward in their goal to be a thriving, productive community. The Town of Essex has worked meticulously to outline a proposed Village Center that will best serve it's residents, businesses, and employers.

The Village Center Designation is meant for municipalities like the Town of Essex and GBIC strongly advocates for this designation to be given to Essex.

Sincerely,

Sam Andersen
Executive Vice President, GBIC

**Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC)
Resolution
2024 Essex Town Plan, Planning Process**

WHEREAS, Title 24, V.S.A. §4350 in part requires that CCRPC shall review the municipal planning process of our member municipalities including review of plans; that each review shall include a public hearing which is noticed as provided in 24 V.S.A. §4350(b); and that before approving a plan the Commission shall find that it:

1. is consistent with the goals established in Section 4302 of this title;
2. is compatible with its Regional Plan;
3. is compatible with approved plans of other municipalities in the region;
4. contains all the elements included in § 4382(a)(1)-(12) of this Title;

WHEREAS, The Town of Essex Vermont is a member municipality of this Commission;

WHEREAS, The Town of Essex formally requested CCRPC to approve its *2024 Essex Town Plan* and confirm its planning process on October 13, 2023.

WHEREAS, the Planning Advisory Committee warned a public hearing on October 27, 2023 and held a public hearing on November 15, 2023 to review the *2024 Essex Town Plan* for approval and confirmation of the planning process via Zoom;

WHEREAS, the Planning Advisory Committee reviewed the records and recommended that the Commission approve the *2024 Essex Town Plan* as meeting the requirements of 24 V.S.A. § 4350 and the *Guidelines and Standards for Confirmation of Municipal Planning Processes, Approval of Municipal Plans* and confirm the community's planning process is consistent with Title 24, Chapter 117, as described in CCRPC's staff review and the minutes of the Planning Advisory Committee, dated November 15, 2023.

WHEREAS, the Town of Essex adopted the *2024 Essex Town Plan* on March 6, 2024;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION, that, in compliance with 24 V.S.A. § 4350 and the *Guidelines and Standards for Confirmation of Municipal Planning Processes, Approval of Municipal Plans*, CCRPC approves the *2024 Essex Town Plan* and the Commission finds that said Plan:

1. is consistent with the goals established in Section 4302 of Title 24;
2. is compatible with the *2018 Chittenden County Regional Plan, entitled the ECOS Plan*, adopted June 20, 2018;
3. is compatible with the approved plans from other adjacent Chittenden County municipalities; and
4. contains all the elements included in § 4382(a)(1)-(12) and/or is making substantial progress toward attainment of the elements of this subsection;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION, that, in compliance with 24 V.S.A. § 4350 and the *Guidelines and Standards for Confirmation of Municipal Planning Processes and Approval of Municipal Plans*, CCRPC confirms the Town of Essex's municipal planning process.

Dated at Winooski, this 20th day of March, 2024.

CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

DocuSigned by:

Christopher Shaw

7EA6B28D8E7B4C4
Chris Shaw, Chair

Essex, Vermont

Proposed Village Center Designation

-  Designation boundary
-  Commercial
-  Civic / Public
-  Residential
-  Mixed Use
-  Multi-Family
-  Property boundaries
-  Historic District
-  Photo Locations

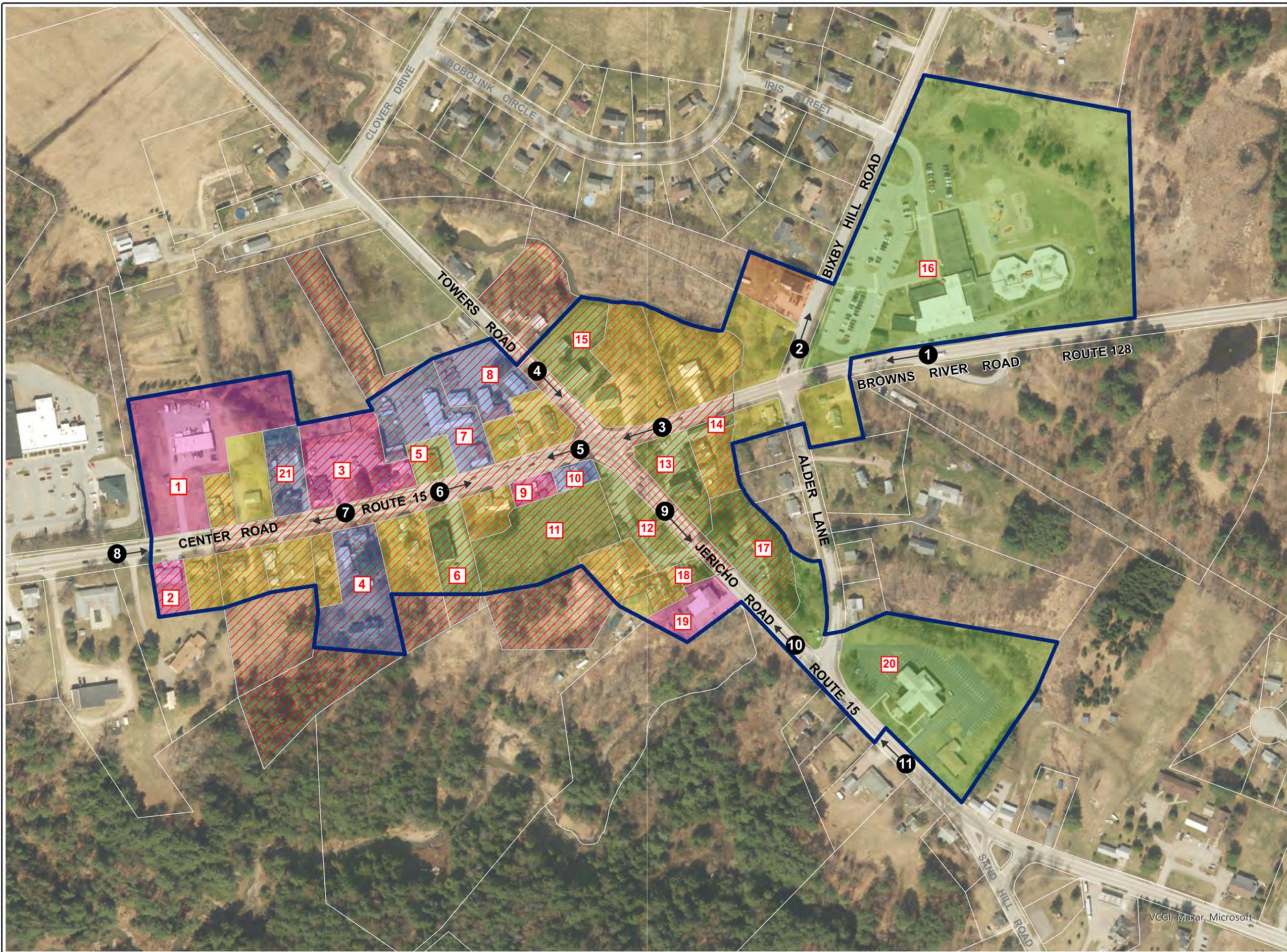
-  1 Potvin Auto / Classic Bike
-  2 New World Coin & Jewelry
-  3 Hoagies Pizza & Pasta
-  4 Hoagies Pizza & Pasta
-  5 Finest Image Photography
-  6 Grange Hall
-  7 Methodist Church
-  8 Franks Motorcycles
-  9 Weston Pulpwood
-  10 Inside Out Upholstery & Design
-  11 Practical Magick / Sacred Sparrow Tattoo
-  12 Essex Common Burial Ground
-  13 Town Common / Park & Ride
-  14 Essex Free Library
-  15 Historical Society
-  16 Memorial Hall
-  17 Essex Elementary School
-  18 Montessori School
-  19 Municipal Public Works
-  20 All About Hair
-  21 Catholic Church
-  22 John Q. Doane Architect



Feet
0 125 250 500

one inch is two hundred fifty feet

December 2024



VCGI, Maxar, Microsoft

Photos Keyed to District Boundary Map



(1) Essex Elementary School. Facing west on Browns River Rd (RT 128) at the District edge.



(2) Classical Institute Boarding House. Up Bixby Hill Rd from Browns River Rd (RT 128).



(3) Practical Magick/Sacred Sparrow Tattoo/housing (Mixed use building), Essex Center Cemetery. Facing west from Browns River Rd (RT 128) toward the Four Corners.



(4) Memorial Hall. Facing south-east on Towers Rd toward the Four Corners.



(5) Inside Out Upholstery. Facing west on Center Rd (RT 15) at the Four Corners.



(6) Essex Grange Hall. Facing east on Center Rd (RT 15) toward the Four Corners.



(7) Hoagies Pizza, Finest Image Photography, and Architect. Facing west on Center Rd (RT 15) facing west.



(8) Potvin Auto and Classic Bike. Facing east on Center Rd (RT15).



(9) Essex Free Library and Town Common. Facing east on Jericho Rd (RT 15), from the Four Corners.



(10) All About Hair and Montessori School. Facing west on Jericho Rd (RT 15).

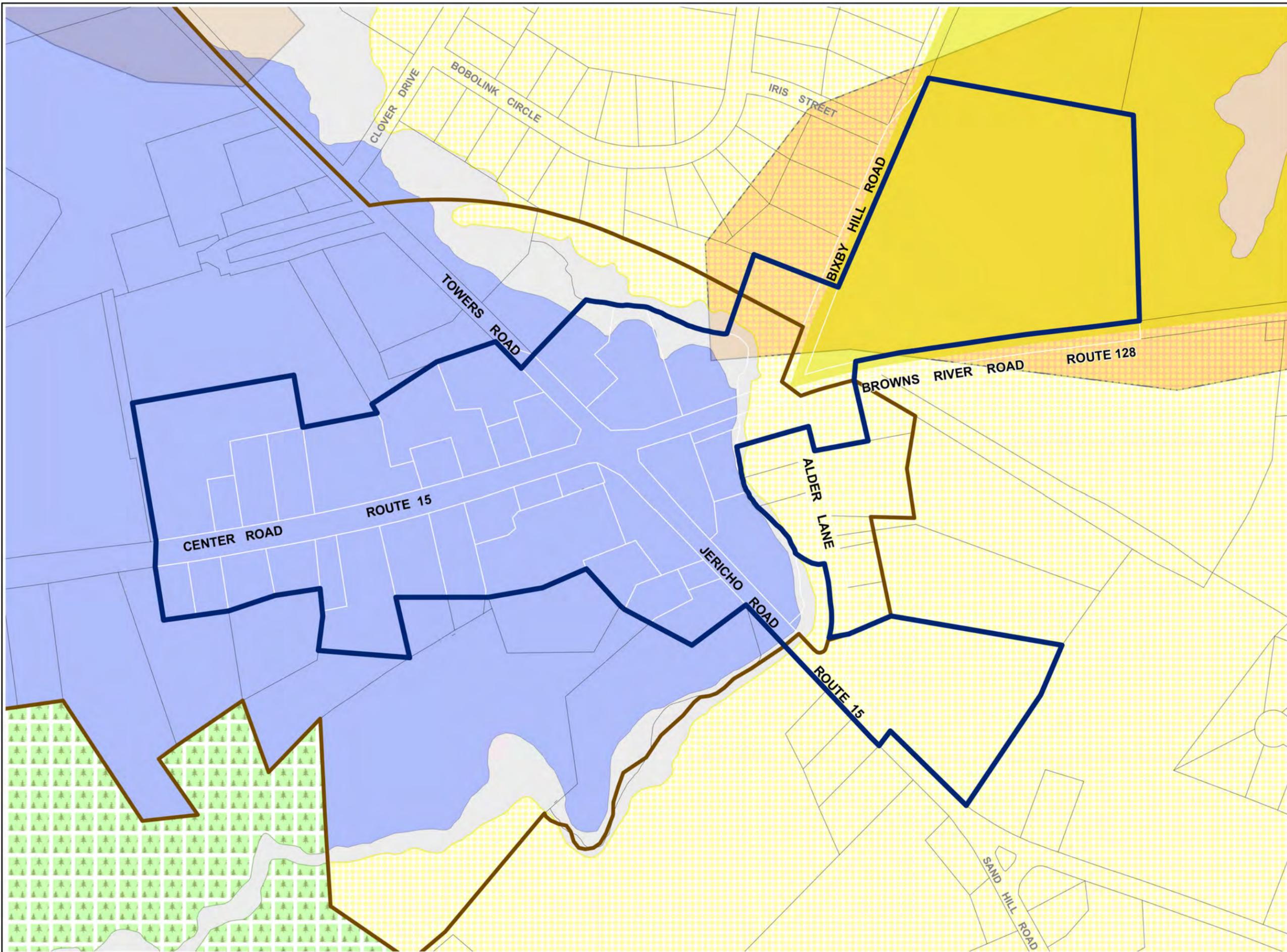


(11) St. Pius X Catholic Church. Facing west on Jericho Rd (RT 15) near the district boundary edge.

Essex, Vermont

Zoning Districts in the Proposed Village Center Designation

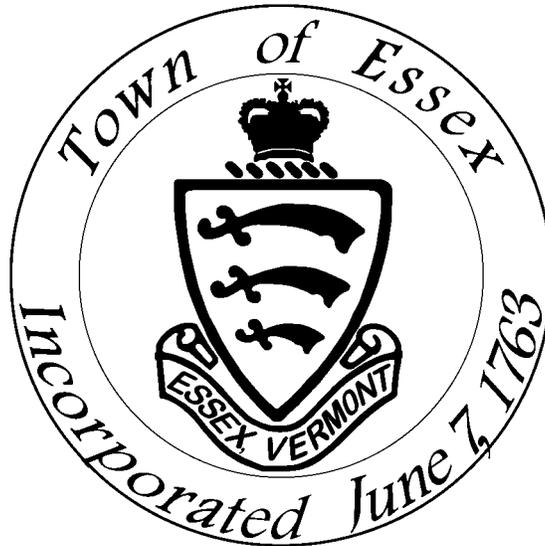
-  Proposed Village Designation area
-  Business Design Control Overlay
-  Parcel lines
-  C2 - Floodplain
-  CTR - Center
-  O1 - Open Recreation
-  R1 - Low Density Residential
-  R2 - Medium Density Residential
-  Scenic Resource Overlay District



Feet
0 125 250 500

one inch is two hundred fifty feet
December 2024

TOWN OF ESSEX
OFFICIAL ZONING REGULATIONS



Effective February 7, 1972
As Amended & Effective On:

February 12, 1973
April 15, 1974
November 14, 1977
December 27, 1977
April 21, 1980
January 5, 1981
February 9, 1987
May 18, 1987
October 16, 1989
February 15, 1993
May 22, 1995
October 27, 1997
December 29, 1998
April 9, 2001
August 25, 2003
December 20, 2004
April 18, 2005
March 24, 2008
December 24, 2008
March 15, 2010
May 23, 2011
November 3, 2014
February 28, 2017
October 9, 2023

TABLE 2.1 SUMMARY USE CHART

USES	ZONING DISTRICTS															
	AR	R1	R2	R3	RB	CTR	B1	I1	MXD	MXD-C	MXD-PUD	RPD-I 40%	HP-DC	O1	C1	C2
ACCESSORY STRUCTURE/USE	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P(4)	P	P	P	P	(1)
AGRICULTURE	P(1, 2)	P(1, 2)	P(1, 2)	P(1, 2)	P(1, 2)	P(1, 2)	P(1, 2)	P(1, 2)	P(1, 2)	P(1, 2)		P(1)(2)	P(1, 2)	P(1, 2)	P(1, 2)	P(1, 2)
AUTOMOBILE SERVICE STATION (EXISTING)	C(1)		C(1)													
AUTOMOBILE SERVICE STATION							C		C							
AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR SHOP							C(1)	P	C		C(4)					
BANK						P	P		P	P(1)	P(4)					
BANK (Drive-through/>10,000 SF)										C(1)						
BARN STORAGE	C(1)	C(1)												C(1)	C(1)	C(1)
BED & BREAKFAST	C	C	C	C	C	C			C	P					C	
CAMP	C														P	
CAR WASH							C		C							
CARETAKER APARTMENT							P(1)	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)						
CEMETERY	C	C	P												P	
RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION		C(1)	C(1)			C(1)	C(1)		C(1)	C(1)						
CONGREGATE HOUSING	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	P(1)		C(1)	C(1)	C(3)		C(1)			
CONTRACTOR'S YARD								P								
CONVENIENCE STORE (EXISTING)			C(1)					C								
CONVENIENCE STORE						C	P		P	C						
CULTURAL FACILITIES	P	P			P	P			P	C			P	P	P	P(1)
DAY CARE FACILITY ADULT					C(1)	C(1)	C(1)		C(1)	P(1)	C(4)	P	C(1)			
DAY CARE FACILITY CHILD OR ADULT	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	P(1)	C(4)	P	C(1)			
DAY CARE HOME	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)							P(1)		P(1)	P(1)
DWELLING/ACCESSORY	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)					P(3)		P(1)		P(1)	C(1)
DWELLING/SINGLE-UNIT	P	P	P	P	P	P					P(3)		P		P	
DWELLING/DUPLEX-UNIT	P	P	P	P	P	P		P	P		P(3)		P		P	
DWELLING/MULTI- UNIT		P	P	P	P	P	P(1)		P	P	P(3)		P			
EQUIPMENT SALES, RENTAL AND SALES							C(1)	P	P		C(4)	P				
ESSENTIAL SERVICES	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P(4)	P	P	P	P	P
EXTRACTION OF EARTH RESOURCES	C(1)	C(1)						C(1)								
FARM PRODUCE STAND	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)						P(1)					P(1)	P(1)	
FARM PRODUCE MARKET	C(1)															P(1)
FIREWOOD PROCESSING AND SALES	C	C						C				P			C	
FORESTRY OPERATION	P(2)	P(2)	P(2)	P(2)	P(2)	P(2)	P(2)	P(2)	P(2)	P(2)	P(2)	P(1)(2)	P(2)	P(2)	P(2)	P(2)
FUNERAL HOME (EXISTING)			C													
FUNERAL HOME						C	P		P	P	P(4)					
GARDEN CENTER	P				P	P	P		P	P	P(4)					
GROUP HOME	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)					P(1,3)		P(1)		P(1)	P(1)
HOME BUSINESS	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)			C(1)						C(1)	
HOME OCCUPATION	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)			P(1)	P(1)			P(1)		P(1)	P(1)
HOTEL, MOTEL							C		C		C(4)					
JUNKYARD								C(1)								
KENNEL	C														C	
LIGHT MANUFACTURING							C(1)	P(1)	C(1)		C(4)	P				

(1) Allowed with Specific Restrictions. See Individual District Tables.

(2) See Table 1.1

(3) Residential Development Conforms to R2 District Standards. See Table 2.5

(4) Commercial Development Conforms to B1 District Standards. See Table 2.9.

TABLE 2.1 SUMMARY USE CHART, continued

USES	ZONING DISTRICTS															
	AR	R1	R2	R3	RB	CTR	B1	II	MXD	MXD-C	MXD-PUD	RPD-I 40%	HP-DC	O1	C1	C2
LUMBER PROCESSING	C(1)													C(1)	C(1)	
MACHINERY REPAIR SHOP (MAJOR)							C(1)	P	C		C(4)					
MACHINERY REPAIR SHOP (MINOR)							C	P	C		C(4)					
MASSAGE THERAPY					C	C	C		C	C	C	C				
MEDICAL CLINIC							C		C	C	C(4)		C			
MOBILE HOME PARK		P(1)	P(1)													
MUNICIPAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)	P(1)	P(4)	P(1)	P(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)
NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPPING CENTER						C(1)	P	P	P	P	P(4)					
OFFICE							P	P	P		P(4)	P				
OFFICE (Max: 2,000 SF)					P(1)	P(1)										
OFFICE/MAJOR (Min: 15,000 SF gross leasable area)							P	P	P		P(4)	P				
OFFICE (Max: 10,000 SF)										P(1)						
OFFICE (Over 2,000 SF)					C(1)											
OFFICE (Over 10,000 SF)										C(1)						
PARKING FACILITY						C	P	P	C	C	P(4)		C			C
PERSONAL SERVICES					P1/C1	PI	P		P	P1/C1	P(4)	P				
PRIVATE CLUB						C	C		C	C	C(4)		C			
PUBLIC FACILITIES	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(4)		C(1)	C(1)	C(1)	C(1)
RECREATION/INDOOR							P	C	P	C	P(4)	P				
RECREATION/PRIVATE OUTDOOR	C						C		C		C(4)	P	C		C	C(1)
RECREATION/PUBLIC OUTDOOR	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		P	C	P		P(1)
RECYCLING ESTABLISHMENT								P								
RESEARCH AND TESTING LABORATORY							C	P	C	C	C(4)	P				
RESTAURANT						C	P		P		P(4)					
RESTAURANT (Max: 8,000 SF)										P						
RESTAURANT (Over 8,000 SF)										C(1)						
RETAIL							P		P		P(4)					
RETAIL STORE (Max: 2,000 SF)					P(1)	P(1)										
RETAIL STORE (Over 2,000 SF)					C(1)											
RETAIL STORE (Max: 10,000 SF)										P						
RETAIL STORE (Over 10,000 SF)										C(1)						
SCHOOL, CERTIFIED	C(1)	P(1)	P(1)			C(1)	C(1)		P(1)	P(1)			P(1)			
SCHOOL, NON-CERTIFIED						C	C		C	C						
SCHOOL/TECHNICAL, VOCATIONAL							P(1)	P(1)	C(1)			P				
SELF SERVICE MACHINE					P	P	P		P	P	P(4)		P			
SMALL PRODUCTION AND SALES					C	P(1)	P	P	P	P(1)	P(4)	P	P			
STORAGE, WAREHOUSE AND DISTRIBUTION							C(1)	P			C(4)	P				
TRUCKING TERMINAL							C(1)	P			C(4)					
VETERINARY CLINIC	C				C	C	C		C	C	C(4)					
WASTE DISPOSAL FACILITY	C(1)															
WHOLESALE ESTABLISHMENT							C(1)	P	C		C(4)	P				

(1) Allowed with Specific Restrictions. See Individual District Tables.

(2) See Table 1.1

(3) Residential Development Conforms To R2 District Standards. See Table 2.5.

(4) Commercial Development Conforms to B1 District Standards. See Table 2.9

Table 2.2 SUMMARY DIMENSIONAL CHART

ZONING DISTRICTS

DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS	AR	R-1	R2	R3	RB	CTR	B1		I1
MINIMUM LOT AREA							EXIST DU	NON-RES	
Off-Site Water and Sewer	3 Acres	1 Acre	20,000 sq ft	10,000 sq ft	10,000 sq ft	10,000 sq ft	20,000 sq ft	30,000 sq ft	40,000 sq ft
Off-Site Water or Sewer	3 Acres	1 Acre	30,000 sq ft	10,000 sq ft	10,000 sq ft	10,000 sq ft	30,000 sq ft	40,000 sq ft	60,000 sq ft
On-Site Water and Sewer	3 Acres	1 Acre	40,000 sq ft	10,000 sq ft	10,000 sq ft	10,000 sq ft	40,000 sq ft	40,000 sq ft	100,000 sq ft
MINIMUM LOT FRONTAGE									
Off-Site Water and Sewer	200 Ft	150 ft	100 ft	100 ft	100 ft	75 ft	150 ft	150 ft	200 ft
Off-Site Water or Sewer	200 ft	150 ft	100 ft	100 ft	100 ft	75 ft	150 ft	150 ft	200 ft
On-Site Water and Sewer	200 ft	150 ft	200 ft	100 ft	100 ft	75 ft	150 ft	150 ft	200 ft
MINIMUM SETBACK/FRONT									
Off-Site Water and Sewer	50 ft	45 ft	40 ft	25 ft	25 ft	30 ft	50 ft	50 ft	50 ft
Off-Site Water or Sewer	50 ft	45 ft	40 ft	25 ft	25 ft	30 ft	50 ft	50 ft	50 ft
On-Site Water and Sewer	50 ft	45 ft	40 ft	25 ft	25 ft	30 ft	50 ft	50 ft	50 ft
MAXIMUM SETBACK/FRONT	NA	NA	NA	35 ft	35 ft	40 ft	NA	NA	NA
MINIMUM SETBACK/SIDE									
Off-Site Water and Sewer	20 ft	20 ft	15 ft	10 ft	10 ft	10 ft	None	None	25 ft
Off-Site Water or Sewer	20 ft	20 ft	15 ft	10 ft	10 ft	10 ft	None	None	25 ft
On-Site Water and Sewer	20 ft	20 ft	15 ft	10 ft	10 ft	10 ft	None	None	25 ft
MINIMUM SETBACK/REAR									
Off-Site Water and Sewer	25 ft	25 ft	20 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	None	None	25 ft
Off-Site Water or Sewer	25 ft	25 ft	25 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	None	None	25 ft
On-Site Water and Sewer	25 ft	25 ft	25 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	None	None	25 ft
MINIMUM BUFFER/ADJACENT RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS	NA	NA	NA	NA	30 ft	NA	30 ft	30 ft	50 ft
MINIMUM BUFFER/SURFACE WATERS	Varies (a)	Varies (a)	Varies (a)	Varies (a)	Varies (a)	Varies (a)	Varies (a)	Varies (a)	Varies (a)
MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE-NON RESIDENTIAL	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%
MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE-RESIDENTIAL-MULTI UNIT	NA	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	70%	70%	70%
MAXIMUM HEIGHT	40 ft (b)	40 ft (b)	40 ft (b)	40 ft (b)	40 ft (b)	40 ft (b)	40 ft (b)	40 ft (b)	45 ft (b)
PUD REQUIREMENTS									
MINIMUM LOT FRONTAGE	100 ft	100 ft	75 ft	75 ft	NA	NA	NA	(f)	200 ft
MINIMUM FRONT SETBACK	20 ft (c)	20 ft (c)	20 ft (c)	20 ft (c)	NA	NA	NA	(f)	25 ft
MINIMUM SIDE SETBACK/SINGLE and DUPLEX UNIT	10 ft	20 ft	10 ft (d)	10 ft (d)	NA	NA	NA	(f)	NA
MINIMUM SIDE SETBACK/MULTI-UNIT	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	NA	NA	NA	(f)	NA
MINIMUM SIDE SETBACK/NON-RESIDENTIAL	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	(f)	25 ft (g)
MINIMUM REAR SETBACK	25 ft	25 ft	15 ft	15 ft	NA	NA	NA	(f)	25 ft (g)
MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE	(e)	(e)	(e)	(e)	NA	NA	NA	(e)	(e)

(a) See Section 3.11

(b) See Section 3.6

(c) With Creative Design - See Article VI

(d) For single unit and duplex dwelling may be reduced to zero feet on one side

(e) See Section 6.0

(f) PUD-Cs may be allowed in B-1 district in accordance with Section 6.6.

PUDs must meet buffer requirements of Table 2.7 and Section 3.2.

(g) Specific Restrictions Apply. See Specific District Tables

(h) See Table 2.10(D) for greater detail building Area/Floor

(i) Includes Buffer Areas

(j) 100 feet along Allen Martin Drive, 50 feet along all other interior streets. See Table 2.12(4) for more detail

(k) PUD-MU allowed. See Section 6.7.

(l) 75 ft Setback along RT 15 - See Section 3.7(b)(2)

(m) 75 ft from Rt 15, 42 ft from "Main" street, 36 from all other streets

Table 2.2 SUMMARY DIMENSIONAL CHART, continued

ZONING DISTRICTS

DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS	MXD		MXD-C (h)	MXD-PUD (g)			RPD-I 40%	HP-DC	O1	C1
	RES	NON- RES		R2	B1	MXD				
MINIMUM LOT AREA										
Off-Site Water and Sewer	20,000 sq ft	30,000 sq ft	7,000 sq ft	20,000 sq ft	30,000 sq ft	(g)	40,000	20,000 sq ft	10 Acres	10 Acres
Off-Site Water or Sewer	30,000 sq ft	40,000 sq ft	7,000 sq ft	30,000 sq ft	40,000 sq ft	(g)	NA	30,000 sq ft	10 Acres	10 Acres
On-Site Water and Sewer	40,000 sq ft	40,000 sq ft	7,000 sq ft	40,000 sq ft	40,000 sq ft	(g)	NA	40,000 sq ft	10 Acres	10 Acres
MINIMUM LOT FRONTAGE										
Off-Site Water and Sewer	100 ft	150 ft	50 ft	100 ft	150 ft	(g)	200 ft	None	200 ft	200 ft
Off-Site Water or Sewer	100 ft	150 ft	50 ft	100 ft	150 ft	(g)	NA	None	200 ft	200 ft
On-Site Water and Sewer	200 ft	150 ft	50 ft	200 ft	150 ft	(g)	NA	None	200 ft	200 ft
MINIMUM SETBACK/FRONT										
Off-Site Water and Sewer	40 ft	50 ft	(m)	40 ft (l)	50 ft (l)	(g)	50 ft (j)	None	50 ft	50 ft
Off-Site Water or Sewer	40 ft	50 ft	(m)	40 ft (l)	50 ft (l)	(g)	NA	None	50 ft	50 ft
On-Site Water and Sewer	40 ft	50 ft	(m)	40 ft (l)	50 ft (l)	(g)	NA	None	50 ft	50 ft
MAXIMUM SETBACK/FRONT	NA	NA	(m)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
MINIMUM SETBACK/SIDE										
Off-Site Water and Sewer	15 ft	None	None	15 ft	None	(g)	25 ft	None	25 ft	25 ft
Off-Site Water or Sewer	15 ft	None	None	15 ft	None	(g)	NA	None	25 ft	25 ft
On-Site Water and Sewer	15 ft	None	None	15 ft	None	(g)	NA	None	25 ft	25 ft
MINIMUM SETBACK/REAR										
Off-Site Water and Sewer	20 ft	None	None	20 ft	None	(g)	25 ft	None	25 ft	25 ft
Off-Site Water or Sewer	25 ft	None	None	25 ft	None	(g)	NA	None	25 ft	25 ft
On-Site Water and Sewer	25 ft	None	None	25 ft	None	(g)	NA	None	25 ft	25 ft
MINIMUM BUFFER/ADJACENT RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS	NA	30 ft	NA	NA	30 ft		200 ft	NA	NA	NA
MINIMUM BUFFER/SURFACE WATERS	Varies (a)	Varies (a)	Varies (a)	Varies (a)	Varies (a)	Varies (a)				
MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE-NON RESIDENTIAL	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	60% (i)	70%	70%	70%
MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE-RESIDENTIAL-MULTI UNIT	70%	70%	70%	NA	70%	(g)	NA	40%	NA	NA
MAXIMUM HEIGHT	40 ft (b)	40 ft (b)	40 ft (b, g)	40 ft (b)	40 ft (b)	40ft (b)	45 ft (b)	40 ft (b)	40 ft (b)	40 ft (b, g)
PUD REQUIREMENTS										
MINIMUM LOT FRONTAGE	75 ft	(k)	(k)	75	(f)	(g)	NA	(e, g)	NA	NA
MINIMUM FRONT SETBACK	20 ft (c)	(k)	(k)	20 ft (c)	(f)	(g)	NA	(e, g)	NA	NA
MINIMUM SIDE SETBACK/SINGLE and DUPLEX-UNIT	10 ft (d)	(k)	(k)	10 ft (d)	(f)	NA	NA	(e, g)	NA	10 ft
MINIMUM SIDE SETBACK/MULIT-UNIT	30 ft	(k)	(k)	30 ft	(f)	(g)	NA	(e, g)	NA	30 ft
MINIMUM SIDE SETBACK/NON-RESIDENTIAL	NA	(k)	(k)	NA	NA	(g)	NA	NA	NA	NA
MINIMUM REAR SETBACK	15 ft	(k)	(k)	15 ft	(f)	(g)	NA	(e, g)	NA	25 ft
MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE	(e)	(e)	(e)	(e)	(e)	(g)	NA	(e, g)	NA	(e)

(a) See Section 3.11

(b) See Section 3.6

(c) With Creative Design - See Article VI

(d) For single unit or duplex dwelling may be reduced to zero feet on one side

(e) See Section 6.0

(f) PUD-Cs may be allowed in B-1 district in accordance with Section PUDs must meet buffer requirements of table 2.7 and Section 3.2.

(g) Specific Restrictions Apply. See Specific District Tables

(h) See Table 2.10(D) for greater detail building Area/Floor

(i) Includes Buffer Areas

(j) 100 feet along Allen Martin Drive, 50 feet along all other interior streets. See Table 2.12(4) for more detail

(k) PUD-MU allowed. See Section 6.7.

(l) 75 ft Setback along RT 15 - See Section 3.7(B)2

(m) 75 ft from RT 15, 42 ft from "Main" street, 36 ft from other streets

Table 2.4 LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT (R1)

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

(B) **Permitted Uses** (see definitions, use standards):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Accessory Structure/Use (2) Agriculture (Table 1.1; Section 4.2) (3) Cultural Facility (4) Day Care Home (Section 4.5) (5) Dwelling/Accessory (Section 4.1) (6) Dwelling/Single- Unit (7) Dwelling/Duplex Unit (8) Dwelling/Multi-Unit (9) Essential Services (10) Farm Produce Stand (Section 4.7) (11) Forestry (Table 1.1) (12) Group Home (Section 4.8) (13) Home Occupation (Section 4.9) (14) Mobile Home Park (only PUD-R; Section 4.12) (15) Recreation/Public Outdoor (16) School/Certified (Section 4.14) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Barn Storage (Section 4.3) (2) Bed and Breakfast (3) Cemetery (4) Congregate Housing (Section 4.4) (5) Day Care Facility, Child (Section 4.5) (6) Extraction of Earth Resources (Section 4.6) (7) Firewood Processing and Sales (8) Home Business (Section 4.9) (9) Municipal Facilities (Section 4.14) (10) Public Facilities (Section 4.14) (11) Religious Institution (Section 4.14) |
|--|---|

(C) **Conditional Uses** (see definitions, use standards):

(D) **District Dimensional Requirements** (unless otherwise specified for a particular use):

Dimension	Standard
Minimum Lot Area	1 acre
Minimum Lot Area per Single or Duplex Dwelling Unit	1 acre
Minimum Lot Frontage	150 feet
Minimum Front Setback (from ROW)	45 feet
Minimum Side Setback	20 feet
Minimum Rear Setback	25 feet
Minimum Buffer/ Surface Waters (see Section 3.11)	Varies
Maximum Lot Coverage – Nonresidential	70%
Maximum Lot Coverage – Multi-Unit Dwelling	40%
Maximum Height (see Section 3.6)	40 feet

(E) **PUD Requirements:** Planned residential developments (PUD-Rs) are encouraged in this district in accordance with the provisions of Section 6.8 of these Regulations and the following dimensional standards, which may supersede the above district dimensional standards to allow for more creative design:

Dimension	PUD-R Standard
Minimum Lot Frontage	100 feet
Minimum Setback/ Front	20 feet ^(a)
Minimum Setback/Side – Single or Duplex Dwelling Unit	10 feet
Minimum Setback/Side – Multi-Unit Dwelling	30 feet
Minimum Setback/Rear	25 feet
Maximum Lot Coverage	PUD Requirements Apply

(a) With creative design.

(F) **District Development Standards:** None

Table 2.5 MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT (R2)

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

(B) **Permitted Uses** (see definitions, use standards):

- (1) Accessory Structure/Use
- (2) Agriculture (Table 1.1; Section 4.2)
- (3) Cemetery
- (4) Day Care Home (Section 4.5)
- (5) Dwelling/Accessory (Section 4.1)
- (6) Dwelling/Single Unit
- (7) Dwelling/Duplex Unit
- (8) Dwelling/Multi-Unit I
- (9) Essential Services
- (10) Farm Produce Stand (Section 4.7)
- (11) Forestry (Table 1.1)
- (12) Group Home (Section 4.8)
- (13) Home Occupation (Section 4.9)
- (14) Mobile Home Park (only PUD-R; Section 4.12)
- (15) Recreation/Public Outdoor
- (16) School/Certified (Section 4.14)

(C) **Conditional Uses** (see definitions, use standards):

- (1) Automobile Service Station/Existing (Section 3.8)
- (2) Bed and Breakfast
- (3) Congregate Housing (Section 4.4)
- (4) Convenience Store/Existing (Section 3.8)
- (5) Day Care Facility, Child (Section 4.5)
- (6) Funeral Home/ Existing
- (7) Home Business (Section 4.9)
- (8) Municipal Facilities (Section 4.14)
- (9) Public Facilities (Section 4.14)
- (10) Religious Institution (Section 4.14)
- (11) Residential Care Facility (Section 4.8)

(D) **District Dimensional Requirements** (unless otherwise specified for a particular use):

Dimension	Off-site Water and Sewer	Off-site Water or Sewer	On-site Water and Sewer
Minimum Lot Area	20,000 sq. ft.	30,000 sq. ft.	40,000 sq. ft.
Minimum Lot Area per Single or Duplex Dwelling Unit	20,000 sq. ft.	30,000 sq. ft.	40,000 sq. ft.
Minimum Lot Frontage	100 feet	100 feet	200 feet
Minimum Front Setback (from ROW)	40 feet ^(a)	40 feet ^(a)	40 feet ^(a)
Minimum Side Setback	15 feet	15 feet	15 feet
Minimum Rear Setback	20 feet	25 feet	25 feet
Minimum Buffer/ Surface Waters (see Section 3.11)	Varies	Varies	Varies
Maximum Lot Coverage – Nonresidential	70%	70%	70%
Maximum Lot Coverage – Multi-Unit Dwelling	40%	40%	40%
Maximum Height (see Section 3.6)	40 feet	40 feet	40 feet

(a)Front setback in R2 portion of MXD-PUD District is 75 feet along VT Route 15. See Section 3.7(B)(2).

(E) **PUD Requirements:** Planned residential developments (PUD-Rs) are encouraged in this district in accordance with the provisions of Section 6.8 of these Regulations and the following dimensional standards, which may supersede the above district dimensional standards to allow for more creative design:

Dimension	Off-site Water and Sewer	Off-site Water or Sewer	On-site Water and Sewer
Minimum Lot Frontage	75 feet	75 feet	75 feet
Minimum Front Setback	20 feet ^(a)	20 feet ^(a)	20 feet ^(a)
Minimum Side Setback/Single or Duplex Dwelling Unit	10 feet ^(b)	10 feet ^(b)	10 feet ^(b)
Minimum Side Setback/Multi-Dwelling Unit	30 feet	30 feet	30 feet
Minimum Rear Setback	15 feet	15 feet	15 feet
Maximum Lot Coverage	PUD Requirements Apply		

(a) With creative design. (b) For single and duplex unit dwellings may be reduced to zero feet (0') on one side.

(F) **District Development Standards:** None

Table 2.8 CENTER DISTRICT (CTR)

(A) **Purpose:** The purpose of the Center District is to support the historic role of Essex Center as the focus of many social and economic activities in the community. The types of uses allowed include residential, civic, cultural, neighborhood commercial, home occupations, and other compatible uses that will serve the needs of the community. Such development should occur in a pattern and scale that will maintain the traditional social and physical character of the Essex Center and preserve its historic and scenic resources. Facilities and services are planned for this area to accommodate moderate to high-density development. Development should be reviewed in accordance with the *2021 Essex Town Center Master Plan (ETC|NEXT)*.

(B) **Permitted Uses** (see definitions, use standards):

- (1) Accessory Structure/Use
- (2) Agriculture (Table 1.1; Section 4.2)
- (3) Bank
- (4) Cultural Facility
- (5) Day Care Home (Section 4.5)
- (6) Dwelling/Accessory (Section 4.1)
- (7) Dwelling/Single - Unit
- (8) Dwelling/Duplex - Unit
- (9) Dwelling/Multi - Unit
- (10) Essential Services
- (11) Forestry (Table 1.1)
- (12) Garden Center
- (13) Group Home (Section 4.8)
- (14) Home Occupation (Section 4.9)
- (15) Municipal Facilities (Section 4.14)
- (16) Office (Max: 2,000 sq ft; see (E)(1) below)
- (17) Personal Services (Max: 2,000 sq ft; see (E)(1) below)
- (18) Recreation/Public Outdoor
- (19) Restaurant
- (20) Retail (Max: 2,000 sq ft; see (E)(1) below)
- (21) Self Service Machine
- (22) Small Production and Sales (Max: 1,000 sq ft; see (E)(2) below)

(C) **Conditional Uses** (see definitions, use standards):

- (1) Bed and Breakfast
- (2) Congregate Housing (Section 4.4)
- (3) Convenience Store
- (4) Day Care Facility, Child or Adult (Section 4.5)
- (5) Funeral Home
- (6) Home Business (Section 4.9)
- (7) Massage Therapy
- (8) Neighborhood Shopping Center (see (E)(3) below)
- (9) Parking Facility
- (10) Private Club
- (11) Public Facilities (Section 4.14)
- (12) Religious Institution (Section 4.14)
- (13) Residential Care Facility (Section 4.8)
- (14) School/Certified (Section 4.14)
- (15) School/Non-certified
- (16) Veterinary Clinic

(D) **District Dimensional Requirements** (unless otherwise specified for a particular use):

Dimension	Standard
Minimum Lot Area	10,000 sq. ft.
Minimum Lot Area per Single or Duplex Dwelling Unit	10,000 sq. ft.
Minimum Lot Frontage	75 feet
Minimum Front Setback (from ROW)	30 feet
Maximum Front Setback (from ROW)	40 feet
Minimum Side Setback	10 feet
Minimum Rear Setback	15 feet
Minimum Buffer/ Surface Waters (see Section 3.11)	Varies
Maximum Lot Coverage - Nonresidential	70%
Maximum Lot Coverage - Multi-Unit	40%
Maximum Height (see Section 3.6)	40 feet

(E) **District Development Standards:**

- (1) Retail stores, personal services establishments and business, financial, or professional offices shall not contain more than 2,000 square feet of floor area.
- (2) Small production and sales establishments shall not contain more than 1,000 square feet of floor area.
- (3) Existing neighborhood shopping centers shall contain no more than 90,000 square feet of floor area.
- (4) Ingress and egress onto VT Route 15 shall be kept to a minimum. To achieve this, the Planning Commission may require new public streets and/or frontage roads and curb cuts shared by adjacent lots.

Table 2.16 BUSINESS–DESIGN CONTROL OVERLAY DISTRICT (B–DC)

- (A) **Purpose:** The purpose of this district is to assist in focusing on design principles which can result in creative solutions that will develop a satisfactory visual appearance within the Essex Center area. The *2021 Essex Town Center Master Plan* (ETC|NEXT) describes the particular planning and design problems in this district and sets forth a design plan for the Essex Center area. Building and site design for all development proposals in this district shall be evaluated under the criteria established herein, except that the criteria established in this Section do not apply to single-unit or duplex-unit dwellings (and their accessory uses), accessory dwellings, or to agricultural buildings and uses.

B-DC District Goals and Objectives

- (1) **Motorized Connectivity:** Assure the continued flow of traffic through the VT Route 15 corridor and address the impact of new residential growth. Plan for changing patterns in mobility, including greater inclusion of transit within the ETC.
- (2) **Non-Motorized Connectivity:** Improve bicycle accommodation, linkages to existing trails, sidewalk segments and crossing points for pedestrians.
- (3) **Recreation:** Support a mix of neighborhood and destination-focused recreation (both indoor spaces and parks) combined with pocket parks and functional “urban” open spaces where appropriate.
- (4) **Diversify the Economy:** Encourage a mix of local and destination retail within the ETC with a greater emphasis on dining and entertainment uses. Create an “experience” for residents and visitors alike.
- (5) **Open Space and Views:** Assure the preservation of open space, establish more diversity in open/civic spaces and prioritize long-range views when addressing new development.
- (6) **Distinctive Architecture:** Focus design on less “boxy” forms, with varied massing, using architectural elements like porches and arcades and encourage diverse roof forms and rooflines. Buildings will have clearly defined entry points. Strive for unique character and quality in architectural outcomes with traditional materials such as wood and brick but enable diverse design expression based on the neighborhood context.
- (7) **Height/Mass and Scale:** Protect long-range views of mountains with appropriate building siting and/or building setbacks designed to highlight significant views. Buildings should have a well-articulated street level that relates to a human scale. Horizontal and/or vertical articulation of the façade using architectural elements, materials textures, etc. should be used to break up large masses and windowless expanses on all facades.
- (8) **Density and Form:** Encourage higher densities for residential uses in areas where access is good, where infrastructure supports it and where it best serves to revitalize and invigorate local retail and commercial uses. Support a diverse mix of housing units to maintain affordability within the ETC.
- (9) **Functional Site Design:** Assure that buildings relate to pedestrians and the site in clear and meaningful ways, including distinct articulation of the building at grade. Buildings should be sited in relation to the established street grid or use landscaping elements such as pavers, street furniture, etc. to create a relationship with the sidewalk that encourages pedestrian movement. Parking should be underneath, behind, or to the side of buildings, to the extent possible, to reduce its visual and physical prominence. Where visible, it should be screened with landscaping or hardscape: shrubs, sitting walls, etc. Shade trees should be integrated into the landscape and parking plan.

(B) **General Provisions.**

- (1) The Business-Design Control Overlay District is an overlay district whose boundaries include some properties in the AR District, R2 and R3 Districts, CTR District, the RB District, the MXD-PUD District and all the MXD-C District. Subsection (D) establishes general criteria for the review of all non-exempt structures within the CTR, RB, MXD-PUD, and MXD-C Districts. Subsections (E) and (F) establish specific criteria for the CTR and MXD-C Districts, respectively.
- (2) The requirements of this overlay district shall be in addition to any requirements specified for the underlying districts, including allowed uses and dimensional standards, in which proposed development is located.

Table 2.16 BUSINESS–DESIGN CONTROL OVERLAY DISTRICT (B–DC), continued

(C) **District Design Review Process.** The Planning Commission may deny approval for proposed development or modification of a structure or site in this district if it determines that the intent of this Section and/or the *2021 Essex Town Center Master Plan* (ETC|NEXT) have not been met. Accordingly:

- (1) Within the Business-Design Control Overlay District, no structure may be reconstructed, moved, erected, nor the exterior altered or restored without design approval from the Planning Commission, issued in conjunction with site plan approval. In the event that site plan review is not otherwise required, design review shall be conducted in accordance with site plan review procedures under Section 5.3. In addition:
 - (a) No building may be demolished without prior approval of the Planning Commission that is in excess of 800 square feet. Structures less than 800 square feet that are not of historic significance as defined by the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation may be demolished without prior approval.
 - (b) The painting of a building and related structures to that building shall not be subject to Planning Commission approval.
- (2) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to prevent the routine maintenance or repair of any exterior architectural feature in the district which does not involve a change in design or the outward appearance of the feature.
- (3) The review of plans for development in this District by the Planning Commission requires submission of information listed under Section 5.2 (Applications), along with building elevations, a description of materials to be used on the exterior of any structure, plans for exterior lighting, signs, drainage and snow removal, and photographs of existing structures and adjacent buildings if applicable. The Planning Commission may require additional information and documentation as it deems necessary.
- (4) Should the Planning Commission deem it necessary to employ an architect or other qualified individual to review any development proposal, the cost of employing such an individual shall be borne by the applicant.
- (5) The Planning Commission shall render a decision as to the acceptability of the plan based on the criteria established in the *2021 Essex Town Center Master Plan* (ETC|NEXT), and general and specific criteria as set forth herein.

(D) **Design Requirements (CTR, RB, MXD-C, MXD-PUD, AR, R2 and R3 Districts):**

(1) **Relationship of Buildings and Site to Adjacent Areas.**

- (a) The site shall be planned to accomplish a desirable transition with the streetscape and to provide for adequate parking, landscaping and safe pedestrian and vehicular movement.
- (b) Project features that may have negative impacts on adjacent properties shall be screened from the adjacent properties.
- (c) The scale, height and mass of the proposed project shall be compatible with its site and existing adjacent buildings and property, and any Town endorsed plan incorporating desired design or architectural guidance.

(2) **Landscaping and Site Treatment.**

- (a) Storage areas, service areas, trash receptacles, accessory structures and parking areas shall be screened or located out of view from the street and adjacent properties. Trash enclosures shall also require additional screening from the street and adjacent properties.
- (b) In areas where general planting will not thrive, other materials such as fences, walls, earth berms, and planters shall be used.

Table 2.16 BUSINESS–DESIGN CONTROL OVERLAY DISTRICT (B–DC), continued

(c) Newly installed utility services shall be underground.

(3) Building Design.

(a) Architectural style is not restricted. However, evaluation of the appearance of a project shall be based on the quality of design and relationship to surroundings.

(b) Buildings shall have good scale and be in harmonious conformance with neighboring development.

(c) Materials shall have good architectural character and shall be selected for harmony of the building with adjacent buildings.

(d) Mechanical equipment or other utility hardware on roof, ground, or building shall be screened from public view with materials harmonious with the building only if they cannot be located as not to be visible from any public right-of-way or adjacent property, except if exempted in Table 1.1.

(4) Access and Parking.

(a) A landscape plan that preserves and/or promotes the visual quality for all parking is required. Parking shall be located at the rear or side of buildings.

(b) Ingress/egress for commercial uses onto collector roads will be kept to a minimum. To achieve this, the Planning Commission may require commonly shared curb-cuts between commercial lots.

(5) Waste Management

(a) All dumpster enclosures and surrounding areas shall be maintained to ensue functionality and provide a generally aesthetically appealing area. If screening fences, gates, or landscaped screening becomes damaged, the landowner shall undertake repairs in a timely manner.

(b) Grease containers shall be placed within a dumpster enclosure located convenient to the businesses that use the grease container. Grease containers shall be arranged in the dumpster enclosure such that access, and use of the container is easy and manageable. Any and all spillage of grease, either on the container or the ground, shall be cleaned immediately.

(c) The landowner will adjust the trash, recycling, and compost pick-up frequencies as required based on the volume of waste that is being produced. If large waste items (mattress, furniture, large box, etc.) and/or other loose debris accumulate within the dumpster enclosures or adjacent to the dumpster enclosures, the landowner shall notify the contracted pick-up service within forty-eight (48) hours and arrange for such items to be disposed.

(d) Loose trash will be cleaned up on a regular basis to an extent feasible and within the landowner's control.

(e) Food waste, except for grease as noted in (b) above, shall be disposed of in accordance with a Food Waste Management Plan.

(6) Pavement Maintenance

(a) Paved roads, drives, and parking areas shall be maintained in a manner to and to promote vehicular and pedestrian safety. Parking, road striping, fire lanes, and crosswalks shall be re-painted when the paint deteriorates and is no longer easily visible. Potholes shall be patched in a timely manner to facilitate traffic flow and reduce the potential for vehicular damage. Sealcoating, crack sealing, and pavement resurfacing will be completed as recommended by a pavement specialist. All pavement maintenance work should be completed in a manner to maintain all existing drainage patterns unless otherwise specified by a professional engineer.

Table 2.16 BUSINESS–DESIGN CONTROL OVERLAY DISTRICT (B–DC), continued

(b) The Town is responsible for all pavement and sidewalk maintenance within street rights-of-way.

(7) **Landscape Maintenance**

Landscaping maintenance shall be completed to provide an aesthetically appealing environment for tenants and the public. Grassed areas shall be mowed regularly to maintain a vegetation height of no higher than six inches. Hardscaped areas shall be maintained to promote pedestrian safety. Regular maintenance of planted areas shall include bark mulch, weeding, and cutting/trimming depending on the plant species to maintain a healthy growing condition. Any dead plants or trees shall be removed.

(8) **Fire and Safety Hazards**

Fire lanes and evacuation routes shall be kept clear of vehicles, objects and debris at all times. All existing fire prevention systems will be maintained and inspected as required by the State of Vermont. All new fire prevention systems will be installed as required by the State of Vermont.

(E) Specific Design Requirements in the CTR District.

- (1) The roof shape of the proposed structure shall be compatible with the predominant roof shapes in the district.
- (2) The predominant direction of structural shape, of placement of openings and architectural details at the front facade shall be consistent with such established conditions in the district.
- (3) The spaces between proposed structures shall be compatible with the current pattern of spacing between buildings in the district.
- (4) The exterior building materials to be used shall be compatible with the predominant materials used in the district.
- (5) Parking shall be prohibited along VT Route 15.
- (6) The front yard setback for structures in this district shall be the average of the front yard setback of the principal buildings located on either side of the proposed structure, but in no event is a setback of less than twenty-five feet (25') permitted.
- (7) No newly established use or lot shall use an access or curb cut directly onto Towers Road or VT Route 15. All new uses and lots shall access onto a secondary road which connects to Towers Road or VT Route 15. In the event the Planning Commission determines that meeting this requirement is impracticable, the Planning Commission may allow one curb cut or access per lot onto Towers Road or VT Route 15.

(F) Specific Design Requirements in the MXD-C District. In the portion of the B-DC District which overlays the MXD-C District, the general purposes of that district shall apply. In addition, the general concepts and specific policies and recommendations for this area set forth in the *2021 Essex Town Center Master Plan (ETC|NEXT)* and the Essex Town Plan shall guide all future development.

(G) Specific Design Requirements in the MXD-PUD District. No use established or lot created after the effective date of this amendment shall use an access or curb cut directly onto Old Stage Road, Lost Nation Road or VT Route 15. All new uses or lots shall access onto a secondary road which connects to Old Stage Road, Lost Nation Road, or VT Route 15. In the event that the Planning Commission determines that meeting this requirement is impractical, the Planning Commission may allow one curb cut or access per lot onto Lost Nation Road or Old Stage Road.

Table 2.19 FLOODPLAIN OVERLAY DISTRICT (C2)

(A) **Purpose:** The purposes of the Flood Plain Overlay District are to: (1) minimize and prevent the loss of life and property, the disruption of commerce, the impairment of the tax base, and the extraordinary public expenditures and demands on public services that result from flooding and other flood related hazards; (2) ensure that the design and construction of development in flood and other hazard areas are accomplished in a manner that minimizes or eliminates the potential for flood and loss or damage to life and property; (3) manage all flood hazard areas designated by the state (pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 753; and (4) make the town and individuals eligible for federal flood insurance and other federal disaster recovery and hazard mitigation funds as may be available. The Flood Plain Overlay District includes all areas identified as areas of special flood hazard in and on the most current flood insurance studies and maps published by the National Flood Insurance Program, as provided by the Secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources. In these areas, building, excavation, fill, disruption of vegetative cover, or other encroachment is restricted.

(B) **Permitted Uses** (see definitions, use standards)

- (1) Accessory Use – No Structures
- (2) Agriculture (Table 1.1; Section 4.2)
- (3) Cultural Facility – No Structures
- (4) Day Care Home (Section 4.5)*
- (5) Essential Services
- (6) Farm Produce Stand (Section 4.7)
- (7) Forestry Operation (Table 1.1)
- (8) Group Home (Section 4.8)*
- (9) Home Occupation (Section 4.9)*
- (10) Recreation/Public Outdoor – No Structures

(C) **Conditional Uses** (see definitions, use standards):

- (1) Accessory structure, addition, and/or substantial improvement to an existing structure
- (2) Barn Storage (Section 4.3)
- (3) Dwelling/Accessory* (Section 4.1)
- (4) Municipal Facilities (Section 4.14)
- (5) Parking Lot
- (6) Public Facilities (Section 4.14)
- (7) Recreation/Private Outdoor – No Structure

**Only in association with an existing single unit dwelling.*

(D) **District Dimensional Requirements:** As required for the underlying zoning district.

(E) **District Development Standards:**

- (1) Where the standards of this overlay district differ from underlying district standards, the more restrictive shall apply.
- (2) Uses permitted within the Flood Plain Overlay District include agriculture and forestry operation, undeveloped open space, lawns, gardens and play areas, and golf courses, tennis courts, and other outdoor recreational uses that do not include new buildings or structures; and those uses generally allowed within or in association with single unit dwellings in existence of the effective date of these Regulations which do not require structural alterations.
- (3) Within this district, no building shall be constructed, erected, moved, replaced, altered or enlarged; no mining, excavation, filling or storage of materials shall commence or expand; and no watercourse be altered or relocated, except with the approval of the Board of Adjustment. No new structures shall be allowed within this district, except for accessory structures, additions and substantial improvements to structures legally in existence as of the effective date of these Regulations, and facilities that, because of their purpose or function, must be located within floodplain areas. These uses are subject to conditional use review under Section 5.7, flood hazard area review under Section 5.8 and underlying district requirements.
- (4) Junkyards, the storage of hazardous, toxic or floatable materials and the construction, major expansion or relocation of any building, or any fill or other encroachment in designated floodways which would result in an increased flood height during the occurrence of the 100-year flood are specifically prohibited in this District.

Table 2.19 FLOODPLAIN OVERLAY DISTRICT (C2), continued

(5) Mandatory state [§ 4424] and federal [44CFR 60.3, 60.6] requirements for continued municipal participation in the National Flood Insurance Program including, but not limited to, associated structural and flood proofing standards, administrative and variance requirements, are hereby adopted by reference and shall be applied to all development within federal or state designated areas of special flood hazard.

Accordingly:

- (a) Applications for development within designated flood hazard areas must include information required under Section 5.8 and are subject to state agency referral requirements.
- (b) Development within designated flood hazard areas shall be reviewed under applicable flood hazard area development standards under Section 5.8.
- (c) Requests for variances within designated flood hazard areas must meet the requirements of Section 7.5(C) in addition to variance requirements under Section 7.5(A).
- (d) Permits, certifications, and variance actions for development within designated flood hazard areas shall be recorded by the Zoning Administrator in accordance with Section 5.8

Table 2.20 SCENIC RESOURCE PROTECTION OVERLAY DISTRICT (SRPO)

(A) **Purpose:** The purpose of this overlay district is to avert or minimize the adverse impacts of development on identified scenic resources, viewsheds and roadscape corridors in the Town of Essex through appropriate site planning and design practices. The standards are intended to provide flexibility so that proposed development can be designed to fit the particular characteristics of the site on which it is located. Scenic resources and important distant views are identified in *Views to the Mountain: Scenic Protection Manual* (the Manual).

(B) **Applicability and Interpretation:** The standards established in this section shall apply to all development located in the Scenic Resource Protection Overlay District that requires Planning Commission review. This section includes mandatory standards (denoted by “shall” or “will”) and advisory guidance (denoted by “should,” “encourage,” and “discourage”). Most of the advisory guidance is related to design issues and is intended to assist applicants in developing projects that will meet the mandatory standards.

(C) **General Provisions:** The overlay district is shown on the *Scenic Resource Protection Overlay District Map*. The requirements of this overlay district shall be in addition to any specifications for the underlying district(s) in which proposed development is located.

(D) **Review Process:** In addition to the information required in Section 5.2 of these regulations and Section 2.4 of the *Town of Essex Official Subdivision Regulations*, applicants shall submit a site plan showing all existing site features including forested lands, open meadows, wetlands, streams, stone walls, view corridors as seen from public roads, existing buildings, and any other pertinent site features. Proposed development plans shall include building envelopes and typical building elevations.

Should the Planning Commission deem it necessary to employ a qualified professional to review any development proposal, the cost of employing such an individual shall be borne by the applicant.

The Planning Commission shall render a decision as to the acceptability of the development proposal based upon the guidelines for development set forth in *Views to the Mountain: A Scenic Resource Protection Manual*, and the specific standards of this section. The Planning Commission may approve, approve with conditions, or deny applications based on its determination of whether the development proposal meets the purposes and standards of this section.

(E) **Using *Views to the Mountain: A Scenic Resource Protection Manual*:**

(1) The Manual includes a map entitled: *Mt. Mansfield Scenic Roads Assessment Project Summary, Essex*. For purposes of this section, the *Scenic Resource Protection Overlay District* map incorporated into these Zoning Regulations shall be used instead of the map in the Manual, as it has since been revised to more clearly illustrate the affected town roads.

SCENIC STREETS

Portions of the following streets are included in the Scenic Resource Protection Overlay District. To see which portions of the streets are in the district, refer to the SRPO map.

- Bixby Hill Road
- Browns River Road
- Chapin Road
- Colonel Page Road
- Jericho Road/VT Route 15
- Naylor Road
- North Williston Road
- Old Stage Road
- Pettingill Road
- River Road/VT Route 117
- Towers Road
- Upper Main Street/VT Route 15
- Weed Road
- Woodside Drive

Table 2.20 SCENIC RESOURCE PROTECTION OVERLAY DISTRICT (SRPO), continued

- (2) Part 2 of the Manual, entitled *Mount Mansfield Scenic Roads Assessment Project Summary, Essex Roads*, includes a breakdown of the visual qualities of 14 Essex roads, particularly with regard to outstanding views to Mount Mansfield and Camel's Hump. A photo inventory was undertaken along these roads, with pictures taken every 500 feet. Each road has a description of the particular scenic resources, including what should be reviewed with sensitivity, as well as a detailed map. The *Project Summary Map* shows all of the roads together in one map.
- (3) If a development is proposed along any of these scenic road segments, applications shall address any impacts on scenic resources as seen from public roads using Part 2 of the Manual, *Scenic Assessment, Essex Roads* as guidance. Part 2 offers planning guidance on siting. In addition, the standards in Section F, below, shall be followed.
- (F) **Site Development and Design Standards:** Part 3 of the Manual, *Design Guidelines*, provides graphic depictions of preferred development patterns for siting, building envelopes, driveways and parking, landscaping and fencing, signage, lighting, building design and materials, roofs, and mass.
- (1) **Subdivisions and Planned Unit Developments (PUDs).** Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) are strongly encouraged as a way of more effectively clustering individual buildings and providing areas of open space that contribute to scenic character and views. To minimize the loss of scenic character, subdivisions and PUDs shall be designed and located to minimize the intrusion of incompatible and unharmonious development into existing scenic vantage points as viewed from public vantage points. The standards outlined below shall apply to the design of subdivisions and PUDs within the *Scenic Resource Protection Overlay District*. The acreage requirement of a minimum of 10 acres may be waived by the Planning Commission.
- (2) **Clustered development.** The clustering of house sites with protected open space is preferred over dispersed development that fragments open space. Several clusters may be considered as well. Clustering may not be appropriate for all sites.
- (3) **Building envelopes.** To minimize loss of scenic character and protect open space, all above grade development shall occur within designated building envelopes.
- (a) Building envelopes shall be positioned so that views to distant mountains remain as natural as possible with buildings and roadways occupying a small portion of the overall view.
- (b) Building envelopes shall be designed to use existing vegetation, forest or landforms to screen buildings to the greatest extent possible. Where possible, buildings should be located within, or near, the edge of forests or hedgerows.
- (c) Where open meadows exist, building envelopes and roadways shall minimize intrusions onto open meadows. Open meadows often provide pleasing foreground views.
- (d) Building envelopes should be designed to encourage a logical relationship with the natural topography and surrounding natural and built landscape. Historically, buildings tend to be oriented parallel or perpendicular to each other, but this is not always possible in clustered development. The natural direction of slopes may also dictate building alignments. When building orientations form a similar or related pattern, the built landscape may appear less distracting, allowing the natural landscape to predominate.
- (e) The arrangement of building envelopes in a manner that protects a significant portion of open space is strongly encouraged. Open meadows are especially valuable as the foreground for distant views. Other site features may be identified as important. Open space areas should be of a size where the ratio of width to length is as low as possible, in order to avoid long strips of protected open space. Open space areas can be incorporated into lots or serve as common land available to all property owners.

Table 2.20 SCENIC RESOURCE PROTECTION OVERLAY DISTRICT (SRPO), continued

- (4) Building Design and Massing.** To minimize loss of scenic character, buildings shall be designed to be compatible with the surrounding natural environment and with other buildings in the area in accordance with the following standards.
- (a)** Larger buildings should be designed to appear as a series of smaller attached buildings much like ells and additions on historic houses. Dormer windows, porches and other projections can also break up the mass of buildings. Uninterrupted wall or roof planes that exceed 50 feet in any dimension should be avoided.
 - (b)** Replication of historic architectural styles is not necessary, although the traditional New England vernacular can provide a good model. Typically, these buildings include a steeply pitched gable roof, ells, and are a minimum height of two stories (or a second story under the roof). Two stories provide a more efficient use of the land and a more traditional building proportion, but consideration should be given to whether a second story will block an important scenic resource.
 - (c)** Buildings oriented at right angles to each other are part of the traditional New England pattern and this pattern is strongly encouraged. It provides a harmony among buildings and with the surrounding landscape. As noted above, however, this pattern may not always be achievable in clustered development.
 - (d)** Building colors and materials should harmonize with surrounding and traditional materials. Horizontal clapboards and brick are commonly seen in the landscape. Colors can vary but extremely bright colors should be avoided. Highly reflective materials should be avoided.
- (5) Access Roads, Driveways, and Service Areas.** To minimize the loss of scenic character, driveways, parking, and service areas shall be designed and located to reduce their visual impact. To this end:
- (a)** A single, shared-access road or driveway shall be used whenever possible over numerous individual driveways. The Planning Commission may approve up to four homes on a single driveway, provided that public safety concerns are adequately addressed in the design of the driveway, and so long as each home would have adequate frontage if it were served by a single driveway on its own lot (i.e. three homes on a single driveway in the Agricultural-Residential (AR) district would require at least 600 feet of frontage). Access roads and driveways should be located to minimize intrusions on open meadows or high visibility within view corridors to distant views. Drives and roadways shall be kept at the edge of open meadows and open space whenever possible.
 - (b)** Signed maintenance and cost sharing agreements must be developed between the homeowners on a shared access drive, including provisions for year-round emergency services access.
 - (c)** Widths of access roads and driveways and any cul-de-sacs or hammerheads should be kept to the minimum allowable.
 - (d)** Parking areas should be located to minimize visibility.
- (6) Dimensional Requirements.** All projects shall be designed to meet the minimum frontage, setback, and acreage requirements as set forth in these regulations. The Planning Commission shall have the authority to waive these requirements if better and more creative site design can be achieved, provided the overall lot has adequate acreage and frontage for all proposed dwelling units, and that curb cuts adhere to Public Works Specifications. Curb cuts that do not adhere to Public Works Specifications shall require approval from the Public Works Department prior to receiving Site Plan approval or Final Plan approval from the Planning Commission.

Table 2.20 SCENIC RESOURCE PROTECTION OVERLAY DISTRICT (SRPO), continued

(G) Landscaping: To minimize loss of scenic character, landscaping shall be thoughtfully selected, located, and maintained to draw the viewer's eye toward attractive natural and built features, and to screen less attractive features. In addition to the requirements of Section 3.2 (Buffers and Screening) and 3.4 (Fences and Walls), the following shall apply:

- (1) Appropriate siting of buildings and roadways will protect rural character more than landscaping. Clustering structures in a manner that leaves a significant portion of the property undeveloped and that minimizes their visual prominence should be explored before proposing landscaping to screen development.
- (2) The use of existing mature vegetation to screen buildings, roadways and parking areas is strongly encouraged. Placing buildings within or next to existing woodlands, rather than within open meadows, facilitates natural screening. Landscape plans that emphasize a mix of species and vegetation types in non-repetitive naturalistic groups are strongly encouraged.
- (3) The Planning Commission may require screening if site development will unreasonably intrude on a designated distant view or important scenic resource. Where open land in the foreground provides views to distant landscape features, landscaping should be selected that will allow for continued access to those views. The Planning Commission may require a management plan to maintain such open land and the visual access it provides to distant views.
- (4) When fences are proposed, the use of traditional New England fences and walls (stonewalls, split-rail fences, picket fences, etc.) is strongly encouraged. Expanses of chain link or solid privacy fences in visible areas without accompanying landscaping is strongly discouraged.
- (5) In instances where street trees would obscure important scenic resources, the Planning Commission may waive the requirement for street trees.

(H) Signs: To minimize the loss of scenic character, signs shall be designed to be harmonious with the surrounding built and natural environment. In addition to the requirements of Section 3.10 of these regulations, the following shall apply:

- (1) Signs generally are discouraged within the district except as necessary for wayfinding purposes. The amount of signage shall be the minimum necessary to clearly identify the name and location of a business or development to the traveling public. The message shall state only the name and/or trademark of the business or activity that is located on the premises.
- (2) Signs shall be compatible with signs located on adjacent premises in scale and proportion and shall not compete for attention.
- (3) The use of monument signs at the entrance to subdivisions may be used if necessary for wayfinding. Use of natural materials such as wood or stone are encouraged.
- (4) Sign colors and design shall complement the color and design of the associated structure. Use of bright, highly saturated or intense colors is discouraged as a primary component of a sign's color scheme but may be appropriate when used in moderation or as an accent or contrast.
- (5) Wall-mounted signs may be used and are preferred over separate signs for business uses. The sign should be designed to be an integral part of the architecture of the building.

Table 2.20 SCENIC RESOURCE PROTECTION OVERLAY DISTRICT (SRPO), continued

- (I) **Lighting:** To minimize the loss of scenic character, exterior lighting shall be minimized, particularly in areas characterized by relatively dark night skies and limited intrusions of artificial light. In addition to the lighting requirements of Section 5.6(G), the following shall apply:
- (1) Outdoor lighting shall be limited to locations where activity will be occurring (e.g., walkways, entrances, parking areas, intersections) and to times when activity will be occurring (e.g., business hours).
 - (2) Light levels shall be the minimum needed for the intended purpose. Lighting shall be designed to avoid sharp contrasts in light levels.
 - (3) Use of lighting as a security or advertising technique when no one is on the premises is strongly discouraged.
 - (4) Use of technologies such as motion detectors or timers is strongly encouraged to provide light only when and where needed to facilitate human activities.
 - (5) Use of full cut-off (as defined by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America) and shielded light fixtures is required. Light fixtures shall be designed and aimed to prevent the light source from being visible from public vantage points or neighboring homes.
 - (6) Exterior light sources shall be selected to minimize adverse color rendering of the surrounding landscape.

Scenic Resource Protection Overlay District -Essex-

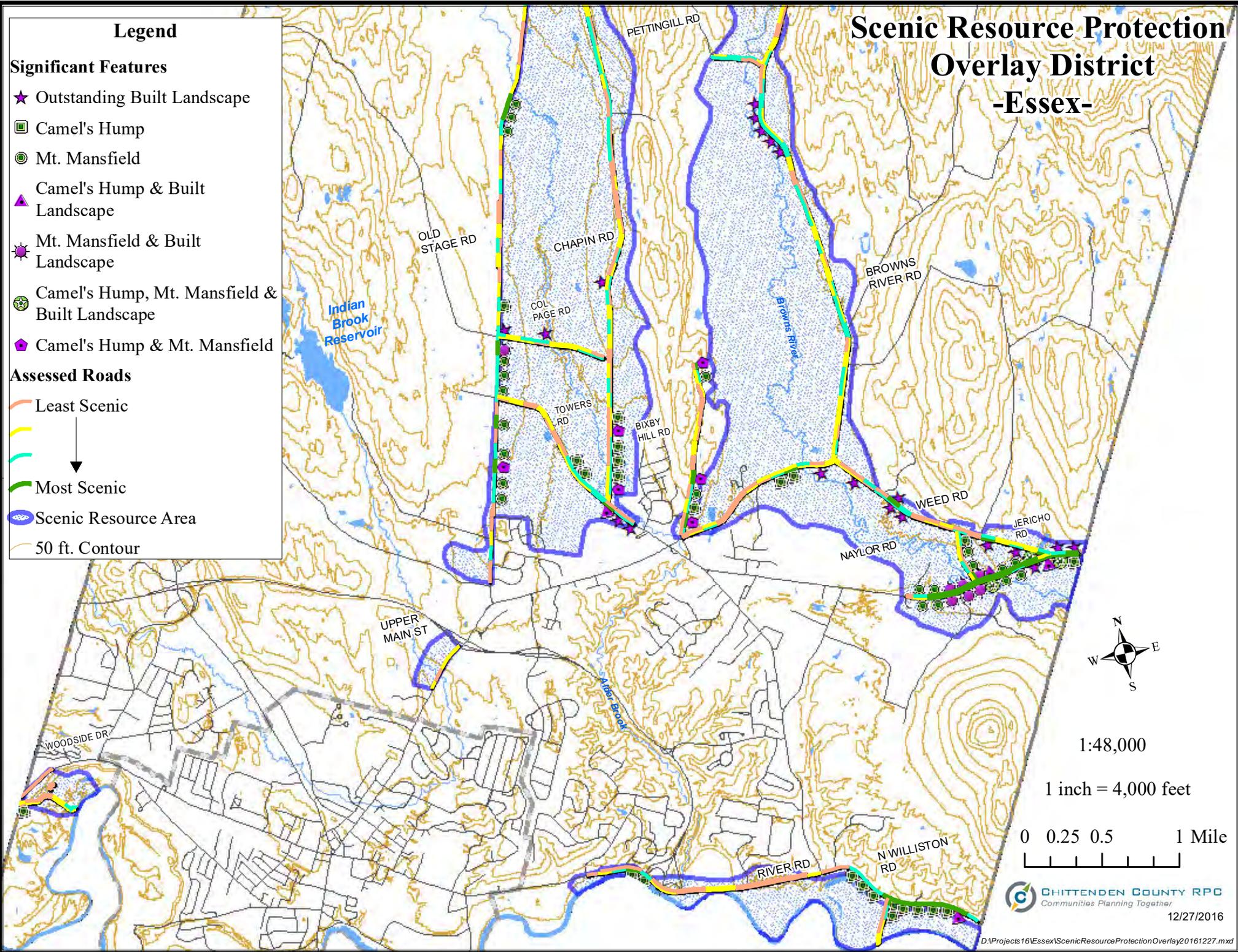
Legend

Significant Features

- ★ Outstanding Built Landscape
- Camel's Hump
- Mt. Mansfield
- ▲ Camel's Hump & Built Landscape
- ⊛ Mt. Mansfield & Built Landscape
- ⊙ Camel's Hump, Mt. Mansfield & Built Landscape
- ◆ Camel's Hump & Mt. Mansfield

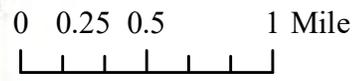
Assessed Roads

- Least Scenic
- Most Scenic
- Scenic Resource Area
- 50 ft. Contour



1:48,000

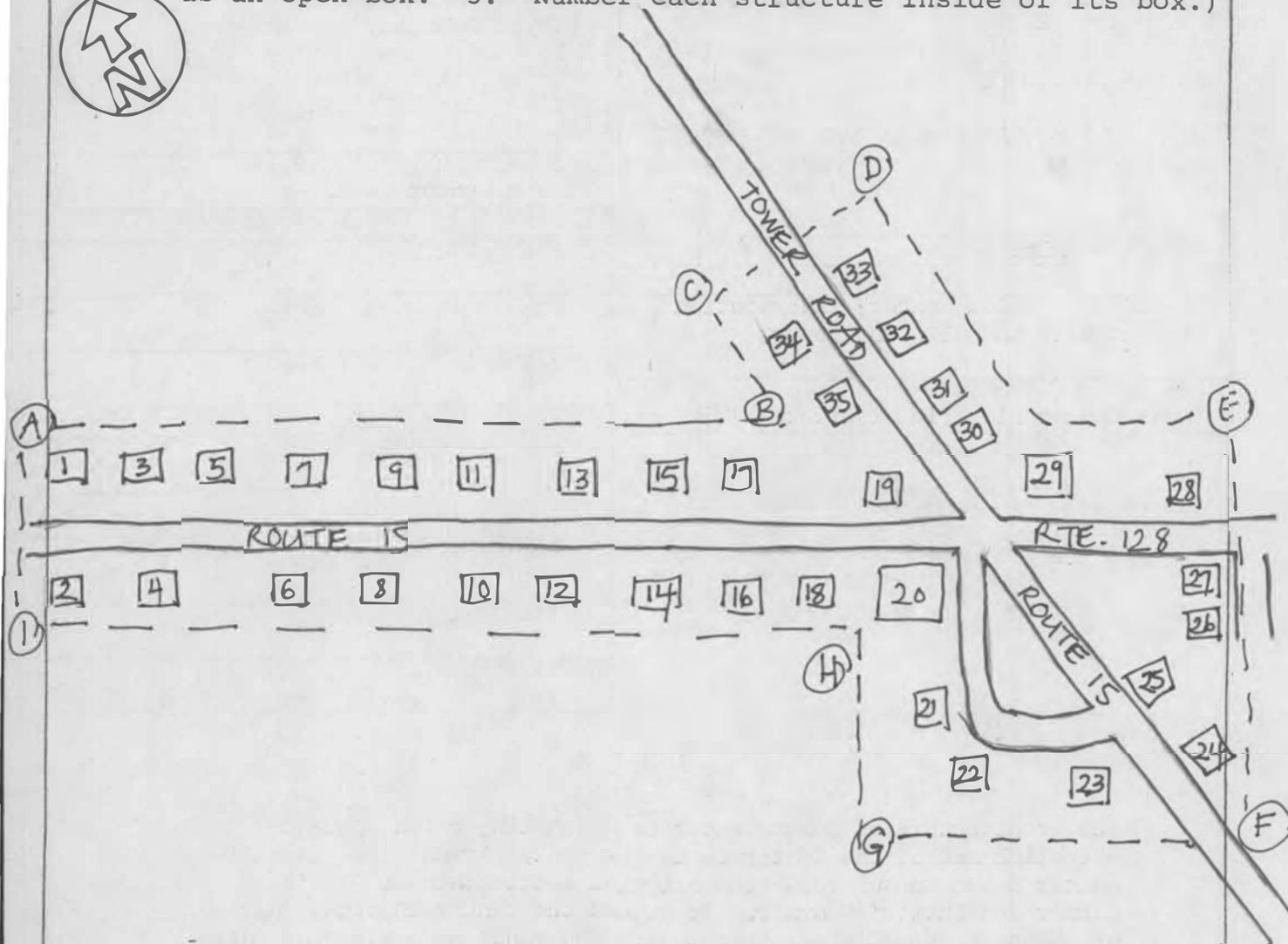
1 inch = 4,000 feet



CHITTENDEN COUNTY RPC
Communities Planning Together

12/27/2016

MAP: (1. Indicate NORTH in circle. 2. Represent each structure as an open box. 3. Number each structure inside of its box.)



BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Beginning at point A, the northwest corner of the Foell property, and proceeding east southeast in a line encompassing the rear boundaries of the house lots on the north side of Route 15 to point B, the northwest corner of the Guyette property (#35). Continuing north to point C, northwest corner of the Weston property (#34), and then east to point D, northeast corner of the lot upon which the Denno house is located. The boundary line proceeds south along the rear boundaries of the structures located on the east side of Tower Road and curves to encompass the rear property lines of the buildings on Route 128 to point E, northeast corner of the Kennison property. The line continues southerly along the rear boundaries of the White School, Mackey, and Hennigan lots to point F, southeast corner of the Hennigan property. From point F the boundary continues west northwest along the rear property lines of the Essex Free Library and the Bentley house to point G, the southwest corner of the Bentley property. From G

REFERENCES:

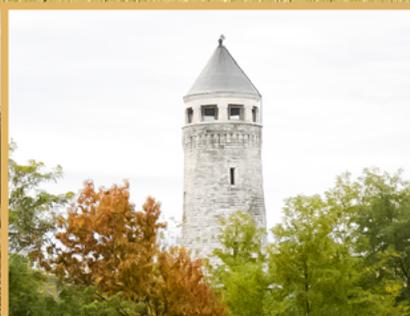
1, 2, 3

RECORDED BY:
Christine Fonda

ORGANIZATION:
Vt. Div for Historic Preservation

DATE RECORDED:
8/3/76

2024
Essex
Town Plan
March 5, 2024



Town plans often lead to specific planning projects. Essex and partnering communities have completed the following studies in recent years:

- [Essex Open Space Plan](#) (2008)
- [Route 15 Corridor Study](#) (2008)
- [Transportation Management Plan](#) (2009)
- [Economic Development Vision and Plan](#) (2010)
- [Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction, Vermont Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan](#) (2011)
- [Views to the Mountains: A Scenic Protection Plan](#) (2011)
- [Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction](#) (2014)
- [ETC NEXT Master Plan](#) (2021)
- [Essex Declaration of Inclusion](#) (2023)

The 2024 Town Plan does not include major changes to the vision of the Town as expressed in previous Town Plans. However, with the separation of Essex Junction, our Essex Town Center is an even more important center of focus. For that reason, this document incorporates and builds on the work done in the ETC Next plan, which foresaw the Essex Town Center as emphasizing the human experience: an area in town that contains a mix of uses (residential, commercial, municipal and historical alike) that can all be accessed on foot. Again, this in no way contradicts previous Town Plans, but the matter has taken on great importance in the past 3 years. See Chapter 3, “Planning Areas” for a description of the Essex Town Center area.

As for the rest of the Town Plan, revisions and changes from the 2016 plan involved statistical updates and a graphic redesign to make the document more readable and visually appealing. A Forest Block and Habitat Connector element was added, as required by statute. The Plan also places greater emphasis on equity and inclusion throughout, including how Essex undertakes daily decision making through municipal operations. The Plan addresses increasing community connection opportunities and building our unique Town of Essex identity. In addition, as Essex seeks to purposely build out the Essex Town Center, we will pursue state designations from the **state Designation Program** for this area. The Plan includes language in support of these designations. It should be noted that although the State designation programs are undergoing **legislative study** for prospective Statewide reforms, it is unknown if, when, or how the programs could be modified by the General Assembly.

Declaration of Inclusion (Adopted June 26, 2023)

The Town of Essex Selectboard hereby declares our commitment to fostering an inclusive and welcoming place for all residents, visitors, employees, and more. We recognize that people have unique experiences, perspectives and identities that shape their individuality, and it is that diversity that contributes to the richness and strength of our community. We understand that our community is best served when all residents feel included and have a sense of belonging with equitable access to town services and facilities.

To that end, The Town of Essex Selectboard condemns racism, sexism, classism, ableism, ageism, discrimination, religious intolerance, and homophobia, in all their forms. We welcome all people, regardless of ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, gender identity or sexual expression, age, or physical and/or mental capabilities, to participate in governance. We will make every effort to provide a safe and welcoming community for all.

The Selectboard understands that inclusion is not merely a statement but a continuous effort that requires active engagement and collaboration from all members of the community. We commit to regularly review our efforts and policies, engage in constructive feedback, and make adjustments as necessary to ensure that our community is welcoming, inclusive, and accessible for all.

Until reforms are proposed, enacted or implemented by the State, the Town will continue to pursue the following current designations available to Vermont municipalities: a Village Center Designation for Historic Essex Center, a New Town Center Designation for the core of the Essex Town Center area, and a Neighborhood Development Area for the area in between. Stating the Town's intent to seek these designations is important to ensure that our local policy interests are understood by Vermont officials for successful coordination between existing and any potential proposed designations - including recognition that the Town is pursuing the prerequisite planning for designation under the existing designation program and allowing the Town access to future state place-based incentives.

Consistency with adjoining Town Plans

Essex is bordered by Westford to the north, Colchester to the west, Jericho to the east, Essex Junction, South Burlington, Williston to the south, shares a corner point with Underhill to the northeast, and shares a corner with Milton to the northwest. These communities have comprehensive plans that are generally consistent with the Essex Town Plan.

Colchester - The Colchester-Essex border has a variety of planning areas. Starting from the northwestern corner, the Colchester side of the border has Agricultural zoning, and the Colchester Pond Natural Area and Essex has Conservation and Open Recreation with Indian Brook Park. These areas are compatible.

The next district abutting in Colchester is Residential One, which allows more residential density than Essex's Agricultural district in Essex, but both are primarily residential. Along Colchester Road (VT Route 2A), the Essex side of the border is zoned for industrial uses but contains a number of residential uses as well as the Champlain Solid Waste District transfer facility, a former landfill site in the northern portion and a mostly developed industrial area along and off of Kellogg Road. On the Colchester side, most of the area is zoned Village, residential uses and agriculture, with a small portion of industrial zoning along Colchester Road. Further development in the northern part of the industrial area in Essex is unlikely due to the presence of the landfill and steep slopes and the currently developed industrial area that abuts residential development does

not currently generate conflict. However, in the unlikely case that Essex develops this area with any heavy industrial uses, Essex could consider additional development restrictions for any of these uses that abut the Colchester residential area.

Fort Ethan Allen spans both towns, and the uses in Fort Ethan Allen are compatible between the 2 towns.

Essex Junction - Planning areas along the border between Essex Junction and the Town of Essex are consistent. Most of the areas on each side of the border are residential. The towns each have Industrial zoning areas along VT Route 117 and Essex has a mixed-use district as well as a residential district, whereas the Essex Junction side of the border is a purely residential area. The uses in the Essex Mixed Use district are not incompatible with residential uses. Although the Town side of the border contains more business activities in the planning areas along Susie Wilson Road and Pinecrest Road areas than Essex Junction, development along the border is limited due to the presence of the Sunderland Brook and wetlands.

Jericho - In Jericho, the border shared with Essex is Jericho's Rural/Agriculture Residential district and along VT Route 15, Jericho's Village Center district begins at the border between the towns. This is compatible with the land use on the Essex side of the border which are the Conservation and Agricultural districts. One portion of Essex's Industrial planning area extends to the Jericho border. The plans are compatible, as conflict is not expected since Jericho does not permit access to this area from Skunk Hollow Road.

South Burlington - The short border that Essex shares with South Burlington is Floodplain on both sides, although South Burlington's zoning is Mixed Industrial and Commercial. Both have regulations in place to protect the river and floodplain.

Westford - In Westford, the border with Essex is characterized by Agricultural, Floodplain, Forestry, and Low-Density Residential zoning areas. Land in Essex contains Agricultural, Conservation, Floodplain, and Low-Density Residential zoning areas. Given the rural nature and similar zoning, the Town Plans are compatible with each other.

Williston - The Winooski River Floodplain serves as the immediate border between Essex and Williston. In Essex, areas just beyond the floodplain feature a combination of Agricultural, Industrial, and Low and Medium Density Residential zoning areas. Williston has largely the same planning areas just past the floodplain, with no significant inconsistencies.

Actions

Developed by the Planning Commission and the Community Development Department

- Action 1.1** Implement the 2021 Essex Town Center (ETC) NEXT Master Plan.
Lead responsibility: Community Development Department, Planning Commission
Potential funding: Operating Budget, grants*
Time frame: Short term to medium term
- Action 1.2** Seek state designations for the Essex Town Center area, including Historic Essex Center (Village Center), the Essex Town Center core (New Town Center), and the area in between (Neighborhood Development Area).
Lead responsibility: Community Development Department, Planning Commission
Potential funding: Operating Budget, grants*
Time frame: Short term to medium term
- Action 1.3** Relocate the Town Offices and other municipal facilities to the Essex Town Center
Lead responsibility: Town staff
Potential funding: Operating Budget, Capital Fund, bond authorization
Time frame: Medium term to long term

2. Economic Development

General Policy

- 2:** Economic growth shall be diversified, with development occurring in and around the Essex Town Center, the Susie Wilson Road Corridor, and the Saxon Hill/RPD-I district.

Specific Economic Development Policies:

- 2(S).1:** Assure that new industrial and commercial development occurs within existing industrial and commercial zoning districts.
- 2(S).2:** Transportation system-related decisions shall include consideration of how those decisions may support or hinder economic development goals.

- 2(S).3:** To improve the community's attractiveness to existing and prospective businesses, elements such as affordable housing and childcare services shall be supported.
- 2(S).4:** An entrepreneurial environment in Essex shall be fostered by encouraging co-working spaces, maker spaces, and partnerships with neighboring communities.

Goals

- 2a.** Develop a marketing identity for Essex that reflects our values, history, aspirations and sense of place.
- 2b.** Maintain Essex's rural areas while increasing and diversifying economic development, emphasizing start-ups, agriculture, home businesses and retail.
- 2c.** Foster a culture of innovation, collaboration, sustainable growth, and job creation.
- 2d.** Maintain and improve roads, bridges, trails, sewer, water lines, etc. but be mindful of infrastructure carrying capacity and development demands upon it.
- 2e.** Create policies and programs that incentivize the provision of childcare services and affordable housing and revise those that increase demand for these.

Actions

Developed by the Economic Development Commission in conjunction with the Community Development Department

- Action 2.1** Update the 2010 **Economic Development Vision and Plan** with a stronger emphasis on the Essex Economy utilizing the EDC business inventory.
Lead responsibility: Economic Development Commission, Community Development Department
Potential funding: Operating Budget
Time frame: Short term
- Action 2.2** Commit to and follow the plan and action items for the new Town Center in the **ETC Next Plan**.
Lead responsibility: Planning Commission, Zoning Board (Development Review Board)
Potential funding: N/A
Time frame: Ongoing

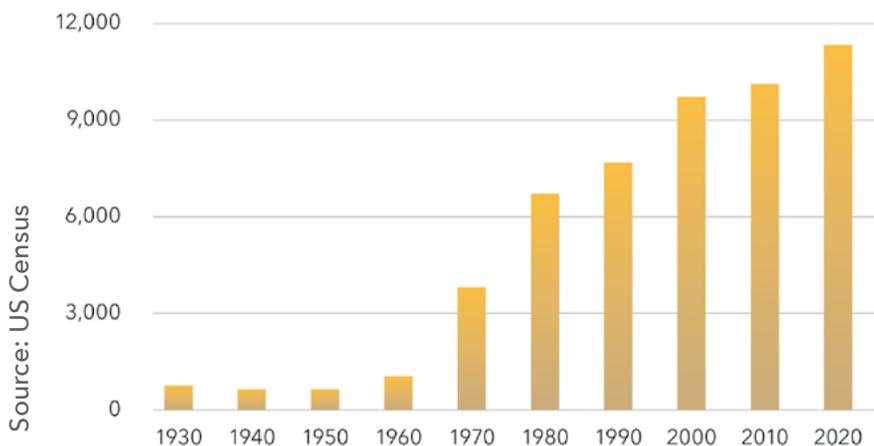
resulted in maintaining the status quo until 2022 when the residents of the Village of Essex Junction voted to separate from the Town of Essex. With the subsequent approval by the State of Vermont Legislature, the area (+-4.65 square miles) formerly known as the Village of Essex Junction became the City of Essex Junction fully effective as of July 1, 2022. With this action the Town of Essex was reduced from +-39.43 square miles to +-34.78 square miles and the population for the new City of Essex Junction was estimated to be 10,601 with the new Town of Essex estimated to be 11,494.

To learn more about Essex History, a more detailed write up of this summary may be found on the [Town Plan page](#) of the Town’s website as well as by visiting the Harriot Farnsworth Powell Historical Museum and the [Essex Community Historical Society’s](#) website. Also see the Cultural/Historic and Archaeological Resources Section in Chapter 3 for more discussion on the Town’s historic resources.

The Essex Community Demographic Profile

By 2020, Essex had an estimated population of 11,484. Population in Essex has increased steadily, although the rate of increase has

**Town Population Growth
1930 - 2020**



diminished since the peak occurring between 1960 to 1980. During the 1990’s population growth fell to 74 persons per year and reached 193 persons per year in 2000. Between 2000 and 2010 the Town added an average of just 28 persons per year however, the growth rate increased notably between 2010 and 2020, with an average of 117 new persons annually.

Population growth in Essex exceeded that of the state and Chittenden County between 2010 and 2020. Essex added population at an annual rate of 1.08%; the State at 0.27% and Chittenden County did so at 0.73%. Currently, Essex comprises 7% of the population of Chittenden County. Prior to 1960 the town contained approximately 2% of the county’s population. The ratio then increased in the 1970’s, 1980’s until it hit 6% in 1980 and has remained at approximately that level in the ensuing decades.

Even when growth takes a community like Essex beyond a small-town size, thoughtful neighborhood planning can retain the core character of small-town life. The concept of community is linked to social cohesiveness and resiliency, and the essence of a town the size of Essex lies in neighbors knowing one another, as well as their teachers, local shop owners, and community leaders. American sociologist Lewis Mumford has praised New England communities for refusing “to grow beyond the possibility of socializing and assimilating its members.” For Essex to thrive in the future, it is essential to build an inclusive, fair, and just community.

Within Essex, the Essex Town Center, the Susie Wilson corridor, and Historic Essex Center provide the diversity of services necessary to maintain the Town’s strong community bonds as the population grows and diversifies. [The 2021 ETC NEXT Master Plan](#) supported this vision as it encourages Essex to strive to further support a wide variety of residential, retail, civic, commercial and recreational uses. Supporting residents and multi-modal access; reclaiming underutilized space for housing, business, recreation and a providing a municipal presence through seeking [state designations](#) of Village Center for the Historic Center, New Town Center for the Essex Town Center area, and Neighborhood Development Area for the area in between will help further this vision.

Steady population growth will continue to bring residential development. The existing sense of community derives, in part, from the balance of rural and urban areas within. Although the Town has largely retained its rural character, incremental residential development in the countryside threatens the town’s open space. Chapter 3 will take a closer look at development patterns and

The Town has 239 “affordable” rental units across 5 different housing facilities in 2023; an increase of 68 units from 2015, according to the **Vermont Housing Finance Agency**.

Essex has incentives in its **Official Zoning Regulations** to encourage more affordable housing – developers are allowed to build more homes on a property if some of the units are considered “affordable” – but developers have rarely used the density bonuses. Most of the affordable units built in recent years have been incentivized through federal subsidy programs.

Essex studied affordable housing in 2019, when an **The Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan** (ANA) was adopted. One of the recommendations of the ANA was to establish a **Housing Commission**, which was established in 2020. The Commission originally was established a joint commission with the City (then Village) of Essex Junction. In 2023 the commissions officially separated.

The Needs Assessment states that “The impacts of the region’s housing shortage are not limited to individual household economics – the lack of financial stability and reliable living situations can limit local spending power, discourage investment in the area, and impact public health. In addition, many households have settled in homes further from the nexus of jobs and destinations in the Burlington metro area. This has not only increased traffic congestion and household commuting expenses, but it has also contributed to urban sprawl and a lack of community connections.” The top Needs Assessment recommended actions are show in the sidebar.

Recommendations

There are several strategies identified in the **Essex Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan** that can be used to improve housing options:

- **Revise the Land Use Regulations** in ways that support affordability such as:
 - Supporting the use of accessory dwelling units;
 - Reducing the required amount of parking for new developments; and
 - Making the development review process simpler.

- **Reduce Development Fees for Affordable Housing Projects**
This strategy is essentially a local subsidy activated at the time of development. Revenues that would otherwise go into the municipality’s general fund or, in the case of impact fees, capital funds for specific projects, are instead used to offset the cost of developing affordable units.
- **Secure Designation(s) from the State Designation Program**
These designations can provide technical planning assistance for municipalities, infrastructure grants, and eligibility for tax incentives for developers.
- **Establish a Housing Trust Fund** The creation of a local Housing Trust Fund (HTF) could provide a dedicated source of subsidies for affordable housing projects, in addition to providing a source of local match funds to leverage larger funding sources.
- **Partner with Housing Developers and Non-Profits**
Partnerships between municipalities and housing developers, both for-profit and nonprofit, on affordable housing projects can potentially achieve affordable housing goals at a lower cost than through municipal regulation. Such partners include **Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity**, **Cathedral Square**, **Evernorth**, and the **Champlain Housing Trust**. The Town should also seek out grant opportunities to support affordable housing.

To advance the above recommendations, the Town’s Housing Commission will:

- Advise the Selectboard, Planning Commission, and other municipal boards and committees on the housing needs of the community, including review and consultation of policy and zoning changes related to housing;
- Maintain and analyze the community’s demographic and housing stock information and provides periodic updates on housing issues to elected officials;
- Work to educate the public on housing topics and develop partnerships with developers, non-profits, state agencies, and social service organizations to advance the community’s housing goals.

The **Vermont Planning and Development Act** allows the enabling authority to create a Design Control District for “any area containing structures of historical, architectural or cultural merit.” Unless a design control district is established for a specific area, neither the Planning Commission nor the Zoning Board of Adjustment has any jurisdiction over ensuring that the design and scale of a building is harmonious with its surroundings. To maintain and enhance the cultural heritage of Essex’s historic neighborhoods, and to eliminate or minimize substantial character alteration of existing buildings, the Town enforces design control guidelines in the Essex Town Center and Fort Ethan Allen. The 2 areas were established as design control districts in 1987. **Historic Preservation and Design Control Standards for Essex Center and Fort Ethan Allen**, a report prepared as part of the 1991 Town Plan, shall be consulted in the design or review of any project within the historic areas. The Town should update the design regulations in the Essex Town Center (ETC) area, as called for in the **ETC NEXT Plan**.

Essex has many other historic structures and few tools to protect them from demolition or damage to their architectural integrity, any historic building is at risk.

The Essex Community Historical Society and Harriot Farnsworth Powell Museum are an additional resource for more information on the historic resources found in Essex. Members of the Society have urged the Town to adopt comprehensive measures to protect historic structures and archaeological resources, and the protection measures should be taken into consideration. A **Village Center state designation** for Historic Essex Center will make tax credits available for renovation and restoration of historic structures in the designated area.

Archaeological Resources

As discussed in the Historic background section of Chapter 2 of this Plan, early Native American settlements have been discovered in Essex. Archaeological sites are generally not identified until development occurs on a site. Native America archaeological sites have generally been found near a water source and on gently sloping land. This was proven true for Native Americans in Essex, as during the early stages of planning for the Circumferential Highway. Archaeological digs unearthed evidence of Native American settlements near Indian Brook, from the Late Paleoindian (10,000 - 9,000 years ago) Period, the Early - Late Archaic Periods (9,000 - 3,000 years ago), and Early - Late Woodland Period (3,000 years ago - the time of European settlement, 1600). Additional evidence

of Native American settlement has also been revealed in Saxon Hill. Evidence of early European settlement archaeological resources can also be found from the time of European settlement in Essex. Locations can be identified through historical document and map research.

Cultural Resources

In addition to the built environment, Essex has a strong cultural community. The town is the home of the **Essex Art League**, one of the largest local art groups in the state. The league’s membership is open to any interested Vermonter. Memorial Hall, an historic structure, hosts the **Essex Community Players** theater group.

Land Use and Development

During the Town Plan visioning process, residents and businesspeople envisioned the following as their high-priority items for Essex: affordable housing; a variety of local businesses; a sustainable working landscape that could preserve and promote biodiversity; and bicycle and pedestrian connectivity that could support greater recreation opportunities. Participants also expressed a desire that citizens should provide input into the planning and zoning process. The wordcloud below shows the top concepts expressed during that Town Plan visioning process.





PHOTO CREDIT SE Group

The proposed form for new development within the neighborhood supports the planned use mix and densities with new structures between 2 and 5 stories. As a hub, the MU-S Neighborhood provides connections to existing local and regional pedestrian, recreation and transit systems which are integrated into the fabric of new development. Open spaces incorporate resource protection areas as amenities using green infrastructure, with civic spaces including greens, parks, plazas that support local neighborhoods, public gatherings and events. A **New Town Center** state designation from the state's **Designation Program** is recommended for this and the Mix-Use North area to help promote and develop dense, walkable community center.

- **Mixed-Use North (MU-N) Neighborhood** functions in concert with the Mixed-Use South Neighborhood but with greater emphasis on diverse residential and mixed residential / commercial uses. Anticipated uses include retail, housing (single, duplex and multi-unit), accommodations (hotel), civic, and commercial spaces (professional services, incubator and office). Target densities in this neighborhood are higher than existing zoning, with densities greater than 8 units per acre envisioned, enabled by the considerable regional connections afforded by the VT 289 interchange, VT Route 15, proximity to the transit line, and increased bike and pedestrian networks. A **New Town Center** state designation from the state's **Designation Program** is recommended for this and the and the MU-S area to help promote and develop dense, walkable community center.
- **Historic Center (HC) Neighborhood** serves as both a reminder of the traditional settlement patterns within Essex and as a welcoming gateway to the ETC along VT Route 15 from places to the east. The historical architecture found within this neighborhood should be celebrated and preserved to the greatest extent possible, while allowing the area to adapt to the changing needs of residents and businesses. Important civic spaces within the neighborhood should be prominently featured and the pedestrian experience and scale of new development and improvements should reflect the existing character. Improving the gateway experience in this neighborhood can serve to calm traffic and establish a design character that can be borrowed elsewhere in the ETC to enhance visual cohesion. A state **Village Center** designation is recommended for this area to help revitalize this historic area's structures and encourage further residential and commercial development.