

Memorandum

To: Selectboard
Cc: Karen Adams, Deputy Manager
From: Greg Duggan, Town Manager
Re: Discussion about Selectboard and volunteer board/commission/committee work plans from fiscal year 2025 (10 minutes)
Date: 6/6/2025

Issue

The issue is to inform the Selectboard of fiscal year 2025 work plans for the Selectboard and the Town's volunteer boards, commissions, and committees.

Discussion

As part of the Selectboard's effort to establish a work plan for fiscal year 2026, the Selectboard may wish to review its work plan from FY25, along with the work plans from the Town's volunteer boards, commissions, and committees.

Cost

n/a

Recommendation

This memo is informational.

Attachments:

1.	SB annual work plan FY25 20250606
2.	annual work plan - Cemetery Commission
3.	annual work plan - Conservation and Trails Committee
4.	annual work plan - Economic Development Commission
5.	annual work plan - Energy Committee, Essex FinalApproved_20190813 - MarkedUp-2025-Clean-Edits
6.	annual work plan - Housing Commission
7.	annual work plan - Planning Commission 2025 1-3-25 (for SB)
8.	annual work plan - Police Community Advisory Board
9.	annual work plan - ZBA FY25

Town of Essex - Selectboard FY25 work plan

Adopted May 20, 2024

Relevant Long-term goal	Work item	Priority level (Mandatory, High, Medium, Low)	Primary department(s)	Q1 notes	Q2 notes	Q3 notes	Q4 notes
Evaluate the community's <u>recreation</u> needs and make sure the needs are met and funded accordingly.	Determine plan for long-term management of the Tree Farm Recreational Facility.	1 - Mandatory	Parks and Recreation		[10/15/24] Selectboard took public input on the topic on 10/7/24. Town staff and City of Essex Junction staff have had meetings to discuss options.		[4/4/25] Selectboard and Essex Junction City Council have agreed to work on a lease extension for Tree Farm Management Group. Town staff has shared an initial draft with the City for consideration.
n/a	Complete transition from Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Adjustment model to Planning Commission and Development Review Board model.	1 - Mandatory	Community Development	[8/5/24] Selectboard adopted Resolution supporting transition to DRB, with plan to advertise openings and interview candidates at 9/16/24 SB meeting.	[10/15/24] Selectboard interviewed candidates at 9/16/24 and 10/7/24 Selectboard meetings, and may choose to appoint candidates at 10/21/24 meeting.		[4/4/25] COMPLETE. DRB took effect 1/1/25 and has been holding meetings. ZBA no longer exists, and PC is now focused solely on planning.
Be responsive to the impact of <u>opioids</u> in the community.	Conduct public outreach on drug and overdose issues, and work with Police Department and Essex Westford School District to do so.	2 - High	Administration, Police	[7/12/24] Flyer included in 7/15/24 Selectboard packet. Narcan distribution at Essex Free Library publicized in Essex Reporter. Police, Deputy Manager, Rep. Rey Garofano coordinating on opioid forum, and EWSD Chair Robert Carpenter also interested after having conversation with SB Chair Tracey Delphia. [8/14/24] Rep. Garofano coordinating relevant entities for a forum, tentatively scheduled for mid-November. The two staff who were working on the forum have left Essex (Deputy Manager and Community Affairs liaison); Tammy Getchell has stepped up to represent the Town in forum planning. [8/19/24] Rep. Garofano emailed to say forum is now anticipated for Spring 2025.			[4/4/25] Town staff is working with Essex's State Representatives to organize a forum targeted at middle and high school students and families. Other participants likely to include police, Essex Junction, Essex Westford School District, Health Department, Coming Together, HowardCenter, Journey to Recovery, Spectrum, pediatricians, Essex Rescue, and Essex CHIPS. State Reps are taking the lead on organizing. Forum is expected to happen in late summer/early fall of 2025. [6/6/25] Update about forum provided in 6/2 SB packet.
Be responsive to the impact of <u>opioids</u> in the community.	Determine use(s) for opioid settlement funds.	2 - High	Administration, Police		[10/15/24] See above for progress on opioid forum. The staff person who was taking the lead on this work is no longer with the Town of Essex. The Finance Department is tracking the money that come in, and has created a separate fund for holding the money until it is used.		[4/4/25] Town staff has begun creating a framework for a working group to determine how else to best use opioid settlement funds.
Ensure that Essex's <u>capital</u> needs are understood and fully funded, with an exploration of all possible funding mechanisms.	Fully identify capital needs, including vehicle replacement schedules, and present a plan to pay for those needs.	2 - High	Finance, Administration, et al		[10/15/24] Capital plan will be presented in the coming weeks, and includes a rough projection of how much additional funds would be expected on the 3-cent capital tax after the reappraisal is complete. [12/17/24] Proposal to SB at 12/16/24 meeting to shift capital funding from operating budget to capital tax; capital budget includes proposed adjustment to Public Works vehicle replacement schedule.		[4/4/25] COMPLETE. Capital budget and five-year plan was adopted by the Selectboard in February 2025. Staff presented, and SB adopted, a new format for the capital budget that will it easier to read and track. At Town Meeting, voters approved a 2-cent increase to the capital tax, raising the tax to 5 cents.

Relevant Long-term goal	Work item	Priority level (Mandatory, High, Medium, Low)	Primary department(s)	Q1 notes	Q2 notes	Q3 notes	Q4 notes
Ensure that Essex's <u>capital</u> needs are understood and fully funded, with an exploration of all possible funding mechanisms.	Update capital plan to have all Public Works vehicles replaced in eight years.	2 - High	Public Works, Finance	[10/15/24] Capital plan will be presented in the coming weeks.	[10/15/24] Capital plan will be presented in the coming weeks. [12/17/24] Public Works vehicle replacement schedule proposed to be updated based on anticipated lifespans of vehicles; includes 8-year replacement schedule for plow truck.		[4/4/25] COMPLETE. Approved capital plan includes revised replacement schedules for vehicles.
Evaluate the community's <u>recreation</u> needs and make sure the needs are met and funded accordingly.	Review, update, and/or create forest management plans for large-scale public properties, and begin to implement those plans.	2 - High	Parks and Recreation	[10/15/24] The Town is advertising for a Parks and Maintenance Superintendent, who will have responsibility for forest management plans on large-scale public properties.	[10/15/24] The Town is advertising for a Parks and Maintenance Superintendent, who will have responsibility for forest management plans on large-scale public properties. [12/17/24] Parks Maintenance Superintendent has been hired and starts 12/30/24. Trails Coordinator rinterviews begin this week.		[4/4/25] Parks Maintenance Superintendent is compiling and reviewing forest management plans.
See that progress is made toward the community's vision for construction of a new <u>municipal complex</u> .	Develop a plan for 80 & 90 Upper Main St. based on the community's vision and goals, and present funding options to implement that plan. Consider grant funding, state designations, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District, and other funding possibilities.	2 - High	Community Development, Finance, Administration	[8/14/24] First public forum and stakeholder meetings held on 8/1/24.	[10/15/24] Presentation to Selectboard on 8/19/24 about results of first round of public input. Second round of stakeholder meetings held at beginning of October, with public input session on Oct. 3.		[4/4/25] Selectboard accepted the conceptual plan from consultant Stantec in March 2025. The SB also accepted a grant from Northern Borders Regional Commission for infrastructure planning on the site. With the conceptual plan in place, the focus is now expected to turn to identifying funding options, plans, and scheduling.
Consider <u>non-property-tax revenue</u> sources and update in the best interest of the community.	Investigate increase of non-property-tax revenues, such as licensing fees allowed by charter, impact fees, etc.	3 - Medium	Finance, et al		[10/18/24] Fire Impact fee study is nearing completion. Finance Director has included FY25 first quarter Interest revenue update in the 10/21/24 Selectboard packet. [12/17/24] Dog license fees increased by Selectboard on 12/16/24.		[4/4/25] Fire impace fee study has been accepted and staff and consultant are working on proposed impact fee ordinance. SB will review draft ordinance on 4/7/25 in Reading File, with more discussion and possible action later in April. Staff has also issued a request for proposals for Rec Needs Assessment, including an update to Rec Impact Fees. [6/6/25] Public Hearing is being held at 6/16 SB meeting for ordinance update; SB began discussing fee schedule at 6/2 meeting, with more information expected for 6/16 SB meeting
Consider <u>non-property-tax revenue</u> sources and update in the best interest of the community. Evaluate the community's <u>recreation</u> needs and make sure the needs are met and funded accordingly.	Update Parks and Rec fees to cover costs to the maximum extent possible, including operational and capital needs.	3 - Medium	Parks and Recreation				[4/4/25] As noted above, the RFP for the Rec Needs Assessment also seeks an update to rec impact fees.
Evaluate the community's <u>recreation</u> needs and make sure the needs are met and funded accordingly.	Complete Recreation Needs Assessment (Town Plan action 9.50).	3 - Medium	Parks and Recreation		[10/18/24] Funding for a recreation needs assessment will be proposed in the Manager's FY26 budget proposal; funding may be available sooner depending on availability of FY24 fund balance.		[4/4/25] Rec Needs Assessment RFP has been issued. Fund balance assignments and FY26 approved budget include funding for the needs assessment.

Relevant Long-term goal	Work item	Priority level (Mandatory, High, Medium, Low)	Primary department(s)	Q1 notes	Q2 notes	Q3 notes	Q4 notes
Improve awareness of <u>community events</u> , encourage volunteer participation in those events, and evaluate the variety of events that are held.	Explore creation of a farmers' market.	3 - Medium	Parks and Recreation		[12/17/24] Parks and Rec has put out survey to gauge interest in Farmers' Market; survey shows lots of support.		[4/4/25] Farmers Market will begin this year and run through the summer at Sand Hill Park. [6/6/25] COMPLETE Farmers Market launched 6/4/25 and has received lots of positive feedback.
Improve awareness of <u>community events</u> , encourage volunteer participation in those events, and evaluate the variety of events that are held.	Explore creation of community gardens.	3 - Medium	Parks and Recreation				[4/4/25] Desire for community gardens was mentioned in the concept plan for the municipal complex being planned at 80 & 90 Upper Main St.
n/a	Continue work on recommendations from the Charter Review Committee, and decide whether or not to propose any charter changes on the 2025 Town Meeting ballot.	3 - Medium	Administration	[8/14/24] Charter Review Committee included materials in 8/5/24 Selectboard packet. SB agenda for 8/19/24 includes item to discuss proposed changes.	[10/18/24] Selectboard reviewed proposed charter changes at 10/7/24 meeting. Will review again at 10/21/24 meeting. [12/17/24] Selectboard has approved several proposed charter changes, and first public hearing was held on 12/16/24.		[4/4/25] COMPLETE. Proposed charter changes were included on the 2025 Town Meeting ballot and approved by voters. Proposed changes have been sent to the VT Legislature for consideration. [6/6/25] Legislature is reviewing charter amendments.
Review <u>guiding documents, policies, and standards</u> to reflect the needs of the community, and update accordingly. Review relevant and important policies annually.	Revise fund balance assignment process and Fund Balance Policy.	3 - Medium	Finance				[4/4/25] Fund balance assignment memo was adjusted this year to make it easier to track proposed and approved assignments. Staff is working to understand VLCT guidance around fund balance assignments. [6/6/25] Consideration being given to require a public hearing prior to making fund balance assignments. Staff is looking into the timing to align with the audit and budget timeline
Continually improve access to and accessibility of <u>information</u> and documents.	Improve visualization and availability of data, especially to help inform decision-making.	4 - Low	Administration		[10/18/24] Town Manager is taking a "Data-Driven Decision Making" class through ICMA.		
Continually improve access to and accessibility of <u>information</u> and documents.	Publicize annual road paving and maintenance plans, including culverts.	4 - Low	Public Works				[4/4/25] Paving schedule was presented at the Public Works table at the Town Showcase.
Make improvements in <u>multimodal transportation</u> options throughout Essex.	Pursue the installation of a crosswalk on VT Route 15 at Saybrook Road and the ice cream shop.	4 - Low	Public Works	[8/14/24] Public Works Director Aaron Martin reached out to VTRANS in July about crosswalk, with letter of support from Selectboard.	[10/21/24] VTRANS has approved two locations for crosswalks on Center Road near Saybrook Road and Sunset Drive. Staff will propose options to pay for installation of crosswalk(s).		[4/4/25] VTRANS has approved a third crossing, near Perry Drive on Jericho Road. The approved FY26 budget and FY24 fund balance assignments include funding for installation of the crosswalks. Work expected to happen this summer.

Relevant Long-term goal	Work item	Priority level (Mandatory, High, Medium, Low)	Primary department(s)	Q1 notes	Q2 notes	Q3 notes	Q4 notes
Make improvements in <u>multimodal transportation</u> options throughout Essex.	Study and propose solutions to minimize truck traffic on Sand Hill Road.	4 - Low	Community Development, Public Works		[10/3/24] Com Dev staff had kickoff meeting with CCRPC recently to understand and finalize scope of project to study truck traffic on lower Sand Hill Road.		[4/4/25] The Town has a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) project through the Chittenden County REgional Planning Commission to study Sand Hill traffic. Updates can be found online at https://www.essexvt.org/1279/SAND-HILL-TRAFFIC-STUDY . Other improvements to multimodal transportation options include the Essex Active Transportation Plan and the Keystone Trail project (funded through a Vermont Outdoor Recreation Community Grant), both of which are in progress through Community Development. Updates are available online under Projects and Initiatives at https://www.essexvt.org/1326/EXPLORE-ENGAGE
n/a	Bring youth and other younger voices into local government.	4 - Low	Administration		[10/18/24] By chance, youth have spoken up at recent Selectboard meetings on the topics of a boat launch and crosswalks on VT Route 15 / Jericho Road.		[4/4/25] The Town maintains a relationship with EWSD for possible internship programs, and currently has an intern in Community Development. Public Works also brings on college interns each summer.
n/a	Explore and create public/private partnerships and opportunities.	4 - Low	All				
n/a	Provide ongoing support for and communication with municipal boards, commissions, and committees.	4 - Low	Administration, et al		[10/18/24] Volunteer boards, commission, and committees have been invited to Selectboard meetings in October and November for annual check-ins with the Selectboard, and those meetings have started happening. Staff is also working on a Board and Committee handbook to provide clarity and support for volunteer boards and their staff representatives.		[4/4/25] The Selectboard Chair offers Coffee with Committees one Saturday each month, typically with two Selectboard members attending. Each volunteer board has a staff rep, and Management also contributes as needed. The Board and Committee handbook is nearing final draft stages. [6/6/25] SB began reviewing a draft Handbook for Boards, Commissions, Committees and their Staff Volunteers at 6/2 meeting. Feedback will result in changes being presented at the 6/16 SB meeting. Annual breakfast for chairs and vice chairs was held 6/6/25
n/a	Pursue housing initiatives, particularly with help and reporting from the Housing Commission.	4 - Low	Community Development		[10/18/24] Housing Commission Chair presented at the 10/7/24 Selectboard meeting and spoke to some of the initiatives the commission is pursuing.		

Relevant Long-term goal	Work item	Priority level (Mandatory, High, Medium, Low)	Primary department(s)	Q1 notes	Q2 notes	Q3 notes	Q4 notes
Review <u>guiding documents, policies, and standards</u> to reflect the needs of the community, and update accordingly. Review relevant and important policies annually.	Review policies annually at the Selectboard's organizational meeting; update as needed.	4 - Low	Administration	[8/14/24] Administration's Admin Assistant Kate Larose is compiling list of all Policies to get better documentation of what exists. Can then use that to review and update policies.			[4/4/25] All policies that have been adopted and/or amended in the past 10 years are online at https://www.essexvt.org/1354/POLICIES . The Selectboard will review several policies at its organizational meeting on 4/7/25. Other policy updates in 2024 and 2025 include Human Services Funding Distribution Policy (1/27/25), Winter Operations Policy (11/4/24), and Investment Policy (8/19/24). [5/15/25] Handbook for Board, Committees, Staff Reps will supplant some outdated policies that have not been in use.

ADDITIONAL WORK ITEMS	Date added	Primary department
Tree Nursery partnership with Center for Technology-Essex		Community Development
Selectboard team-building event		Administration
Property acquisition for small boat launch	8/19/2024	Community Development, Parks and Rec
Green Mountain Transit routes	9/16/2024	Community Development
Women's Correctional Facility proposal		Community Development, Community Justice Center
Responding to and weighing in on committee requests to become commissions		Administration, Community Development
Review (with legal) of Conservation and Trails Committee/Commission proposed charter	12/16/2024	Administration, Community Development

ANNUAL WORK PLAN – CEMETERY

Budget year: FY25

DEPARTMENT: Clerks and Recreation

Budgeted staff: Jenn Booker Deputy Clerk

Primary function(s): Inventory and provide guidance for a well-maintained setting for the interment and commemoration of the deceased and for the comfort and inspiration of the bereaved and the public. The Commission will strive to accommodate the desires of families and individuals within the Town’s and Cemetery’s rules adopted for the operation of Mountain View Cemetery. The Commission wishes to provide compassionate and efficient service in a manner that respects human dignity.

Regular work (happens every day/week/month/year)

TASK	Frequency	status	Other departments involved
Mowing, Weed whacking	Once/ Twice month		Parks and Recreation
Flags, Flag holder replacement	When needed	Placed new holders and flags at both cemeteries	FVW/Committee members
Turf improvement	Ongoing last 3 years	ongoing	Parks and rec /
Repair of broken gravestones	Ongoing	Continuing to get to all the broken gravestone work done	Bianchi stone crafters

Special Projects

TASK		Quote	Company/ department
Tree removal	23 trees need to be removed	\$27200.00	DJ Tree Service
Fence Work	Ground is moving separating fence	Waiting	Parks and Recreation
Columbarium Remodel	Looking to upgrade gardens around it	n/a	n/a
Repairing of water in cemetery	Water leak	Three quote options looking to pay less than \$6000.	Aquarius sprinkler / recreation
Japanese knot weed	Common cemetery spreading	Looking into this	n/a
Updating rules and regs	Commissioners want to update rules and regs in the future	n/a	
Columbarium cleaning		110.00	Bianchi stone crafters
Inventory	We have about 400 open plots		Clerk/ Shann
Mark out rest of cemetery	Need to mark the back left corner still	n/a	O'leary burke

Conservation and Trails Committee Work Plan - Approved 8/13/24		Conservation and Trails Committee Work Plan - Approved 8/13/24							
ITEM TITLE	DESCRIPTION	ITEM TITLE	DESCRIPTION	TASKS	Point Person	Other Team Members	Committed? For FY25	FUNDING Sources?	Average Priority
Act 171	Include protection of forest blocks and wildlife connectors in Town Plan, - Zoning regs and specific prescriptions	Act 171	Include protection of forest blocks and wildlife connectors in Town Plan, - Zoning regs and specific prescriptions	Review maps / criteria, public outreach, make goals + actions + text for Town Plan	Betsy	Morgan, Paul	No	Possibly Municipal Planning Grants, others?	10
Tree City USA	Regain Tree City USA status; See STMP goals for details	Tree City USA	Regain Tree City USA status; See STMP goals for details	Create check list of tasks needed to maintain	April	Ken, Steve, Shannon, (Kent)	Yes	Capital budget	9
Street Tree Management Plan	Develop a 5-year street tree maintenance plan for trees on town ROWs and on municipal properties. Specifically budget projections	Street Tree Management Plan	Develop a 5-year street tree maintenance plan for trees on town ROWs and on municipal properties. Specifically budget projections	Update existing Plan - must include projected budget impacts; identify removed trees	Steve	Morgan, Betsy			9
Current Use, FOLC program Promotion	Enroll more properties in one or both programs to promote conservation / active land management	Current Use, FOLC program Promotion	Enroll more properties in one or both programs to promote conservation / active land management	Analyze financial benefits to landowners who enroll in one / both programs	Ken	Paul	No	N/A	9
Forest management plans	Review existing (Indian Brook, Saxon Hill, Tree Farm, Mathieu Forest, Sleepy Hollow) determine status. Offer each for adoption by the selectboard. Make plans for execution. Suggest additional plans for other town owned forests.	Forest management plans	Review existing (Indian Brook, Saxon Hill, Tree Farm, Mathieu Forest, Sleepy Hollow) determine status. Offer each for adoption by the selectboard. Make plans for execution. Suggest additional plans for other town owned forests.	Determine funding for landing / road upgrades, RFP for logger and additional plans, public outreach	Ken	Betsy, Morgan, (Chuck)	Yes	Maybe CRF, rec impact \$ (NO tax \$ for road) Building Comm, VOREC, Rec Trails Program	9
Tree Nursery	Develop MOU with EWSD for Tree Nursery	Tree Nursery	Develop MOU with EWSD for Tree Nursery	Tree Nursery MOU	Steve	Ken, Morgan			8
Recreational Trails	Participate in planning grant work as needed including the Current VOREC Grant. Review trail maintenance programs	Recreational Trails	Participate in planning grant work as needed including the Current VOREC Grant. Review trail maintenance programs	Map Trails, classify by value for recreation / transportation Identify Trail Maintenance issues - propose solutions; signage	Duane	Shannon, Betsy, April			8
Identify Targets for Land Conservation	Uses of conservation fund	Identify Targets for Land Conservation	Uses of conservation fund	Make a list or potential parcels for acquisition and or conservation.	Bino	Paul			8
Boat access to Winooski	Create public, non-motorized boat access to Winooski River	Boat access to Winooski	Create public, non-motorized boat access to Winooski River		Shannon	Bino, Steve			8
Revise landscaping ordinances	Propose revisions to Zoning Regs to reflect landscaping best practices	Revise landscaping ordinances	Propose revisions to Zoning Regs to reflect landscaping best practices	Identify provisions to change; draft revisions, present to PC/SB	Betsy	Duane	No	No	7
Mission Statement Revision	Review current CTC Mission text, revise and submit to Selectboard for adoption	Mission Statement Revision	Review current CTC Mission text, revise and submit to Selectboard for adoption	Prepare Draft for Committee approval and submission to SB	Ken				7
Non Vehicular Transportation Projects	Bike and Ped Plan to get from A-B	Non Vehicular Transportation Projects	Bike and Ped Plan to get from A-B		Bino?	Duane			7
Ongoing Items - Items below are regular/traditional things th		Ongoing Items - Items below are regular/traditional things the		Committee does					
Advise PC on Development applicaitons	Review plans as presented by staff and provide written recommendations on each - be sure these are included in minutes.	Advise PC on Development applicaitons	Review plans as presented by staff and provide written recommendations on each - be sure these are included in minutes.	Document recommendation in minutes, send written copy to staff	Kent		Yes		8
Arbor Day Celebration	Plan Organize Arbor Day Celebration	Arbor Day Celebration	Plan Organize Arbor Day Celebration	organize annual Arbor Day celebration; Select a location to plant a tree; secure a tree	Ken	Betsy, Morgan, Shannon	Yes		8
Fall & Spring Clean-Up Day	Focus on invasive removal & trail maintenance - consider alternative locations	Fall & Spring Clean-Up Day	Focus on invasive removal & trail maintenance - consider alternative locations	See to-do list	Paul	Morgan, Shannon	Yes	No	8
Explore Essex	Man table at community day, Coordinate workshops, field walks, etc during 2 week period.	Explore Essex	Man table at community day, Coordinate workshops, field walks, etc during 2 week period.		Betsy	Ken, Morgan			5

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Enhanced Energy Plan

Approved by the Town of Essex

Date

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Purpose

This energy plan is a vision for the Town of Essex to advance the State of Vermont's Comprehensive Energy Plan and Climate Action Plan and to align energy planning with local land use policies. This plan is incorporated by reference in the 2025 Essex Comprehensive Plan. This plan was developed according to the Department of Public Service's energy planning standards for municipal plans. If this plan is given a determination of energy compliance from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, it will have substantial deference in the Public Utility Commission's (PUC) review of whether an energy project meets the orderly development criterion in the Section 248 process. The Section 248 process is not easily summarized. For an in-depth discussion of the Section 248 process see the Public Service Department's 2024 Guidance for Regional & Municipal Enhanced Energy Planning Standards [here](#). See the energy compliance section in this plan for more information, as well.

Introduction

Since releasing its first [Comprehensive Energy Plan](#) in 2011, Vermont has been working toward a goal of obtaining more of its energy from renewable resources. Renewable energy, as defined by 24 V.S.A. §4303(24), "means energy available for collection or conversion from direct sunlight, wind, running water, organically derived fuels, including wood and agricultural sources, waste heat, and geothermal sources."

The state's [2022 Comprehensive Energy Plan \(CEP\)](#) is structured to meet the greenhouse gas requirements of [Vermont's Global Warming Solutions Act](#), and to be consistent with [Vermont's Climate Action Plan](#) as required by 10 V.S.A. § 592. The State's energy and climate goals are:

- To obtain 90% of all energy across all sectors (transportation, heating and electricity) from renewable sources by 2050, with the interim goals of 25% renewable by 2025 and 45% renewable by 2035.
- In the transportation sector, 10% of energy needs will be from renewable energy by 2025, and 45% by 2040.
- In the thermal sector, 30% of energy needs from renewable energy by 2025, and 70% by 2042.
- In the electric sector, 100% of energy needs will be from carbon-free resources by 2032, with at least 75% from renewable energy.
- Reductions in greenhouse gas emissions: 26% reduction from 2005 levels by 2025; 40% reduction from 1990 levels by 2030, and 80% reduction from 1990 levels by 2050.

This plan describes how the Town of Essex intends to act to implement the state's energy and climate goals outlined above. Meeting these goals will require ambitious action.

The following are transformations needed for the Town of Essex to meet these goals by 2050:

- Establish enough renewable energy generation sites to generate an **additional 77,451 MWh** of electricity by 2050¹. (As of 2023, Essex generates 11,535 MWh of renewable electricity.)
- Increase electric and plug-in hybrid light duty vehicles to 98% of passenger vehicles registered in the Essex

¹ The renewable energy target is expressed in MWh because the target is intended to be technology neutral. The Essex Community's target takes into account both electricity used in the commercial, industrial, and residential sectors. The target is modeled based on population and electricity usage. The Essex Community makes up 43% of electricity used in Chittenden County; therefore, the community's target is among the highest in the County.

Community

- Weatherize 59% of homes and 59% of commercial and industrial establishments
- Heat 93% of homes with electric heat pumps and 4.2% of homes with wood
- Heat 50% of businesses with electric heat pumps and 12% with wood

Led by its Energy Committee, the Town of Essex is striving to match the state’s goals. The Essex Energy Committee has taken the position that, “For the Town of Essex to achieve the level of success for the overall betterment of our community, we must develop and implement plans which aggressively change the way in which we view energy from the standpoint of cost, use and conservation.” **Equity Considerations**

Certain populations are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and to policies that are developed to address it. As actions and policies are considered, it is important to ask the questions below to empower more inclusive decision-making:



Who is helped?



Who is harmed?



Who is missing?

Things to consider from the State of Vermont Climate Council's [Guiding Principles for a Just Transition](#):



All recommendations directly identify and support relevant impacted and frontline communities.



Investments, policies, administration, and oversight tackle the needs of impacted people first, providing the greatest benefits of transitions to these communities.



Future climate goals must be broad for the well-being of all Vermonters and include targeted strategies for different groups that take into account their specific histories, sociocultural and economic realities.



Where plans and policies create burdens, these burdens are shifted away from impacted communities.

The actions in this enhanced energy plan have been reviewed for equity considerations. When actions are implemented, equity considerations should be included in the process. For more information on building equity into climate change actions, see the [State of Vermont Climate Council’s Guiding Principles for a Just Transition](#).

Implementation of Goals

To meet these goals, the Town of Essex has committed to implementing prioritized multiple actions under the following general categories: (i) Land Use Regulations and Development Policies; (ii) Transportation, (iii) Buildings and Thermal; and (iv) Renewable Energy Generation and Storage. See the implementation section for additional information.

Land Use Regulations and Development Policies

Land Use:

The relationship between transportation, land use and energy consumption is extremely important and is an area in which the community can have a large impact through development regulations.

Low density is an inefficient use of land with greater dependence on cars. This land use pattern uses more energy and emits more climate change causing emissions. **Compact walkable neighborhoods** offer diversity of housing choice, high quality open space and access to surrounding natural areas, employment, services and shopping – providing lifestyles less dependent on cars.

Low density:	Compact walkable neighborhoods:
 <p>Uses more energy for heating and cooling. Low density development encourages larger building footprints with higher heating and cooling needs.</p>	 <p>Use less energy for heating and cooling. Compact density development encourages smaller building footprints with lower heating and cooling needs.</p>
 <p>Results in more driving. Sprawling suburban and rural areas are heavily dependent on cars with limited opportunity for walking, biking and taking the bus to everyday destinations.</p>	 <p>Allow for less driving. Compact development promotes efficient travel that is less dependent on cars, and provides more choice and opportunity for walking, biking and taking the bus.</p>
 <p>Causes loss of natural habitats, lower carbon sequestration and storage. Low density zoning rules allow Vermont's working and natural landscape to be converted to development, eliminating the existing and future carbon sequestration and storage benefits. Inefficient use of finite buildable land worsens stormwater, whose impacts are increasingly costly to mitigate.</p>	 <p>Conserve natural habitats, maintained carbon sequestration and storage. Compact development in existing development areas decreases development pressure on Vermont's working, natural landscape and preserves it for existing and future carbon sequestration and storage benefits.</p>

*Sources: Initial Vermont Climate Action Plan, Page 60 »
Forest Carbon, An Essential Natural Solution for Climate Change »*

For detailed guidance on how to limit low density sprawl, enable compact walkable neighborhoods, and protect the working and natural landscape to ensure climate change resilience, see [CCRPC's Climate Change and Land Use Guide](#).

(Essex Energy Committee and Planning Commission to decide which specific actions to put under this heading. Examples could include: promoting "smart growth" through ETC|NEXT and Susie Wilson Road corridor plans; limiting development in rural zoning districts to prevent sprawl and conserve working lands / natural habitats.)

Development (construction of buildings on sites):

For new construction and building renovations, the State of Vermont has an energy building code, the Vermont Residential and Commercial Building Energy Standard. The zoning administrator is responsible for providing the energy code to land use permit applicants and must see a completed energy certificate of compliance before issuing a certificate of occupancy.

Goal: The Town of Essex is committed to development patterns and building energy use that result in the efficient use of energy and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

General Policy: The Town Center is a focus of concentrated growth and community life intended to encourage energy efficient development and travel. (See the Land Use and Development section of the Essex Town Plan for more detail).

Actions

1. Consider adopting Vermont Building Energy Stretch Code for all development in the Zoning Regulations.
2. Allow charging stations wherever there is parking and update sign standards to encourage installation of electric vehicle charging stations.
3. Require EV ready buildings – adopt a specific use standard for multi-unit dwellings that requires those uses to provide resident access to EV charging.
4. Consider supporting Thermal Energy Networks (TENs), which are highly efficient heating and cooling systems that use a network of pipes to interconnect thermal energy resources with multiple buildings. TENs are similar to water and sewer systems in that they support dense, mixed-use development patterns.
 - *Zoning could include bonuses for buildings that are readily connectable to a network*
 - *Maps that identify thermal energy resources could spur TENs development.*
 - *Consider zoning measures that attract land uses and industries that offer waste heat recovery opportunities.*
5. Consider reviewing the process for LEED density bonuses to increase utilization, in the Town.
6. Explore the idea of an energy fee or revolving loan fund that would fund public energy efficiency, electrification, and energy generation projects.
7. Continue to require energy efficient street lighting for new developments and when replacing existing lamps
8. Update land use regulations to incorporate recommendations in [CCRPC's Land Use and Climate Change Guide](#).

Transportation

The Town of Essex has a relatively unique opportunity within the county to support greater transportation choice and reduce automobile dependency since it is a relatively compact community with an extensive sidewalk network. The Community is also served by public transportation and rail. Residents have more transportation choices than many neighboring communities that have a more suburban/rural land use pattern.

Goal: The community should be served by varied modes of transportation with automobile use balanced by increased availability of public transit, sidewalks, and multi-use trails to reduce transportation energy demand.

General Policy: Transportation systems shall be integrated with land use policy in such a way that improvements are compatible with compact walkable neighborhoods with access to public transportation and EV charging.

Actions

1. Design and construct pedestrian/bike path on VT Route 2A
2. Reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips by establishing strategic park-and-ride locations, and by partnering with ridesharing, car-sharing, and public transit organizations.
3. Partner with [Drive Electric Vermont](#), nonprofit organizations, vehicle dealers, and/or state agencies to organize high-visibility events where people can see and test drive EVs, such as energy fairs and summer festivals. Particular attention should be made to electric pickup trucks and motorcycles, since these represent nearly ½ the existing non- electric vehicle stock in the community.

4. Promote the [Drive Electric Vermont](#) webpage, which connects users to financial incentives, dealers, and recharging stations for EVs. Promote the [Go Vermont](#) webpage, which provides ride share, vanpool, public transit, and park and-ride options.
5. Develop a community EV charging plan that includes on-street EV charging for low-income and multi-unit housing residents and apply for grants to implement the plan, similar to the City of Burlington. Incorporate recommendations from outreach to low-income residents, renters, seniors, people of color, disabled and chronically ill residents, etc.
6. Provide charging stations at prominent publicly owned locations such as municipal or school parking lots, as well as parking areas near public transportation and park and rides. Apply for all available state and federal funding programs. Ensure that all public stations are fully accessible.
7. Replace the Town's vehicle fleet with electric or biodiesel fuel vehicles as fossil fuel-burning vehicles reach the end of their useful life.
8. Increase the number of EV chargers at the Police Department to support plug-in electric hybrid cruisers.
9. Present annually to the public, staff, and municipal officials an overview of public transit available in the Town and the Village including information about Green Mountain Transit and the major routes they offer.
10. Continue to work with Local Motion to make the Essex Community safe and welcoming for bicycling.
11. Continue to identify issues and opportunities for walk-bike improvements and connections.

Buildings and Thermal

Investing in weatherization and transitioning heating from fossil fuels toward electricity and other renewable options will decrease energy use and lower greenhouse gas emissions. Better insulated homes save money and improve health and comfort, during both extreme cold and heat events. Weatherization, heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, and certain types of advanced wood heat and biofuels (specifically those with lower life-cycle emissions), all present opportunities to reduce energy use and emissions from heating homes and other buildings.

Goal: The Town of Essex will weatherize and electrify existing buildings and new construction will be 100% fossil fuel free by 2050.

General Policy: The Town of Essex shall support regulatory and non-regulatory initiatives that result in decreased greenhouse gas emissions, and reduced energy consumption and ensure that new policies do not increase costs for low-income residents.

Actions

1. Fund an Energy Coordinator position to develop energy implementation plans, coordinate efforts for the Town, and encourage residential and commercial weatherization and electrification. As an initial step, make this goal a priority for the Building Manager.
2. If the Town of Essex adopts a rental registry or regulations, ensure that these include requirements that rental properties are properly weatherized to keep tenants warm in the winter, cool in summer, and reduce costs. Work with landlords to meet targets to ensure that new policies do not increase costs for low-income residents or cause displacement.

3. Consider adopting an ordinance regulating the heat sources for new buildings like the City of South Burlington. https://www.southburlingtonvt.gov/news_detail_T7_R1061.php. Ensure that new policies do not increase costs for low-income residents. Consider exemptions for affordable housing. Host education programs and collaborate with Efficiency Vermont, utilities, and energy vendors to encourage energy efficiency in existing residential and commercial buildings and to educate residents and businesses about heat pumps, advanced wood heating, geothermal heating, renewable natural gas, and other renewable technologies.
4. Promote wood stove change-out programs that take older non-EPA certified stoves out of service and replace them with more efficient and lower emitting cord and pellet stoves.
5. Through the Building Manager, monitor energy used by the Town buildings annually to describe progress towards energy goals, working closely with the Energy Committee.

Renewable Energy

Goal: Support the generation of 77,451 MWh of new renewable energy in Essex by 2050.

General Policy: The Town of Essex shall support regulatory and non-regulatory initiatives that result in increased renewable energy generation.

Actions

1. Identify and map specific preferred sites for renewable energy generation to send a message to potential developers that these are the locations where the Town would like to see renewable energy generation development.
2. Support state-wide development of renewable, distributed generation that **seeks to benefit communities who have historically faced barriers to accessing the benefits of investing in renewable energy**, while also helping utilities cost-effectively meet their distributed generation requirements under the Renewable Energy Standard.
3. Encourage and support renewable energy projects consistent with the siting policies of this plan through letters of support to the Public Utilities Commission.
4. Explore possible municipally owned sites for renewable energy generation, such as the Town landfill, rooftop solar on municipal buildings, and parking lot canopies on public lots.
5. Study the capabilities of existing buildings to support roof-mounted solar PV systems in zoning districts where it is deemed appropriate for a better estimate of this potential.

ACT 174 AND SUBSTANTIAL DEFERENCE

In 2016, Act 174 established a process for “enhanced energy planning,” which encourages municipalities to write plans that are “energy compliant.” This plan meets the standards for energy planning established by Act 174 and outlined in 24 V.S.A. §4352. Therefore, the policies of this plan will receive substantial deference in §248 proceedings. The Public Utility Commission shall apply the land conservation measures or specific policies in accordance with their terms unless there is a clear and convincing demonstration that other factors affecting the general good of the State outweigh the application of the measure or policy. This is a higher standard of review than “due consideration,” which the municipal plan’s policies would otherwise receive.

6. Work towards a plan to replace existing municipally owned-streetlamps with solar-generating lamps, provided that these can be harmonized to the extent feasible with design constraints.

Energy Compliance

In 2016, Act 174 established a process for “enhanced energy planning” for municipalities. This process was updated in 2022 to include consideration of the equity impacts of policies and objectives. Enhanced energy planning sets up the framework for municipalities to update their **Municipal Plans** according to a set of energy standards developed by the Vermont Department of Public Service. If a **Municipal Plan** meet these standards, the **Municipal Plan** is given a determination of energy compliance from the regional planning commission. The updated detailed standards for **Municipal Plans** are available [here](#).

A determination of energy compliance means that the PUC will give the **Municipal Plan** substantial deference. This means that a land conservation measure or specific policy shall be applied by the PUC in determining whether a jurisdictional energy siting project meets the orderly development criterion in the Section 248 process, unless there is a clear and convincing demonstration that other factors affecting the general good of the State outweigh the application of the measure or policy. This is a higher standard of review than a **Municipal Plan** would otherwise receive in the Section 248 siting process.

Siting

The Town of Essex can have input over the siting of renewable generation facilities in a few ways through the policies contained in this plan. The community can define preferred sites for net-metering facilities and include policies to identify the scale and type of renewable energy generation facilities to occur in specific areas within the community. Also, the Essex Community can restrict renewable generation facilities where appropriate.

Vermont’s Net Metering Rule (Rule 5.100, updated November 12, 2024) defines preferred sites for renewable energy development (any renewable technology besides hydroelectric). Compared to non-preferred sites, net metering on preferred sites can be larger (up to 500 kW instead of 150 kW) and such projects receive financial benefits in the net metering rates. See the latest Vermont Public Utility Commission Rule Pertaining to Construction and Operation of Net-Metering Systems for details on the financial and scale benefits of preferred sites. Systems up to 15kW and rooftop solar systems up to 500kW go through a registration process rather than the full Public Utilities Commission process. However, all other projects do not have an expedited review process and must meet the same requirements as any other system. Preferred sites as defined under the PUC rule include:

- On a pre-existing structure
- Landfills
- Parking lot canopies over permitted paved areas
- Gravel pits
- Previously developed land
- Superfund sites
- Brownfields
- Locally- and regionally-designated sites

- On the same parcel or directly adjacent parcel as a customer taking 50% or more of the output

The Town of Essex Community strongly encourages the siting of net-metered systems on parking lots. Municipally designated preferred sites can be identified in a duly adopted municipal plan or through a joint letter of support by the Town planning commission, Town Selectboard and regional planning commission. Project developers are encouraged to reach out the Energy Committee, the Planning Commission, and the Town of Essex staff to discuss projects in advance of submitting a petition.

Constraints

Some areas are not appropriate for any type of development, including types of renewable energy generation facilities existing as of the date of this plan. The State of Vermont has defined certain resources as known and possible constraints, which are protected by the ECOS Regional Plan and state agency review during the Public Utility Commission review process. The Town of Essex has added additional constraints based on local policy. In determining whether known or possible constraints are present, on-site field verification should be conducted.

Known constraints are areas in which development, including renewable energy generation, is not appropriate. See Map 2 for the location of known constraints within the community. Known constraints are:

State Known Constraints

- FEMA Designated Floodway
- DEC River Corridors
- National Wilderness Areas
- State-significant Natural Communities
- Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species
- Vernal Pools (confirmed)
- Class 1 and 2 wetlands (VSWI and advisory layers)

Local Known Constraints

- Slopes of 20% and steeper
-

Possible constraints are areas in which the effects of development, including current types of renewable energy generation facilities, may need to be mitigated. See Map 3 for the location of possible constraints in the community. Possible constraints are:

State Possible Constraints

- Agricultural Soils (*While the State will review agricultural soils, it is not the intent of the Village of Essex Junction to protect primary agricultural soils from development considering agricultural operations (outside of community)*)

Local Possible Constraints

- Scenic Resource Protection Overlay District
- Slopes 15% or greater and less than 20%
- Recreation/Conservation areas within the Resource Preservation-Industrial District

gardens) are not feasible on small parcels isolated from more intact open agricultural areas. Further, mitigation of these soils through state development approval processes does not seem appropriate in such an urban environment).

- Hydric Soils
- Vernal Pools (unconfirmed)
- Act 250 Agricultural Soil Mitigation Areas
- FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas
- Protected Lands (State fee lands and private conservation lands)
- Deer Wintering Areas
- The following features from ANR's Vermont Conservation Design:
 - Interior Forest Blocks – Highest Priority
 - Connectivity Blocks – Highest Priority
 - Physical Landscape Blocks – Highest Priority
 - Surface Water and Riparian Areas – Highest Priority

Siting Policies

The policies in this section are the land conservation measures to be applied in the Section 248 decision making process with respect to the PUC's review of a petition for a renewable generation facility. The Town of Essex will use the following siting policies to determine support for identifying a municipally designated preferred site and in the review of Section 248 applications.

1. The Town of Essex strongly encourages development of renewable energy generation facilities on rooftops, parking lots, on parcels or directly adjacent parcels to a customer that has been allocated more than fifty percent of the net-metered system's electrical output, previously-developed sites, brownfields, landfills, former mineral resource extraction areas, and municipally designated sites. In the Essex Town Center and the Historic Preservation and Business Design Control Districts, design control best practices must be applied to integrate development into the built environment to the extent feasible. (See Appendix A for these standards).
2. Locate ground-mounted solar and wind turbines outside of, the Essex Town Center, and the Business and Historic Preservation Design Control Districts.
3. Development of renewable energy generation facilities shall not take place in areas with known constraints and shall first explore alternatives to and then mitigate adverse impacts in areas with possible constraints, as identified in the constraints section of this plan. In determining whether known or possible constraints are present, on-site field verification should be conducted.

4. With the exception of preferred sites listed in policy 1, development of large-scale renewable energy generation facilities (capacity greater than 500kW) shall be located only within industrial zones, including the industrial zoned portion of the Resource Preservation District, in the Town of Essex.
5. Locate energy generation proximate to existing distribution and transmission infrastructure with adequate capacity and near areas with high electric load (See [Green Mountain Power's Solar Map](#)) to reduce the need for new distribution and transmission extensions.
6. Avoid or minimize the adverse impacts of development (including renewable energy development and associated transmission and distribution infrastructure) on identified scenic resources, viewsheds and roadscape corridors in the Town of Essex Scenic Resource protection overlay district (See Map 3) through appropriate site planning and design practices. See Appendix A for appropriate planning guidance on siting or site development design standards
7. Apply the Design Control Best Practices (see Appendix A) when locating roof-mounted photovoltaic net metering systems in Town Center and the Town's Historic Preservation and Business Design Control Districts
8. Within the Resource Preservation Industrial District the following policies apply:
 - a. 200-foot vegetative buffer shall be maintained along adjacent residential areas and streets, including VT Route 15, Sand Hill Road and Saxon Hill Road and where development abuts a residential property not located in a residential district.
 - b. A 100-foot vegetative buffer shall be maintained along Allen Martin Drive. Parking areas, components of stormwater management systems may not be located within the 100- or 200-foot buffer in this district.
 - c. Underground utility easement crossings are permitted only within the 200 ft. and 100 ft. buffer. Utility easements are permitted if ledge, underground water or other conditions make underground installation infeasible. Areas cleared for utility crossings shall be re-vegetated.
9. Development (including renewable energy generation facilities and associated transmission and distribution infrastructure) is discouraged on slopes of 15 % or steeper and less than 20% due to the likelihood of erosion and stormwater runoff problems. Development shall be prohibited on slopes of 20 percent and steeper due to the likelihood of environmental damage.
10. Development (including renewable energy generation and associated transmission and distribution infrastructure) will not destroy or significantly imperil wildlife habitat identified on Map 3 as highest priority and priority landscape scale components) or all reasonable means of minimizing the destruction or imperilment of such habitat or species will be utilized.
11. Where feasible, pair renewable energy generation with electrical energy storage to ensure energy is utilized to the fullest potential, to increase resiliency/reliability of electricity during outages and decrease fossil fuel usage during peak periods. Renewable energy generation projects that can accommodate energy storage are strongly encouraged.

Existing + Future Estimates of Energy Consumption

The existing consumption data in this section are from various sources and represent actual current consumption and generation in the transportation, electricity and heating/building sectors.

Projected future energy use targets are drawn from the Vermont Public Service Department’s energy analysis. PSD worked with the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) to employ the [Low Emissions Analysis Platform](#) (LEAP). The LEAP analysis is not prescriptive but is instead an indicative analysis designed to show the estimated magnitude and timing of needed changes and the relative importance of major economic sectors to meet Vermont’s energy and climate goals.

Per the PSD’s Energy Planning Standards, if a municipality chooses to update or create an enhanced energy plan they must include targets for future energy use. The data in this section is designed to satisfy the analysis and targets standards. It is important to remember these targets represent only one way to achieve each municipality’s energy goals. Other strategies may allow the municipality to meet its goals (for example, switching some wood heating systems to heat pump systems).

For more information on the LEAP model, including its underlying assumptions, please refer to Vermont’s 2022 Comprehensive Energy Plan found here: <https://publicservice.vermont.gov/about-us/plans-and-reports/department-state-plans/2022-plan>.

Data in this section meet the requirements of energy planning standard 4A.

Table 1A Current Household Transportation Energy Use

1	Total Energy Consumption for Light Duty Vehicles (LDVs) (2022)	606,274 MMBTU
2	Total Energy Consumption for Fossil Fuel LDVs (2022)	605,118 MMBTU
3	Total Energy Consumption for Electric LDVs (2022)	1,157 MMBTU
4	Fossil Fuel Burning LDVs Registered to Households (2022)	13,423
5	All-Electric (Battery) LDVs (2023)	52
6	Plug-in Hybrid LDVs (2023)	32
7	Total Electric Light Duty Vehicles (2023)	84
8	Total Electric LDVs as % of Municipality’s Total Vehicles	0.6%

Sources: Transportation Research Center, Drive Electric Vermont

Table 2A Home Heating by Fuel Type, 2022

Heat Source	# of Homes	Margin of Error	% of Homes	% Margin of Error
1 Utility gas	2,709	371+/-	55%	6.5+/- %
2 Fuel oil, Kerosene	752	276+/-	15%	5.5 +/- %
3 Propane	615	292+/-	12%	5.8+/- %
4 <i>Subtotal Oil, Kerosene, Propane</i>	<i>1,367</i>	<i>402+/-</i>	28%	7.9+/- %
5 Wood	197	115+/-	4%	2.3+/- %
6 Electricity	596	268+/-	12%	5.3+/- %

7	Non-PV solar energy	0	18+/-	0%	0.4+/- %
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Sources: American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimate, Table 25040, These data are associated with a margin of error.

Table A3. Recent Residential Energy Efficiency Projects

	2021	2022	2023	Total
Total Residential Projects (includes projects below)	176	161	98	435
Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® Projects	1	0	0	1
Other Weatherization Projects	2	2	1	5
Residential New Construction Projects	0	1	0	1
Other Selected Measure and Engagement Counts				
Home Energy Visits	0	8	2	10
Heat Pump Water Heater Installations	9	10	4	23
Cold Climate Heat Pump Installations	104	103	72	279
Wood Heating Installations	10	2	4	16

Source: Efficiency Vermont, RPC Report Produced 6/2024

Heat Pump Hot Water Heater Installations - This is a subset of all hot water measures listed in the Measure Category tables, the number of heat pump domestic hot water installations processed through Efficiency Vermont’s upstream and midstream programs.

Home Energy Visits - A home walk through provided by Efficiency Vermont staff to help residential homeowners prioritize efficiency improvements and answer energy-related questions. Staff spend approximately an hour and a half in the home and at the end deliver a personalized set of recommendations to meet customer energy goals and make their homes more efficient, comfortable, and healthy.

Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® - Sponsored by the Department of Energy, this program connects homeowners with experienced and trusted contractors that can help them understand their home's energy use and identify home improvements that increase energy performance, improve comfort and health, and lower utility bills. The program is cosponsored with Vermont Gas Systems and Burlington Electric Department for homes in their service territories.

Measure - A purchased and installed item or an action that has electrical and/or thermal and/or water savings associated with it.

Other Weatherization Projects - Launched in 2018, Efficiency Vermont offers several programs that help customers install weatherization measures smaller in scope than a comprehensive Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® project. Programs include attic, basement, and do-it-yourself weatherization installations.

Project - A collection of one or more energy efficient measures that have been implemented at a customer's premise (physical location). A customer can be associated with one or more projects and in some cases, a project may be associated with multiple customers.

Residential New Construction Projects - Comprehensive energy efficiency services to customers building new or gut-rehabbing single-family homes. This program maximizes energy efficiency, durability, and comfort through direct technical assistance, third party certification, incentives, and code compliance support. The RNC program is cosponsored with Vermont Gas Systems and Burlington Electric Department for homes in their service territories.

Electricity

Table A4. Annual Electricity Use (KWH)

Sector	2021-2023 Average
Commercial & Industrial	52,066,927
Residential	24,804,395
Total	76,871,322
Count of Residential Premises	3,276
Average Residential Usage	7,571
Source: Efficiency Vermont, 2024 RPC Report Produced	

Table A5. Existing Renewable Electricity Generation	Sites	Power (MW)	Energy (MWh)
Solar	315	8.76	11,516.21

Wind	1	0.01	18.72
Hydro	0	0	0
Biomass for Electric Generation	0	0	0
Total	316	8.77	11,534.94
Source: Vermont Department of Public Service, Generation Scenarios Tool, Distributed Generation Survey + data as of 1/31/2023			

Projected Energy Use

Data in this section meets the requirements of energy planning standard 4B-4D.

Table B1. Projected Light Duty Vehicle (LDV) Transportation Energy Demand		2025	2035	2050
1	Estimate of total light-duty vehicles*	15,165	16,702	19,305
2	Estimate for number of area battery electric and plug-in hybrid LDV (passenger cars and light trucks)	833	8,745	18,958
3	Light Duty Electric and Hybrid Electric Vehicles (% of Vehicle Fleet)	5.5%	52.4%	98%
4	Non-Electric Light Duty Energy Demand (gas, diesel, ethanol, CNG, biodiesel) (MMBtu)	901,056	427,427	57,064
5	Electricity Demand for Light Duty (passenger cars and light trucks) Transportation (MMBtu)	14,143	148,250	280,023
6	Biofuel share of biofuel-blended LDV transportation energy consumed	8%	10%	10%

Source: LEAP Model, UVM Transportation Research Center

*Growth rate for LDV is based on the municipality's 10-year average annual change of new homes built between 2012-2022, annual rate is 1.14%

Table B2. Projected Commercial Thermal Energy Use, 2025-2050	2025	2035	2050

1	Projected Number of future commercial establishments*	159	172	195
2	Percent of Commercial Establishments Weatherized	22%	43%	59%
3	Energy Saved by Weatherization (MMBtu)	8,667	18,162	28,055
4	Number of Heat Pumps installed in Commercial Buildings**	297	897	1,147
5	Commercial Establishments Using Wood Heating (%)	9%	11%	12%
6	Commercial Thermal Energy Use Attributable to Wood Heating (MMBtu)	13,035	15,958	19,768

Sources: VT Department of Labor, ECOS Plan Forecasts, CCRPC Bottom-Up Approach for Commercial Sector

*Growth rate for future commercial establishments is based on the ECOS Plan employment forecast rate of .82%

** Contemplates multiple mini split heat pumps per commercial establishment. However, larger commercial establishments would likely use a centrally ducted system.

Table B3. Projected Residential Thermal Energy Use, 2025-2050		2025	2035	2050
1	Projected number of future residences*	5,241	5,867	6,950
2	Residential thermal energy use (MMBtu)	499,709	290,469	178,841
3	Energy saved by weatherization or other thermal efficiency improvements (MMBtu)	60,027	153,608	204,259
4	Estimated number of Homes weatherized	1,166	2,520	4,077
5	Percent of residences weatherized	22%	49%	59%
6	Heat pump energy consumed by residences (MMBtu)	81,979	82,839	83,700
7	Estimated number of heat pumps in homes	1,595	4,344	6,481
8	Percent of residences using heat pumps	30%	74%	93%
9	Wood heat (cord wood + wood pellets) consumed by residences (MMBTU)	25,745	26,521	27,297
10	Estimated number of residences using wood heat	248	270	291
11	Residences using wood heat (%)	4.7%	4.6%	4.2%

12	Utility gas Heat Energy consumed by residences (MMBtu)	233,417	123,472	13,527
13	Estimated number of residences using utility gas	2,247	1,258	144
14	Percent of residences using utility gas	43%	21%	2%

Sources: LEAP Model, Department of Public Service

**Growth rate for future residences is based on municipal 10-year average annual change of new homes built between 2012-2022, annual rate is 1.14%. This may not align with growth rates anticipated for housing targets required under 24 V.S.A. § 4382(a)(10).*

Table B4. Electric Efficiency Targets, kilowatt-hours (kWh)		2025	2035	2050
1	Total cumulative electric energy saved from improvements in area residential equipment efficiency, in kWh	580,598	3,228,717	5,837,619
2	Residences that have increased their Electric Efficiency	339	1,884	3,406
3	Total cumulative electric energy saved from improvements in area commercial equipment efficiency, in kWh	1,759,035	8,588,467	7,094,476
4	Commercial and Industrial Establishments that have Increased Their Electric Efficiency	15	73	73

Source: Energy Efficiency Utility Potential Study, CCRPC, and the Department of Public Service

Projected Renewable Energy Generation Potential

According to CCRPC’s analysis, there is enough suitable land in the Town of Essex for development of renewable energy generation to meet the community’s targets. The generation targets are technology neutral, meaning Essex can use any technology (wind, solar, biomass, hydroelectric, etc.) to meet its goals.

Prime solar or wind areas are areas where models show the appropriate conditions for electricity generation, and where there are no constraints. Base solar or wind areas are areas where models show the appropriate conditions for electricity generation, but where there are possible constraints, which must be considered during development and may reduce the development potential of a site. The 2018 ECOS Plan indicates that “*development should be located to avoid state and local known constraints that have been field verified, and to minimize impacts to state and local possible constraints that have been field verified.*” Please see Constraints section for the list of constraints.

Land available for wind and solar generation and generation potential are based on models of the elevation, slope, and aspect of land, or the modeled wind speed, in a municipality. These models do not remove existing impervious surfaces. Therefore, land-based generation potential may be over-estimated for municipalities with a high percentage of impervious surface.

Table C1. Land Available for Wind and Solar Generation

	Acres with Prime Potential	Acres with Base Potential	Total Energy Potential (MWh)
Solar	660	6,663	284,920
Wind	113	3,310	168,666
Solar Rooftop	134		78,063

Source: CCRPC and the Department of Public Service, Vermont Center for Geographic Information

Source: Community Energy Dashboard, 10/23/2018	Sites	Power (MW)	Energy (MWh)
Table A5. Existing Renewable Electricity Generation			
Solar	315	8.76	11,516.21
Wind	1	0.01	18.72
Hydro	0	0	0
Biomass for Electric Generation	0	0	0
Total	316	8.77	11,534.94

Source: Vermont Department of Public Service, Generation Scenarios Tool, Distributed Generation Survey + data as of 1/31/2023

Renewable Energy Generation Targets

Renewable electricity generation targets were calculated by multiplying the regional target by the Town of Essex’s share

of the county total of three equally weighted factors: population, current electricity consumption, and land area available for renewable energy production. The incremental municipal targets are obtained by subtracting existing generation facilities located within a municipality's borders.

Table C2. New Renewable Electricity Generation Targets in Megawatt hour (MWh)	2032	2040	2050
Total Target (MWh)	23,384	68,240	88,986
Incremental Generation Target – Any Technology (MWh)	11,853	56,705	77,451
Grid Distribution Headroom (MW)	119.6	97.6	87.5
<i>Sources: CCRPC and the Department of Public Service</i>			

Hydroelectric generation is unlikely to increase significantly in the community for several reasons. There are few additional sites for large facilities, and smaller facilities have limited generation potential. Furthermore, site design and permitting are extremely challenging due to the significant impacts on stream geomorphology and aquatic habitats.

Of the total solar generation potential, up to 64.8 MW (78,063 MWh) could be located on existing rooftops (though not all roofs will be suitable for solar due to arrangement and shading). Because these sites are already developed, solar generation may be compatible with other land uses if developed in a way that is in harmony with existing development patterns and existing aesthetic norms especially in the Town's Historic Preservation and Business Design Control Districts. Preferred sites should be the focus of renewable energy development over undeveloped land, or historic districts. The Essex Energy Committee has partnered with solar developers to promote adoption of rooftop solar in the community by hosting informational events for both residential and commercial building owners.

Other preferred sites for net metering systems include brownfields, landfills, and former mineral resource extraction areas. For instance, the Town strongly supported Green Mountain Power's 4.5-MW photovoltaic array and battery storage facility at River Road on the site of a reclaimed sand and gravel extraction area. Wind turbines may also be located on previously-developed sites, but wind generation efficiency drops exponentially with turbine size, and only small-scale turbines should be sited near developed areas, so the generation potential for these sites would be limited. There are nevertheless good reasons to consider small-scale wind on municipal lands as a means of reducing electrical costs and setting an example of the small-but-important steps residents and businesses can take to work towards Essex's goals.

Renewable energy generation facilities shall not take place in areas with known constraints; if impacts to possible constraints cannot be avoided, they shall be mitigated. Renewable energy installers should be encouraged to develop in tandem with other uses that could occur on a given site to add value in a way that speaks to holistic development

patterns rather than a standalone facility. This type of development could also locate renewable energy installations on the same site as high energy users and reduce the need for distribution and transmission line upgrades.

Facilities with a generation capacity greater than 500kW are considered utility-scale and shall be located in designated industrial or commercial zones, where constraints are less numerous, impacts are more easily mitigated, and there is less competition for other land uses than in other areas. Other areas would have to be considered on a case-by-case basis, with developers encouraged to interact directly with Essex's municipal planners and committees in advance of issuing an advance notice under Section 248.

Within the Town of Essex's Scenic Resource Protection Overlay District, the Town of Essex's Historic Preservation Design Control District, and the Business Design Control District, all renewable energy generation facilities shall follow the siting, design, and screening standards/best practices as other forms of development to avert or minimize undue adverse impact on scenic resources.

Design Control Best Practices

This section outlines the best practices for locating net-metered roof-mounted solar facilities up to 500 kW in the Town of Essex's Business and Historic Preservation Design Control Districts. The best practices in this section are intended to preserve character-defining features of these areas while accommodating the need for renewable energy generation to the extent practical.

1. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
2. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
3. Utilization of low-profile solar panels is recommended. Panels shall be within ten percent (10%) of the average height of existing adjacent buildings and not be visible from the public right of way. Solar shingles laminates, glazing, or similar materials should not replace original or historic materials. Use of solar systems in windows or on walls, siding, and shutters should be avoided.
4. Panels should be installed flat and not alter the slope of the roof. Installation of panels must be reversible and not damage to the historic integrity of the resource and district.
5. Solar panels should be positioned behind existing architectural features such as parapets, dormers, and chimneys so they are not visible from the public right of way.
6. Use solar panels and mounting systems that are compatible in color to established roof materials. Mechanical equipment associated with the photovoltaic system should be unobtrusive.
7. Solar panels should be installed on rear slopes or other locations that are not visible from the public right-of-way. Panels should be installed flat and not alter the slope of the roof. Installation of panels must be reversible and not damage the historic integrity of the resource and district.
8. Flat roof structures should have solar panels set back from the roof edge to minimize visibility. Pitch and elevation should be adjusted so they are not visible from public right-of-way.

9. Use of solar systems in non-historic windows or on walls, siding, or shutters should not be visible from the public right of way.

Scenic Resource Protection Standards

The scenic resource protection standards should be applied to the Town of Essex's Scenic Resource Protection District. The purpose of these standards is to avert or minimize the adverse impacts of development (including renewable energy generation) on identified scenic resources, viewsheds and roadscape corridors through appropriate siting and design practices. A proposed development along any of the scenic road segments identified in this section shall address any impacts on scenic resources as seen from public roads using these standards.

1. To minimize the loss of scenic character renewable energy generation facilities 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 identified in the list of scenic streets.
2. Renewable energy generation facilities shall be positioned so that views to distant mountains remain as natural as possible.
3. Renewable energy generation facilities should be arranged in a manner that protects a significant portion of open space.
4. The use of vegetation to screen renewable energy generation facilities and associated fencing in all seasons is strongly encouraged. Plantings shall be of sufficient height, density and maturity to serve as a visual barrier from buildings and the roadscapes identified in this section
5. Shorter structures may be more appropriate in certain spaces than taller structures to keep the project from obstructing public vantage points identified in this section. Avoid locating a renewable energy generation facility in a location which diminishes the visual impact of the array from the owner's property but places the array immediately within their neighbor's or the public's viewshed. Locate facilities in a manner designed to reduce impacts on neighbors or public viewsheds.

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

2025 ANNUAL WORK PLAN – Planning Commission

TASK	Timeframe	Others involved	
Zoning Update (DRB change, unified bylaw, Act 47, childcare, other small?)	Winter-Fall		In progress
Act 181/Act 250 changes Work with the CCRPC on ECOS Plan Future Land Use Map	Winter/Spring	CCRPC	CCPRC doing the work but checking in the PC and Selectboard on this.
Energy Plan	Winter-Summer	Energy Committee, CCRPC	Energy Committee and CCRPC doing the heavy lifting. PC will review and include in the Town Plan. Town Plan amendment excepted for March 2026.
Official Map	Winter-Summer	CCRPC UPWP for the ETC NEXT MUN and MUS areas	Not yet started. Will be part of the Transportation Plan for FY26
State Women’s Correctional Facility zoning request	Winter – Summer (?)	State, police, rescue, fire	In progress
Bylaw Modernization Grant implementation	Ongoing until June	CCRPC, Public Works	CCRPC helping with a zoning analysis that will help us implement the grant.
Big Zoning Updates (RPD-I, PUD Regulations, Fort Ethan Allan, ETC Next, other?)	Spring 2025 – Spring 2026	HC, CTC, EDC	In progress
Act 171 (Forest Block and Connector) planning	Summer 2025- Winter 2026	CTC, consultant	Not yet started
80/90 Upper Main Street Site Planning	Ongoing	PW, Manager, fire, library, Recreation	Began June 2024. PC will continue with the continued planning on the site and zoning changes
Development Review	July 1 – December 31	PW, Fire, Police, Recreation	Compete with the transition to the DRB
DRB Transition	July 1 – December 31	ZBA	Complete

Police Community Advisory Board

Work Plan

PCAB has been and is currently working on a community survey to send out like they did a few years ago. The survey is in the final stages and will hopefully be ready to be sent out in July. Moving forward, PCAB will be looking to fill two more positions on the Board. There has also been discussion of potentially getting PCAB more involved with the community by having monthly trainings with PD to the community about topics that might come up (ex: how to prevent online scamming).

Thank you!

Alyssa

ANNUAL WORK PLAN – Zoning Board of Adjustment/DRB

Budget year: FY25 (ZBA ceased to exist on January 1, 2025)

DEPARTMENT: Community Development

Budgeted staff: Planner and Zoning Administrator

Primary function(s): Development Review

Regular work (happens every day/week/month/year)

TASK	Frequency	Timeframe	Other departments involved
Development Review (conditional use, appeals, variance)	Monthly (as needed)	ZBA: July – December DRB: January - June	Police, Fire, Recreation, Public Works
Development Review Board Transition (ZBA and PC members)	As needed	July - December	