

Town of Manchester, Vermont



Town Plan 2012

Town of Manchester, Vermont Town Plan



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24 VSA Chapter 117

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Part 1: Introduction

Section 1: Purpose and Intent

The purpose and intent of this Town Plan is to describe how Manchester wishes to evolve and mature over time, by clarifying the concepts, resources, and goals that we find essential to the health and well being of the community. Used well, a Town Plan is the foundation policy document for all aspects of community governance. This includes land use, of course, but also related issues such as infrastructure planning, provision of services, and capital improvement budgeting. While there are many specific goals and policies, the overarching them is to help maintain and enhance the positive attributes of our community (including its social and economic vitality, and quality of life), and minimize or prevent adverse impacts.

While respecting the work done in other background studies, implementation of this Plan will also take place through application of the goals, policies, and/or regulatory and non-regulatory approaches found in other documents or programs, including but not limited to the Zoning Ordinance, Sign Ordinance, and Capital Improvement Plan. This will maintain the integrity of this Plan as a foundation policy document for other plans and regulations in support of community goals.

As noted, this Plan is a ‘big picture’ policy document; it is not situation-specific. This Plan works in tandem with, and takes judicial notice of, specific regulatory provisions found in Town Ordinances. Where needed for purposes of Act 250 or other regulatory review, as well as for interpreting and implementing the Plan’s goals and policies, these bylaws or rules should apply.

This Plan, like the community, is dynamic in nature. If future plans, programs, or bylaws are adopted under specific statutory authority, then these should be given the same judicial notice or treatment as those specifically mentioned in this Plan.

Drawings are included throughout this Plan, to help illustrate the intent of the language. This should help clarify the goals described herein, and minimize debate over the meaning of the words.

Section 2: A Look Back

This Plan blends the best of the old and the new: while respecting cherished, historical attributes of the natural, built, and human environments, it looks pro-actively to help create a successful foundation for the future.

It is noted here that the Town itself, as described in previous versions of this Plan, experienced significant debate about the proliferation and presence of factory outlet stores. As a forward looking document, this Plan will not revisit those issues, except as historically relevant to lessons for the future. While not diminishing the controversy and anguish of the 1980's and 1990's, what we did learn is that a small town can indeed stand up to external pressures, hold fast to ideals, and find ways to accommodate national businesses within an existing commercial core. We did this in ways that maintain and enhance the built environment, transportation infrastructure, and architectural fabric of a historic Vermont downtown. While some may still disagree on the issues, whether factory outlets are 'good' or 'bad', or whether new or renovated buildings are perfect, suffice to say that all involved did the best they could with the knowledge and resources available at the time, and that these sustained efforts are admired widely.

Along these lines, a brief look at specific efforts will offer helpful perspective:

The 1978 Townlift Plan was an early and important step. The 1988 Downtown Task Force was an important, subsequent public process which helped Manchester citizens take an active role in shaping the Town's future. The 1993 Build Out Analysis was a watershed moment, helping us better understand the difference between means and ends: that debates over rules were fruitless if we hadn't first defined the goals we sought to achieve. The 1994 Vision Statement, based on a year-long process of public involvement, clarified a wide ranging set of shared community values, and played a key role in the approach to a new Town Plan.

The 1996 Transportation Plan helped further our understanding of land use and transportation design, and how we can use this dynamic synergy to improve form and function, and strengthen a sense of place in our downtown for residents and visitors alike.

The 2001 Design Guidelines took a further step forward, clarifying goals for architectural design, historic preservation, sign placement and design, outdoor lighting, and site and streetscape design.

More recent changes to commercial and industrial/professional services bylaws, rooted in Town Plan policies, as well as continued planning toward a roundabout at Center Bridge, demonstrate the community's ongoing efforts to implement this Plan. These also relate to understanding the difference between means and ends: that rules, while important, are the means, not the end; they are tools - ways to help achieve goals - and that the essence of community planning is defining goals first, and then finding or creating the best possible tools to achieve those goals.

Another unique initiative is that of appointing high school students to all of our Town boards. Embraced enthusiastically by all involved, this offers an unusual opportunity to engage youth in civic affairs, and give them a direct voice in shaping the future of our community. This is especially appropriate within the context of a Town Plan, and this 2012 edition is the first to benefit from that participation.

This is a community that cares about itself, its past, present, and future. Each of these efforts has been part of a sustained approach to public involvement and civic engagement in the land use arena, which will clearly continue into the future. All of these efforts are part of the whole, essential threads in the fabric of community life, strengthening the human capital along with the built and natural environments.

Section 3. Community

Manchester is blessed with a spectacular natural setting, and a strong volunteer ethic and sense of community which support an amazing variety of programs. Many non-profit organizations provide a wide array of needed and desired services and events. In addition, the private sector is a willing contributor of time and financial resources supporting many community programs, and helping to accomplish many community goals.

These often invisible partnerships work synergistically to help make Manchester a wonderful community in which to live, work, and raise a family. We celebrate these significant contributions to the web of social support and community life.

Manchester's broad array of cultural attractions also enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. A partial list includes: Hildene, the Lincoln Family Home, Southern Vermont Arts Center, American Museum of Fly Fishing, Mark Skinner Library, Manchester Music Festival, Smith Center for the Performing Arts, and Riley Rink at Hunter Park. Many local businesses add to this vitality through events they sponsor, and through the all important support they give to a wide range of programs throughout the year. Independent art and craft galleries and classes also add to the Town's cultural mix, as do our local schools, with the rich mix of artistic, musical, literary, and athletic events they host each year.

Residents may differ in their opinions about changes that have occurred in Manchester over the years. However, one critical point of agreement and common ground is the importance of community spirit and protecting our community's quality of life. This Plan acknowledges the best of "what is", and builds a foundation for what "could be"; protecting what we cherish, and improving what we don't.

Part II. Goals and Policies

Section 1: Land Use Plan

This Plan respects the general land use scheme which has served the community well: maintain the core for the most intensive development, with decreasing intensities of development and land use allowed in outlying areas. That said, this Plan also strongly encourages strategies to achieve a true mixed use environment in the core, including residential, among the varied commercial uses; and encourages us to take steps to improve and enhance our approach to creating a more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly community; all toward the larger goal of maintaining and enhancing a community oriented, vibrant downtown. These may be implemented through companion regulations such as the Zoning Ordinance, and through a variety of non-regulatory approaches, such as Town decisions regarding capital budgets, and planning for and implementing construction/maintenance/extensions of municipal infrastructure.

For example, the Sewer Service District is not just the end of the line for sewer pipes; it is also a density boundary, and should be recognized as such in all policy discussions and decisionmaking. This is not to say that zoning districts or boundaries, or land uses allowed in any zoning district, must remain fixed in place forever; rather, that any changes to districts or uses should be consistent with this Plan's intent, goals, and policies, and should minimize and/or mitigate potential adverse impacts. Prospective changes should be based on long term community needs and goals, not just politically expedient 'quick fixes'.

In order to implement this general scheme, a number of distinct land use districts have been created. These are all separate areas, yet are complementary to each other as part of the whole. That said, these districts are described at the end of this Plan. What follows next is a discussion of energy related issues - not only required by statute, but of essential importance now, and which should inform and permeate all aspects of community planning into the future.

Section 2: Energy

Energy, in all forms, is fundamental to modern life. It is of critical importance (in both availability and cost) to all aspects of individual and community life. To reflect this importance, this section is at the front of this Plan: to keep it in the forefront of all aspects of community planning. Some key resources, such as oil and gas, are subject to fluctuating supply and cost, yet demand keeps rising. Conservation is the only sure thing, whether through increased efficiency or decreased demand. Every dollar not spent on energy is available for local investment or saving, and to meet other basic needs. Optimizing energy use lowers operating costs, and also lessens adverse environmental impacts.

Effective land use planning promotes energy efficient design. Higher density development in the core, ideally mixed use including housing, lessens the need for car travel and limits pressures for scattered development. Allowing customary home occupations helps, for some residents may work at home. An expanded network of sidewalks and trails, along with effective parking strategies, make it easier and more comfortable to walk or bike instead of driving.

The siting, design, and construction of buildings strongly influences the amount of energy needed for heating and cooling, as well as the amount of electricity needed for lighting. Proper subdivision design, building orientation, construction, and landscaping provide opportunities for energy conservation measures such as less vehicular travel, passive solar space and domestic hot water heating, natural lighting, and photovoltaic electricity production. Additional energy savings can be realized by retrofitting existing buildings with insulation, more efficient doors and windows, weatherstripping, compact fluorescent or LED (light emitting diode) lights, more efficient appliances, and more efficient use of those appliances.

The Town itself should set a positive example by considering energy issues in all decisions concerning capital expenditures on roads and other municipal infrastructure, as well as operating and maintenance costs for buildings, facilities, and vehicle use. The Town and schools should also pursue energy audits, use of cleaner fuels, and other strategies to optimize energy use in all municipal buildings, vehicles, and programs.

Renewable energy resources offer long-term advantages over non-renewable sources. Solar, wind, hydro, and wood or wood gasification may become more prominent in the Town's energy mix. The Town should support efforts to research and develop these and other alternative, ecologically-sound energy sources. The Town itself should consider options for enhancing its own sustainable energy production or supplies.

We also strongly support broadened awareness of and application of best practices in all aspects of energy production, consumption, and conservation. These include, but are not limited to: meeting or exceeding State of Vermont energy efficiency standards for residential construction, meeting or exceeding Efficiency Vermont or other applicable standards for commercial construction, and application of LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) or other similar standards in all aspects of site design and construction. Other municipal practices referenced throughout this Plan will also reinforce this general theme, including continuing to build sidewalks, paths, and other amenities to encourage walking and cycling, and strengthening opportunities for downtown housing.

Other 'best practices', such as avoiding unnecessary idling of motor vehicles (for example, tour buses and delivery trucks), reduce energy use, reduce air pollution, and lessen impacts on neighbors. Reuse/recycling of materials and resources can also decrease energy use.

Continued partnership with Efficiency Vermont on educational and efficiency programs may yield further benefit in reducing demand, thus extending the life of existing supplies and infrastructure.

Goals and Policies

1. The Town should set a positive example, by first doing energy audits of municipal and school facilities and taking steps to minimize its own energy consumption through conservation and efficiency practices. The Town should support programs to increase public awareness of energy issues, encourage businesses and homeowners to conserve energy, and consider goals to create patterns and practices of more sustainable energy use. The Town should also take active steps to help citizens and landowners implement energy efficiency measures.

2. Major development proposals should fully and effectively address energy conservation and efficiency concerns.
3. Land use planning should be consistent with the objective of encouraging energy efficiency.
4. Renewable energy resources should be protected, and their use encouraged.
5. Energy efficiency should be encouraged and practiced wherever possible, in order to minimize short- and long-range costs to individuals and to society. At a minimum, the efficiency standards of the Vermont Department of Public Service should be followed.

Consideration should be given to small-scale, short-term improvements (insulation standards, weatherization projects...) as well as larger-scale, longer-term projects or improvements such as park-and-walk strategies, pedestrian and bike paths, solar orientation of buildings, re-evaluation of allowable development densities in areas served by water and sewer, subdivision design, and mass transit opportunities (including rail and bus).

6. Research and development of alternative or renewable energy facilities are encouraged in appropriate locations.
7. All energy producing facilities should respect the integrity of residential areas, aesthetic concerns, and natural resource issues.
8. The Selectboard should consider appointing an energy coordinator as authorized by statute to coordinate studies and action plans related to municipal use of energy.

Section 3: The Core

The commercial core should continue to be the area where commercial activity is centered, and where the most intensive development is allowed. Efforts should continue to promote the core as a true mixed use district, including residential, with emphasis on social vitality and pedestrian-friendly connectivity throughout. Although land uses other than retail are certainly desired and encouraged, concern remains about the nature and extent of retail development in the downtown. Stated differently: it's important for the town and the region that sufficient critical mass and variety remain for locally-oriented goods and services. While the visitor-based economy remains key for Manchester, we who live and work here also have essential needs that must be met. While difficult to regulate entirely, the Town should take pro-active steps, whether formally or informally, to ensure that an appropriate mix of goods, services, and amenities exist for residents of the Town and region.

General Goals and Policies for the Core

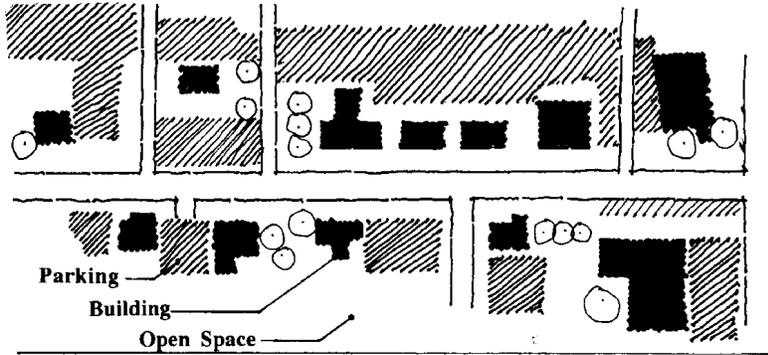
1. Respect residents' needs, and facilitate development which caters to the resident community, while respecting and acknowledging the economic values of visitor-based businesses. This challenges us to create an environment that supports and encourages a variety of economic uses, serving residents and visitors alike: a true mixed-use environment, with different types of retail activity, residential uses, professional offices, restaurants, service businesses, theaters, and other activities and amenities that contribute to a successful, vibrant community. A key part of this is creating and maintaining a business environment that is hospitable to locally-owned and managed businesses, and to businesses which provide the necessities and niceties of everyday living to residents. It also includes working to preserve existing or to provide new housing opportunities in the downtown area¹.

¹ See also Part II, Section 9, Affordable Housing; Goal #5 described therein applies here, as well.

2. Continue to improve our bylaws, as we have done over time, to allow more effective and efficient use of land, and which create incentives to help provide for or achieve stated needs such as affordable downtown housing; affordable and attractive commercial space for locally oriented businesses; and professional offices and services, and other types of land uses that will contribute to a stronger, more diverse economic base.
3. Preserve and enhance the historic integrity, and the scale and character, of the historic downtown and its buildings of local, state, or national historic significance. Enhance the historical look and feel of a rural, village-type environment while accommodating 21st century needs and circumstances.
4. Encourage redevelopment of road corridors to create a more pedestrian friendly environment which encourages folks to get out of their cars and walk. This may include, but is not limited to: moving sidewalks away from the road, improving greenspace and street tree planting, reducing the number and width of curbcuts, adding benches and other amenities, and continuing to enhance both public sidewalks and off street links for pedestrian and cyclists. It also includes consolidating curbcuts, creating off-street links between adjoining commercial uses, combining, landscaping, screening, or hiding parking lots, preserving and adding new on-street parking where practical, and other strategies that take a holistic approach to transportation and land use design as recommended by the Transportation Initiative Committee. The overall goal is to improve the overall function and infrastructure of the transportation network, both public and private.
5. Enhance the attractiveness of the streetscape through careful attention to architectural, landscaping, and siting standards. This also includes providing improved access to the river, and preserving and protecting existing significant trees (of appropriate species in appropriate locations) and other natural or topographic features.

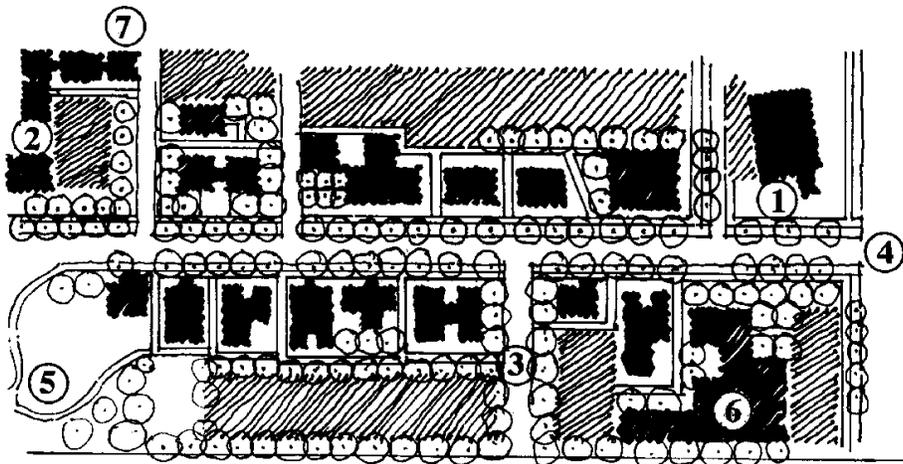
6. Protect and enhance the community's public services, infrastructure, and facilities. Projects that would have an undue adverse impact upon the community should not be permitted unless the developer provides sufficient mitigation that will ameliorate the impacts and improve upon existing conditions.

Each of these general goals is explored more fully in the subsections below.



Commercial Development: Typical Existing Conditions

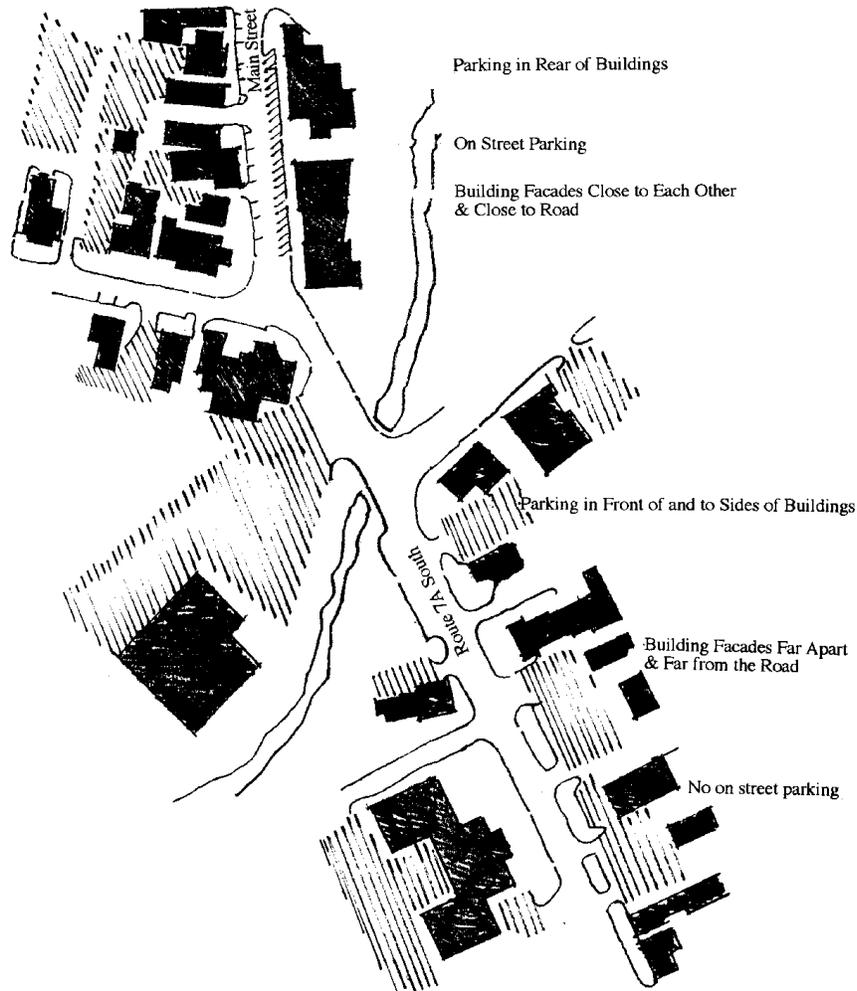
Problems here include buildings placed along an inconsistent streetline, lack of street trees, uncoordinated site access and circulation, highly visible parking areas...



Commercial Development: Goals and Directions

Improved conditions include buildings placed along a consistent streetline, parking lots linked and hidden in rear yards, intense and consistent street tree planting and greenspace areas, enhanced pedestrian walkways and amenities...

**The pedestrian oriented Main Street
& The auto-oriented Route 7A South**



The pedestrian-oriented Historic Main Street presents many desirable themes as compared with the more automobile-oriented corridor south of the Junction: buildings placed along a consistent streetline, parking lots hidden in rear yards, covered entryways into buildings easing the transition between public and private spaces...

Section 4: Building Design & Architecture

Background and Intent:

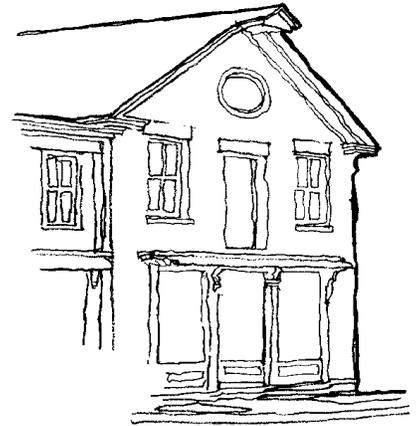
As described more fully in the Design Guidelines for Manchester's Commercial and Historic Districts (published in 2001 and officially referenced herein), the Town of Manchester seeks to maintain and enhance those aspects of the built environment that contribute to our unique character and historic heritage. The following goals and policies are intended to explain the importance of these issues and clarify desired outcomes. Most of these principles apply equally well throughout the Town, and should be used or applied where appropriate.

Goals and Policies for building design and architecture:

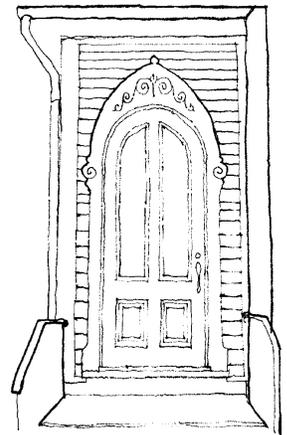
1. Buildings should be sited sensitively, with respect to site-specific opportunities and constraints, and should be of appropriate size and scale to help achieve the goals described in this Plan. Size and scale are sensitive issues, and what is appropriate on one site or in one part of Town may be different than in other areas.
2. Architecture should reflect and enhance the historic character of our Town. Without necessarily replicating precise forms or details, new or renovated buildings should, at a minimum, take their cues from existing historic buildings so that they fit harmoniously, and improve and enhance, the rhythm and fabric of the built environment.



3. Architectural design elements to be considered are specified clearly in the design review section of the Zoning Ordinance; where required in the Ordinance, these elements are satisfied by the granting of a design permit. Even where not expressly required, these elements should still be considered for commercial or industrial projects, especially conditional uses where 'character of the area' is an essential part of the review process. As noted below, architectural design is also integral to successful streetscape design.



4. Architectural design should be considered with an eye to the future: 'will this building be considered worthy of preservation 100 years from now'? High quality construction materials and finishes should be used. Energy efficiency is also key here, and we challenge architects to find creative solutions to what is sometimes a dynamic tension between historic character and present and future needs. For example, adding solar panels on a historic building need not be viewed negatively; rather, why not see this as a way to extend the life of a historic building for present and future needs?



6. Buildings should be designed to accommodate different types of uses. Structural, architectural, and energy efficient design should be readily adaptable or recyclable for future uses, whether for a single use or for traditional mixed uses (i.e., first floor retail with upstairs residence or office).

7. Buildings and sites should provide a user-friendly environment, by providing appropriate links with public sidewalks and (where appropriate) adjoining uses, pedestrian amenities such as benches and shade trees, bicycle racks, weather-protected entrances, public restrooms, safe and convenient access (to and from, and within a site), and the like. Covered porches and walkways should be considered (and not counted 'against' a landowner for coverage or density) where they add architectural interest, enhance pedestrian-friendly attributes of the community, and where they are not used for commercial purposes.

8. Preservation of the Town's historic heritage is essential in providing important, tangible connections to our past, and thus, to who we are as a community. Historic structures described in the Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey should be preserved, and all efforts should be made to ensure the continued use and upkeep of these buildings. Exterior renovations and new construction within the Town's designated historic districts (described below; see accompanying maps at the end of this Plan) should be considered in the design review process as to compatibility with and enhancement of the district.

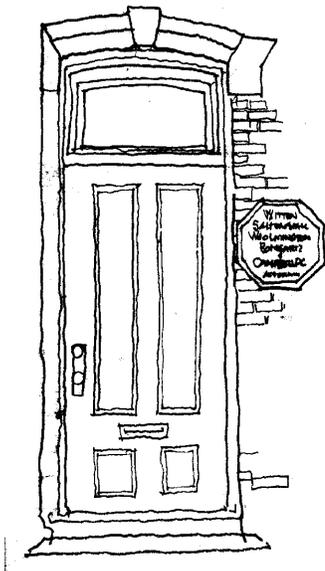
However, just as the Vermont Survey of Historic Sites and Structures distinguishes between historic and non-historic sites, this Plan acknowledges that different sites may present different distinguishing characteristics. In many cases, it will be entirely appropriate for the Town to require a site to be maintained, renovated, or improved in-place and on-site. There may also be cases where changes to a site or structure are appropriate because it allows a number of other Town goals described in this Plan to be satisfied. In effect, there are times when a balance must be found that allows for the best possible overall outcome for the Town. Indeed, regulating individual elements of site design in a vacuum, without consideration of the effects on other elements of site design, adjoining properties, or the Town as a whole, does not always achieve the desired results.²

Further, we recognize that individual buildings, historic districts, and the core as a whole are not museums. Seeking to preserve history, without also considering present and future needs, may ultimately doom older buildings to neglect or lack of economic viability. Keeping buildings 'alive' through adaptive reuse inevitably requires flexibility in architectural design. As always, being sensitive to the past is essential. It is a dynamic balance, and no single, predefined approach or answer will be right for each individual case that comes before us.

²

This was one of the most important conclusions of the 1993 Build Out Analysis: while many developments met the requirements of the plan and bylaws, we were not achieving our stated goals. Buildings met required setbacks, on-site parking was provided, but we were still getting suburban-style development inconsistent with the Town's past, as well as its desired future. We didn't see the forest for the trees: we may have had the details right, but we didn't put them together in desirable patterns. This Plan builds on the lessons learned since 1993, that we are more likely to achieve our stated goals if we place greater emphasis on patterns of land use, and make sure that our plans and bylaws allow and require the results we seek.

Proposals to alter or remove historic sites and structures will be reviewed very carefully. Yet, as noted above, being careful does not mean being inflexible; nor does it mean that any change is suspect. This Plan makes it clear that the burdens of persuasion and proof remain upon the developer to demonstrate the need for, and short- and long-term value to the Town of such proposals.



Historic Buildings Should be Preserved...

Section 5: Historic Districts: Background and Description

As noted throughout this section, Manchester's residents are particularly concerned about the protection of historically significant sites, buildings, and areas. A detailed historic site survey of the town center was conducted in 1985 by the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation, and will be updated to the extent possible in 2007. This survey revealed a rich mixture of historic styles, and identified four historically significant districts (described below, and shown in map form at the end of this Plan). These four districts reflect the historic qualities of the town center, and are located at key entry points to the center. Building numbers cited in this section are keyed to the historic district maps, as well as the Vermont Survey of Historic Sites & Structures (where more complete descriptions and information are found).

MANCHESTER CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT (please see map #9)

The Manchester Center Historic District is an example of a nineteenth-century crossroads commercial center. Topography was influential in determining the location of the center; the nearby Batten Kill provided water power necessary for establishing various early mills and small industries (hence the early name, "Factory Point"), and the village's location at the intersection of several important roads was a significant factor in making it the business center of town.

BONNET STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT (please see map #10)

The Bonnet Street Historic District is a linear residential district flanking Bonnet Street (Vermont Route 30) as it heads north out of the commercial center of Manchester Center. The district includes houses in a wide range of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century residential styles, a reflection of Manchester Center's slow, steady commercial and industrial growth throughout the period. Significant activity in this district occurred in the decades around the turn of this century, when a brick rectory (number 18) and several Italianate-style and large Colonial Revival style houses were built, and the oldest house in the district (number 8) was remodeled in a distinctive "Carpenter Gothic" style. White marble sidewalks, stoops and foundations unify the district visually, and serve as reminders of the importance of the marble industry in this area's economy.

MANCHESTER DEPOT HISTORIC DISTRICT (please see map #11)

The Manchester Depot Historic District is a grid-plan district built up in the decades around the turn of the century as a residential and commercial neighborhood associated with the railroad and with a booming marble milling and woodworking industry. Included in the district are a variety of little-altered vernacular houses and stores and one outstanding Shingle Style house (number 19). Intrusions are few and consist of two recently moved buildings (numbers 6 and 30a), a recent garage, and two severely altered houses (numbers 16 and 18).

The early core of the district was formed at the intersection of Elm Street and Highland Avenue. Here a few small stores were built in the 1870s, probably in response to the Western Vermont Railroad Company's institution of a daily through train from New York City to Manchester in 1871. Train service catered to tourists who came to enjoy Manchester's natural beauty and stay in the area's many hotels. As Lewis Aldrick wrote in his 1889 History of Bennington County, Vermont, "The shops at the Depot were built about twenty-one years ago, and at that time there was but one or two buildings in the village."

The heyday of Manchester Depot was the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1890 the Rutland Railroad took over rail service, with plans to build up the line with fast passenger trains from New York City through Western Vermont to Canada, and to construct a new station (The Depot 0106-34). From 1903 to 1905, a large hotel was built at the depot.

In 1902, Manchester's largest marble works, the Norcross-West Marble Company, began operations near the intersection of Depot Street and Richville Road. Norcross supplied marble to many public buildings, including the New York Public Library. A single-track railroad, optimistically named the "Manchester, Dorset and Granville Railroad" (and later nicknamed "Mud, Dirt, & Gravel"), was built to haul marble from Dorset.

The first decade of this century also saw the beginning of commercial harvesting in the softwood forests covering the Green Mountains to the east of Manchester. Spruce was processed as pulp or lumber in the large mills that were built in the Richville section of Town.

Most of the houses in the Manchester Depot Historic District were built during these same years. Although they vary in plans and architectural details such as gable windows and window lintels, these houses are similar in style, lending a continuity to the district.

NORTH MANCHESTER CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT (see map #12)

The North Manchester Center Historic District has a linear orientation, flanking U.S. Route 7A, a major north-south highway through Vermont used by white settlers since Colonial days and by Native Americans before them. Although the district had historically been integrated with the commercial and manufacturing center to the southwest (the Manchester Center Historic District), it is now visually separated from that historic core by a small shopping center and a stretch of recent structures and altered historic buildings.

This district is comprised primarily of residential structures, although many small early shops and a store bear witness to Manchester Center's nineteenth-century role as a commercial and industrial center serving an extensive agricultural hinterland.

These include a tin shop (number 33, c.1790), two mid-nineteenth century blacksmith shops and a harness shop (numbers 9, 48 and 42), a watchmaker's shop (number 45, c. 1985), and a store (number 3, c. 1860). There are also two early taverns, one still serving its original function (number 8) and one converted to a residence (number 37). Represented here are vernacular interpretations of a variety of styles, ranging from the late eighteenth-century through the early twentieth-century. Several of the earliest buildings (number 8, 33, 37, and 38) retain Federal-style doorways, marked by four delicate pilasters and a narrow cornice. The preponderant style is Greek Revival, stretching from the 1830s to well past the Civil War era.

Section 6: Streetscape Design

Background and intent:

“Streetscape” is the overall design, feel, and function of the land area between buildings on either side of a road. It includes the traveled area of the roadway itself, on-street parking, curbing, sidewalks, street trees, utility lines, benches and other pedestrian amenities, building location, and building design. As described more fully in the Design Guidelines for Manchester’s Commercial and Historic Districts (published in 2001 and officially referenced herein), the general goal of appropriate streetscape design is to create safe and pleasant public space which enhances the sense of community and maximizes pedestrian amenities, while making appropriate provision for vehicular travel. While important for visitors, this is especially important for the enjoyment and convenience of residents.

Integral to this is also greenspace design. Depending upon site specific circumstances, this may mean protecting or enhancing existing greenspace, or creating new greenspace where none exists.

Although greenspace has its own inherent value, and can soften the effects of the built environment for residents and visitors alike, it serves the community best when it is designed and created or managed to maximize its qualitative effectiveness from both aesthetic and ecological perspectives, not just to satisfy purely quantitative requirements for land coverage, or size or number of plantings, for their own sake.

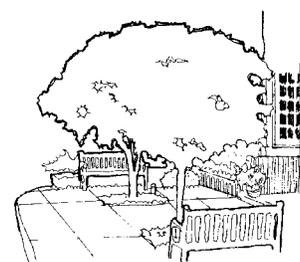
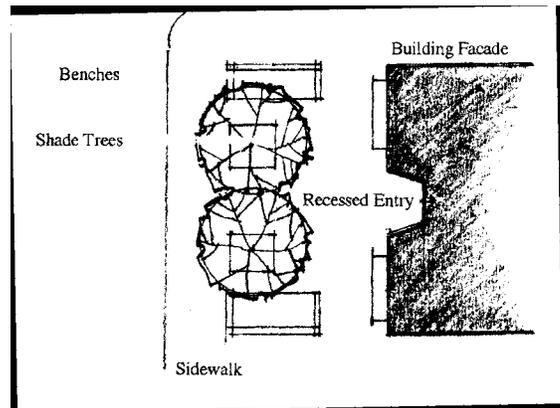
Most of these principles apply equally well throughout the Town, and should be used or applied where appropriate.

Goals and Policies for streetscape design:

1. Buildings should be sited along a setback line that relates well to pedestrian traffic and the style of the street on which the building is located. Toward that end, the Zoning Ordinance may regulate maximum, as well as minimum setbacks, to help create a harmonious, pedestrian-friendly streetline. As specified in the Ordinance, setbacks may be different in different areas; for example, appropriate setbacks on Main Street may be quite different than those on Bonnet Street.

2. Sidewalks and curbing should be built to Town specifications, and should be of appropriate width and design to provide safe and pleasant pedestrian travel. Unless good reason is otherwise demonstrated, sidewalks should be separated or buffered from vehicular traffic; plans should include greenspace, street tree/shade tree plantings, and pedestrian amenities such as benches. Sidewalks and crosswalks should be of appropriate color, material, and/or texture so that they are clearly delineated as areas of safe passage. Pedestrian pathways and crosswalks should be provided at appropriate locations.
3. Architectural design is an integral element of a successful streetscape. Buildings should incorporate historic design details, as well as appropriate treatments of windows and entrances, to add interest and character to the street environment.
4. Particular thought should be given to the interaction between private structures/sites and the public street/sidewalk area, so that projects promote functional and aesthetic design. For example, a recessed building entryway creates a

progressional transition area between public and private space that promotes human interaction, and gives people a place to shake off rain or snow before entering a building. Park benches give people a place to relax, tell stories with friends, and share a bite to eat. These types of physical design elements have positive impacts by helping to build and enhance community. Fences or low hedgerows also help by defining boundaries between the public and private realm.



5. Utility services should be placed at the rear of buildings wherever possible, and should be completely screened (unless prohibited by code), in order to minimize or prevent the view, smell, and noise of such infrastructure. This includes, but is not limited to, exterior HVAC units; garbage/recycling areas, containers, or dumpsters; exhaust fans;

propane tanks; and related items. Wherever possible, screening should include both structures (such as stockade fences or brick walls) and landscaping (including coniferous shrubs) for year-round effectiveness.

6. In order to enhance the aesthetics and visual character of the downtown area, public utilities (including but not limited to power lines, substations, and telecommunications facilities) should be relocated from public view along main streets wherever possible. This may include behind buildings, away from the street, along side streets, or underground.
7. In order to minimize light pollution and maximize aesthetic values, exterior lighting should be reviewed and regulated in a manner similar to architectural design, especially with regard to intensity, color, style of fixtures, public safety, and preventing glare of any sort (whether into the sky, onto roadways or adjoining properties). Lights should be well-shielded, and aimed down toward the area to be illuminated. Fixtures alongside or near the edge of the street should be compatible with an overall streetscape plan and design. The use of motion detectors or other 'triggering' devices on security lights should be required, so that an appropriate balance is created between protection of property, aesthetics, economic, and environmental concerns. Interior and display lighting should also be designed with these considerations in mind.
8. Important vistas or public views should be considered and protected through the design review process.



Highland Avenue, the Depot

9. Signs which are designed well and placed in appropriate locations can benefit the buildings and businesses they serve as well as the Town as a whole. Therefore, buildings and sites should be designed to accommodate signs in appropriate locations. The Town should maintain its strong and effective Sign Ordinance (hereby referenced herein) as an essential tool to help achieve the goals set forth in this Plan.

Goals and Policies for greenspace design:

1. Greenspace should be in usable, visible locations, and of appropriate size and shape, to provide visual relief, shade, pedestrian comfort, aesthetic beauty, screening, noise reduction, and/or stormwater infiltration as appropriate in each location.

Greenspace is usually more effective in larger, contiguous blocks rather than split up into tiny, formalized areas too small to satisfy intended goals. However, sometimes small greenspace areas are appropriate, such as on Historic Main Street, or in parking lots.

Where appropriate, adjacent landowners should be encouraged to consolidate greenspace areas into larger, more functional blocks. This is especially true when a master plan approach is used for development plans on multiple parcels, where more opportunities exist to satisfy many goals related to access, circulation, greenspace, and other key issues.

This also holds for other types of projects, especially those on vacant land such as residential subdivisions. In these cases, a critical area and natural land analysis should be conducted, so that the most appropriate areas for both conservation and development are identified up front. This technique, as described in the Zoning Ordinance, will help ensure that new development is appropriate for its site, and minimizes adverse impacts upon the land and the community.

2. Trees, shrubs, and flowers should be appropriate for each site's needs and conditions, and should be planted and maintained in accordance with standard horticultural practices in order to ensure the health, vigor, and longevity of all vegetation.

In some cases, deciduous shade trees will be chosen; in other locations, coniferous species may be required for year-round screening, beauty, and color. Species should be chosen for vigor, hardiness, and beauty; native species should be favored. In choosing planting locations, consideration should be given to overall site design and beautification, growth patterns at maturity, and long-term health and vigor, as well as conditions related to soils, underground or overhead utilities, drainage, road salt, snow/ice encroachment, sight lines for motorists and pedestrians, and other potential hazards.

3. Trees are important community resources, and are an important element in attractive, beautiful, and livable towns. Existing mature trees, both on-street and on-site, should be protected. Appropriate measures and precautions should be taken to protect, maintain, and enhance trees, flowers, and shrubs. However, trees must also be appropriate for each site, and not every tree can or should be saved. There are cases where both landowner and community will benefit by taking a long-run view, and replacing trees, whatever their size, with those more appropriate for a particular site.

Street trees should be planted wherever possible. Appropriate species will tolerate roadside conditions, be relatively disease-resistant, and will grow to be tall, stately specimens providing shade and beauty. A mix of different species and ages of trees should be planted, so that the potential for complete loss of street trees (such as experienced with Dutch elm disease) is minimized.

4. A comprehensive street tree management plan should be created and maintained in a usable and useful format to reflect current conditions, challenges, and opportunities.

Section 7: Transportation, Parking and Traffic Management

Background and intent:

Downtown parking and traffic have been debated at length over the years; typically, regarding quantitative issues: how many cars, how many parking spaces, how much traffic. We now know that the real issues are more qualitative: where spaces are located, their relationship to parking needs, provision for (or lack of) pedestrian links, coordination and consolidation of curbcuts, and difficulties experienced when visitor traffic is heavy.

Since the 1994 background transportation study, and the 1996 Commercial District Parking and Pedestrian Plan (the “Transportation Plan”, endorsed by the Planning Commission and Selectboard as a blueprint for action and officially referenced herein), we have made significant progress in redefining and implementing desired patterns of land use.

We have focused on downtown improvements, creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment, more effective pedestrian and vehicular links between commercial projects, and more effective intersection design, all of which help the transportation network to function more efficiently. Rather than design streets or sites for the convenience of vehicular travel, we design primarily for the convenience of people. This includes centrally-located, safe and convenient parking areas, a safe and convenient sidewalk network, safe and well-marked crosswalks, amenities such as benches, mini-parks and greenways, and other design elements that encourage people to park their cars and walk throughout the downtown. The Town should encourage public/private partnerships to accomplish these goals, with the private sector paying its fair share of these improvements, which certainly add value to commercial developments, whether through direct funding or other mitigation strategies. Most of these principles apply equally well throughout the Town, and should be used or applied where appropriate.

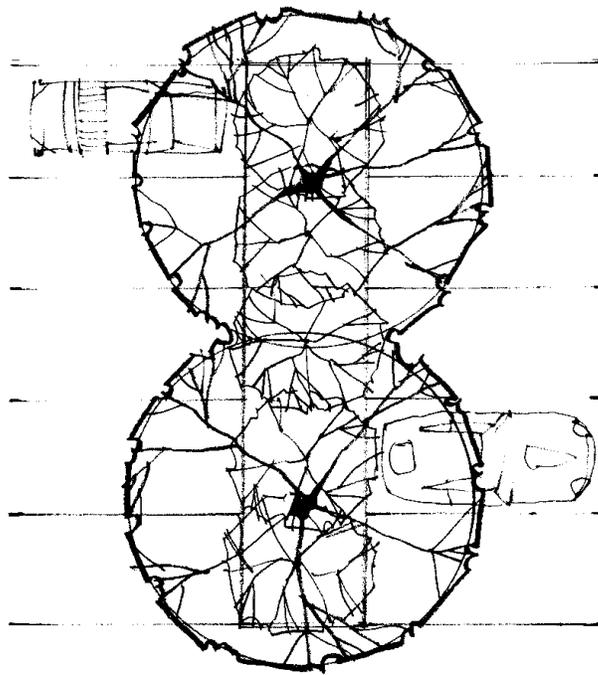
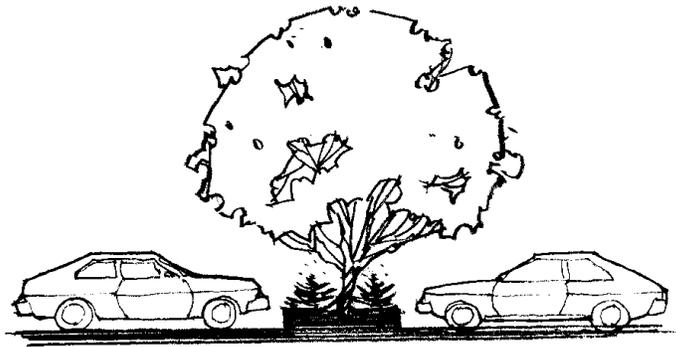
Appropriate mitigation falls into two categories: on-site and off-site improvements. On-site improvements typically include project-specific needs, and may include intersection improvements (such as roundabouts), public sidewalks, closing curbcuts, sharing and consolidating curbcuts and parking areas, bicycle parking facilities, provision for public transit, benches and other pedestrian amenities, easements for or construction of walkways and driveways creating off-street links between projects, street trees, and other similar design enhancements.

Off-site improvements may include contributions toward broader identified needs (such as the roundabout at Center Bridge) that are beyond the scope of any single development project, and beyond the ability of the Town to finance on its own.

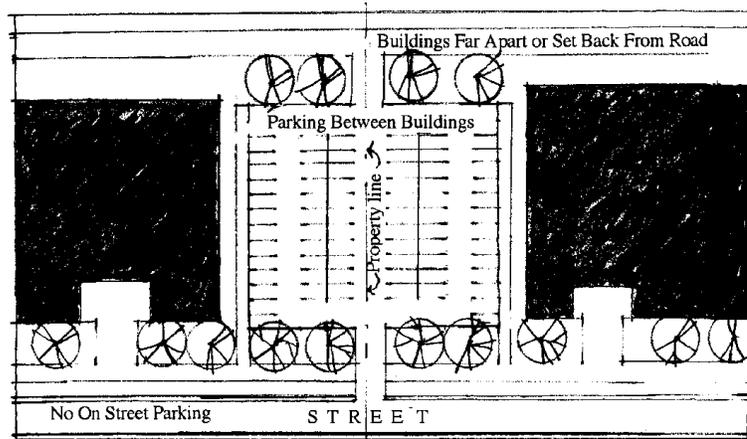
We recognize that many desired improvements are significant, and will not be accomplished all at once. It is important to keep a long-term perspective, so that incremental improvements are achieved within the context of the “big picture”. It is also essential that infrastructure is designed to meet general needs throughout the year, and not be overbuilt to accommodate peak demands at limited times of year. It should also be designed in integrated fashion, with opportunities to share needs between a mix of uses in both time and space, especially where evening peak demand overlaps little with daytime needs.

Goals and Policies for transportation, parking, and traffic management:

1. Parking, traffic, and transportation improvements should be designed in ways that calm and manage traffic while respecting residents’ needs and enhancing community character.
2. Parking areas should be screened or hidden as much as possible, ideally behind buildings. Creative landscaping and screening should also be used as a buffer between parking lots and sidewalks, and to provide delineated pedestrian pathways, screen cars from the road, provide shade, and provide year-round color and aesthetic beauty.
3. Curbcuts should be as narrow as possible while serving vehicular needs. Wherever possible, sidewalks that cross curbcuts should be constructed of a different color, material, and/or texture to help clarify these areas as safe havens for pedestrians.
4. Wherever possible, the number of curbcuts should be reduced or minimized. This may be accomplished by closing curbcuts, and/or consolidating access with or between adjoining parcels or projects.

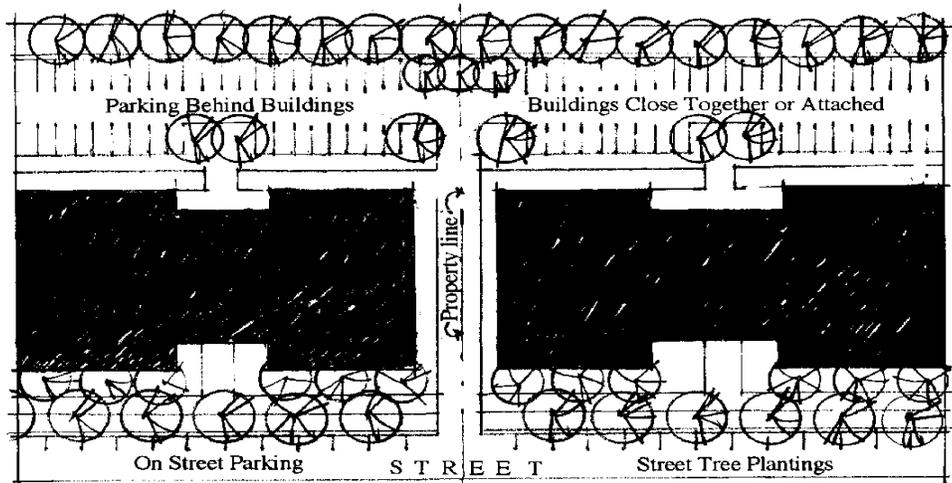


Example of parking lot landscaping which provides year-round screening for aesthetic beauty, shade, and buffering of noise



Development Pattern NOT Consistent with Goals of Town Plan

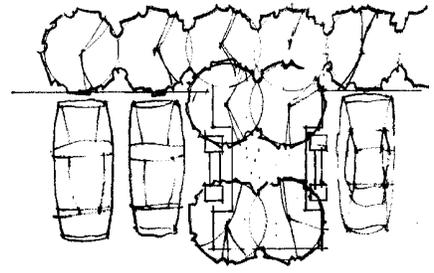
Undesirable scenario: buildings widely spaced and set back far from the road, parking between buildings and quite visible, no buffer between sidewalk and road...



Development Pattern Consistent with Goals of Town Plan

Desirable scenario: buildings closer together and closer to the road, parking well-screened and behind buildings, on-street parking, significant street tree plantings, greenspace buffer between sidewalk and road...

5. Parking facilities should be designed, consolidated and reconfigured in ways that maximize the effective use of land, while providing appropriate aesthetic design, pedestrian and vehicular links, and screening as described elsewhere in this Plan – what TIC (Transportation Initiative Committee) defines as “effective parking”. Consideration should be given both to customer traffic, as well as trucks, service, and emergency vehicles.



Creative approaches should also be used where appropriate, including payment in lieu of parking, shared parking, or other strategies. Shared parking is encouraged within or between projects or lots, and may be on-site, on adjoining land, or off-site; this should acknowledge actual behavior, not just theoretical distinctions in time and space, while remaining realistic about actual, on the ground needs during normal business conditions. It is not the intent to satisfy temporary, peak demands for roadway capacity or parking supply; this would be wasteful and counterproductive. Creating “effective parking”, as defined by the Transportation Initiative Committee, is the goal, ultimately through multiple strategies that provide a better balance between supply and actual demand in both time and space. This may also include encouraging better use of existing public parking through promotional efforts in partnership with the private sector.

6. Another way of lessening traffic impacts is to minimize or avoid the need for traffic. Commercial and residential projects should be designed to help satisfy this goal. Examples: mixed use developments, especially those which include housing; shared parking lots; off-street pedestrian and vehicular links between projects; and pedestrian & bike paths which feed into an overall greenway plan. The Town should continue creating incentives to encourage these designs; for example, lowering or removing density requirements for housing when part of a mixed-use project in the commercial core.
7. Improvements to the Depot Street corridor should be implemented, as identified in a previous planning study and included in the Town’s Capital Improvement Program.

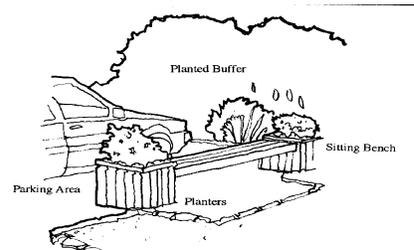
8. A greenway network of pedestrian, cross-country ski, and bicycle paths should be developed, linking the outskirts of town with the downtown, and with important public facilities and existing trails (please see map #13, proposed bicycle & pedestrian connections). This would improve opportunities for non-motorized travel within the core, while creating new recreational opportunities close to town for residents and visitors alike.

9. Sidewalks should be continuous throughout the entire C-1 zone, and, where appropriate, should connect with adjacent neighborhoods and/or adjacent zoning districts. Provisions for pedestrian and bicycle travel should be incorporated into all private developments and public works projects. This may include, but not be limited to: links to adjoining parcels and/or paths, bike racks, sidewalks on bridges, crosswalks, and appropriate striping and/or paving of roadway shoulders (especially when roads and bridges are improved).

Businesses and recreational facilities should consider providing appropriate facilities, including showers and secure bicycle storage, in order to encourage energy-efficient commuting.

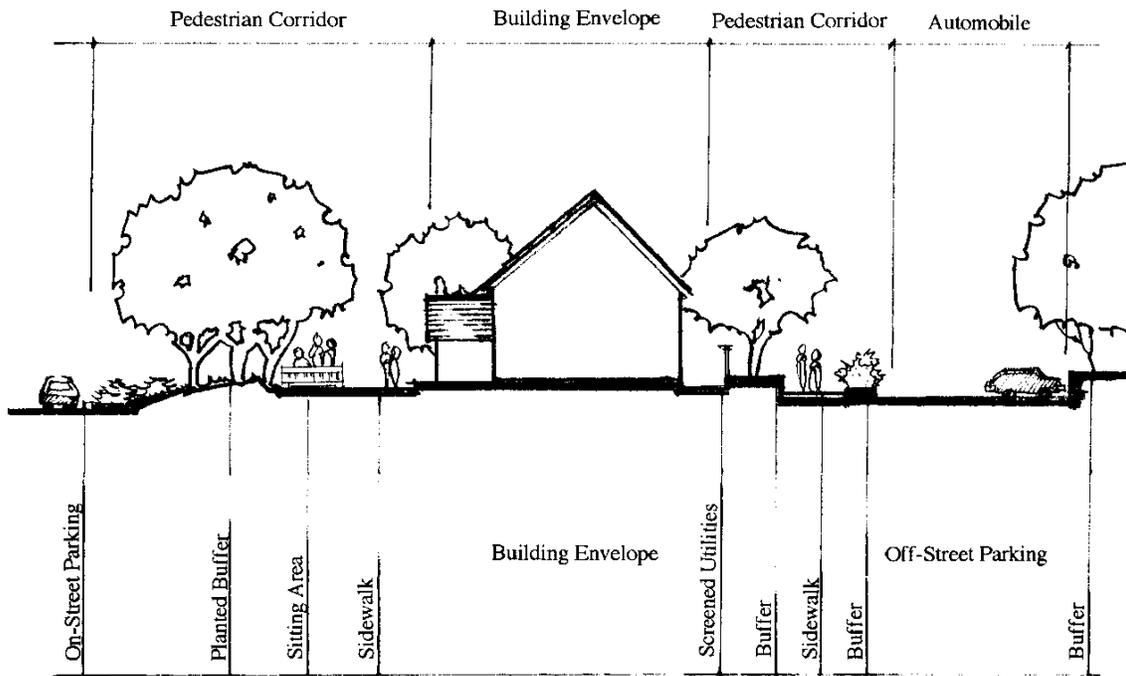
10. The Zoning Ordinance should include incentives to encourage voluntary improvements consistent with these goals and with the Transportation Plan. While development may be seen as the cause of current traffic problems, development may also serve, or be used as a tool, to help solve some of those same problems. Density bonuses, or additional infill development, may be useful incentives to help finance improved parking and pedestrian facilities. Done well, development can create positive impacts upon the Town.

11. Where consistent with this Plan, and when clear and compelling benefit to the Town is demonstrated, the boundary of the commercial zone may be changed to follow natural features or contours, follow existing parcel or project boundaries, allow commercial development in appropriate locations, or allow “effective parking” to be created.



However, any non-residential uses which adjoin residential land must provide intense screening and buffering in order to minimize or prevent adverse impacts upon adjoining residential lands. Measures should be taken to minimize or prevent impacts including but not limited to noise, odor, traffic, heat, light, glare, dust, vibration, and security. Non-residential uses should not channel significant traffic onto local or connector streets in or near residential areas.

12. The Town should seek to re-establish, enhance, and encourage or facilitate services provided by mass transit providers. Regular, cost effective, energy efficient transit, whether by bus, rail, or other means, will become ever more important in the future, whether within town, for daily commuting between towns, or other long distance travel. High priorities include maintaining the existing 'short haul' commuter bus service linking Manchester with both Bennington and Rutland, as well as re-establishing long distance bus or other transit opportunities linking Manchester with the 'outside world'. Appropriate provision for these should be made, whether on individual sites, reserved lands, or in the bylaws.
13. Significant mitigation, proportional to a project's size, scope, and/or projected impact, should be required. This may include both on-site and off-site requirements, site improvements, and/or financial contributions toward relevant infrastructure improvements.
14. High traffic generators, such as drive-through fast food restaurants and drive through banks should not access directly to Routes 7, 7A, 30, or 11/30. Access to a side street should not be less than 100 feet from the intersection of that side street and any of the above-mentioned routes.



Accommodations for the automobile and for buildings can be made while providing for a high-quality pedestrian experience...

Section 8: Conservation and Natural Resources

Background:

Manchester's natural beauty and uniqueness are two of its greatest assets. To a large extent, Manchester's long-term success as a livable community depends upon how well we maintain and enhance those assets.

Natural resources have inherent value above and beyond their perceived value from a human perspective. Ecology teaches us that natural resources are the foundation for all of life, and that everything is connected to everything else. What happens to one resource invariably affects others. Manchester's economic success over the past 200 years (and the next 200 years) is inextricably linked with its natural resources and natural beauty. Thus, even from a purely human perspective, the Town must take the long view, and protect and conserve its natural resources.

Understanding the natural environment is a key consideration when planning for appropriate land use. Physical conditions (including but not limited to soils, slopes, elevation, critical habitats, wetlands, drainage channels, and flood hazard areas) may limit the type of development that is appropriate for a particular area. The need to preserve forests, wetlands, and other critical natural resources should also influence land use planning. Indeed, general land use plans as well as specific development site plans should consider natural resource opportunities and constraints first, and then design appropriate plans with these in mind.

Goals & Policies for Conservation and Natural Resource Protection

These goals and policies should be implemented in many ways, whether through development review, incentives and restrictions, or voluntary landowner actions. Manchester's Conservation Commission may serve an important role in these efforts, on its own and in partnership with allies such as the Manchester Community Land Trust, Vermont Land Trust, Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, Equinox Preservation Trust, Batten Kill Watershed Alliance, The Nature Conservancy, the United States Forest Service, and similar organizations. These goals and policies may also be implemented through specific regulations in the Zoning Ordinance.

1. Any development that may adversely impact (in the short or long term) any special resource area or unique natural feature mentioned herein, or not mentioned but in the public interest, should not be permitted.
2. Lands with severe limitations for development should not be developed, and should not be considered when determining an appropriate density or intensity of development on a particular tract of land. Development should be concentrated on shallower slopes, and should maintain appropriate buffers to protect natural resources such as wetlands. Physical constraints, including but not limited to steep slopes, wetlands, poor soils, or flood hazard zones, present greater challenges and risk to both natural resources and the built environment.
3. Prime agricultural land, and important forest land and meadows should be conserved through efficient site planning. Developments should be planned to conserve the natural vegetative cover of the land to the greatest extent possible.
4. Ridges and mountaintops provide much of Manchester's natural beauty; protection is an important local and regional goal. Manchester's surficial geology is among the most diverse in the state, and the mountain tops and ridges of the Taconic and Green Mountain Ranges form a striking backdrop for the town. Many glacially formed hills and ridges are found at lower elevations in Manchester; this "in-town" topographic diversity provides an important natural, visual contrast to the built environment. These hills, ridges, and mountains contribute to the natural beauty of Manchester, and should be preserved in their natural state.

Land areas at higher elevations are fragile and susceptible to damage, since environmental conditions are more severe (more precipitation, higher windspeeds, lower air and soil temperatures, and shallower and more poorly-drained soils). Since fewer plant and animal species can survive such conditions, there is less ecological diversity in these higher-altitude communities. Therefore, these areas need greater protection from development.

With regard to lower slopes and hillsides, the intent is not to require invisibility; rather, that as described and illustrated in the section on subdivisions, that development and structures be sited sensitively and appropriately, in ways that fit into the landscape.

5. Partnerships with appropriate organizations are encouraged to help conserve natural resources and important lands, preserve public access, procure conservation easements, pursue changes in property tax policies, and create other techniques and strategies which further these goals and policies for natural resource preservation.
6. Creating a greenway network of bike, ski, and pedestrian paths throughout the Town should be a high priority. Development proposals which include any portion of this network should allow for and incorporate these paths in site planning. This is especially important on land with existing paths or trails, along identified or potential trail corridors, and on land with river frontage. Efforts have already begun on a path linking the Manchester Elementary-Middle School northward to Riley Rink at Hunter Park and on to the Dorset Town line. Creating parks or walkways along the West Branch of the Batten Kill in the central business district should be a priority for the town, local businesses, and community service organizations.
7. Public access to riverbanks and trails should be preserved and enhanced. Toward that end, partnerships should be formed with private landowners, land trusts, the National Forest, and other natural allies.

Lands adjacent to streams should be accessible to the public and may not be isolated or land-locked by properties in private ownership. This objective may be accomplished through land acquisition, stream bank easements, permit conditions, or other appropriate techniques. As in other situations, partnerships that accomplish mutual goals may be the most effective approaches.

8. Any expenditure of funds for conservation purposes should give the highest priority to the acquisition of land or easements along the Batten Kill. Special measures should be taken to conserve and enhance the natural, scenic, recreational and historic/cultural elements of the river and landscape. This is especially important now that the river has been designated an Outstanding Resource Water for these very reasons.

Critical parcels of land, including but not limited to those described in this section, should be conserved or preserved as they are or in a natural condition. The Town may wish to further refine and prioritize this list so that conservation efforts are effective and efficient in achieving municipal goals. Conservation or preservation can be achieved by fee-simple acquisition, donation or acquisition of development rights or conservation easements, involvement of land trusts or other charitable organizations, and other cooperative strategies or partnerships which accomplish the desired goals.

9. Land development continues to depend on a clean and adequate groundwater supply. To ensure maximum yield and quality, areas with high groundwater storage or recharge capability must be protected. Hydrologic features, aquifer recharge areas, and watersheds which replenish surface and ground water supplies providing clean water for public consumption should be protected from incompatible development. The Aquifer Protection Area should be retained, or expanded as needed.

From an ecological perspective, the entire Town is an aquifer. Indeed, much of the valley is underlain by gravel soils, through which water and other materials can percolate easily. This increases the potential for contamination of subsurface aquifers. In order to protect the municipal wells, an Aquifer Protection Area has been established in the Zoning Ordinance which restricts land uses to those which present low probabilities for contamination. Other strategies may be considered for further protection of water supplies throughout the Town.

Rivers, streams, ponds, wetlands, drainageways and watersheds are vital elements of the total water system and should be protected. Any destruction, diversion, or pollution of these features would adversely impact a valuable natural resource and could harm public water supplies.

The Batten Kill and its tributaries are an important natural, recreational, and economic resource which should have the greatest protection possible. Before changes are made to streams, rivers, or riparian land, consultation with appropriate state agencies is recommended (Agency of Natural Resources, Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Fish & Wildlife, etc.).

These streams and rivers are not just passageways for water; they are a fundamental part of our ecosystem, and a watershed approach to land use management is important in protecting these resources.

10. Forest and timber lands cover much of Manchester. These forests stabilize soils and slopes, prevent flooding, provide valuable timber, wildlife, and recreational resources, filter air pollutants, and have important recreational, economic, and aesthetic value. Consequently, development should maintain natural vegetative cover to the greatest extent possible. Steep slopes and higher altitudes are more sensitive, and require higher levels of protection and review. Logging, timber, and forestry activities should, at a minimum, follow the State's recommended Accepted Management Practices for maintaining water quality. In addition, strategies should be used that ensure a long-term sustainable yield, maintain and enhance the ecological integrity of the land and of forest ecosystems, and minimize or prevent adverse impacts upon the land or upon the values described herein.
11. Agriculture, while not a dominant land use in Manchester today, remains essential to food production and to the working landscape cherished by residents and visitors alike.

It is important to conserve agricultural lands for future needs. The Town should use all available tools to protect agriculture as a viable use of land, and to ensure that high quality soils for agricultural will be available in the future: zoning regulations; requirements for use of clustering in residential, commercial, or industrial developments; tax abatement, stabilization, or "current-use" tax policies; and cooperative efforts with land trusts or similar organizations will all help achieve this goal.

A pro-active approach to maintaining the economic viability of agriculture will more likely achieve that goal than mere regulation. Toward that end, the Town may wish to allow the transfer of development rights, encourage opportunities for farmers' markets or community supported agriculture programs, or create partnerships with the Vermont Land Trust or other allies to help protect farmland. The Conservation Commission may be of help in this area. The general intent is to find positive ways to protect the resource without creating undue hardship to landowners.

12. Sand and gravel deposits are abundant in Manchester, and demand remains strong for these resources. As specified in the Zoning Ordinance, mining or extraction should be conducted in ways that minimize adverse impacts upon surrounding lands, prevent depreciation in the value of surrounding lands, and ensure that residential areas are not disturbed by noise, truck traffic, disruption of water supplies, or other impacts related to the gravel operation. Extra care should be taken regarding all aspects of proposed mining or extraction in highly visible areas (such as ridgelines...), whether in project review or any permitted operations.

Sand and gravel operations should rehabilitate the land in a timely manner after the material has been removed, so that it is usable for other purposes. Land rehabilitation should take place in a phased approach as material is removed, and should not wait until the subject parcel or resource is played out. This will ensure that large areas of land are not laid bare for long periods of time before rehabilitation activity begins and concludes.

13. Wetlands provide a transition between terrestrial and aquatic systems, where the water table is usually at or near the surface, or the land is covered by shallow water.

A wetland has one or more of the following three attributes:

- (a) At least periodically, the land supports predominantly hydrophytic vegetation;
- (b) The substrate is predominantly undrained hydric soil; and/or
- (c) The substrate is nonsoil, and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year.

Benefits provided by freshwater wetlands include: flood and stormwater control, critical fish and wildlife habitat, protection of subsurface water resources, provision of recreational opportunities, pollution abatement, erosion control, educational and scientific research opportunities, open space and aesthetic appreciation, and provision of nutrients for freshwater food cycles. Wetlands and appropriate buffers should be protected.

Scenic roads may be recognized officially and protected under State statutes. These roads are often two rods wide, lined by stone walls and sugar maples, and may provide especially scenic views. Although scenic roads are not specifically identified herein, an assessment of Manchester's scenic roads should be undertaken. In the interim, public or private actions which would impact these roads should be evaluated, and development planned to minimize adverse impacts.

In light of these concerns, the Town should consider modifying its requirements and specifications for road construction. Roads that are wider than necessary cause the destruction of trees, stone walls, and other features integral to the area's rural character. In order to protect the Town in the future, appropriate rights-of-ways should be dedicated, and roadbeds should be constructed, to Town specifications. However, the constructed road width should be proportional to the number of lots served and/or the traffic flow which can reasonably be anticipated. The intent is to reserve sufficient rights-of-way for longer-term future needs, and yet avoid building roads that are wider than necessary.

When designing roads, rural character, natural topography, and scenic corridors, as well as traditional engineering concerns, should be considered.

15. Deer yards provide shelter and browse for deer during the winter, and are crucial to the survival of deer herds in the region. Some deer yards in Manchester have been identified by the Wildlife Research Section of the Agency of Environmental Conservation, and these areas must be protected from incompatible development.
16. A wide variety of unique natural features are found in Manchester; many are identified and described below. These unique natural features should be preserved. When new features are discovered, they should be added to this list. However, protection should be extended to any newly-discovered unique natural features, even if they are not yet included herein.
17. Endangered species should be protected. Toward that end, partnerships with private, state, and federal entities are encouraged.

Mount Equinox

Location: ~2.5 miles (4.0 km) west of Manchester Village
Elevation: 3,816 feet (1164 meters)

The highest mountain in the Taconic Range, Mount Equinox provides a breathtaking backdrop to the Manchester valley, and a panoramic view of the region from its summit. The slopes of the mountain form a significant aquifer recharge area, support unique, rare flora and rare species of bats, and are an important element in the Town's natural beauty. "An excellent exposure of the gradational contact" between marbles and phyllites at the base of the Mount Anthony formation occurs between 1800 and 2100 feet in Cook Hollow. One outcrop displays a series of thin and parallel strata eroded into an intricate, contoured pattern. Solution caves exist in the sides of the mountain.

Nearly 1000 acres on the east face of the mountain is now preserved in perpetuity. Equinox Resort Associates has deeded the development rights for 850 acres to the Vermont Land Trust, and for 105 acres to The Nature Conservancy. These lands are under conservation management by the Equinox Preservation Trust, including a trail maintenance program, public trail access, and a wide variety of educational and research activities in partnership with Bennington College, Burr & Burton Seminary, the Vermont Land Trust, and the Vermont Institute for Natural Science.

Similar arrangements and partnerships should be encouraged, in order to protect these important mountain lands for their inherent natural values, as well as for future generations of human enjoyment and exploration.

Skinner's Hollow Cave and Cook Hollow

Location: on the east side of Mount Equinox

A solution cave in white marble, with an entrance located near the junction of two slide paths at the base of a high ledge. "A funnel-shaped passage slopes steeply down to the first

chamber, 20 feet below the entrance level, from which a hole goes farther down. At the bottom is a room about 35 feet in height. Snow remains in the entrance until July, and ice is found throughout the cave.” State wildlife biologists suggest the importance of seasonal timing considerations for forestland conversion or clearing where feasible; the best time of year being the hibernating period from October through March.

Downer Glen/Prospect Rock

Location: about 2.5 miles (4.0 km) southeast of Manchester Center

Elevation: Between 900 and 2100 feet (275-641 meters)

The Prospect Rock outcrop overlooks the valley from the top of a deep cleft in the ridge of the Green Mountain Range. Bourn Brook flows through the glen, cascading into a rock gorge near the bottom.

Deposit of Marble Breccia

Location: west of Route 7 about 0.5 miles (0.8 km) north of the Sunderland Town Line

Elevation: About 900 feet (275 meters)

A small quarry (Dryer Quarry) exposes calcite marble breccia, composed of angular fragments of pinkish, blue-gray, and gray marble along with some rare microcline (mineral of the feldspar group), cemented by red hematitic marble. The breccia apparently extends from the quarry to an outcrop near the southeastern edge of Equinox Road, but this is the only occurrence in the area.

Bullhead Pond and Bog

Location: about 3 miles (4.8 km) northeast of Manchester Center

Elevation: About 750 feet (229 meters)

Area: About 5 acres (2 hectares)

A small pond with typical pond and shore vegetation. A small bog lies in a bowl-like depression a short distance to the north of the pond; a small quaking mat has formed at the center of the bog. Crowded in this small area are many species of bog flora. The slope above the bog is wooded with a mixture of deciduous trees; red maple and hophornbeam being the most abundant. Large hemlocks, some with trunks up to 2 feet in diameter, grow in a small woodland on the south slopes of the pond. Due to the presence of these unique features, and the varied ecological habitats in and around the bog, this area should be preserved in its natural state. Aside from its inherent natural values, it has great merit for nature studies and environmental education.

Batten Kill Watershed

Our valley is a watershed, anchored by the Batten Kill, a fast-flowing cold stream with a densely-vegetated protective edge. The river begins at a spring and marsh in Dorset, flowing southerly as two separate streams until their confluence in Manchester Center. From there, it continues south into Sunderland and then into Arlington, where it turns westward into New York State, eventually emptying into the Hudson River.

The West Branch flows right through the heart of Town. It has historic value as a power source for the old factories which were located on the mill pond at Factory Point (now the Town Green), and current value as a significant natural resource. An important goal is to enhance the enjoyment and appreciation of the river by the creation of one or more parks and greenways along the river's edge. These parks would provide greater public access to the river, and would provide alternative pedestrian pathways, away from vehicular traffic flow, through the downtown for residents and tourists alike. The Batten Kill is famous throughout Vermont and the nation for providing a top-quality trout fishing experience. Even in the summer, a high-quality trout habitat is maintained by the presence of many subsurface springs which feed cold, highly-oxygenated water into the river. These springs also help to maintain the river's depth during the summer months.

In 1991, the Vermont Water Resources Board gave the Kill further recognition in granting its first ever “Outstanding Resource Water” designation. In its decision, the Board concluded that the river deserved this designation for its exceptional natural, recreational, cultural, and scenic values.

For all of these reasons, the Batten Kill should have the highest protection possible.

Other Unique Natural Features

- Trails along the side of Equinox Mountain and other areas of town, which have historically been, and continue to be, used for hiking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, hunting, and snowmobiling. Continued public access to these trails is essential, and must be maintained.
- Equinox Pond and its adjoining trail network, which are now conserved, protected, and maintained through the efforts of Equinox Resort Associates and the Equinox Preservation Trust. While public access is now secure for these particular lands, similar arrangements should be pursued for adjoining lands so that a greenway network can be maintained and enhanced for the enjoyment of all.
- The Long Trail, which runs along the crest of the Green Mountains from Massachusetts to Canada. This trail, a part of the Maine-to-Georgia Appalachian Trail, is the oldest long-distance trail in the country. The Long Trail is maintained with cooperative arrangements between the National Forest Service and the Green Mountain Club.
- Lye Brook, Bourn Brook, Bromley Brook, Tanner Brook, Munson Brook and Falls, and Stony Brook, all of which flow eventually into the Batten Kill.
- Table Rock, above Equinox Pond, with its view of the valley to the southeast.

- Punch Bowl - glacial bowl located between Barnumville Road and Route 11/30.
- Boswell Botany Trail at the Southern Vermont Art Center, a conservation and educational project of the Garden Club of Manchester.
- Historic roads, such as the Beartown Notch between Mount Equinox and Mother Myrick Mountain.
- Pew Forest, a large forested parcel above Three Maple Drive which was donated to the University of Vermont for educational purposes, and is now owned and protected by The Nature Conservancy.
- Isham Forest, a forested parcel above Equinox Pond which was donated to and is managed in a cooperative effort by the Vermont Land Trust and the New England Forestry Foundation.
- Pickerel Pond, and other significant ponds throughout the Town.

Section 9: Affordable Housing

Land and housing in Manchester remains desirable, and therefore more expensive, than in many surrounding communities. The reasons for this are often attributed to a number of factors, including: the Town's natural beauty, cultural amenities, commercial activity, high quality schools, and proximity to ski areas. While the Town values the high quality of the natural and built environments, this creates continuing problems related to affordability. Pressure has long been exerted on the housing market by Manchester's attractiveness in the retirement and second home markets; and more recently, by families migrating from more urban areas. Indeed, many residents wonder whether their children will be able to stay (or return to) and raise families in their hometown.

Manchester has long recognized this affordable housing problem, and has taken steps to help improve the situation. Funded by a state grant, the 1989 Housing Action Plan estimated that Manchester needed 62 units of elderly housing, 96 units of family housing, and 32 units of small rental housing. Since that time, the Regional Affordable Housing Corp. has built two rental housing neighborhoods to help address this need.

It is clear that the trends underlying the 1989 study have continued. According to the Bennington County Regional Commission's 1996 housing study, the median sale price for housing in Manchester in 1990 was \$155,500. The 1990 median household income was \$30,455. Applying standard affordability guidelines as described in this study at that time (affordable sale price = 2.5x income), the median household income at that time could afford a house costing \$76,138, barely half the cost of the median priced home.

More recent data indicate the following for Manchester (source: www.housingdata.org):

HUD (Housing & Urban Development) median 2011 household income for a family of four: \$61,700

Median price of primary homes (Jan. 2010 - June 2011) \$280,000

For comparison purposes, if we apply that same 2.5x income ratio to determine housing affordability, that family could afford a home costing \$154,250, well below the actual median price of homes sold here. Clearly, the affordability problem remains.

While these data are not all directly comparable, they are consistent with other indicators reported by the Vermont Housing Finance Agency and other sources that the ‘affordability gap’ continues to widen.

It is highly unlikely that the Town will choose to develop housing on its own. However, the Town has in the past and will continue to work cooperatively with the private sector, non-profit organizations (Regional Affordable Housing Corporation, Habitat for Humanity, Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, Vermont Housing Finance Agency, Housing Vermont, Bennington County Regional Commission), and other entities wishing to promote or construct more affordable housing.

An important outcome of the 1989 study was the Planned Affordable Residential Development (PARD) section of the Zoning Ordinance now in effect. The PARD bylaw allows the potential for greater development densities than would otherwise be permitted, and exempts affordable housing projects from the Town’s Major Development Project Review. These two elements were included in order to address stated concerns about impediments to creating affordable housing in Manchester: land costs and permitting costs.

While most housing studies and projects focus on “affordable housing” in the legal and banking sense, there is also a clear need for reasonably priced housing – that which may not be subsidized, but which is affordable for working persons and families, and younger folks who may wish to stay in the town where they were raised.

More recent issues exacerbating the problem are the cost of building materials, and basic market forces. Demand remains for higher end homes, and these are more profitable to build than more modest structures. Indeed, recent data reported by our Listers show that the median price of a home in Manchester is over \$450,000 (all homes, primary and vacation).

These problems are compounded in other, less visible ways. Since housing values are so high compared with other communities, the property tax rate is relatively low. The state thus labels us a ‘gold town’, which should share ever larger portions of its property taxes with other towns. This shell game plays on a simplistic comparison of tax rates, and ignores reality. In fact, the actual tax burden placed on Manchester citizens has been among the highest in the state; yet further straining household finances.

With property tax bills now essentially set by the state, local control of our fiscal house is but an illusion.

Goals and Policies related to affordable housing

1. The Town should take appropriate steps, such as it did when creating the affordable housing bylaw, to create opportunities for the development of affordable housing.
2. The Town should work cooperatively with the private sector and non-profit organizations to help ensure the availability of an adequate stock of affordable housing, located in appropriate areas. There is a particular need for housing that is reasonably priced for low and moderate income families, (whether “affordable” in the legal/subsidized sense, or that which is affordable to regular working persons and families).
3. The Town should encourage the rehabilitation of substandard housing, and alleviating overcrowding where it exists.
4. The Town should consider increasing the allowable density of development in areas served by municipal water and sewer. If legally possible, this should be linked to the provision of affordable housing; otherwise, it may not serve this essential purpose. Expanding the boundary of the sewer service district should also be considered; as above, if these changes are made, they should be tied to firm, long term achievement of community goals (for example, the construction of a meaningful number of new affordable housing units).
5. Whether through encouragement, requirement, or a combination of the two, the Town should consider taking stronger action to help maintain, increase, and enhance the availability of housing stock in the commercial areas. Toward that end, the Town should consider more stringent bylaws that might, for example, require a developer to retain part of, or replace entirely, any housing stock displaced by conversion to commercial use.

Section 10: Subdivisions and Residential Developments

Introduction and Intent

Current trends demonstrate renewed pressure for residential development. While actual housing starts may not be statistically meaningful right now, the pace is clearly being set. In recent years, many new lots have been subdivided, and many older subdivisions have been built out.

Just as we learned that many of the problems related to commercial development were the result of patterns and styles of development, the same may be true for residential subdivisions. One example, noted earlier in the Introduction to this Plan:

The Farming and Rural Residential zone, which covers a large portion of the Town's land area, is intended to encourage and preserve agriculture, discourage sprawl, preserve open space, and encourage efficient provision of public services. Yet, if that zone is subdivided and built out into 2-acre lots as currently allowed, none of those goals can possibly be achieved.

Indeed, dividing that land area into 2-acre parcels will destroy the very qualities sought to be protected. A visit to almost any urbanized part of the United States will demonstrate clearly how typical small-lot subdivision design discourages agriculture, creates sprawl, chops up open space into private yards, fragments wildlife habitat and recreational trail systems, and makes it difficult or impossible to provide efficient public services. It also does little to foster a sense of community or sense of place.

These concerns were brought into clearer focus in the recent build out analysis conducted for our residential land. Preliminary results of that study indicated that approximately 5000 new housing units could be created at maximum build out. As with the prior commercial core build out study, what's important here is the order of magnitude of possible future development.

Further, this informs us of potential impacts of that future condition: number of cars on the road, students in our schools, demand on water and other key resources, impacts on the land. With this information in hand, we are better prepared to consider growth that is permitted under current bylaws, and make changes as may be appropriate to manage that growth.

This Plan encourages and requires different patterns of development that help to satisfy our stated goals, and help to build a sense of community. These patterns are not new or untested theory. They've been known for years, and their use is now required as part of subdivision review.

The general intent is to protect the natural resources that make the land attractive in the first place, and to build with the land, not against it. Toward that end, it is important to understand the natural environment, and the physical opportunities and constraints presented, on any parcel of land.

Physical conditions (including but not limited to soils, slopes, elevation, critical habitats, wetlands, drainage channels, and flood hazard areas) may limit the nature or extent of development that is appropriate for a particular site. Protection of forests, wetlands, agricultural land, wildlife habitat, and other important natural resources should also influence subdivision design. Indeed, general land use plans as well as specific development site plans should consider natural resource opportunities and constraints first, and then design appropriate plans with these in mind.

Natural features such as forests, meadows, rivers, streams, and ridgelines should be conserved, and development should generally be clustered in more appropriate areas. Roads should follow natural contours, and not carve straight lines across the landscape. Buildings should be sited below ridgelines; ideally, below the crest line, so they do not intrude upon the skyline. Shared driveways are encouraged, as they minimize the number of curbcuts along public roads, and are economically and ecologically more efficient.

As shown on the accompanying drawings (and as described and illustrated in the planning literature)³, designing with the land can often result in similar or identical development densities, respecting the land while also creating a more pleasant human environment.

Of course, if the Town finds it appropriate to decrease allowable densities of development, then different strategies and approaches, both technically and politically, will be required.

Goals and Policies for Subdivision Design and Residential Development

1. As illustrated on the following pages, plans for subdivisions or residential developments should consider natural resource opportunities and constraints first, and then design appropriate plans with these in mind. The clear intent is to conserve or protect natural resources, while allowing reasonable land development that is sensitive to the landscape, ecologically appropriate, and which allows efficient provision of services. This process, described more fully in the book Designing Open Space Subdivisions⁴, is outlined briefly below. It is the Town's intent that subdivisions should be designed as follows:
 - A. Identify all potential conservation or open space areas first;
 - B. Locate appropriate house sites;
 - C. Design road alignments and trails, respecting and protecting existing trail alignments and corridors; and
 - D. Draw in lot lines.
2. Plans for subdivisions or residential developments should demonstrate satisfaction of the goals expressed in this Plan and in the Zoning Ordinance (at a minimum: how a proposed subdivision design helps to preserve agriculture, discourage sprawl, preserve open

³ Dealing with Change in the Connecticut River Valley (Arendt, et. al. 1990) is a classic reference on this topic. See also Rural by Design and Designing Open Space Subdivisions (Arendt, et. al. 1994) and The Hidden Design in Land Use Ordinances (University of Southern Maine, 1994). Many other fine references also exist.

⁴ Randall Arendt, 1994. Natural Lands Trust, Media, PA.
2012 Manchester Town Plan, page 51

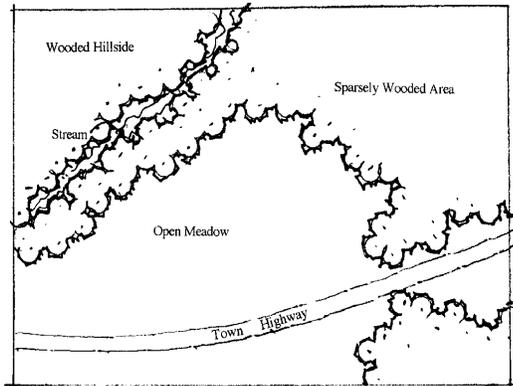
space, and ensure efficient provision of public services...). As specified in the Zoning Ordinance, a Planned Residential Development or “cluster” style development will often satisfy these goals better than a ‘traditional’ subdivision design.

3. As illustrated on the following pages, natural features such as forests, meadows, and ridgelines should be conserved, and development should be clustered in more appropriate areas. Roads should follow natural contours, and not carve straight lines across the landscape. Buildings should be sited below ridgelines; below any primary sight lines to the ridgeline, so that buildings do not intrude upon the skyline.

Structures built on highly visible slopes should be screened or ‘softened’ so that they present minimal intrusion into the natural slopes and landscape. This does not mean that all new development must be invisible; rather, that new development should be sited sensitively and carefully, consistent with the values described here. This may require unique ways of siting buildings, maintaining a certain percentage of tree stems or tree canopy, or other creative techniques that place buildings on the land in ways that allow new structures to fit harmoniously into the landscape.

Shared driveways are encouraged, as they minimize the number of curbcuts along public roads, and are economically and ecologically more efficient.

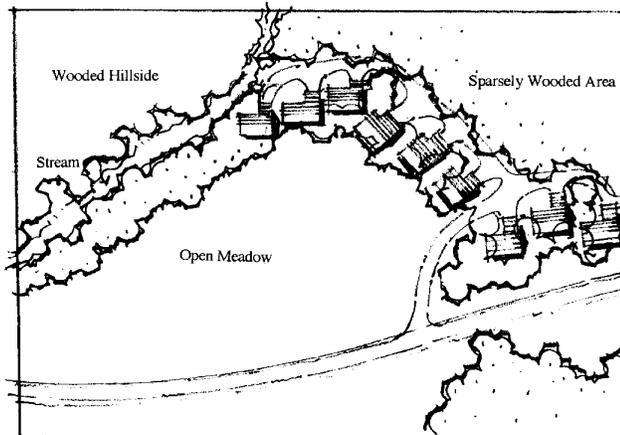
4. In order to help satisfy these goals, development density should be determined on a project basis -- that is, an overall project must meet the minimum density requirements, but individual parcels within a subdivision need not all be of a certain minimum size. Appropriate protection should be created for long-term protection of conserved or reserved land, so that further subdivision of this land does not take place in the future.
5. Wherever possible, project designs should maximize the protection of contiguous blocks of land, whether on- or off-site. This will best protect the goals of this section, and best protect critical resources.
6. While still seeking the best possible design, strategies and partnerships should encourage more affordable housing wherever possible.



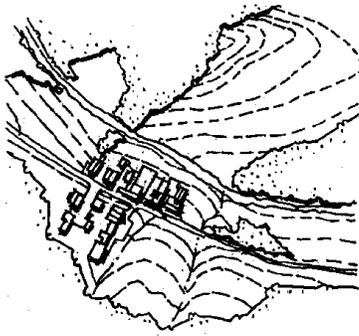
Existing Conditions in One Unit to Two Acre Zone
 Resources: open space, stream and wooded hillside



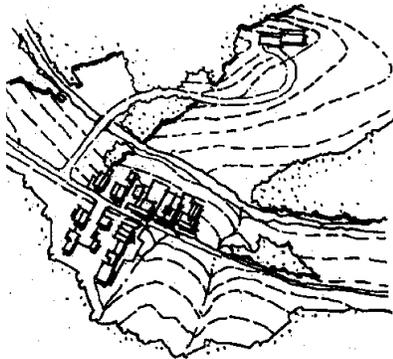
Conventional Residential Development in One Unit to Two Acre Zone
 Resources Lost: openspace, stream and wooded hillside



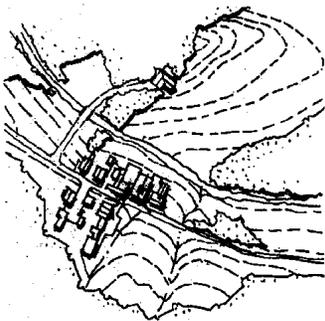
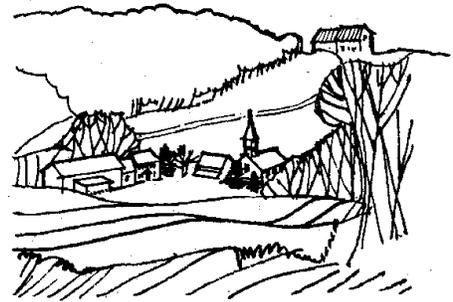
Resource Protecting Residential Development in One Unit to Two Acre Zone
 Resources Protected: openspace, stream and wooded hillside



Existing
Land Use
Scenario



New
Development
Intrudes on
the Scenic
Ridgeline
(Undesirable)



New
Development
Blends into
the Landscape
and Preserves
the Scenic
Ridgeline
(Meets Goals)



Section 11: Economic Development/Industry

Background:

Concern remains about the diversity of Manchester's economy. While a number of manufacturing or office uses remain in Town, the local economy generally depends upon tourism. Many retail and service businesses exist in support of tourism and second home development.

We live in a global economy today, and recognize that there are many external factors affecting local economies that are not within our control. This makes it all the more important to be aware of those elements that are within our control, and to make the best of them.

Manchester's natural beauty and uniqueness are two of its greatest assets. Manchester's long-term success as a livable community depends in large part upon how well we maintain and enhance those assets. The goals and policies in this Plan are intended to help maintain Manchester's high quality of life for its residents, and its uniqueness and attractiveness to visitors.

The Town must also be pro-active in defining its future, by being aware of economic trends, and being prepared to take advantage of appropriate circumstances. Through its own Economic Development Committee, and in conjunction with organizations such as the Bennington County Industrial Corporation, the Town should identify appropriate opportunities, and make appropriate changes, that will allow desirable businesses to grow and flourish. While perhaps seeking new enterprises, the Town must also pay attention to and nourish existing businesses, many of which have been quiet mainstays of our economy, supporters of schools and nonprofits, and contributors to the fabric of our community.

That said, industrial development is still an important component of Manchester's economy. Indeed, many feel that it should be a more prominent part of the Town's economic base, so that we are less dependent upon the retail or service sectors. At the same time, we recognize that 'industry' takes many different forms in today's economy. To better encourage and facilitate economic development, a variety of changes have been made to these districts to clarify and streamline the bylaws, and to allow greater flexibility in the types of businesses that may locate in these districts.

In this process and work, it is also important to encourage more social vitality and interaction, not just creation or use of physical infrastructure; and also to focus on that which will interest a younger generation of community members to settle here, to live, work, start businesses, raise families.

We also need to raise the profile of our assets as a tourism economy, with a historic downtown and lively mix of commercial, cultural, and environmental/recreational attractions.

Goals and Policies regarding economic development:

1. Mixed use developments are strongly encouraged, especially those which include housing as an integral design element. The Town should consider incentives toward that end, such as removing density requirements for housing when part of a mixed-use project. Second floor apartments above commercial uses, and small accessory apartments, are simple and traditional ways the Town can encourage economic development that also satisfies other goals (such as the provision of affordable housing).
2. The Town must encourage the creation of employment opportunities (for ourselves and our children) that provide professional challenge and adequate pay with which to support a family. To help achieve this goal, the Town should take steps to ensure that needed land area and infrastructure are both available in appropriate areas.
3. Economic development means more than just attracting new industry, or creating new jobs. It also means protecting a high quality of life, providing high-quality educational opportunities, and providing high-quality infrastructure. One strategy the Town should pursue is to adopt an official map, to designate areas for community needs that are known now or anticipated for the future. This keeps options open by giving the Town certain legal rights, described in State statute, that otherwise do not exist.
4. In recent years, small businesses and microenterprises have been seen as effective ways to strengthen and diversify local economies while creating minimal environmental impacts. In that light, the Town should build on its strengths, and consider whether it would be appropriate to promote and market itself as an “incubator” for these businesses.

5. No matter what strategies are pursued for economic development, the Town must guard carefully its attractiveness as a place to live. This has been, and will continue to be, a paramount factor in the Town's long range vitality and success.
6. Housing affordability must be a key component of any economic strategy. If no one can afford to live here, or move here, then the pool of potential employees will be a limiting factor no matter how successful any other economic development strategies may be.
7. The Town should assess the needs of existing and potential industry, and take steps to create a favorable climate for industrial development that is appropriate for, beneficial to, and acceptable by the community.
8. Industry should not produce excessive amounts of noise, vibration, dust, odor, heat, light, or glare, nor should it create undue adverse impacts upon air or water quality or sewer capacity.
9. Wherever possible, adjacent uses should be designed in an integrated fashion.
10. Industry should be located in appropriate areas which contribute to an orderly growth pattern, are served efficiently by municipal services, and are compatible and consistent with the rural character of the area. Utilities, roads, and other essential services should be available and adequate to serve a project's needs. Industry should not be located where significant truck or employee traffic will be channeled onto local or connector streets in or near residential areas. Traffic routes and access points should be compatible with nearby residential areas.
11. Industry and related activities should afford maximum protection to any nearby properties, and any nearby residential areas (existing or proposed). Measures may need to be taken to minimize or prevent impacts related (but not limited) to noise, odor, traffic, heat, light, glare, dust, and vibration. Industry should provide adequate greenspace and landscaping to maintain the open space character of the area, and to effectively screen adjacent properties.

12. Workforce development, through local schools and continuing education programs, is another key component of successful economic development – whether in maintaining existing services and businesses or in attracting new employers.
13. Appropriate infrastructure must be in place to serve the needs of the community and employers. More than just water, sewer, and power, this now includes fiber optics, access to high-speed, wide-bandwidth telecommunications facilities, and other types of technological capacity. Broadband access throughout Town is as essential as electricity in allowing citizens, employers, and home businesses to thrive and participate in community and commerce.

Section 12: Special Issues

A. Nonconforming buildings and sites

Pre-existing, nonconforming buildings and sites present interesting challenges. This plan acknowledges laws of vested rights, and that flexibility is warranted in redeveloping these sites. Otherwise, a strict constructionist approach leads to “all or nothing” scenarios, where a landowner must either keep the site exactly as it is, or make it comply fully with current regulations. This is often an unrealistic choice accomplishing little for both the landowner and the Town.

In certain cases, it may make sense from building safety, site planning, aesthetic, transportation, and/or streetscape perspectives to allow these buildings or sites to be substantially altered, or demolished and reconstructed to more complying, even if not fully complying status. This may be appropriate where the Planning Commission and Development Review Board determine that significant progress is made achieving the goals in the Town Plan and Zoning Ordinance can be achieved, and where the the Boards determine that there will be clear and compelling benefits for the Town.

Such a flexible approach can potentially serve several municipal goals: keeping commercial (re)development downtown where it belongs, encouraging reinvestment in or rehabilitation of existing sites and structures, bringing older buildings up to current codes, and bringing these parcels into greater conformance with current design standards and principles. The Town also invites landowners to consider voluntary improvements to properties to bring them into greater conformance.

This section should be construed as creating opportunities, but not entitlements, to consider or take the actions described herein. This section is not intended to supersede other sections of this Plan or the Zoning Ordinance. Rather, it suggests that all of these issues must be considered together, and in light of the many short- and long-term goals expressed in this Plan, to gain the best possible outcomes.

B. Telecommunications Facilities (and similar or related structures, including cable or telephone services...)

Towers and related infrastructure require careful consideration. These structures tend to be located in highly-visible locations on mountaintops and ridgelines, and the need for additional facilities is projected to increase dramatically in the next five to ten years. The federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 limits local control of these structures; however, within those confines, Manchester has acted to protect the Town's historic character, rural nature, and aesthetic beauty.

As with all other issues covered in this Plan, the Zoning Ordinance includes a specific bylaw to guide and govern the placement of antennas or tower structures. Among other issues that may arise, the Town is concerned about aesthetics, integrity of residential zones (that is, intrusion of commercial structures into residential areas), ridgeline protection, preferred locations (whether general or specific), and colocation or clustering of tower facilities.

Many towns now realize the potential for adverse impacts caused by the placement of towers and related infrastructure, and seek the cooperation of all parties in resolving these concerns. The Town of Manchester is quite concerned about the aesthetic and environmental impacts of tower facilities. When planning new infrastructure or upgrades to existing systems, special consideration should be given to any primary or secondary impacts that would reduce resource values (including but not limited to aesthetics and streetscape design, agricultural land, timber resources, natural areas, wildlife habitat, and historic sites). In addition, when a new facility is planned, there must be clear evidence that the proposed location is necessary based upon economic considerations, potential impacts on resource values, and the resulting public benefits.

In all cases, appropriate and suitable techniques should be used to minimize or prevent any adverse impacts from the placement of towers and related infrastructure.

Goals and Policies Regarding Telecommunications Facilities (and similar or related structures and infrastructure):

1. All such facilities should respect the integrity of residential areas, aesthetic concerns, and natural resource issues.
2. Wherever possible, facilities should be co-located at or on existing structures or facilities, unless it is determined that separate facilities will create less visual and aesthetic impact.
3. Towers and related facilities should only be as tall as absolutely necessary. Where towers are located within treelines, they should be made to be extendable, so they can 'grow' with the trees, and remain the minimum height needed above the treetops.
4. Unless required by the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration), towers should not be illuminated. Where required, lights should be shielded in order to minimize aesthetic impacts, and so that light is cast only where needed.
5. Structures should be designed in order to minimize aesthetic impacts. Equipment sheds can be hidden in the trees; depending on site-specific circumstances, tower structures may be monopole or lattice, of appropriate colors and minimal reflectivity, or even disguised as trees or steeples. Towers and related infrastructure should be screened from view to the greatest extent possible.
6. Electric or transmission lines should be installed so as to minimize aesthetic and ecological impacts. For example: clearcut swaths, created for power lines or access roads which go straight up the mountainside, often create far more adverse impacts than the towers they serve, and are not acceptable.

7. Any permits granted for these facilities should be for a limited time period. This will allow for periodic review, and new permit conditions reflecting advances in knowledge, experience, and technology. Equipment should be downsized as technology advances, and removed when no longer used or needed. These requirements can minimize aesthetic intrusion, while maximizing the potential to serve a greater number of users in the same physical area. A bond may be required to ensure that funds are available to accomplish these purposes.
8. The Town should encourage utility providers (cell, broadband, electricity...) to improve both geographic coverage and service reliability.
9. In order to enhance the aesthetics and visual character of the downtown area, public utilities (including but not limited to power lines, substations, and telecommunications facilities) should be relocated from public view along main streets wherever possible. This may include behind buildings, away from the street, along side streets, or underground.

Section 13: Recreation

Due to its location in the heart of Southern Vermont's ski country, Manchester is a very sports-oriented community. Recreation, especially outdoor activity, is integral to community life and promotes a healthy lifestyle. Schoolchildren are able to learn to ski through JISP (Junior Instructional Ski Program), a unique, cooperative program between the schools and the local ski areas. Aside from downhill and cross country skiing, other popular sports include cycling, snowboarding, soccer, golf, football, basketball, hunting, fishing, boating, lacrosse, horseback riding, tennis, volleyball, softball, baseball, and skateboarding.

Thus, the Town's recreation area (officially known as the Dana L. Thompson Recreation Area, more commonly just called "The Rec" or the Fairgrounds) is heavily used year-round for both scholastic and organized sporting events, annual events such as the July 4 celebration, and family gatherings. In addition, the Town's Parks & Recreation Department maintains a full schedule of events, summer camps, and pool activities. The summertime Concerts on the Green have become very popular at the Town Green in the heart of the downtown. In order to maintain and enhance the quantity and quality of its offerings, the Department will continue to depend upon the wide range of volunteer efforts which have proven so successful thus far. While the Town has been supportive of the Department's expanded programming, it is clear that part of this support is due to the ability to earn revenue from program fees to help offset expenses.

As noted, the existing park provides facilities for many active recreational needs; however, there are always demands for more space and more uses. To help determine how to best meet current and prospective demands, the Parks and Recreation Committee is now embarking upon a strategic planning process.

As noted elsewhere in this Plan, interest has also been expressed in an expanded trail and greenway network throughout the community. This could include extensions to the existing recreation path linking the Rec Area with Riley Rink at Hunter Park, or could become a broad based network linking existing trails with new connections.

Goals and Policies Regarding Recreation Services:

1. Improve coordination and communication between the Parks & Recreation Committee, Conservation Commission, and Planning Commission, so that each Board's planning is consistent with the others and with the overall goals expressed in this Plan.

2. Settle the long running question of whether we should have a community center, and whether it could be financially sustainable.
3. Improve coordination and communication with other groups providing recreation services, including local schools, to minimize programming conflicts or duplication, and to maximize efficient and effective use of facilities, as well as service delivery.
4. Provide outcome-driven programming with an emphasis on community health and wellness. Specifically target cross-generational activities for families, teens, and seniors.
5. Ensure that user fees for programs and facilities are reasonable; establish a scholarship fund for low-income citizens; make the Rec Area as self-supporting as possible.
6. Seek to include parks, trails and open space in the thinking for all future development within the community.
7. Encourage other towns in the area to participate in activities, uses, and financial support for both capital and operational funding, as the Rec Area certainly serves as a regional facility. As an example, Burr & Burton Academy uses the park regularly. While this is 'our' school, roughly 60% of the students come from other communities.

Section 14: Public Utilities and Facilities

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

Most Recent Upgrade:	2005 - new disinfection system; 1996 - new aeration system in lagoon #2; 1991 - new aeration system in lagoon #1
Capacity:	600,000 GPD (gallons per day), per the NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System) permit)
Uncommitted Reserve:	172,890 GPD
Type:	Secondary aerated lagoons

The Town's system provides secondary level treatment of wastewater, including disinfection and dechlorination to increase the quality of the effluent, and minimize adverse impacts upon the Batten Kill.

The plant is not yet operating at capacity, but growth keeps adding demand on the system. Over 250,000 gallons per day (GPD) have been committed since 1982. Capacity can be expanded by changing some operating procedures, and by minimizing groundwater infiltration into the system. The Town is actively pursuing these approaches at this time, which are more cost effective than adding new capacity. As we approach 80% capacity, the state will require engineering design and capital funding for expansion of the system.

Under optimum conditions, it is estimated that the plant may be able to treat approximately 1,000,000 GPD. However, the limiting factor at this location is the assimilative capacity of the Batten Kill. Initial discussions with the Agency of Environmental Conservation suggest that an increase to 750,000 GPD could possibly be permitted, depending upon the quality of effluent discharged, and the assimilative capacity of the river. The Town should consider analyzing that capacity to determine future options.

In the meantime, the Town should guard and allocate wisely its limited capacity, to maximize options and minimize costs in the future.

The Town must also keep a close watch on current and projected growth trends, so that sufficient time is available for informed decisionmaking regarding any upgrades or expansions that may be needed as we approach capacity limits.

The Town has also established a Sewer Service District, which is shown in map form in this Plan and in the Zoning Ordinance. This is the area which the Town has determined can be served economically and efficiently with municipal sewer, and which is appropriate for higher density development. Expansion of this District is encouraged where clear and compelling benefit is demonstrated for the Town and the sewer system. Given limited capacity, a key policy question for the Planning Commission and Sewer Board is whether land within the existing District should be served before expanding the District to serve additional land.

Extensions of sewer lines outside the District are discouraged. However, even in the rare instance where the Town allows the extension of service lines outside the boundary of the sewer service area, increased development densities will not follow. Otherwise, the District boundary is meaningless.

Recommendations

- A. Pursue strategies to 'expand' capacity by minimizing infiltration, and maximizing system efficiencies.
- B. Evaluate, the assimilative capacity of the Batten Kill, to determine the maximum permitted treatment capacity of the plant.
- C. Evaluate feasibility and cost of converting to tertiary treatment.
- D. Maintain the existing sewer service area, unless clear and compelling benefit to the Town and sewer system is demonstrated.

WATER SYSTEM

The Manchester Water Company, established in 1894, operated as a privately-owned enterprise until April, 1980. The system was then purchased by the Town for \$361,500. During the mid-1980's, the Town upgraded the water system with a new subsurface well and pump station, covered storage tanks, and new water lines. Since then, the Town has embarked upon an aggressive program of improvements, including leak detection, replacement of old water mains, and replacement of water meters. This will help maximize system efficiency, thus extending its service life, forestalling the need for costly capacity upgrades, and improving revenue through greater capture of billable flows.

Batten Kill Well and Pump Station

All source requirements in Manchester are presently satisfied by the primary Batten Kill well and an adjacent, secondary backup well. These wells tap a gravel aquifer which extends in a north/south direction along the Batten Kill. These wells have a theoretical total capacity of roughly 5,000 GPM (gallons per minute). However, current pumping capacity is designed for only 1,400 GPM. As with the sewer system, continued growth and development continue to add demand. The Town can extend the life of the wells by continuing to pursue system efficiencies, and guarding new allocations carefully.

The Batten Kill wells are the primary water supply for the Town and Village, and must therefore be protected. Any land use, or storage, disposal, or transport of any material or liquid near the wellhead area that could present a threat to this supply must not be permitted.

Much of the valley is underlain by gravel soils, through which water and other materials percolate easily. This increases the potential for contamination of subsurface aquifers. In order to protect the municipal well, an Aquifer Protection Area has been established which restricts land uses to those which present low probabilities for aquifer contamination. A new hydrogeological study was conducted in 1996, which delineated an expanded protection area surrounding the two municipal wells. This expanded Aquifer Protection Area is shown on a map in this Plan and in the Zoning Ordinance; specific regulations governing and protecting this area are found in the Zoning Ordinance. New information gained in a 2005 study added further insight into subsurface flows and the impact of well pumping on the aquifer. This is useful information on its own, and has already helped improve proposed development plans in this vicinity. Other strategies may be considered for further protection of water supplies throughout the Town, such as the 2006 purchase of land adjacent to the well.

The pump station includes an 800 gallon per minute pump and a 500 gallon per minute pump, both of which fill the Town's two storage tanks. The east tank 850,000 gallons, and the west tank holds 500,000 gallons. Well water is chlorinated and pumped into these two tanks, which are at an elevation of 1100 feet (336 meters). Operation is controlled by a telemetry system, which was improved in 2003. Energy and functional efficiencies were improved in 2003 with the installation of a variable frequency pump. The Town received a grant from Efficiency Vermont to help with the up-front cost.

Water Consumption

A continuing problem, dating back 20 years, is the loss of water unaccounted for in gallons billed as compared with gallons pumped. In 2006, this ratio averaged about 62%, better than in the past, but still leaving 1/3 of pumped water unaccounted for. In the first three quarters of 2006, this meant that an average of nearly 18,000,000 gallons of water per quarter were lost. This is clearly wasteful and unsustainable. As with electricity and other key resources, it is far more efficient and cost effective to prevent waste than to increase supply.

Therefore, the Town is pursuing an aggressive approach to detecting and fixing leaks. Through the Capital Improvement Program, the Town also continues to plan for replacement of old water lines, some of which date back to the 19th century. More recent strategies include system wide replacement of water meters, to ensure that water used is actually paid for. These meters can be read by radio device, which should also improve the accuracy of meter reading and billing.

WATER CONSUMPTION

1980 estimated usage	308,000 GPD
1986 estimated usage	550,000 GPD
1996 usage	480,000 GPD
2001 usage	558,208 GPD
July 2006 average usage	594,000 GPD
Fiscal Year 2011 avg use	468,162 GPD

According to the Town's Water and Sewer Superintendent, the municipal well appears to have adequate hydraulic capacity to serve these rates of consumption. However, similar to state rules governing the sewer system, when the system reaches a certain threshold of capacity, then planning for and eventual construction of system upgrades are required. These are significant capital expenses that also have other implications (for example, possible further expansion of the Aquifer Protection Area).

POWER FACILITIES

Electric power is supplied to the town by the Central Vermont Public Service Corporation (CVPS), a regulated utility under the jurisdiction of the Vermont Public Service Board.

Significant concerns exist regarding the so-called “Southern Loop” portion of the grid that serves the region; specifically, whether there is adequate supply of power at peak times, and adequate transmission capacity even if supply exists. CVPS undertook an outreach campaign in 2006 seeking input from various stakeholders on ideas and strategies that might solve these problems and be acceptable to communities. Support appeared to emerge for four strategies: conservation/increased efficiency, installing a synchronous condenser on the existing transmission line to improve stability and flow of power, replacing a key transformer at Vermont Yankee to avoid the lengthy disruption that could occur if this were to fail, and ‘distributed generation’ - that is, smaller scale, indigenous power production.

In the past, electrical transmission and distribution lines have been located primarily at the convenience of the electric company, with little regard given to aesthetic or environmental concerns. The Town is also concerned about tree trimming done by the power company, which tends to have adverse impacts upon the beauty and longevity of trees. While important throughout the Town, this is of special importance in the downtown area, where great emphasis is placed upon streetscape design and street tree planting.

While respecting and appreciating the need for a reliable electric supply, there must be better ways to accomplish this goal.

When planning new lines or upgrades to existing lines, special consideration should be given to any primary or secondary impacts that would reduce resource values (including but not limited to aesthetics and streetscape design, agricultural land, timber resources, natural areas, and historic sites). When a new corridor is planned, it must be demonstrated that the proposed location is necessary based upon economic considerations, potential impacts on resource values, and the resulting public benefits.

In some instances where special improvement projects are planned, such as those described in the Transportation Plan for the major downtown streets, the utility company should be encouraged to install underground lines, or to use other suitable techniques to minimize the visual impacts of transmission lines and poles. These strategies will be demonstrated in the heart of the downtown as part of the Junction Roundabout project.

However, electricity is not the only form of energy upon which we depend. Residents and businesses use a variety of fuels for heating, including oil, propane, and wood. From both ecological and economic perspectives, the Town encourages the use of the best, most energy-efficient practices and principles wherever possible. This will help to minimize direct costs to users, while minimizing energy waste and accompanying pollution to society at large.

Policies Regarding Public Utilities

1. The existing water and sewer service areas should be retained, unless clear and compelling benefit to the Town and its water and sewer systems is demonstrated.
2. The level of discharge from the wastewater treatment plant must not exceed the assimilative capacity of the Batten Kill.
3. Any land use, or storage, disposal, or transport of any material or liquid that could present a threat to the quantity or quality of water obtained from the aquifer should not be permitted in the aquifer protection area.
4. Upgrading or constructing power lines should be done in ways that consider and balance the need for a reliable power supply while minimizing adverse impacts on land and valuable resources. Except where improvements can be made (such as those described in policy 5, below), existing power line corridors should be used whenever possible.
5. The provision of underground utility lines or other techniques (such as rerouting power lines behind buildings) to minimize visual impacts in urban areas, particularly in areas which have special design and improvement priorities, is strongly encouraged. Electric or utility lines and related infrastructure should be installed so as to minimize aesthetic and ecological impacts.

6. In order to enhance the aesthetics and visual character of the downtown area, public utilities (including but not limited to power lines, substations, and telecommunications facilities) should be relocated from public view along main streets wherever possible. This may include behind buildings, away from the street, along side streets, or underground. Where this is not possible, these should be screened from adjacent properties with dense coniferous plantings. Relocating the substation at the base of Center Hill Road remains a long term goal.
7. Energy efficiency should be encouraged and practiced wherever possible. Utility providers are strongly encouraged to offer a broad array of advice and assistance in this arena, and to broaden the range of opportunities for and usage of renewable, sustainable energy supplies.

Section 15: Community Services

TOWN OFFICES AND ADMINISTRATION

In 1991, the Town Hall was relocated to a new facility on Main Street, in the former Mount Laurel building. Offices for the Town Manager, Planning & Zoning, Town Clerk, Finance, and Assessing are found here; the building also serves other public functions, including the Meals on Wheels kitchen, a weekday senior meal program, senior exercise classes, and the Manchester Food Shelf. This site should be able to accommodate Town government for the foreseeable future.

PUBLIC SAFETY

In 1996, the Town's three public safety organizations moved to a new, combined facility located at the Town Hall site on RT 7A North. This building provides the space needed for equipment, personnel, and support, and should be able to accommodate each Department's needs for at least the life of the 20-year bond.

The Town maintains a professional Police Department, staffed by a Chief of Police, seven Police Officers, and four full-time Dispatchers.

A long-standing and continuing challenge is maintaining an adequate complement of volunteers to staff Manchester's busy emergency services. This is a particular problem for the Rescue Squad, whose call volume has increased dramatically over the past ten years. With a sustained average of over 900 calls per year, the Squad now has three full-time personnel to provide adequate coverage (especially during daytime work hours).

The Fire Department has, at times, faced a similar problem in maintaining a full roster. Thankfully, some younger members have joined in recent years.

The Town is thankful for these dedicated volunteers, and for all employers who allow their employees to remain on the payroll while responding to emergencies.

The Town should do what it can to support the continuation of the current volunteer system, which has been effective in meeting community needs, and which is extremely cost-effective as compared to the resources needed to maintain professional fire and rescue squads.

SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

The Town of Manchester continues to pursue a multi-faceted strategy to deal with its solid waste in a responsible, environmentally-sound manner. Current strategies, which have not changed in many years, include:

1. Use of the transfer stations at the former Sunderland Landfill and the “Baker” site in East Dorset, where residents can dispose of their trash for a fee, and can recycle a variety of materials for free.
2. Cooperation with other Northshire towns and the Bennington County Regional Commission, under the dictates of Act 78, to achieve long-term solutions for solid waste management.

The Town should revisit these issues to determine whether the most effective and efficient strategies are in place to serve community needs.

HEALTH SERVICES

The Southwestern Vermont Medical Center in Bennington serves as the primary hospital for the region, although some residents prefer the Rutland Regional Medical Center. Each is at least a 30-minute drive from Manchester. Fortunately, medical offices in Manchester, affiliated with both hospitals, do offer some major medical services. However, as with dental care, some believe the area ‘underserved’ by medical practitioners; many will not accept new patients at this time, and several physicians have either moved away or changed to a ‘concierge’ type of practice that serves far fewer patients than before. In order to meet community needs now and into the future, efforts should be made to determine the best ways to help encourage greater provision of medical services in the Northshire.

Regarding elder housing, we are fortunate to have The Fields and The Meadows as small, lower cost apartments. On the other end of the economic scale, we have the Equinox Terrace assisted living facility, and the newer Equinox Village independent living facility next door. While beautifully constructed and providing a high level of service or care, these, like many new homes, are not affordable to many residents.

Manchester Health Services, Inc. is a non-profit organization that provides a variety of health programs and services, including: child health conferences; clinics for diabetes, glaucoma and blood pressure; school health programs; home nursing service; physical therapy service; social work; and medical equipment loans. A new facility, constructed with private donations in 1996, has greatly enhanced the staff's ability to provide high-quality services. They also run a thrift shop to generate revenue for operational support.

A number of private or nonprofit providers offer mental health counseling. Several dentists serve many patients in the area. Local schools offer a limited range of in house services to students.

Thanks to a generous local businessman who provides office space within his building local access is now provided to residents for state health and social services.

HIGHWAYS

There are currently five full-time town highway employees. The Town maintains and resurfaces its roads on a planned rotation cycle, so as to avoid the greater costs and problems associated with delayed maintenance and roadbed deterioration. The cost of road surface retreatment averages \$75,000 - \$130,000 per year, depending upon the availability of State paving assistance. In order to minimize the escalation of cost over time, the Town's policy has been to maintain existing paved roads, but not to pave additional roads.

To further enhance the pedestrian-friendly nature of the Town, and to discourage reliance on cars, the Town has improved and expanded the sidewalk system. In concert with private landowners, who are required to rebuild sidewalks and curbs to Town specifications in conjunction with commercial development projects, significant progress has been made in this arena. However, maintenance, repairs, and upkeep of roads and sidewalks in the downtown area has declined in recent years. These efforts should be reinstated.

Other areas noted for possible future sidewalks include further extension along Richville Road; East Manchester Road, from the Post Office heading east toward densely-developed residential areas; Barnumville Road, from the intersection with Main Street at least to Highland Avenue, if not beyond; and Main Street, from the intersection with Barnumville Road to Cemetery Avenue, the new location for Mark Skinner Library.

POST OFFICE

The main Post Office is in the former “Stovilator” building at the corner of Richville Road and East Manchester Road. Although large enough to better serve the community’s needs than the old Post Office, locating this facility away from the commercial core has encouraged new development, and brought significant amounts of new traffic to this predominantly-residential area. In the long run, the Town would be better served by having the Post Office in a more traditional downtown location.

With its own zip code, Manchester Village is also served by its own Post Office on Seminary Avenue.

Section 16: Education & Schools

Manchester is served by a number of educational institutions, including:

- Northshire Day School
- First Congregational Church Preschool
- Zion Episcopal Preschool
- Manchester Elementary-Middle School (MEMS), grades pre K-8
- Burr and Burton Academy (BBA), grades 9-12
- Maple Street School
- Home Away From Home
- Meadow Brook Childrens' Center
- Stepping Stones day care

The region also provides a number of other educational opportunities, such as the Long Trail School and Lawrence School for Young Children in Dorset, West River Montessori School in Londonderry, the Mountain School in Winhall, Hiland Hall School in Shaftsbury, the Southshire Community School in North Bennington, and the Pine Cobble School in Williamstown, Massachusetts. Some parents choose to provide home schooling for their children.

However, most children attend the Town's public schools. The Manchester School District belongs to the Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union. Manchester Elementary-Middle School offers elementary and middle school instruction in grades. As Manchester has no designated high school, students may attend the secondary school of their choice. Most students in grades 9-12 attend Burr and Burton Academy, an independent school that serves as the de facto local high school. The voters have traditionally approved paying full tuition for students attending Burr and Burton Academy; and, by law, the full amount to other public high schools, and the state average tuition for secondary students wishing to attend other private, non-sectarian high schools.

The Manchester community values education highly, and has high expectations for school programs and student achievement. This is evidenced by annual support of school budgets, and by a high level of parent involvement in the schools.

During the 2005-2006 school year, Manchester Elementary-Middle School served 444 students (a decline of 45 students compared with 2000-2001), and the District's Average Daily Membership of 756 students (a decline of 4 students compared with 2000-2001). This is consistent with other data and experience showing decreasing enrollment in the lower grades, while BBA continues to expand its facilities to meet growing need in the upper grades.

A school renovation and expansion project at MEMS was completed in 1994; that was financed by a 20-year bond, to be paid off in 2014. Another bond for a new roof and boiler upgrade at MEMS was approved in 2004; that will be paid off in 2024.

Interestingly, while MEMS enrollment remains well below that projected as part of the 1994 expansion, the school is said to be reaching capacity as space is used for new and unanticipated purposes. A study is being set in motion for 2007 to consider a new middle school for Dorset and Manchester; yet, at the same time, Manchester and Dorset are openly competing for students to fill existing classrooms. From a strategic planning perspective, it may be more appropriate to do a space and facility needs study first, to determine how both communities are now and may in the future use existing facilities in an educationally sound and cost efficient manner, before launching a study to consider a third school in the Northshire.

The goals of the Manchester School District are to establish high-quality teaching and learning throughout the school, to develop consistency and continuity among the grades, and to increase capacity to achieve higher standards and increase student achievement. To accomplish these goals, the Manchester Elementary-Middle School will continue to work on an intensive long-range plan and an annual action plan. These plans implement a multi-year cycle of review and revision of instructional practices and curricula in all subject areas, and include a complementary staff development program.

In 2006, the Manchester School Board approved a five year Strategic Plan that includes six goals:

1. Implement curricula in math, literacy, science, and social studies that are aligned with Grade Level Equivalents. The curricula will reflect high expectations for all learners and honor all learning styles.
2. Students will be well prepared for secondary education.

3. Enhance the working relationship with Friends of MEMS to benefit from philanthropic monies.
4. Retain current students and stabilize enrollment levels.
5. Develop a prioritized long-term capital plan that supports the educational priorities of the strategic plan.
6. Expand student engagement with the Manchester community; expand Manchester community engagement with MEMS students.

The challenge, as always, is how to provide a high-quality educational experience that remains affordable to the taxpayers. This is especially true in light of Act 60/68. It is clear that creativity and caution are needed in this arena. Although Manchester gives the appearance of an economically-thriving community, a closer look reveals a wide range of income levels. While there are upper income households, a significant number of families fall within the lower middle class and below. Within our diverse population, over 30% of Manchester children are Medicaid-eligible, and about 20% of our students participate in the free and reduced-cost lunch program at MEMS.

As Act 60/68 have taken effect, the Manchester School District has reexamined the entire educational system, and investigated whether both mandated and desired services can be provided in more efficient and effective ways. The special education program, use of paraeducators, and class sizes have all been altered to meet current demands. Questions had also been raised as to whether continued participation in the Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union is appropriate or fiscally sound.

Educational issues and concerns are not limited to the K-12 years. For example, access to affordable, high-quality day care for young children is a continuing concern for both single- and two-parent families.

Currently, day care is provided in home settings as well as organized institutions such as Northshire Day School, Home Away From Home, Stepping Stones day care, and Meadow Brook Childrens' Center. Given the need for child care in today's society, the Town should ensure that its policies and ordinances encourage, rather than impede, provision of these services. Consistent with this belief and with State statute, the Zoning Ordinance makes provision for child care facilities in most zoning districts.

It is important that these facilities are integrated appropriately into residential neighborhoods, especially with regard to traffic, parking, noise, and other potential impacts.

Local non-profits have long provided learning opportunities. The Manchester Historical Society hosts lectures and walking tours of historic neighborhoods; the Southern Vermont Art Center has classes in a variety of media, and has recently expanded its children's programs; and the new Equinox Holistic Center also hosts a unique schedule of events not found elsewhere in the community. Hildene offers a multifaceted approach involving history, land use, conservation camps, astronomy, and niche farming. Other programs are provided by the Green Mountain Academy for Lifelong Learning, Manchester Music Festival, Equinox Preservation Trust.

Our local schools also add to the Town's cultural offerings, with the rich mix of artistic, musical, literary, and athletic events they host each year. BBA is also testing the waters by offering short courses for parents during the winter of 2006-2007.

Based on surveys conducted by Chamber of Commerce, there is interest in further opportunities for higher education for both workforce training and personal enlightenment. Toward those ends, conversations should be initiated between the Town, Chamber, The Academy for Lifelong Learning, and all institutions of higher education in our region and state.

The fundamental goal is that educational programs for all ages and levels should provide challenging, effective, and affordable opportunities for creative learning, and personal and professional growth.

Section 17: Relationship to Other Plans

To date, there have been few, if any, conflicts over planning and development issues with adjoining towns. However, the potential certainly exists. Generally speaking, towns have sovereign rights over planning issues within their borders. However, issues related to planning, natural resources, and impacts of development are not limited to neat lines or political boundaries. Thus, it is appropriate to consider these issues, anticipate possible problems, and work proactively toward solutions.

This is especially true in the case of Manchester Village. Although surrounded by the Town, the Village maintains its own separate planning process and regulatory scheme. The Town and Village should certainly cooperate wherever possible for mutual benefit and maximum effectiveness.

Two other examples:

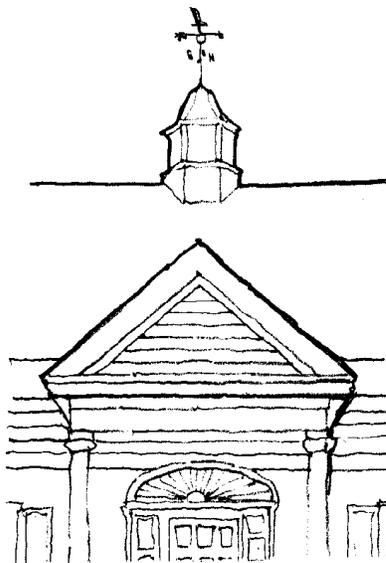
While much of the land on Manchester's eastern boundary is protected from development, the adjoining land in Winhall is zoned for small lot residential development. A number of these houses can be seen easily from the Manchester valley. Manchester and Winhall should discuss this and find ways to minimize the potential impact of increased development along this boundary.

The potential exists for similar conflict on Manchester's southerly boundary, along RT 7A. While limited development is allowed in Manchester, this area is adjacent to a commercial strip in Sunderland. These same concerns may apply at the Town's northerly boundary, where RT 7A makes the transition from Manchester's Farming and Rural Residential zone into Dorset's Commercial-Industrial zone. In both cases, adjoining towns should consider ways to lessen the contrast of abrupt transitions in existing or potential land uses.

Inter-municipal cooperation is also needed for regional issues such as solid waste management, transportation planning, and telecommunications towers. These issues transcend not only town boundaries, but also individual towns' ability to handle; thus, appropriate solutions may require a more regional perspective. While the Bennington County Regional Commission has helped to coordinate planning efforts in the solid waste management and transportation arenas, the Town will continue to encourage BCRC (Bennington County Regional Commission) to take a more active role in these and other regional issues.

Goals and Policies for Managing Regional Issues

1. Manchester should work with neighboring towns to create more consistent land use patterns along municipal boundaries, and to minimize the potential for adverse impacts where different land uses are permitted along municipal boundaries.
2. Manchester should continue to encourage the Bennington County Regional Commission to take a more pro-active role in anticipating regional issues and resolving regional problems.
3. Manchester should continue to work cooperatively with its neighbors and the region as a whole toward appropriate solutions to shared issues and problems, including (but not limited to) natural resource management, transportation, and economic development.
4. The Town and Village of Manchester should consider ways to work more cooperatively, so that mutual goals may be achieved as effectively and efficiently as possible.



**Architecture should reflect
and enhance the Town's
historic character...**

Section 18 Land Use Districts

Commercial Districts

These districts should continue to be the Town's primary business centers. Ideally, they will provide a mix of commercial, professional, residential, and service uses, designed, located, and connected in pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly ways. Much work has been done to create 'subzones' that clarify the unique qualities of each area, and identify appropriate standards for architecture, site planning, and land uses for each.

We will continue our focus on improving transportation infrastructure: vehicular and pedestrian circulation, pedestrian and cycling amenities, effective parking, and landscaping and streetscape design. Wherever possible, we encourage public/private partnerships to achieve infrastructure improvements where there is benefit to the Town, and where it will support economic development of appropriate types in appropriate locations.

Given the great importance placed upon the downtown, these issues are explored in much greater detail in Section 2, below.

Transient Commercial Overlay Districts

These districts are intended for very limited commercial development serving visitors to the region, which maximize aesthetic values while minimizing adverse impacts upon the Town. To help implement this Plan, these districts have been re-evaluated and modified to help clarify land use boundaries and uses.

Professional Service/Industrial Districts

These districts provide opportunity for a wide range of service and industrial land uses, including 'high tech' and knowledge-based businesses, that may not want or need to locate within the commercial core, and that may need greater flexibility to expand in

the future. We place great emphasis on minimizing adverse impacts (especially upon adjoining residential properties), including but not limited to noise, vibration, dust, odor, heat, light, or glare. Where appropriate or necessary, industrial uses should provide appropriate buffering from adjoining properties.

Mixed Use District

This district is intended to encourage a mix of residential, professional, and light industrial land uses close to the center of Town, and where infrastructure exists to serve those uses.

General Residential Districts

The GR districts are intended for a variety of residential, professional, and light commercial uses, and as a transition area between the commercial downtown and the outlying residential areas. Recent changes to the GR-2 bylaws help implement this Plan by encouraging development in a compatible manner closer to the core, while maintaining the integrity of the more residential character elsewhere. Still, it is important to help ensure that new non-residential development is compatible with residential properties and uses.

Single Residential Districts

These districts provide land area for residential uses. Non-residential intrusions should be minimized or prevented.

Farming and Rural Residential District

This district provides land area for low-density residential development, as well as for farming, forestry, and other rural land uses. An important goal is conservation of open space and natural resources.

Forest and Recreation District

This district provides for conservation and preservation of natural resource and recreational values. Sustained or year-round residential uses, or permanent improvements supporting such uses, are not permitted. Special policies designed to protect the natural appearance of mountains and ridges, and the functioning of fragile upland ecosystems, should be strengthened or adopted.

Overlay Districts

In order to further protect and enhance the values expressed in this Plan, the Town has also adopted overlay zoning districts which either add land uses to certain areas, or add restrictions or conditions to be considered when reviewing proposed land development. Examples include, but are not limited to: the transient commercial districts described above, design review districts, flood hazard areas, aquifer protection area, sewer service area, and recreation. Special regulations are also provided to protect streams, ponds, and wetlands; while not overlay districts in a strict sense, these regulations provide additional protection to special resources where appropriate.

Section 19: Implementation of the Manchester Town Plan

As noted earlier, this Plan describes the goals the Town wishes to achieve, and the policies by which the Town will manage its affairs. As with most significant endeavors, implementation will happen through a multi-faceted approach. It can occur through the adoption and application of companion documents and tools; these may include, but are not limited to, the Zoning Ordinance, Sign Ordinance, Capital Improvement Plan, and transportation plan. It is important that any changes proposed to these associated documents be consistent with this Plan, and help to achieve the goals stated herein.

Implementation of this Plan can occur through the process of Act 250 review, where development projects are reviewed for conformance with this Plan (and, by explicit intent and direct reference throughout, applicable sections of other Town documents and programs adopted under specific statutory authority, such as Town Ordinances and the Capital Improvement Plan). This is a comprehensive, thoughtful Plan which should be considered as a whole when questions of interpretation arise.

Incentives and partnerships can also be appropriate ways to accomplish goals. As in many human endeavors, progress is often best achieved through a balanced approach, combining incentive and encouragement with regulation and restriction; these may also include non-regulatory approaches such as land conservation.

Implementation of this Plan can also occur through direct action taken by citizens and leaders in the community. The Town Green Project is a superb example, where an auto dealership was “undeveloped” into a community greenspace in the heart of Town.

In the end, this Town Plan is only as strong as the respect it is accorded, and the value it adds to the community as a foundation policy document and blueprint for action. As Alan Kay (one of the pioneers of personal computing) once said,

“The best way to predict the future is to invent it”.

In that same light, this Town Plan is the foundation by which the citizens of Manchester may invent their own future. Let us use it well.

Section 20: Appendix of Community Data

Residential Properties	1,669
Condos	405
Mobile Homes - Landed	24
Mobile Homes - Unlanded	91
Camps	15
Commercial/Industrial	342
Undeveloped land	265
 Total Parcels	 2,811

Type of commercial property Description	Number of Parcels	Number of Spaces	Total Sq FT
BANKS	6	8	46,393
RETAIL	105	213	703,673
Auto Related	13	13	69,844
Restaurants- Standalone	25	25	95,739
Restaurants- Within other Parcel	17		(not in Totals)
PROFESSIONAL OFFICES	75	124	197,617
HOTELS/MOTELS/INNS	29	29	456,537
MISC	12	12	52,335
Professional Office buildings	77	124	197,617
 TOTAL	 342	 548	 1,819,755



HOME

PROFILES

MAPS

METADATA

DOWNLOAD DATA

INDICATOR LINKS

VERMONT INDICATORS ONLINE

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

Manchester

Click on [Hyperlinked](#) numbers to get a historical trend report.
Click on **Variable Titles** to access data definitions and sources.

View A Theme Table

Population

Select A New Town To Profile

Manchester

Compare a Second Town

Addison

Population

Go to a New Theme Table

	Manchester	Bennington County	Vermont
Estimated Population, 2008	4,271	36,382	621,270
Total Population, 2000	4,184	36,994	608,827
...that is Under 18 Years of Age	967	8,758	147,523
...that is 65 Years of Age and Over	798	6,167	77,510
...that is Female	2,224	19,246	310,490
...that is Male	1,956	17,748	298,337
Median Age, 2000	44.00	40.30	37.70
Population Density (Persons per Sq. Mi.), 2000	99.07	54.70	65.82
Total Population in Urban Areas, 2000	0	13,720	232,448
Total Population in Group Quarters, 2000	77	1,273	20,760
Absolute Population Change, 1990-2000	562	1,140	46,060
Percent Population Change, 1990-2000	15.52%	3.18%	8.18%
Natural Increase, 1990-2000	-97	85.50	23,071
Annual Births, 2006	35	375	6,510
Annual Deaths, 2006	42	398	5,043
Total Population 5 Years and Older, 2000	3,989	35,005	574,842
...Lived in a different house in the U.S. five years ago	1,685	13,161	227,850
...in Different Town or City five years ago	1,587	10,849	199,432
...in Different County five years ago	842	5,578	105,857
...in Different State five years ago	675	4,577	69,748
...Lived Outside U.S. five years ago	35	285	7,393
...Net (domestic) Migration, 1995-2000	-269	-2,310	2,254

Race/Ethnicity/Nativity

Go to a New Theme Table

	Manchester	Bennington County	Vermont
Total Population, 2000			
...of all races) that is Hispanic / Latino	73	344	5,504
...that is White Only	4,091	36,161	589,208
...that is Black / African American Only	16	155	3,063
...that is Asian Only	13	228	5,217
...that is American Indian / Alaska Native Only	7	74	2,420
...that is Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander Only	0	5	141
...that is Some Other Race Only	18	76	1,443
...that is Multi-Racial	35	295	7,335
Total Claims, 2000			
...of White Racial Background	4,125	36,435	596,079
...of Black / African American Racial Background	22	230	4,492
...of Asian Racial Background	20	290	6,622
...of American Indian / Alaska Native Racial Background	24	215	6,396
...of Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander Racial Background	0	7	308
...of Some Other Racial Background	26	128	2,727
Native to US, 2000			
...Native to Vermont	1,540	17,766	330,528
...Native to Other State	2,433	18,060	250,395
Foreign Born, 2000			
...Entered Area within previous five years	46	247	8,217

Civics & Planning

[Go to a New Theme Table](#)

	Manchester
Year Town Incorporated or Chartered	1761
Type of Entity	Municipality - Town
County	Bennington County
Regional Planning Commission	Bennington County Regional Commission
Incorporated Villages	Manchester Village
Municipal Plan	Yes
...approved by Regional Planning Commission	Yes
Zoning Ordinance	Yes
Subdivision Ordinance	Yes
Development Review Board	Yes
Development Category	1 - Traditional Center

Housing

[Go to a New Theme Table](#)

	Manchester	Bennington County	Vermont
Total Households, 2000	1,819	14,846	240,634
Average Household Size, 2000	2.26	2.41	2.44
Total Number of Families, 2000	1,157	9,914	157,763
Average Family Size, 2000	2.81	2.91	2.96
Total Housing Units, 2000	2,456	19,403	294,382
...Owner Occupied	1,283	10,599	169,784
...Renter Occupied	536	4,247	70,850
...Vacant	637	4,557	53,748
...for Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use	536	3,673	43,060
Median Housing Unit Value, 2000	\$175,500	\$113,300	\$111,200
Median Monthly Ownership Costs, 2000			
...with Mortgage	\$1,398	\$1,022	\$1,021
...without Mortgage	\$504	\$404	\$378
...as a Percentage of Household Income, 1999	23.20%	20.10%	20.20%
Median Gross Rent, 2000	\$613	\$538	\$553
...as a % of Household Income, 1999	23.00%	27.30%	26.20%
Housing Units by Heat Source, 2000			
...Heated with Utility Gas	106	226	29,234
...Heated with Bottled / Tank / LP Gas	349	1,604	34,715
...Heated with Electricity	115	489	11,363
...Heated with Fuel Oil / Kerosene	1,187	11,456	141,041
...Heated with Coal / Coke	5	16	427
...Heated with Wood	39	960	22,616
...Heated with Solar Energy	7	15	90
...Heated with Other Type of Fuel	9	69	817
...That Are not Heated	2	11	331
Extended Manchester Housing Data Profile			

Economy

Go to a New Theme Table

	Manchester	Bennington County	Vermont
Median Household Income, 1999	\$47,196	\$39,926	\$40,856
Median Family Income, 1999	\$59,191	\$46,565	\$48,625
Per Capita Income, 1999	\$30,499	\$21,193	\$20,625
Median Adjusted Gross Income per Family, 2007	\$62,661.00	\$52,609.50	\$57,433.00
Average Adjusted Gross Income per Person, 2007	\$27,808.31	\$23,534.81	\$24,210.28
Annual Average Wage, 2008	\$36,326	\$34,964	\$38,317
Median Earnings, 1999	\$25,118	\$20,721	\$21,497
... Male	\$29,957	\$26,505	\$26,445
... Female	\$17,446	\$16,338	\$17,092

Total Retail Receipts (Taxable), Fiscal Year 2008	\$126,049,212	\$315,194,965	\$5,193,157,571
Civilian Labor Force, 2008	2,460	20,550	355,400
...Employed	2,350	19,000	338,500
...Unemployed	120	1,000	16,900
...Unemployment Rate	4.70	4.90	4.80
Persons for Whom Poverty Status was Considered, 2000	4,101	35,713	588,053
...in Poverty, 1999	188	3,588	55,506
...under 5 years old	6	365	4,476
...5 to 11 years old	12	559	7,013
...12 to 17 years old	0	313	5,106
...18 to 64 years old	123	1,913	32,694
...65 to 74 years old	23	166	2,785
...75 Years and Over	24	272	3,432
Families for Whom Poverty Status was Considered, 2000	1,162	9,960	158,684
...in Poverty, 1999	25	700	9,925
...with Related Children Under 18, 1999	11	553	7,788
Total Persons in Reach-Up Program (formerly ANFC), 2005	32	814	11,410
Families in Reach-Up Program (formerly ANFC), 2005	11	315	4,573
Total Persons Receiving Food Stamps, 2005	198	3,395	46,416
Households Receiving Food Stamps, 2005	111	1,677	23,080
Households for whom public assistance income was considered, 2000	1,812	14,822	240,744
...with Public Assistance Income, 1999	27	725	11,610

Transportation

[Go to a New Theme Table](#)

	Manchester	Bennington County	Vermont
Class 1 Highway Mileage, 2004	1.78	10.41	134.72
Class 2 Highway Mileage, 2004	15.65	146.50	2,715.69
Class 3 Highway Mileage, 2004	23.64	451.41	8,509.25
Class 4 Highway Mileage, 2004	7.57	55.67	1,533.90
State Highway Mileage, 2004	19.42	164.44	2,703.60
Lane Highway Mileage, 2004	0.56	0.60	23.90
Scenic Highway Mileage, 2004	0	0	53.72
Number of Households with 1 Vehicle, 2000	631	5,093	80,892
Number of Households with 2 Vehicles, 2000	766	6,180	103,737
Number of Households with 3 or more Vehicles, 2000	291	2,406	39,544

Number of Households with no Vehicles, 2000	<u>131</u>	<u>1,167</u>	<u>16,461</u>
Average Number of Vehicles per Household, 2000	<u>1.73</u>	<u>1.72</u>	<u>1.75</u>
...in owner-occupied housing units	<u>1.90</u>	<u>1.93</u>	<u>1.94</u>
...in renter-occupied housing units	<u>1.30</u>	<u>1.22</u>	<u>1.30</u>
Total workers 16 years of age and over, 2000	<u>2,129</u>	<u>18,320</u>	<u>311,839</u>
...who Drove to Work Alone	<u>1,662</u>	<u>13,922</u>	<u>234,388</u>
...who Carpooled to Work	<u>190</u>	<u>2,151</u>	<u>37,191</u>
...who Commuted via Public Transportation	<u>22</u>	<u>130</u>	<u>2,208</u>
...who Commuted via Motorcycle	<u>0</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>136</u>
...who Commuted via Bicycle	<u>6</u>	<u>63</u>	<u>977</u>
...who Walked to Work	<u>110</u>	<u>934</u>	<u>17,554</u>
...who Commuted via Another Means	<u>6</u>	<u>119</u>	<u>1,734</u>
...who worked at Home	<u>133</u>	<u>984</u>	<u>17,651</u>
...who worked outside town or city of residence	<u>621</u>	<u>8,968</u>	<u>202,707</u>
...who worked outside county of residence	<u>224</u>	<u>3,195</u>	<u>66,901</u>
...who worked outside Vermont	<u>100</u>	<u>2,296</u>	<u>21,346</u>
Aggregate Travel Time to Work (in minutes), 2000	<u>29,575</u>	<u>330,480</u>	<u>6,367,500</u>
Average Travel Time to Work (in minutes), 2000	<u>14.82</u>	<u>19.06</u>	<u>21.64</u>
Total Number of Automobile Accidents, 2001	<u>22</u>	<u>538</u>	<u>3,260</u>
...Involving Fatalities	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>83</u>
...Involving Injuries (not Fatalities)	<u>13</u>	<u>228</u>	<u>1,661</u>
...Involving Property Damage Only	<u>8</u>	<u>303</u>	<u>1,514</u>

Education

[Go to a New Theme Table](#)

	Manchester	Bennington County	Vermont
EDUCATIONAL ENROLLMENT			
Total Population 3 Years and Over, 2000	4,053	35,903	588,931
...Enrolled in preprimary school			
...Public School	109	792	12,265
...Private School	41	349	4,991
...Enrolled in elementary school			
...Public School	392	3,833	65,574
...Private School	55	466	5,106
...Enrolled in high school			
...Public School	154	1,882	32,174
...Private School	79	242	3,728
...Enrolled in college (undergraduate)			
...Public School	40	647	20,669
...Private School	18	896	12,499
...Enrolled in graduate or professional school			
...Public School	2	108	3,684

...Private School	7	165	3,466
...Not enrolled in school	3,156	26,523	424,775
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT			
Total Population 18 Years and Older, 2000	<u>3,218</u>	<u>28,190</u>	<u>461,248</u>
...Less than 9th Grade Education	<u>108</u>	<u>1,341</u>	<u>21,253</u>
...9-12th Grade Education, no Diploma	<u>276</u>	<u>2,944</u>	<u>43,325</u>
...High School or Equivalency	<u>816</u>	<u>9,518</u>	<u>147,980</u>
...Some College, no Degree	<u>530</u>	<u>5,479</u>	<u>90,833</u>
...Associate's Degree	<u>238</u>	<u>1,828</u>	<u>33,510</u>
...Bachelor's Degree	<u>787</u>	<u>4,497</u>	<u>79,255</u>
...Graduate or Professional Degree	<u>463</u>	<u>2,583</u>	<u>45,092</u>

Manchester School Report Data, 2008

Property Taxation

[Go to a New Theme Table](#)

	Manchester	Bennington County	Vermont
Municipal Tax Rate (plus LAR & Highway) (per \$100), fiscal year 2009	<u>0.1632</u>	--	--
Educational Tax Rate for Homesteads (per \$100), fiscal year 2009	<u>1.2851</u>	--	--
Educational Tax Rate for Non-Residential (per \$100), fiscal year 2009	<u>1.3176</u>	--	--
Common Level of Appraisal Ratio, fiscal year 2010	<u>0.9914</u>	--	--

Extended Property Valuation Data

Public Safety

[Go to a New Theme Table](#)

	Manchester	Bennington County	Vermont
Total Instances of Crime, 2008	<u>236</u>	<u>1,714</u>	<u>30,033</u>
...Against People	<u>39</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>3,623</u>
...Against Property	<u>181</u>	<u>1,236</u>	<u>23,506</u>
...Against Society	<u>16</u>	<u>178</u>	<u>2,904</u>

Natural Resources

[Go to a New Theme Table](#)

	Manchester	Bennington County	Vermont
Area of Land, Acres, 2000	27,027.20	432,640	5,920,640
Area of Water, Acres, 2000	32	2,700	261,200
Total Private & Public Conserved Lands, Acres, 1999	7,816.88	173,182.51	1,148,249.29
Percent Private & Public Conserved Lands, 1999	28.90%	--	--
Federal Administered Conserved Lands, Acres, 1999	5,386.51	149,142.41	435,008.82
State Administered Conserved Lands, Acres, 1999	284.56	7,963.59	378,563.41

Forestry & Agriculture

[Go to a New Theme Table](#)

2007 Census of Agriculture
Census of Agriculture Website
...Vermont State and County Data Tables
Vermont Forest Resource Harvest Reports
Click Here and scroll down to VERMONT FOREST RESOURCE HARVEST REPORTS

[UVM Center for Rural Studies](#) | [Vermont Center for Geographic Information](#)

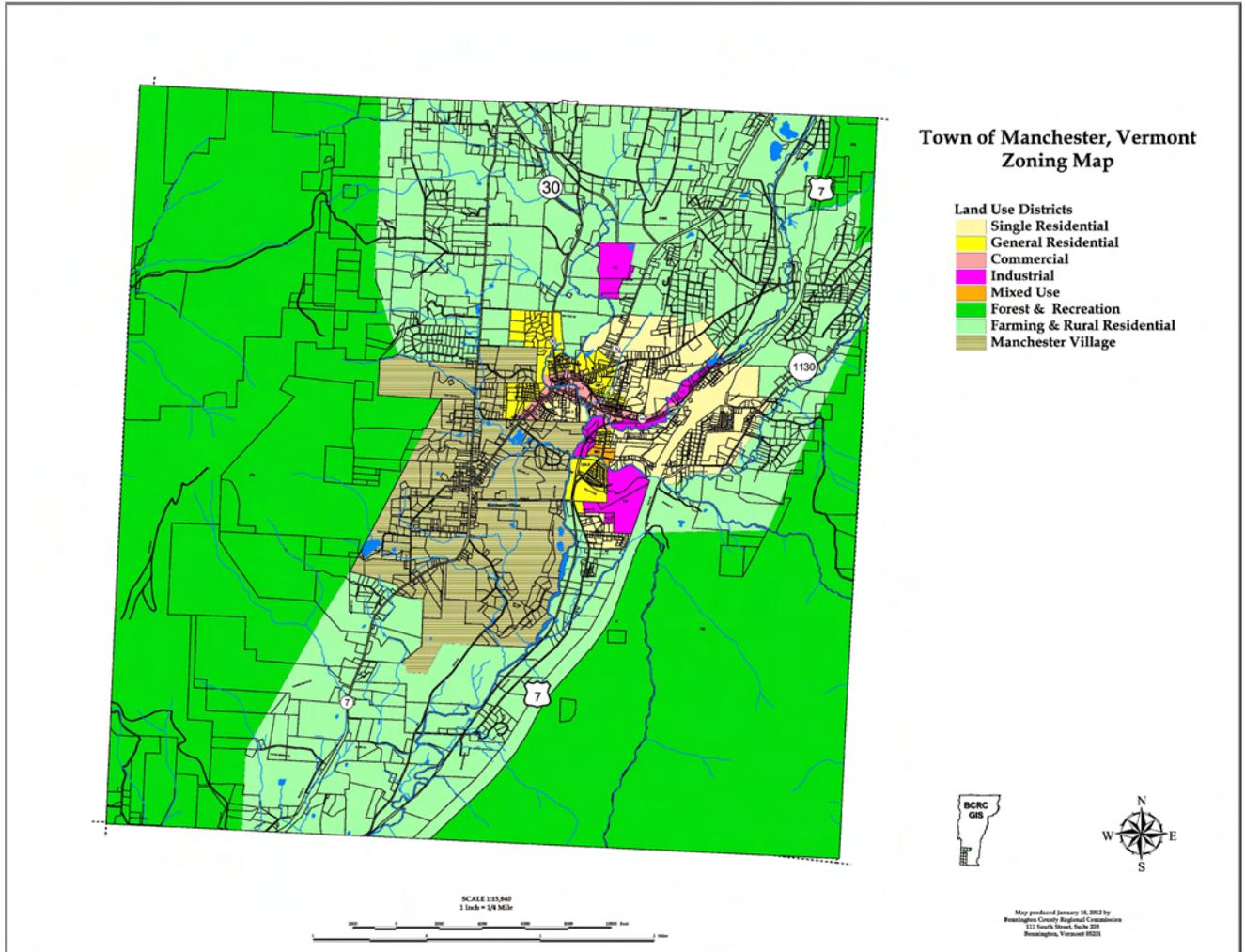


If you have any questions or problems with the Mapping System or data please [contact us](#), and include your platform and browser information.

Section 21: Maps

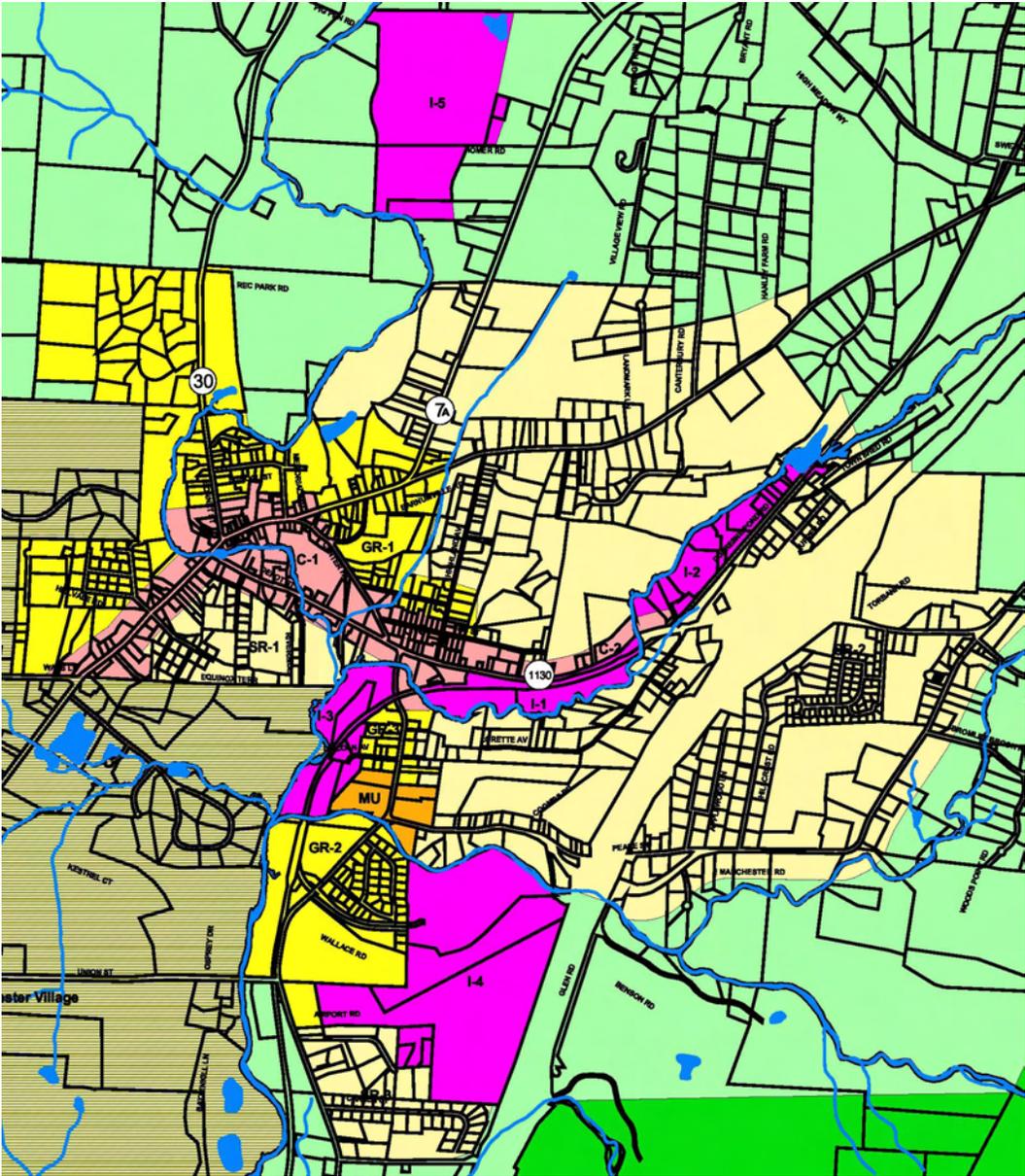
- Map #1: Land Use Plan & Map
- Map #2: Land Use Plan & Map, Town Center
- Map #3: 100 Year Flood Hazard Areas
- Map #4: Topographic Map
- Map #5: Biological Areas
- Map #6: Wetlands
- Map #7: Aquifer Protection Area
- Map #8: Sewer Service Area
- Map #9: Manchester Center Historic District
- Map #10: Bonnet Street Historic District
- Map #11: Manchester Depot Historic District
- Map #12: North Manchester Center Historic District
- Map #13: Bicycle & Pedestrian Connections as proposed in the Transportation Plan
- Map #14: Educational Facilities, Public Facilities, and Utilities
- Map #15: Electrical Transmission Lines

Map #1: Land Use Plan & Map

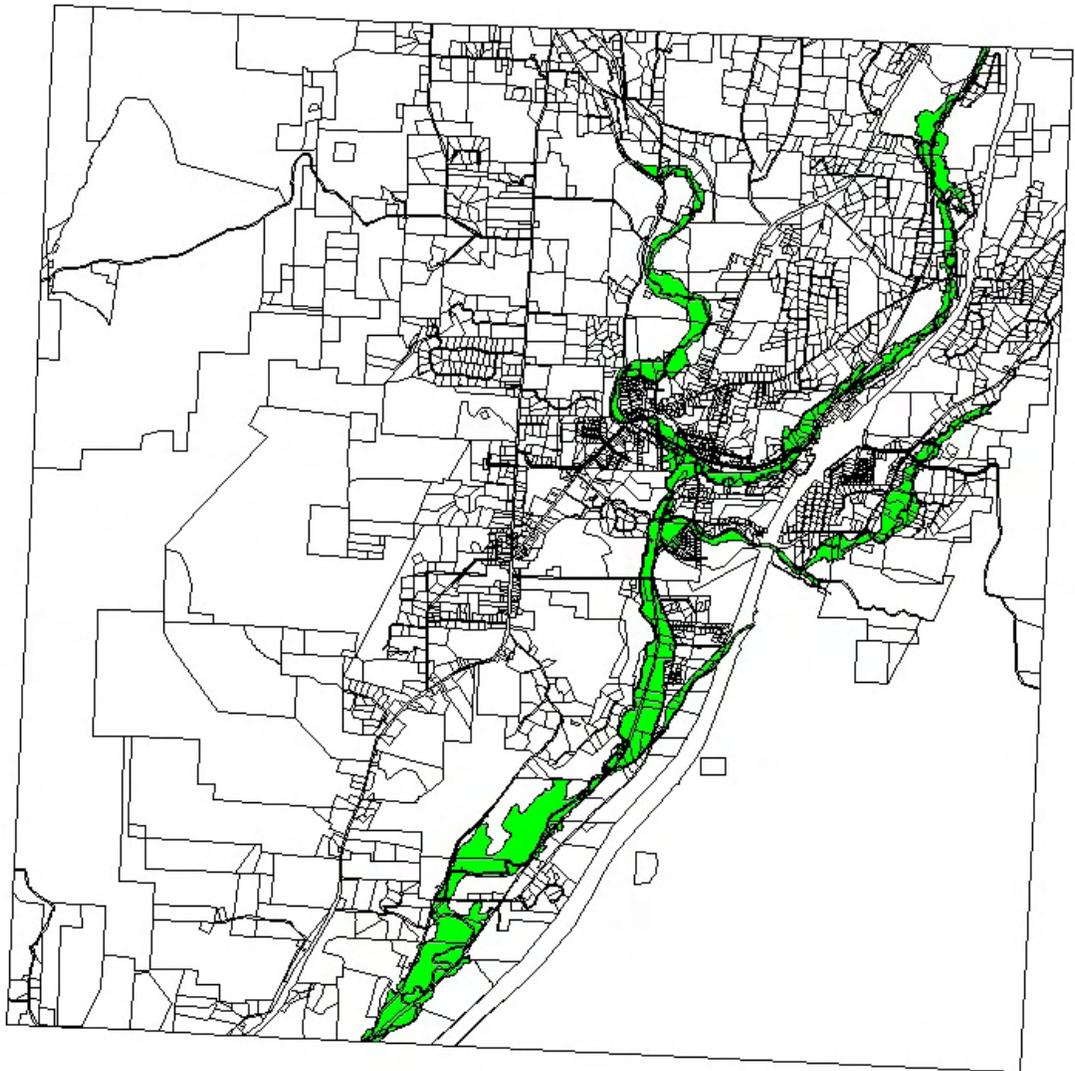


For more detailed information, please refer to the maps in the Planning & Zoning Office, or please visit the Town's online mapping website at www.mainstreetmaps.com/vt/manchester

Map #2: Land Use Plan & Map - Town Center



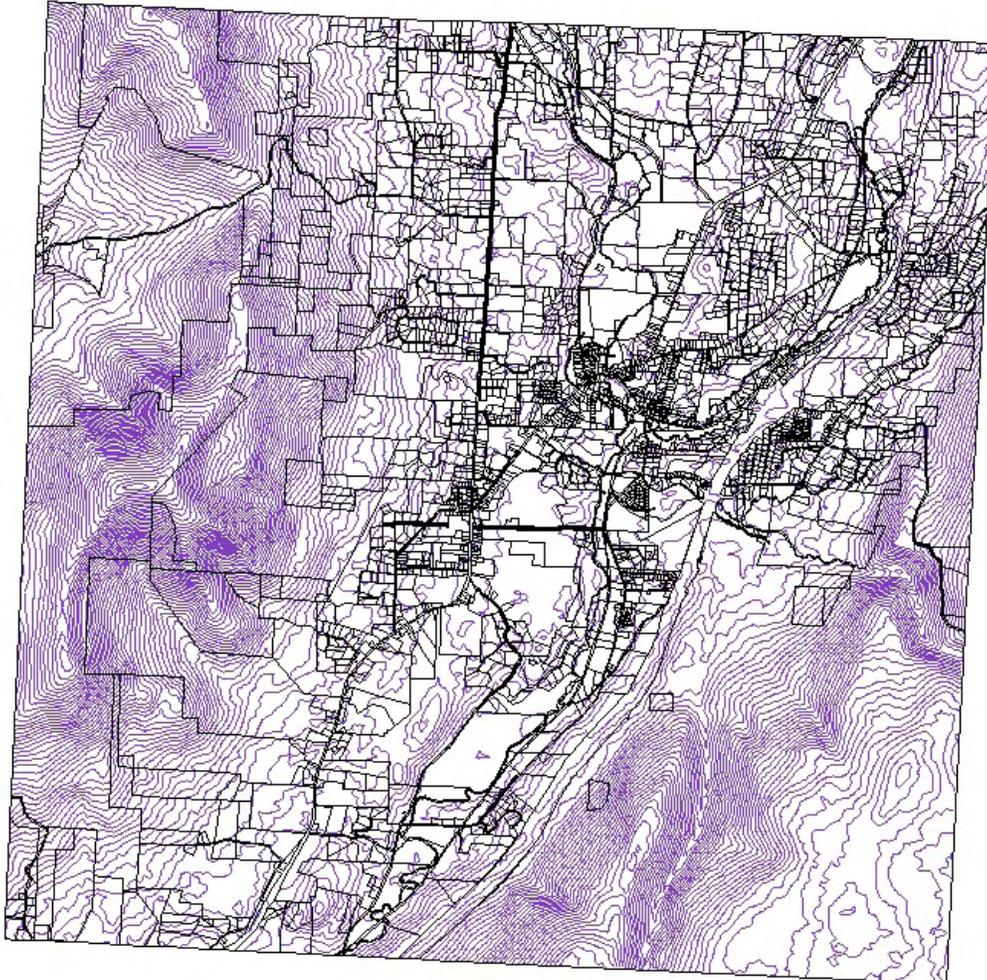
Map #3: 100 Year Flood Hazard Areas



for planning purposes only



Map #4: Topographic Map

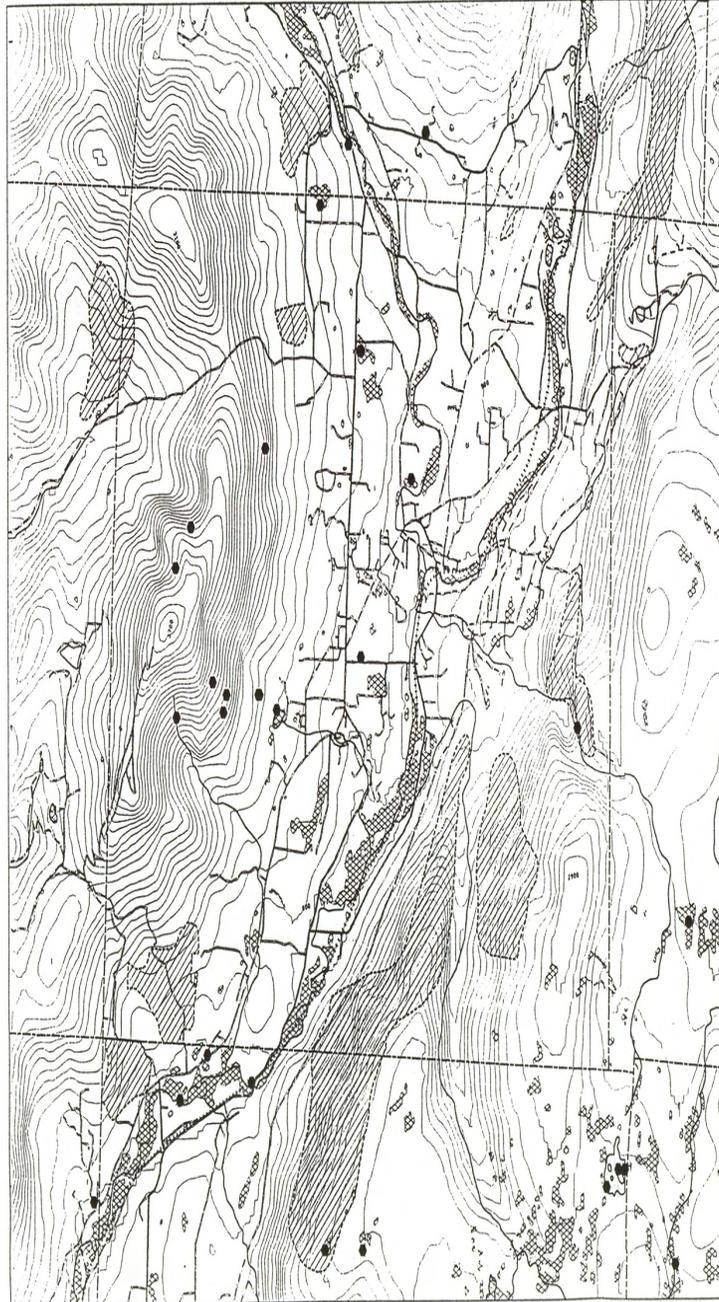


for planning purposes only



Map #5: Biological Areas

schematic for general reference only
full-size maps available in the Planning & Zoning Office



Town of Manchester Significant Habitat Map



Rare, Threatened or Endangered Species or Significant Natural Community

Deer Wintering Area

River

Road

Railroad

Town

Wetland

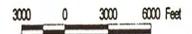
100 Foot Contour

Lake

Legend



Scale 1:60,000



Notes on Deer Wintering Areas

The locations and boundaries of deer wintering areas shown were determined using color infrared aerial photos. (Not all deer wintering areas have been identified and mapped within the state of Vermont. Some, but not all, of the deer wintering areas shown have been field checked by department wildlife biologists to confirm use and boundaries. The boundaries of the deer wintering areas on this map are generally accurate to within 500 feet. The Dept. of Fish and Wildlife may consider protection of deer wintering areas as Necessary Wildlife Habitat under criterion 8(a) of Act 250 (10 V.S.A. 1086(a)(8)(A)).

Deer wintering area is not the only habitat type considered for protection by the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife under Necessary Wildlife Habitat of Act 250. As examples, Necessary Wildlife Habitat for bear (beech stands that are important feeding areas for bear) and Bicknell's thrush (high elevation spruce-fir areas that support this species) are not included in this map.

For information on Addison, Chittenden, Caledonia, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, Orleans, and Washington Counties, contact John Austin, Vermont Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, 324 No. Main St., Barre VT 05641. Telephone: 802-479-3611; Email: jaustin@aurbarre.nr.state.vt.us

For information on Bennington, Orange, Rutland, Windham, and Windsor Counties, contact Forrest Hammond, Vermont Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, RRI, Box 33, 363 River St., No. Springfield, VT 05159-9726. Telephone: 802-886-2215; Email: fhammond@aurspring.nr.state.vt.us

Notes on Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species and Significant Natural Communities

A dot represents the location for one or more rare, threatened, or endangered species or one or more significant natural community. Depending on what feature is present, the actual area represented by the dot may be hundreds of acres, only a few square yards or even a mile or long stretch of a river. The locations for rare, threatened, and endangered species and significant natural communities are mapped accurately within 200 yards; however, for information gathered from remote areas or received from other sources, the accuracy level varies up to one-half mile.

This data layer is provided for planning purposes and general information. The database is maintained by the Nongame and Natural Heritage Program (NNHP), Vermont Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. The NNHP staff and contractors do not enter privately owned lands without permission from the landowner. Please note, all areas in the town have not been inventoried, therefore additional locations may exist. Field verification may also be necessary by the user(s) of our data. This database is continually updated, so for the most up-to-date information contact NNHP. (See below.)

Vermont's rare native plants and animals shown on the map are cataloged by the NNHP because they have particular habitat requirements, are at the edges of their ranges, are vulnerable to disturbance or collection, or have difficulty reproducing. Rare plants and animals include those that are state-listed as threatened or endangered and therefore protected by the Vermont Endangered Species Law (10 V.S.A. Chap. 123), and those that are federally-listed and protected by the Federal Endangered Species Act (7 U.S.C. 1531-1544).

A natural community is an assemblage of plants and animals that is found recurring across the landscape under similar environmental conditions where natural processes, rather than human disturbances, prevail. Examples are a bog, a riverine floodplain forest, and a dry oak woodland. The Dept. of Fish and Wildlife may consider protection of significant natural communities as Rare and Irreplaceable Natural Areas under Criterion 8 of Act 250.

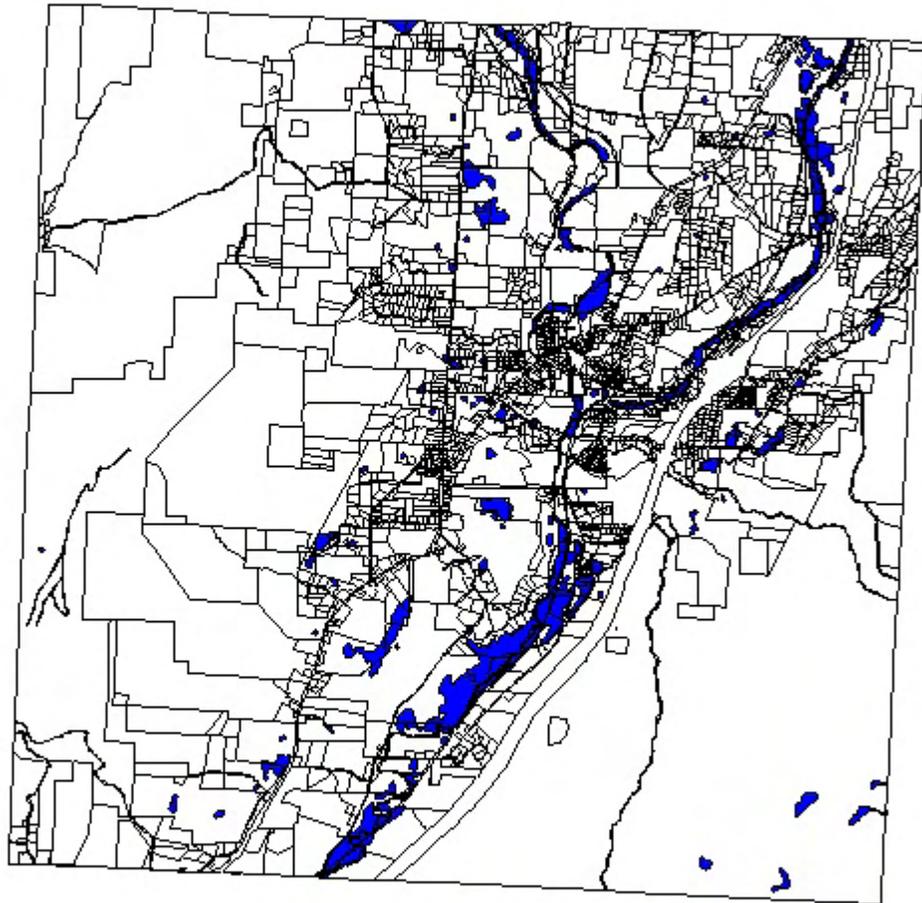
For information contact Everett Marshall, Nongame and Natural Heritage Program, Vermont Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, 103 So. Main St., Waterbury, VT 05671-0991. Telephone: 802-241-3715 or 802-241-3700; Email: emarshall@for.nh.state.vt.us

For project or site review, please send the following: a letter with a short summary of the project including your relation to the project, what permit(s) the review pertains to, and a site location map (preferably a USGS map).

Data Sources: Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species and Significant Natural Communities; Deer Wintering Areas; and Wetlands: 1:34,000, Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI)
Roads (major and minor); and Railroads: 1:5,000, VCGI; and Town Boundaries: best known source, VCGI
Rivers; and Lakes: 1:100,000, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS); and 100 Foot Contour: Digital Elevation Model (DEM), USGS

This map was produced on 4/3/97 using ArcView GIS by the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. The Deer Wintering Area and the Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species and Significant Natural Community data are current to 2/97.

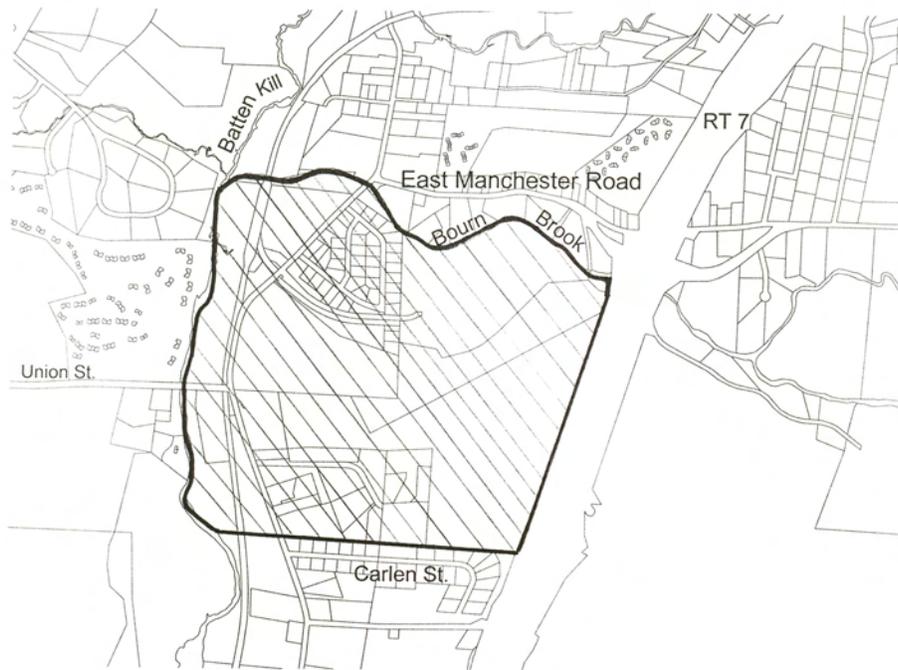
Map #6: Wetlands
based on the National Wetlands Inventory Map
schematic for general reference only
full size map available in the Planning & Zoning Office



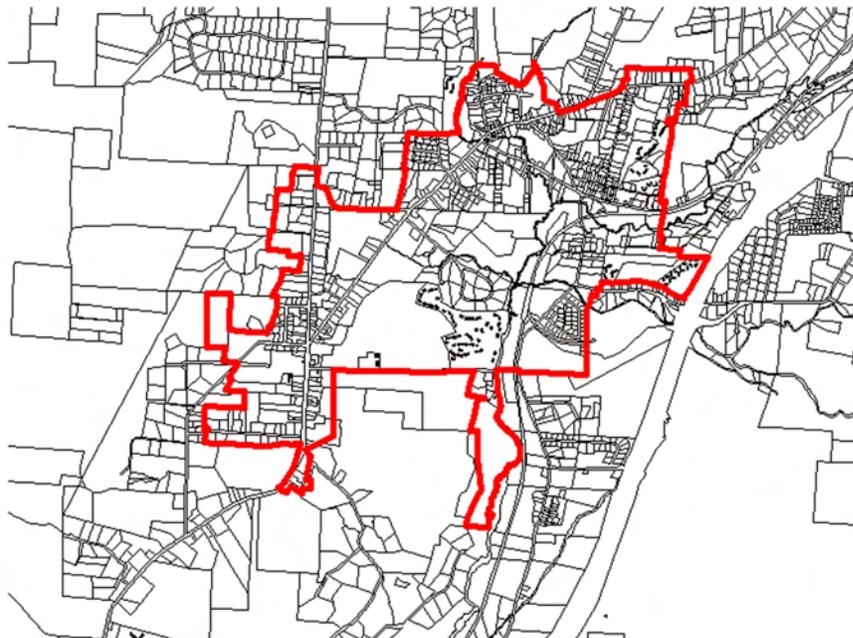
 **Parcel.**
 **Wetlands.**



**Map #7: Aquifer Protection Area
schematic for general reference only
full size map available in the Planning & Zoning Office**



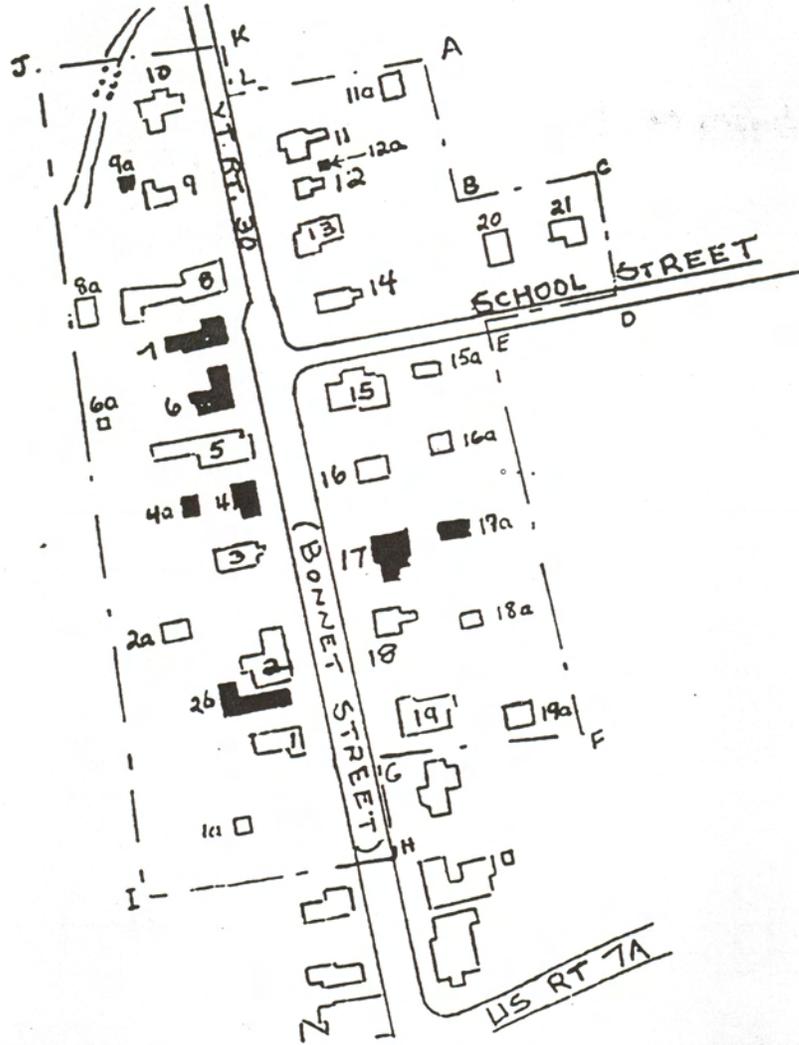
**Map # 8: Sewer Service Area
schematic for general reference only
full size maps available in the Planning & Zoning Office**



Map #10: Bonnet Street Historic District

schematic for general reference only

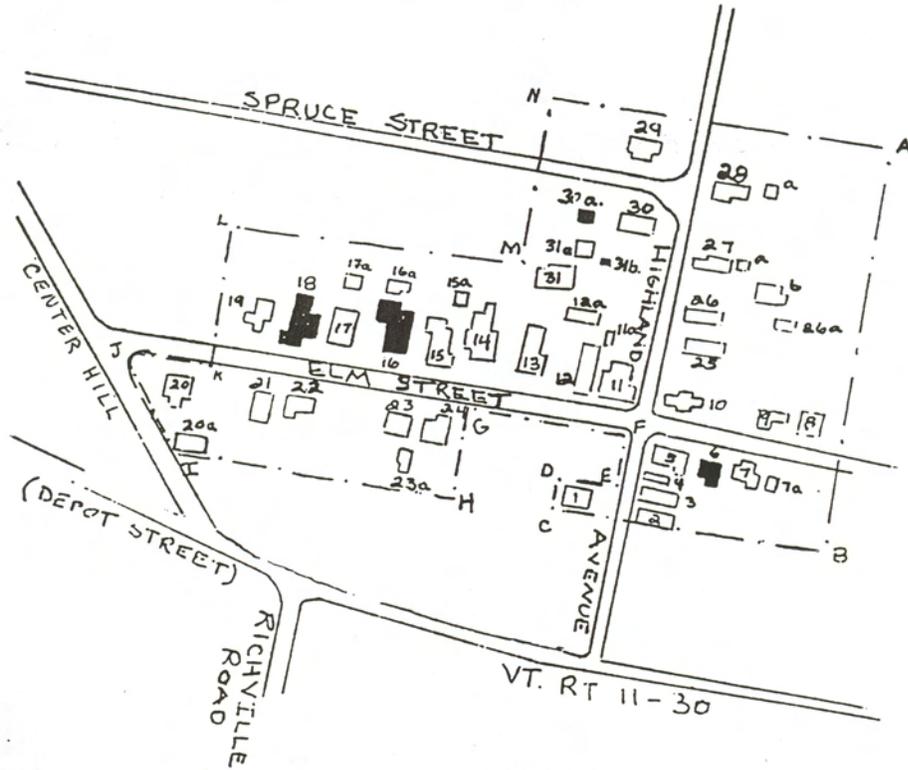
see the Vermont Historic Sites & Structures Survey for more detail
(available in the Planning & Zoning Office)



- Historic structure
- Not a historic structure

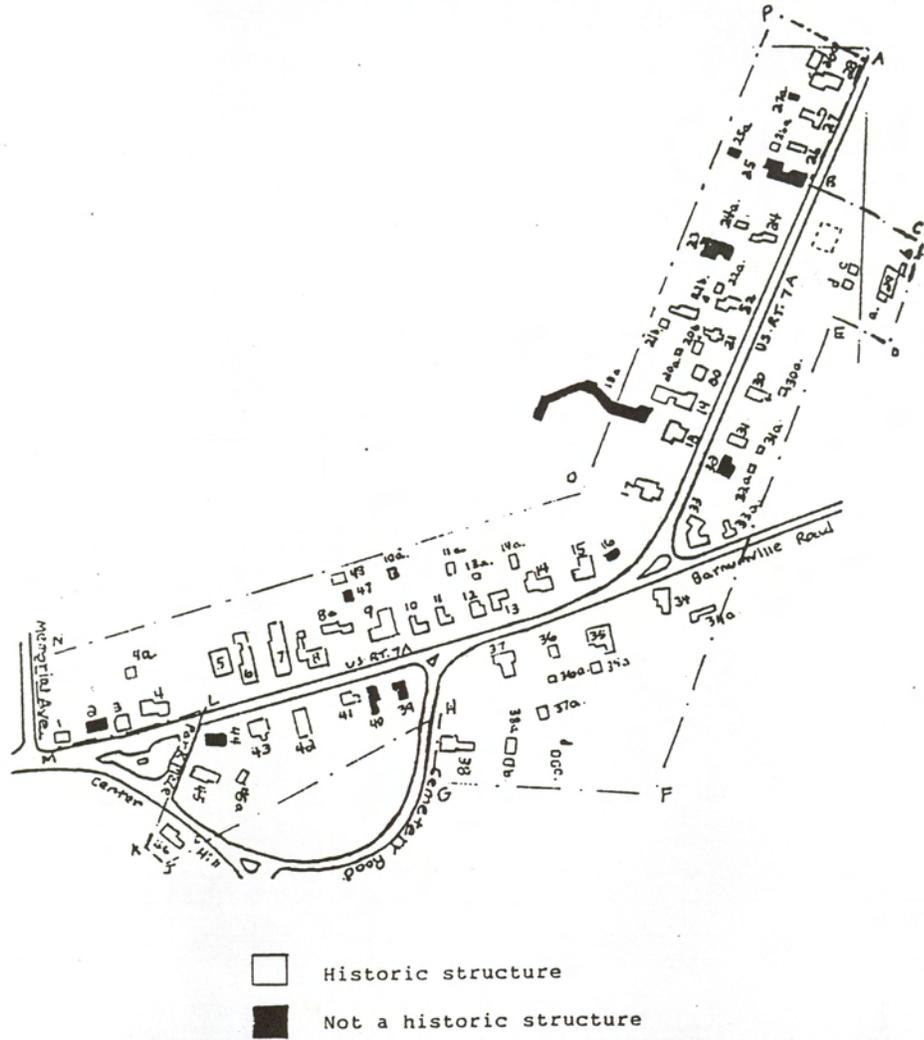
Map #11: Manchester Depot Historic District

schematic for general reference only
see the Vermont Historic Sites & Structures Survey for more detail
(available in the Planning & Zoning Office)



- Historic structure
- Not a historic structure

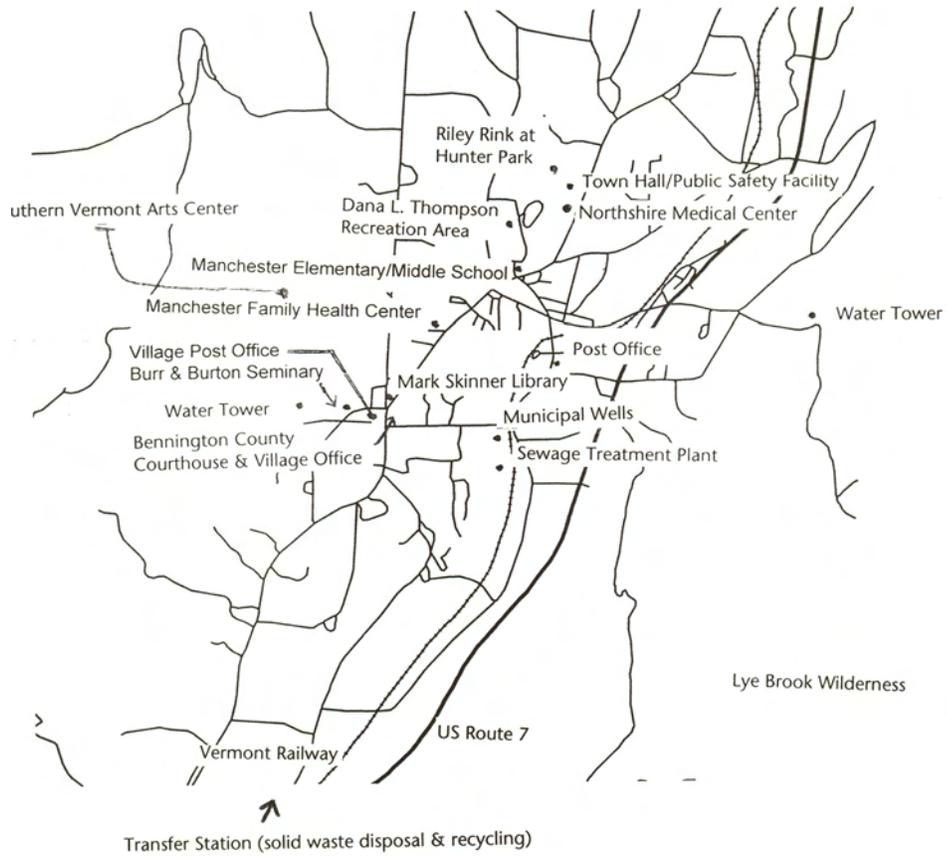
Map #12: North Manchester Center Historic District
schematic for general reference only
see the Vermont Historic Sites & Structures Survey for more detail
(available in the Planning & Zoning Office)



Map #13: Bicycle & Pedestrian Connections
as proposed in the Transportation Plan



Map #14: Educational Facilities, Public Facilities, and Utilities



Map #15: Electrical Transmission Lines
(courtesy of CVPS)

