

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

Essex	15.63%	20.98%	12.97%	14.50%
So. Burlington	12.67%	3.94%	13.12%	11.29%
Shelburne	7.79%	7.75%	5.37%	8.44%
Milton	10.01%	14.23%	9.70%	13.41%

The bottom section of Table 1 presents information on the six towns that have accounted for the largest shares of county population growth since 1960. From 1960 to 1990, Williston accommodated approximately 6 percent of the county's population growth (the experience during the 1970s was somewhat lower). From 1990 to 1998, the Town received over 18 percent of the county's growth. This is roughly comparable to the experience of Colchester and Essex in the 1970s.

Based on United States Census statistics, the average size of a household has changed in both the County and the Town, with average household size declining in the County between 1980 - 1990 from 2.89 to 2.57 persons per household. For the same period in the Town, the household size decreased from 3.11 to 2.72. It is estimated that this figure has further declined in Williston to 2.56 in 1998.²

B. Population Characteristics

Detailed characteristics of the Williston population are generally available only from the 1990 US Census, which is now almost ten years old. These data are of some value in describing trends, but are limited as descriptions of the current population. Information on such matters as age distribution, household types, household income, labor force and educational attainment can be tracked over time by comparing the 1980 and 1990 census data. Comparisons can also be made among Williston, adjacent municipalities, Chittenden County and the State of Vermont. Supplemental information since 1990 is available primarily from State sources such as the Vermont Health Care Authority, the Vermont Department of Taxes and the Vermont Department of Employment and Training.

Growth in Young Adult Age Groups:

Williston's total population grew by 27.2%, or 2.35% annually, from 1980 to 1990. Table 2 (on the next page) indicates that the highest rates of increase during that period, generally 4 to 6 percent per year, were in the adult age groups (35-84). Population declines occurred in the teenage and young adult age groups (10-24).

² Ibid.

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

Table 2. Population Change by Age Group, 1980 to 1990

AGE	1980 Census		1990 Census		Annual % Change
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	
85+	16	0.4	19	0.4	1.7
75-84	50	1.3	90	1.8	6.1
65-74	139	3.6	206	4.2	4.0
60-64	101	2.6	194	4.0	6.7
55-59	136	3.5	222	4.5	5.0
45-54	427	11.1	598	12.2	3.4
35-44	546	14.2	974	19.9	6.0
25-34	776	20.2	946	19.4	2.0
20-24	326	8.5	242	5.0	-2.9
15-19	376	9.8	321	6.6	-1.6
10-14	367	9.5	307	6.3	-1.8
5-9	294	7.7	364	7.4	2.2
0-4	289	7.5	404	8.3	3.4

Since 1990, steady increases in school enrollment indicate that the decline in the school age groups has ended.³

Growth in Incomes and Jobs:

The average Williston resident enjoys an income, whether measured per capita or per household, that is significantly higher than the average state or county resident. As shown in Table 3, Williston's per capita income has increased relative to those in adjacent communities. A similar comparison of household income from the 1990 census indicates that Williston's percentage of total households in all upper income categories exceeds that of the county and state. In addition, of all Williston households, three percent have incomes below the poverty level, as compared to 9.1 percent in the county and 10.4 percent in the state. The characteristics of housing constructed in the Town since 1990 suggest that the current portion of Williston residents falling below the poverty level is even smaller. These strong income figures reflect the fact that Williston is located in the State's most prosperous county and, presumably, that many Town residents are employed in higher paying occupations.

³ Ibid.

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

Table 3. Per Capita Income Comparisons, Chittenden County Towns and the State of VT

	1986	1991	1998	Increase	
				1986-91	1986-98
Williston	\$13,165	\$21,970	\$26,519	66.9%	101.4%
South Burlington	\$14,353	\$20,580	\$26,487	43.4%	84.5%
Essex	\$12,211	\$17,451	\$21,986	42.9%	86.1%
Hinesburg	\$11,329	\$16,698	\$21,102	47.7%	86.3%
Richmond	\$11,335	\$16,147	\$19,764	42.5%	74.4%
Chittenden County	\$12,112	\$15,347	\$20,874	26.7%	72.3%
State of VT	\$ 9,785	\$12,684	\$15,649	29.6%	59.9%

Sources: Vermont Tax Statistics, Dept. of Taxes, 1986 , 1991 and 1997, U.S. Census 1998 Population Estimates.

Data on employment in Williston are presented in Table 4. Note that these data describe jobs located in Williston, not jobs held by Williston residents. Nonetheless, the trends are of interest. Jobs in the Town have more than tripled over the decade from 1987 to 1997. The two sectors showing the greatest increase in the number of jobs over the decade are Retail Trade (1,113 new jobs) and Services (1,493 new jobs). These two sectors, plus government, make up the three sectors with the lowest average wages.

Table 4. Employment and Wage Trends, Williston, 1987-1992

Industry	-----1987-----			-----1992-----			-----1997-----		
	# Jobs	% of Total	Avg. An'l Wage	# Jobs	% of Total	Avg. An'l Wage	# Jobs	% of Total	Avg. An'l Wage
Agriculture	(not listed)			26	1%	\$22,650	68	1 %	n.a.
Construction	408	18%	\$20,364	685	13%	\$25,777	897	11%	\$31,750
Manufacturing	503	23%	\$30,866	640	12%	\$28,077	858	11%	\$32,108
Transp/Util	245	11%	\$24,171	457	9%	\$29,722	718	9%	\$31,893
Wholesale	213	9%	\$26,453	601	12%	\$30,046	935	12%	\$35,378
Retail Trade	236	11%	\$15,735	703	14%	\$17,085	1,349	17%	\$17,982
F.I.R.E.*	63	3%	\$23,022	578	11%	\$28,280	736	9%	\$33,983
Services	558	25%	\$15,971	1,227	24%	\$22,962	2,051	26%	\$25,137
Government	(not listed)			217	4%	\$19,877	348	4%	\$21,999
TOTAL	2,226			5,134			7,960		

* Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate.

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

In addition to being relatively well-paid, Williston's residents also are employed in relatively high numbers. Table 5 presents U.S. Census data from 1980 and 1990 which indicate that the percent of adult Williston residents in the labor force increased from 72.2% in 1980 to 78.2% during that period. In 1990, only 2.7% of those Williston residents seeking work were unemployed, a figure that also compares favorably to county and state rates. Comparable data from a more recent point are not available. However, those data that are available indicate that the unemployment rate for the State of Vermont has fallen to 2.9 percent in 1999, and that the rate in the Burlington labor market area has declined to 1.7 percent. It is certainly likely that Williston residents have shared in this prosperity. When data from the 2000 census are available, the Town should examine recent trends and review the above conclusions.

Table 5 Persons in Labor Force and Unemployment Rate, Williston, Chittenden County and the State of VT

	Williston		Chittenden County	State of Vermont
	1980	1990	1990	1990
Total Persons, Age 16+	2,183	3,772	104,007	434,544
In Labor Force	2,030	2,944	76,107	301,419
Percent in labor force	72.2%	78.2%	73.2%	69.4%
Employed	1,943	2,865	72,417	283,146

Source: US Census, 1990

According to the 1990 U.S. Census, Williston residents are well educated in comparison to county and state residents. At that time, more than 90 percent of Williston adults had received at least a high school diploma. More than half of the adult Williston population had earned a college or post-graduate degree. While more recent, comparable, data are not available, it can be inferred from the influx of new residents to new, relatively large dwellings, that Town residents still demonstrate relatively high educational attainment levels.

C. Projected Population

Creating population projections for small communities is a very difficult task. On the one hand, the presence or absence of a single large residential development can drastically change a community's population growth experience. On the other hand, there is the dilemma of whether to base projections on what can be expected if the community simply accommodates growth as it occurs, or to develop projections based on community objectives. Several projections for future population growth were included in the Town's 1995 Comprehensive Plan, and a mid-range projection of 2.1 percent per year was selected as the most appropriate. In fact, population growth since 1990 has been considerably greater than 2.1 percent per (from 1990 to 1998, the rate was 4.3 percent per year).

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

The Town considered a range of possible growth scenarios ranging from that set forth in the 1995 Comprehensive Plan (2.1 percent per year) to simply accommodating all growth as it occurs (4.5 percent per year). The seven scenarios are summarized in Appendix 2. Several of the scenarios were designed to reflect the capacity of the Town's existing infrastructure, while others were based on the notion of accommodating a reasonable share of the anticipated regional growth. Several of these scenarios were found to cluster.

The press of growth in Chittenden County is enormous. The Town has limited tools to severely restrict its own growth and recognizes that limitation on growth in Williston would have implications for sprawl throughout the region. While the Town may feel that a rate of growth for the Town that results in a population of approximately 8,000 persons by the year 2010 is preferred, the anticipated regional growth patterns make this unrealistic. After considering the various growth scenarios, the Town has determined that a reasonable growth target will result in a total population of between 9,000 and 9,300 persons by the year 2010. This is a close match with available sewage treatment capacity, but may require additional school facilities prior to full retirement of one of the Town's two school bonds.

In summary, the population in Williston is growing and is relatively prosperous. While there has been some broadening in the types of housing and family groups living in Williston, the challenge of the coming decade will be to provide even more housing options in the Town. Employment opportunities are strong for Town residents, with jobs emerging in the Burlington Labor Market Area and in the Town. By establishing the above target growth trend, and by planning for public facilities and utilities around that trend, the Town intends to ensure that the quality of life is maintained for all existing and future residents.

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

IV. LAND USE

A. Trends

The Town of Williston covers nearly 20,000 acres of land in the Champlain Valley of Chittenden County. Map 1 shows how land uses are distributed throughout the Town.⁴ Table 6 presents a tabulation of the land area for the various classification categories. This indicates that approximately 35 percent of the Town's land area is devoted to residential uses and nine percent is devoted to commercial, industrial and utility uses. The remainder is classified as farm, vacation home, other, miscellaneous, or not coded.

Table 6. Land Use Distribution, Town of Williston, 1999

Land Use Type	Acres	% of Total
Residential, < 6 acres	2,053.6	10.40%
Residential, > 6 acres*	4,695.8	23.77%
Mobile Home without land	65.5	0.33%
Mobile Home with land	174.0	0.88%
Vacation, < 6 acres	11.2	0.06%
Commercial	843.0	4.27%
Industrial	760.8	3.85%
Electric Utilities	187.8	0.95%
Other Utilities	2.2	0.01%
Farm	4,181.0	21.17%
Other	457.3	2.32%
Miscellaneous**	4,165.0	21.09%
Not coded or taxed***	2,153.9	10.91%
Total	19,751.1	100.00%

* Includes many large parcels that may be farm or forest, but which have a dwelling on them.

** Includes vacant lots in approved subdivisions of all kinds, and parcels not otherwise classified such as preserved open lands, vacant fields, woodlands, etc.

*** Includes common land owned by condominium developments and homeowners associations, roads, and other parcels not taxed.

⁴ This map is based originally on the Town's tax parcel map and tax use classification. This was modified by partial field verification. Tax use classifications, however, do not match exactly with land use classifications.

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

Comparable data are not available for earlier years so it is not possible to examine trends. Other sources of information point to a significant shift in the Town from its farming heritage to a bedroom community and employment center. Table 7, below, compares the distribution of tax parcels in the Town's Grand List, by tax use classification⁵, for 1987, 1994, 1997 and 1998. It shows an increase in the total number of parcels in the Town of over 80 percent, with large increases in the listings for residential and commercial parcels. Most striking is the increase in the number of industrial/utility parcels. The number of parcels classified as farm for tax purposes declined by 50 percent, while miscellaneous, the category that includes vacant/unused land, increased by more than 100 percent (this reflects vacant lots in approved commercial and residential subdivisions).

TABLE 7. Grand List Parcels, Town of Williston, 1987-1998

Land Use Category	1987 Parcels	1994 Parcels	1997 Parcels	1998 Parcels	1987-98 Change
Residential	1,428	2,225	2,461	2,525	76.82%
Vacation	17	15	15	15	-11.76%
Commercial	139	204	249	235	69.06%
Industrial/Utility	24	68	78	81	237.50%
Farm	24	11	11	12	-50.00%
Miscellaneous	283	635	654	590	108.48%
TOTAL	1,915	3,158	3,468	3,458	80.57%

The trend is further reinforced by data on housing permits and employment data. As shown in Table 1 of the Housing section, a total of 855 new dwelling units were added in Williston in the period 1990 - 1998. As shown in table 3 of the Population Section, the number of jobs located in Williston increased from 2,226 in 1987 to 7,960 in 1997, an increase of 5,734 jobs.

⁵ In this case, the tax use classification was not changed by field verification, in order to maintain comparability from year to year.

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

B. Distribution

Simple visual observation is perhaps the most forceful evidence of the trends at work in Williston. For many people, Williston is viewed from I-89 as they pass through the Town. From this perspective, the change is dramatic, and perhaps misleading. The arrival of new housing developments and commercial uses has transformed the view to the north from the highway, and formed the strong impression among most observers that the Town is well along in its conversion to a suburb.

In fact, the observer is seeing only a portion of the Town, and it is this portion that has been designated through past land use policy as the area to absorb growth. Through zoning regulations and the placement of sewer collection lines, the Town has encouraged development in its northwestern sector and around its Village. These are areas north of I-89, along Routes 2 or 2A or along major Town Roads. The designated areas include just over 4,000 acres of land, with development existing or approved on about 2,700 acres. The areas are summarized below:

To the west of Route 2A, development has been a mixture of residential subdivisions, light manufacturing, warehousing and business/service. Densities have been relatively high.

To the east of Route 2A, around the Village, extending to North Williston Road and generally bounded by I-89 and Mountain View Road, moderate density residential development has taken place.

The area surrounding the Taft Corners intersection, some 700 acres surrounding the intersection of Routes 2 and 2A and adjacent to the I-89 interchange with Route 2A, has experienced significant development in the form of large and small retail establishments, office facilities, elderly residential care facilities, medical facilities, restaurants and hotels.

The area along the western edge of the town, north of Interstate 89, has experienced considerable development in the form of light manufacturing and trucking/warehouse facilities.

To the north of Mountain View Road at Redmond Road is the IBM facility that is linked to the company's Essex plant by a bridge over the Winooski River. This property is developed as an office and manufacturing complex, surrounded by a buffer of open land.

Lands elsewhere in Town, generally south of I-89, north of Mountain View Road and east of North Williston Road, are developed at very low density for residential use, or are in an open state, as agricultural land, forest lands, recreation lands, conservation lands, or otherwise unused lands. These are the sections of Town that are perhaps overlooked by those forming their impression of Williston from a passing vehicle.

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

C. Future Land Use

In keeping with the Goals of the Vermont Planning Act, this Comprehensive Plan will set out a pattern for future land use that accommodates growth in a compact manner. In general, this plan proposes that commercial development be concentrated in the commercial area around the Taft Corners intersection, that industrial development be concentrated along the western side of the Town, and that residential development be concentrated in the area north of Interstate 89, generally west of North Williston Road, south of Mountain View Road, and extending north along route 2A to the Winooski River. The remainder of the Town is seen as rural and shall be designated for limited development, agriculture and forestry uses, and open space. The Future Land Use Plan is depicted in Map 2. This general pattern will be encouraged by appropriate land use controls, provision of needed public facilities and infrastructure, and other incentives. In all areas, development will be balanced by preservation of areas identified in the Open Space Plan and other significant open and natural areas. The desired rate and character of development in specific areas of Town are described in the following sections.

1. The Taft Corners Commercial Center

The Town of Williston has been planning for the development of a commercial center in the area surrounding the Taft corners intersection (the intersection of U.S. Route 2 and Vermont Route 2A) for more than three decades. Early efforts on the part of the Town involved the provision of water and sewer service, and participation in transportation upgrades. This area is to become the commercial center for the Town of Williston. It will also serve as a commercial center for those areas immediately surrounding the Town.

The vision for the area is constantly evolving as development takes place and new development is anticipated. The general concept is to create a Williston "downtown" in the area immediately surrounding the intersection. This "downtown" will be the heart of the commercial center. Moving away from the "downtown", there will be a transition through less dense commercial and mixed use areas to an industrial area on the west and residential areas to the north and east. To the south, the commercial center is bounded by Interstate 89 (although a small amount of commercial development associated with the interchange is anticipated south of the interstate). Map 3 on the next page, illustrates the concept of the Taft Corners Commercial Center and its component parts.

It is the intent that the density and diversity of uses in the commercial center will facilitate, if not encourage, non-automobile travel. In addition, local streets are to be designed to create a human scale and pedestrian friendly environment. These attributes are to be characteristics of the entire commercial center. It is understood, however, that they will be most intense in the central "downtown" portion of the area, and diminish (but not disappear) as one moves away from the "downtown".

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

The location of Williston's commercial center brings with it a number of significant natural and cultural features. First and foremost are the impressive views of the mountains. Second is the topography and land form; the high ground near the water tower and the viewpoints along the interstate. Finally, the historic tavern and farmhouse are symbolic of the community's rural heritage. These features must be recognized, and the design for future development must preserve and enhance them.

Visually, the area designated as the commercial center will be a dominant feature in the Town's landscape. This portion of the Town is highly visible from the interstate, and development in the center will form the foreground of many views of the Town. It is important that the design of buildings and spaces convey the impression of a compact, well designed town center, as an alternative to typical suburban sprawl.

The Town is struggling with a difficult problem: that of planning for the development of a large area in a manner that creates many of the amenities associated with traditional downtowns while also avoiding the more typical patterns of suburban commercial development. The intent is not to replicate or replace downtown Burlington, but to create a commercial center that contains a mixture of uses and activities, and that includes a variety of public spaces created by the buildings and landscaping.

It is also intended that this area will accommodate commercial growth in Williston for several decades. It is believed that concentrating commercial development in this one area will prevent dispersed commercial development elsewhere in the Town, and beyond.

Transportation will be a critical element in achieving this general vision of the commercial center. The details of the transportation plan for this area will be described later in this section. In general, non-automobile travel will be encouraged by facilitating public transit, by providing pedestrian and bicycle friendly walkways throughout the area and connecting to other parts of Town and neighboring communities. At the same time, alternate routes will be developed for through vehicular traffic, thus reserving roads in the commercial center for local traffic.

- (a) The Taft Corners "downtown" Area: This is the heart of the commercial center. A compact mixture of office, retail, restaurant, service and residential uses is anticipated, creating a true multi-function downtown area. Densities will be relatively high and multi story buildings are anticipated. Buildings should be located close to streets to provide an urban streetscape. Parking should be located to the rear of buildings. Structured parking will be encouraged and surface parking will be discouraged by limiting the amount of each parcel that can be devoted to parking. Where structured parking is used, allowable total building coverage should be increased.

The design of this area should include urban public spaces to take advantage of important views, and should feature internal streets that make pedestrians feel comfortable. Wide sidewalks should be common, and they should be adorned with pleasant landscaping and street furniture. Building facades along the streets

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

should feature articulated structural bays, human scale architectural features such as entryways and display windows, and interesting architectural detailing. It is recommended that the Design Advisory Committee and the Planning Commission develop design guidelines that will foster these objectives.

The density of the area makes it conducive to the use of transit, and suitable transit stops should be anticipated in the overall layout. While two main roads cross in the middle of this area, every attempt should be made to divert through traffic to alternative routes, and to make the main roads serve primarily local traffic. Internal streets should form a circulation grid and should accommodate on-street parking. One feature of the grid will be multiple routes between local origins and destinations.

The compactness of proposed development in the commercial center surrounding the Taft Corners intersection will inevitably lead to a loss of some of the panoramic views now afforded by the area's relatively undeveloped character. However, new view opportunities should be provided from the new street network and from other perspectives available to pedestrians. In the evolving design, it is important to pay close attention to the creation of green spaces that will complement the pattern of streets, buildings, pathways and view corridors. In addition, the goal of creating open space at the perimeter of the concentrated growth area should continue to be a high priority. As a part of the Maple Tree Place development, walking trails are being extended to the grove of burr oaks on Water Tower Hill, and large portions of the 100+ acre Mahan farm will remain open. The Foxwood horse farm is a valuable open space amenity at the current time. It is important that the Town explore possibilities for preserving open space associated with the commercial center around Taft Corners.

- (b) The business area northwest of "downtown": To the northwest of the "downtown" area is a business park that is almost completely built out. This area contains a mixture of office, service, and retail uses, plus an elderly housing facility. The area is much more open than the "downtown" and surface parking is much more in evidence. Efforts should be made in this area to encourage pedestrian access, and to provide links to other parts of the commercial center.
- (c) The mixed use area west of "downtown" and straddling route 2: This district serves as a transition between the moderately intense commercial development in the business park and the residential areas to the north and west. Where it fronts on route 2, this area serves as the westerly entry to the Town's commercial center, and should be designed accordingly. Since this area borders residential areas, care should be taken to ensure that development does not have adverse impacts on the residential neighbors.
- (d) The commercial area southwest of "downtown": This commercial surrounds the "downtown on the southwest. It is a transition area between the more compact, pedestrian oriented development in the "downtown" and the industrial

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

development to the west. While this area is not as dense or as urban as the "downtown", the topography and road system combine to make it strategically important to the over-all character of the town's commercial center. Buildings and site plans should be designed to reflect the landforms.

- ⊘ This area should be relatively dense, but less so than the "downtown".
- ⊘ Development north of Marshall Avenue should be designed to form a pleasant streetscape along Harvest Lane, with modest front yards and parking to the rear or beside buildings.
- ⊘ Development in the circle formed by Harvest Lane and Marshall Avenue should be designed with buildings and parking along the periphery, surrounding open spaces in the interior.
- ⊘ Truck oriented businesses should be prohibited in this area, as should auto repair and service establishments.
- ⊘ Surface parking should be discouraged. Parking structures should be encouraged. Where parking structures are used, allowable building coverage should be increased. Parking should not be located between streets and buildings, but should be to the side or rear of buildings. The amount of land devoted to parking may be somewhat greater than in the "downtown" area, but not as great as in the less dense, more auto oriented, area to the south
- ⊘ Westerly views across this area towards the Adirondack Mountains are important public resources. Prominent public vantage points for these views shall be identified and the visual corridors from these vantage points must be protected and enhanced. It is recommended that the Town undertake a study to determine the most appropriate vantage points and view corridors.

(e) The transition commercial area to the south of "downtown": Immediately to the south of the "downtown" area is a commercial area that is bounded on the north by a line approximately 300 feet north of Marshall Avenue, on the west by Harvest Lane, on the east by Route 2A, and on the south by a line south of the three existing large retail establishments. This area serves as a transition between the "downtown" to the north and other development to the south. This area should be designed and laid out to facilitate pedestrian and non-motorized travel and to provide attractive, human scaled, public spaces and walkways.

This is a retail and commercial area and may continue as such. However, the current dominance of large retail establishments must be tempered by the provision of a variety of other commercial uses of smaller scale. Appropriate uses can be classified roughly as retail uses, office uses, entertainment uses, eating establishments, personal service uses, professional service uses, and indoor recreation uses. The key concern is a balance that will bring vitality and interest to the area. No additional retail should be constructed until after other uses have been established in the area.

This area must be connected to the "downtown" area to the north. The emerging grid street connections must be recognized, enhanced, and built, both as

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

pedestrian and vehicular links. Landscaping and visual design of these connections must stress human scale and pleasant pedestrian spaces.

Of equal or greater importance are the visual and physical qualities of the area. The design of the streets, spaces and buildings must be done in a unified manner that stresses human scale, quality urban spaces, and visually interesting architecture.

- ⌘ The westerly views towards the Adirondacks are a spectacular resource. Suitable public vantage points must be identified and the visual corridors to the mountains must be preserved and enhanced by appropriate landscaping.
- ⌘ Surface parking must not be a dominant visual feature of the area. The percentage of land area devoted to surface parking must be limited. Where parking structures are used, maximum allowable building coverage should be increased. Parking structures should be designed to provide attractive facades, perhaps featuring storefronts or other amenities. Surface parking may be effective as a means of preserving visual corridors. Surface parking areas should be screened and broken up with landscaping or other visual design elements. Surface parking areas should not be designated for specific establishments, but should be designed to serve all businesses in the area.
- ⌘ Small, attractive, well located and well-designed (and maintained) public spaces should be provided in the area. These need not be large, but they should provide places for people to visit without feeling that they are in a space associated with a specific business establishment. They should include features such as benches, bike racks, pedestrian scaled and styled street lights, and special pavements should be included to provide a human scale and ambiance.
- ⌘ Public spaces, parking facilities, and business establishments should be integrated (visually and physically) with connections to the grid streets leading to the "downtown" to the north. These should be designed to facilitate pedestrian and vehicular connections to the more dense portions of the Town's commercial center. The C-1 district forms the southern terminus of the grid streets from the "downtown", and must be designed to create pleasant "ends" to the views down these streets.
- ⌘ The public spaces, pedestrian ways, and landscaped areas should contain a variety of physical features that create a human scale and a sense of welcome (trees, benches, public sculptures, pedestrian scaled and styled street lamps, bike racks, kiosks, etc.). These features tend to invite people to come to the area, and that make them feel comfortable when they are there.
- ⌘ Buildings should be designed to have more than one public facade. Public facades should be designed with architectural interest and details that convey a human scale. Small storefronts and display windows are encouraged, as are entrance ways, windows, planters, etc. Concrete block and corrugated metal facades should be prohibited. The use of trademarks as major architectural features should be prohibited. Multi story buildings should be encouraged, and can facilitate a mix of uses.

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

(f) The mixed use area southeast of "downtown": This is the area to the southeast of the "downtown" which is designated for mixed-use development. The intent is to encourage a mix of residential and commercial uses as an extension of the intensely commercial "downtown" area. This mixed use area should be connected by road and pedestrian/bicycle paths to both the "downtown" and the Village Center. A variety of housing types should be encouraged, along with smaller scale commercial uses that are compatible with residential uses (warehousing and trucking uses are not appropriate in this district). Pedestrian scale, landscaping, street trees, and broader, landscaped open spaces should also be a part of development plans in this area.

(g) The mixed commercial area along south and western edges of the commercial center: A variety of large and small uses are already located here, and there is room for additional development. While the area is auto oriented, site plans and building designs should incorporate landscaping, walkways, and human scale amenities.

≠# The circulation network should include recreation paths traversing the area. These may take advantage of natural features such as ravines.

≠# While buildings may be large, they should be designed to present interesting facades with human scale details. Multiple entries, display windows, and other architectural features are necessary to avoid large stark, sterile blank walls.

≠# Some variety of uses and building/establishment sizes is important to avoid dominance by any single type of use.

≠# The views across this area towards the Adirondacks are an important feature of the entire commercial center, and must be preserved and enhanced. View corridors from strategic vantage points must be identified and protected.

As preparation of this plan was being completed, the Town entered into an agreement with the owner of much of the land in sub-area (g). The purpose of the agreement was to end long standing litigated disputes over allowable uses in this area. The agreement authorized the landowner to proceed with two retail facilities in exchange for withdrawing litigation and providing a set of amenities associated with a proposed garden center development in sub-area (h).

(h) The transitional area south of Route 2: This area is located at the western edge of the commercial center, south of route 2. It contains a mixture of primarily non-retail commercial and light industrial activities, but abuts residential development to the north and west. Care must be taken to ensure that development in this area does not adversely impact the neighboring residential properties.

(i) The commercial Area east of "downtown": The area between the "downtown" and the Allen Brook will feature a diverse mix of retail and service businesses in an orderly, well planned area that is convenient to residents of the town and

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

region. This area will be less dense than the "downtown". Surface parking will be more in evidence. Where possible other, residential uses will be incorporated, and the area will serve as a transition to a higher density residential area to the northeast. Streets in this area should connect to the internal grid streets in the "downtown" area.

Transportation in the Commercial Center: Transportation is a critical element in the success of the planned commercial center. The initial circulation plan for the area featured a compact ring road around the "downtown", surrounded by open land or transitional uses. Over the years, this initial plan has evolved considerably.

One of the principal components of the original circulation plan was the diversion of through traffic around the area. Instead of the ring road, the 1995 Comprehensive Plan included a 3-legged bypass system to carry much of the through traffic around the commercial area. The Circumferential Highway (segments A and B connecting I-89 with the segments already built in Essex), to the east, can carry through traffic from Interstate 89 to areas abutting Mountain View Road in Williston and to Essex and points north. Marshall Avenue Extension carries through traffic from Interstate 89 to industrial parks in Williston and to the airport vicinity of South Burlington. Industrial Avenue can continue its role as a major through route for traffic between Essex and South Burlington. Both Marshall Avenue and Industrial Avenue can be specifically designated as truck routes with the intention of removing most commercial truck traffic from the Taft Corners intersection. A connector between Industrial Avenue and Marshall Avenue will provide an important truck route bypass west of Taft Corners.

If segments A and B of the Circumferential Highway are not constructed, traffic volumes on routes 2 and 2A in the commercial center will be considerably higher, and there will be continued conflicts between the needs of local traffic and through traffic. The Town may need to reconsider the ring road, perhaps with a connection north to Mountain View Road.

Along with the 3-leg bypass, a network of internal "grid" streets is proposed that will provide access to various activities and link the four quadrants of the commercial center. These internal grid streets will constitute the public framework for future private development. Transportation on these streets will be multi-modal. In addition to provision for low-speed automobile travel, street design will accommodate bus stops and other public transit facilities. Pedestrian movement will be favored throughout. Wide sidewalks normally shall be provided along both sides of internal streets. Crosswalks, at intersections or mid-block, shall be constructed of distinct materials and/or clearly striped. Bulb-outs, small curb radii and similar design techniques shall be used to minimize pedestrian crossing distances. Along most streets, on-street parking will be provided.

One central issue in the evolution of the Taft Corners under this plan will be the changing function of Routes 2 and 2A. The intersection of these two roadways at Taft Corners, the original crossroads in the area, should continue to be a central focus of development.

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

However, its current nature as an auto-oriented center must be replaced by a more pedestrian-friendly environment. A major intersection upgrade, to be implemented in 2000, will address many of these needs. In addition to the Taft Corners intersection, Routes 2 and 2A will be intersected by a number of grid or other interconnecting streets, as described above. These street crossings are intended to connect Taft Corners quadrants in a manner that will be safe for pedestrians and bicycles as well as automobiles.

To accomplish these objectives, the function of Routes 2 and 2A should change from the current status as primary carriers of local and regional through traffic to carriers of local or destination oriented traffic. This change in function will require concurrent action on several fronts. Bypass routes, particularly the Circumferential Highway, should be completed as soon as possible. Street connections between the quadrants should be implemented in conjunction with consolidation of existing private curb cuts. "Traffic calming" measures, such as a central raised median and landscaping along the road corridor, should begin. Construction of non-auto improvements, including transit routes, bicycle paths and sidewalks, should have priority over road widening. The primary goal is that Routes 2 and 2A not be allowed to divide the Town's major commercial center. Any actions impacting State Highways will require coordination with the Vermont Agency of Transportation. The goals of this plan should serve as the basis for any such discussion.

Summary

The creation of a major commercial center around the Taft Corners intersection as a mixed use activity center is a fundamental element of this Comprehensive Plan. No single use, particularly retail, can be allowed to dominate development activity. The timing and location of proposed growth must be carefully monitored to ensure that the mixed use goal is accomplished. Residential uses within Taft Corners are fundamentally important to the area's mixed use character. In the course of the review of proposed development, and in allocation of sewer capacity, the Town must include a residential component.

The plan for the Town's commercial center will continue to evolve. As long as the basic goals and development framework established in this Section are followed, the continued modification of the plan can take place as part of the Town's ongoing planning process.

2. The Village

Williston Village is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as an Historic District. It contains an impressive collection of 19th century Greek Revival and Federal-style buildings that attest to its role as an important stop along the "Williston Turnpike", the principal route from the Courthouse in Burlington to the Capitol in Montpelier. The Village remains the civic center of the Town, containing the Town Offices, the Williston Central School, the Dorothy Alling Memorial Library, the Community Park, the Town Green, churches, the Armory, and the central Fire Station. Most of these uses are arrayed along Route 2, along with a number of residences and a few stores and businesses.

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

Williston Central School is set back from the main road, and is surrounded by playing fields and open space. New housing has also begun to develop off of Route 2, mostly toward the west end of the Village. Moderate density housing developments are occurring to the north and west of the Village, although somewhat removed from its core at Route 2. It is important that sidewalks and bike paths be provided to connect the residential areas to each other and to other attractions in the Village.

It is the intent of the Town that the Village remains its civic center. Relocation of Town office facilities is not recommended. Rather, the Village's civic role will be reinforced by being the seat of local government operations. The Town has renovated the Governor Chittenden Grange Hall and the Chittenden Memorial Town Hall for use as Town offices. An addition to the Dorothy Alling Memorial Library was recently completed, and continues to provide library services within the village setting. Finally, the Town has acquired much of the land to the south of the existing Town Hall. The majority of that land will remain open. A conservation easement that accompanied the Town's acquisition of the 24 acre Lyon property stipulates that no more than eight acres can be developed. A portion of the property could provide for expansion of Town facilities, including office space, police and emergency services, or additional Town park land.

Williston Central School, with its auditorium, gymnasium and classroom space at Central School functions as an important community center for culture and recreation. Williston Community Park, behind the school, contains ballfields, an outdoor ice skating rink, volleyball courts and horseshoe pits. In addition to vehicular access from Route 2, Williston's alternate transportation path will provide non-motorized access in the village between Old Stage Road and North Williston Road. It is important that this path be connected to the newer residential areas to the north of the Village.

The historic character of the Village will be preserved, using the Historic Preservation Guidelines of the Zoning Ordinance. The pattern of development along the Route 2 "spine" of the Village is particularly sensitive in this regard, and must be protected. The quality and compatibility of design is the key consideration. The restoration of the Williston Federated Church Steeple is an excellent example of effective citizen preservation efforts. Such efforts are very important to the strength of the community and quality of life in the village, and should be strongly encouraged.

The linear pattern of development along Route 2 is enhanced by open space vistas running along the entire length of the Village. To the north of Route 2, significant areas of open space are being protected via public acquisition of land. Development of land for uses not requiring structures, such as the Community Park and alternate transportation path, and protection of archaeological sites and wetlands will assist in open space preservation.

Small pockets of land in the Village will be developed along Route 2 for residential use, and there is a small amount of available space located south of Route 2. Moderate density residential development in neighborhoods off the main road will be encouraged,

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

but the rate of residential growth should be slow to moderate. The existence of homes within walking distance of schools, churches and public facilities is the very essence of a village. These neighborhoods can be connected to Town and school facilities and coordinated with the historic Village character via appropriately sized and located streets and sidewalks. The recently constructed Williston Commons illustrates how residential development in the village can take advantage of these amenities and remain sympathetic to the historic character of the village.

The location of residential neighborhoods, particularly south of Route 2, must be carefully sited to protect some of the existing scenic vistas between the Village and I-89. Of particular importance is preservation of land south of Town Hall that will offer public green space as a complement to abutting civic and residential development.

While civic, residential and open space uses will dominate the character of the Village, there is room for limited future commercial development. Commercial uses should be small in scale, serve the needs of Village and other Williston residents and be confined to specified locations.

A final key element in preserving the character of the Village is the emphasis on easily accessible pedestrian facilities and the "taming" of automobile traffic in the area. The Town will continue its efforts to provide a network of sidewalks and recreation paths that connect the various areas of the Village. In addition, traffic calming efforts must be initiated that slow vehicular traffic on all roads in the Village area. In the village area in particular, roads must be seen as accessible for both automobiles and pedestrians/cyclists.

3. Medium Density Residential Area

Outside of Taft Corners and the Village, the remaining land available for residential development within the Town's sewer district is designated for medium density residential development. This area has been the location for the majority of the Town's residential development in past years. While this area need not be given the same encouragement and zoning incentives as land in the Taft Corners commercial center, the availability of municipal services justifies continued residential development.

Moderate density residential development should be carefully sited and clustered in a manner that will allow preservation of significant open space parcels. The use of Planned Residential Developments (PRDs) should be encouraged, and allowable densities must be based on the amount of developable land. Any development proposal should be compatible with the Town's Open Space Plan (Maps 4, 5, 6, and 7). Where clustering or siting strategies on an individual parcel are not sufficient to accommodate protection of a desired open space resource, either transfer or purchase of development rights or acquisition of the property should be considered. In general, public open spaces and expanded recreation opportunities (including bike paths) should be encouraged.

It is the intent that development in this area take the form of pleasant residential neighborhoods that are interconnected with each other and with other attractions in the Town (schools, town Offices, parks and playgrounds, etc.). To this end, development

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

plans will include interconnected streets and paths (which must be constructed as part of the development). In addition, sidewalks should be provided on one or both sides of neighborhood streets, and street trees should be provided on both sides. Neighborhood streets should be as narrow as possible to accommodate the local traffic, and laid out in a manner that discourages through traffic. The Town should explore ways to encourage quality design of multiple family structures and to promote the construction of aesthetically pleasing and properly scaled buildings.

Most commercial facilities and Town, school and major recreational services will continue to be concentrated in Taft Corners or the Village. Development in the medium density residential district should be designed for convenient access, both vehicular and pedestrian, to those resources. Additionally, new development in the district should be served by recreation amenities, either public or private, that are appropriately sized to meet the needs of the neighborhood population.

4. Commercial Areas (outside of the Taft Corners Area)

While most of the commercial areas in town are included in the general area surrounding the Taft Corners intersection (see Item 1, above), there are two other small commercial areas. One is just north of Route 2 and just west of the Allen Brook. The other is just west of Route 2A, south of the Winooski River. These areas are suitable for a variety of moderate sized retail and other commercial uses. Appropriate controls should be established through Zoning regulations to prevent development from taking the form of commercial strips. Pedestrian/bicycle connections should be provided, along with landscaped green areas--particularly along streets.

Finally, the area immediately south of the I-89 interchange is an area designated for interstate commercial uses. It should be noted that much of this area is already developed as a business park containing a mix of motels, office and industrial uses. In the future, uses that draw traffic from other parts of town, and uses that generate traffic during peak hours should be discouraged. Care must be taken to avoid the appearance of strip commercial development. This can be done by limiting curb cuts, landscaping, placing parking beside or behind buildings, etc.

5. Industrial Areas

The primary industrial area in Williston is along the Town's western boundary, north of I-89. Two heavy industrial uses, the S.T. Griswold concrete plant and Pike Industries asphalt plant, are located on large parcels set back from Industrial Avenue. However, the large majority of existing businesses are a mixture of light industrial and warehouse or distribution uses. Lot sizes generally range from 1 to 3 acres. Lot coverage is moderate to high with open space consisting primarily of required setbacks plus landscaped areas around buildings and parking lots.

This area includes a number of major roadways in the Town. It is important that the visual qualities of these roads be maintained, recognizing that the area is designated for industrial uses. Design guidelines for the area should encourage building facades along

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

the roads (with modest landscaped setbacks) with parking and truck loading areas to the rear of the buildings. Street-side landscaping (street trees, bushes, etc.) should be required, along with sidewalks and/or bike path connections to other areas and to potential future transit service.

Access to the industrial area is generally available to I-89 and the airport. Access through these districts has been enhanced by the extension of Marshall Avenue from Route 2A to Shunpike Road with connections on to South Burlington. Additionally, Industrial Avenue and Route 2A serve as an arterial route between South Burlington and Essex. To assure a good flow of through traffic, individual curb cuts on principal State and Town roads should continue to be limited.

With the high and growing number of employment opportunities in this area, the availability of bus or other public transportation services should be encouraged. Sidewalk connections to public transportation sites also will be appropriate.

Much of the industrial land benefits from sandy soil that is suitable for on-site wastewater disposal. However, some areas have required connection to the municipal sewer system. Connection of existing buildings and new development to the municipal system will be considered on an individual basis, based on the type and volume of wastewater flow and on the available alternatives for disposal.

A second industrial area exists to the north at the site of the IBM facility on Redmond Road. There is room for expansion on this site. IBM operates its own sewage treatment facility that operates well below its design capacity. The company has no plans or intentions to make any of its plant's capacity available to other users, nor will it require any sewer allocation from Williston's portion of the Essex Junction treatment facility.

Access to the IBM plant will be greatly enhanced by construction of the Williston segments of the Circumferential Highway. The Town's sole planned Circumferential Highway interchange, located at Redmond Road, is planned, in part, to facilitate access for existing IBM employees and deliveries, and to accommodate future IBM growth. The regional solid waste transfer station is also located in this area. The nature of this use is such that waste material is trucked both in and out of the area, thus generating large numbers of vehicle trips. Construction of segments A and B of the Circumferential Highway will ameliorate much of the impact of this traffic. The highway will also facilitate access to a permanent regional landfill, if built near the area. The solid waste district is currently exploring this possibility.

6. Agricultural/Rural Residential Area

A considerable amount of land in Williston is designated for agriculture/rural residential uses. This includes land along the Winooski River, north of Mountain View Road, land generally east of North Williston Road, and land south of Interstate 89. The Open Space Plan identifies a considerable portion of this area as worthy of protection from development, while emphasizing the Town's recognition of the right of property owners to a reasonable use of their land. To balance these considerations, residential

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

development should be permitted but clustered and carefully sited to preserve open spaces and wooded areas.

Agriculture has long been an important element in Williston's physical, social and economic make up. While this has changed in recent years, the agriculture/rural residential area contains virtually all of the Town's remaining agricultural enterprises. The Town should work to encourage and facilitate the continuation of these agricultural businesses. Incentives such as tax stabilization agreements and/or purchase of development rights should be made available. Uses of rural land, other than traditional agricultural businesses, which retain open space and other characteristics of the working landscape should be encouraged. The Town should actively work to protect prime agricultural lands in large parcels for agricultural uses. This will preserve the land's ability to support viable agricultural activities in the future. In addition, steps should be taken to ensure that future residential development in the area does not conflict with the ongoing agricultural activities.

Siting strategies for residential development should include clustering or locating development along boundaries or in low impact areas. The Town should consider zoning that establishes low gross densities but requires smaller individual lots (i.e. maximum lot sizes) and protected open spaces. In addition, the visual intrusion of new dwelling units on forested hillsides and ridgelines should be minimized. If larger scale protection of a valuable open space resource is desired, either Transfer or purchase of Development Rights or acquisition of the property should be considered. In any development strategy, housing should not be located on designated open space land. Not more than 15 percent of all new dwelling units should be located in the agricultural/rural residential area each year through the year 2005-06, dropping to 10 percent thereafter.

7. Open space Plan

The Williston Open Space Plan is described in detail in a document entitled *The Williston Open Space Plan: Serving the Protection and Public Enjoyment of Williston's Conservation, Recreation and Scenic Resources*, prepared by the Town Conservation Commission, dated February, 1989. That document is adopted by reference as a part of this Comprehensive Plan, except to the extent that it is updated by this Comprehensive Plan.

The Open Space Plan envisions an open space system that protects existing natural and scenic resources, and provides diverse and appropriate recreational opportunities for present and future residents. The plan is resource-based, built around the unique and rich qualities of the land itself. Its emphasis is on developing an interconnected system of greenways, parks, natural areas and scenic views that would be accessible to the public. Toward that end, an inventory has been assembled reflecting the Town's most valuable undeveloped lands as they exist today, and describing their possible future use. This inventory should serve as a guide to the Town as it makes decisions about development siting, land acquisition, taxation and public facility expenditures. It is not the Town's intention to prevent development in all areas identified in the Open Space Plan, but rather

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

to encourage planning of development so as to minimize impacts on those areas as much as possible while recognizing the right of the landowners. Conservation of the Town's undeveloped lands must occur in such a way as to fairly compensate the property owner, through acquisition, development siting, transfer of development rights, or voluntary donation.

The plan is seen as an evolutionary one. It will be carried out incrementally as the community grows and resources become available. It provides an overall strategy that will allow the individual pieces to be systematically assembled, as necessary, into a coherent whole. Excerpts of the Open Space Plan are presented below.

Visual Analysis

The identity of any community is largely dependent on the visual character of its environment. Williston has long recognized the image of the traditional agrarian landscape as central to its heritage and sense of identity -- well defined farmsteads and villages knit into a patchwork of farm and forest lands framed by a backdrop of hillsides and mountains. Understanding the basic structure and pattern of this landscape is a critical first step toward preserving its scenic beauty. This understanding will help to formulate land use policies that will accommodate and direct the changing character of future residential and commercial development so as to respect and reinforce the traditional landscape rather than obliterate it.

Williston's visually significant lands were evaluated with regards to the following factors. The results are presented on the Visual Assessment Map, Map 4.

Vantage Point: It is via accessible vantage points that a typical citizen "takes in" visual information about the landscape. For most people, these vantage points are found largely along the public roads daily traveled. The Visual Assessment map identifies major public viewing points from roads and other places throughout Town that provide access to views of high quality. The lands comprising these views have been analyzed and evaluated with respect to four major components -- foreground, middle-ground, background and focal points.

Foreground: These lands, generally consisting of cleared land adjacent to public roads, serve essentially as the community's "window" into the landscape. Since they provide access to the rest of the landscape they are the most important component of a scenic landscape (without them even the best middle-ground or background is lost to the viewer). They are most effective when they are enclosed and limited by a woodland or hedgerow edge that creates a distinct first layer of a multi-layered view. In certain high quality short-range views, they can also consist of wooded land. Yet, because they tend to be visually uncluttered, prominent and easily accessed, they also are highly vulnerable to degradation by development.

Middle-ground: These lands are generally a more complex composition of layered wooded and open lands and man-made features. Because of the inherent complexity they are better able to absorb additional development without damaging their basic character.

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

Middle-grounds often are important in the visual transition between foreground and background.

Background: These lands now predominantly consist of forested hillsides that rise up behind the middle-ground. To the east and west the far horizon lines are the Green Mountains and the Adirondacks, seen from many vantage points in the Town. With discretionary clearing of building sites, hillsides below the horizon may sometimes absorb a limited amount of development (soils and slopes permitting) without significant intrusion. At other times any development irrevocably compromises the view. The horizon line itself, due to its highly contrasted nature, is very sensitive to intrusion by man-made development. Publicly acceptable encroachments are generally limited to certain public structures such as church steeples and the roof lines of government buildings or the collective composition of a settlement.

Focal Points: Most high quality views feature some kind of accent or focal point within the composition. The focal point draws the eye. These are typically provided by prominent man-made features such as farmstead clusters or church steeples or unique natural features such as rock outcroppings, great trees or mountain peaks. Because the strength of focal points lie in their contrast to the surrounding landscape, they need to be protected from competing elements (e.g., adjacent buildings or trees should not obliterate a village church steeple).

The Visual Assessment Map (Map 4) outlines major scenic vantage points in the Town and major areas of foreground, middle-ground, and background that are visible from them. These are further broken down into "primary" and "secondary" designations. Places where different components overlap are judged to be more significant. The "photo map" in the Town Clerk's Office shows the view from each major vantage point in Town.

Major conclusions from the analysis include the following:

- 1# Williston is a Town that possesses a rich and beautiful scenic landscape.
- 1# Agricultural lands figure predominantly in the visual quality of the landscape, especially in foreground and middle-ground.
- 1# Lands with a very high scenic value (i.e., a multi-layered designation) include views along Oak Hill Road, Mountain View Road, Sunset Hill Road, and Walker Hill Road.
- 1# A large area of lands with high visual quality falls in the middle of the medium density zone along the Circumferential Highway corridor (See Land Use Map).
- 1# Other major areas of high visual quality that are potentially threatened by future development include: the open fields just east of Oak Hill Road and extending along I-89, the fields just north of Sunset Hill Road, the fields along Oak Hill Road near Butternut road and north of south road, the fields along So. Brownell Road south of I-89, and the open fields along the Governor Chittenden Rd. around Catamount Family Center.
- 1# The agricultural lowlands along the Winooski River are both high in visual quality and protected from development by virtue of their conservation zoning designation.

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

The Open Space Master Plan (Maps 5, 6, and 7) represents an aggregation and distillation of the planning process into a comprehensive outline for land protection in Williston. The plan identifies various types of open space and resource protection areas. The "park" or "P" designation generally denotes lands that are important to be publicly owned and managed for public use and benefit. The "rural resource" or "R" designation denotes lands that, while an important part of the overall landscape character, may not require outright public ownership or prohibition from development. Rather, private development of these lands (especially the open land) should be carefully scrutinized and planned so as not to adversely impact the overall quality of the resource. Unlike "P" lands, public access to "R" lands is generally visual rather than physical.

Types of Open space:

In general, assessing and recommending the specific types and extent of recreational facilities to be developed on these lands would be premature and impractical given the scope of the original Open Space Plan. The intent is to identify lands that are suited to a balanced and flexible public park system. Specific development and management plans will need to be undertaken as each piece is acquired. These public lands will also be augmented and complemented by private recreational areas in the Town. What follows is a description of each of the eight types of open space that comprises the overall plan.

1. Greenways: These lands are set aside to provide an interconnected network of corridors woven through the Town's landscape. The system of greenways is the supporting framework of the entire Open Space Plan. They will serve not only to protect and better the Town's rural character with bands of natural landscape, but also provide recreational corridors for movement between various neighborhoods, community centers and public amenities throughout Town. Development within the actual greenway should be discouraged to allow for an uninterrupted, unencumbered recreational, commuter or natural corridor. Note that the proposed greenway network will be supplemented by streambank buffer areas that run along both sides of named streams and unnamed tributary streams.

Where appropriate, neighborhoods may be developed near the greenway network where the presence of a trail system would be easily utilized and enjoyed. Neighborhoods should make connecting links into the network. The type, use and character of trails and greenways will vary depending on their location. In general, two types of greenways will emerge: transportation/recreation paths which will be developed as transportation and recreation corridors; and primitive paths which will remain largely unimproved. The Town has recently adopted a greenway acquisition policy to further encourage completion of segments of the greenway system

The major components of the greenway system include:

A. Allen Brook Greenway: The "Main Street" of the system links the Winooski Valley Park District's Muddy Brook Park on the Winooski River in the northwest corner of Town with Lake Iroquois along Williston's central watercourse. Major segments along the way include extensive residential neighborhoods west of Rt. 2A, Rossignol

2000 WILLISTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted January 18, 2001

Park, Taft Corners, Allen Brook School, the future neighborhoods east and west of Old Stage Road, Williston Central School and the Village, and the Mud Pond Natural Area.

- B. Northern Loop: A predominantly upland route interconnecting major areas north of Rt. 2 and east of Rt. 2A including: Taft Corners, Allen Brook School, the Brennan Farm ballfield, residential areas east and west of Old Stage Road, Williston Central School and Village, Square Woods, Williston Country Club, Goose Hill, Catamount Ski Area, Indian Lookout, Martel Hill and IBM.
- C. Southern Loop: A predominantly upland route interconnecting areas east of So. Brownell Road, south of I-89 and west of Oak Hill Road including: Mud Pond, Sunset Hill, Five Tree Hill, Sucker Hollow, Sucker Brook, Brownell Mtn., Hillside East and Oak Hill.
- D. East Ridge Greenway: A route along the undeveloped wooded ridge on the Richmond border running from I-89 to Lake Iroquois.
- E. Winooski River Greenway: A route along the banks of the Winooski connecting the entire north boundary of Town and giving access to several canoe or boat launching areas.
- F. Taft Corners Loop: A greenbelt loop containing the commercial center around Taft Corners and connected to a major greenway spur heading west to South Burlington and Burlington. Several short spurs interlink these components; and other existing privately held trails and paths further augment the system.

2. *Country Parks*: Country parks serve in the great tradition of civic parks by striking a balance between human use and conservation of nature. They are generally lands chosen for the exceptional beauty of their landscape including a mix of open meadows, woodlands, tree-studded glades and scenic overlooks. Country parks generally include a minimum of specialized facilities and are for less structured recreation such as strolling, biking and picnicking. Thus, their irregular terrain and diverse character are desirable. It is also important to have such parks close to residential areas. Sizes might range from 25 to 250 acres.

Town owned country park areas include:

- * Mud Pond Country Park (east of South Road)
- * Five Tree Hill
- * The Lake Iroquois uplands
- * Brownell Mountain (north side)
- * The boat launch site by the Fontaine farm

Proposed country parks include:

- * Goose Hill