Village of Manchester, Vermont

PLAN OF DEVELOPMENT

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First Chartered by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont in 1900
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location
The Village of Manchester (Village) and the Town of Manchester (Town) of which it is a part are located in the northern half of Bennington County (Northshire), the southwestern most county of Vermont. The narrow valley where the Village and Town lie runs North/South and is bounded on the East by the Green Mountains and on the West by the Taconics, of which Equinox is the tallest at just over 3800 feet. The Village lies at the foot of Equinox Mountain and stretches east to the Batten Kill River with its center running North/South along Vt. Route 7A.

1.2 Political History
Manchester was first settled in 1764 based on a land grant from Benning Wentworth, the Governor of New Hampshire, issued in 1761. The early days were tumultuous ones for the settlers as both New York and New Hampshire issued conflicting land grants and each tried to exert exclusive control over the territory. This struggle for control largely ceased after the Revolution. In 1777 Vermont declared itself to be an independent republic, and later, when Vermont was admitted as the 14th State in 1791, Manchester and its residents became a part of the newly created United States.

In the early days the Village served as the governmental center for the Town, but as the Town grew, this changed. In 1900 the legislature granted The Village its own charter, and it became a separately governed part of the Town with the ability to tax, make its own laws, and maintain its own police, fire, water, sewer, and highway departments. Today, police, fire, water and sewer service are provided by the Town, while the Village retains its taxing authority, control over its highways and its ability to make its own laws.

In 1931 the Village put Zoning Bylaws in place. In 1970, responding to State Legislative requirements, the Planning Commission was established and in 1972 the first Plan of Development was adopted.

1.3 History - The early Period
In its earliest days, the Village was primarily a crossroads, featuring numerous taverns and inns. The first three decades of existence were difficult ones for Manchester’s settlers. This was frontier country with a harsh climate. Adding to the physical hardships was the political uncertainty, resulting first from contested land titles, and then from the Revolutionary War. Growth was initially slow. Shortly after war’s end, Reverend Perkins, a Congregationalist missionary, who was passing through, remarked of the area: “Friday entered ye State of Vermont – a bad appearance at ye entrance … poor land – very unpleasant – very uneven – miserable set of inhabitants – no religion, Rhode Island haters of religion – baptism, quakers and some presbyterians.” Several of the early settlers of Manchester came from the Baptist colony in Rhode Island, of which the Reverend Perkins spoke so badly. The Manchester Baptists enticed Reverend Joseph Cornell to take the land set aside by Governor Wentworth for the first minister to settle in Manchester, and in June of 1781, the Anabaptist Society in Manchester was formed. Free land or no, it was a rough, frontier town that Reverend Cornell found himself in, in that summer of 1781. There were no churches, but there were four taverns where “Drinking, gambling and whoring were common,” a jail, a pillory, and a whipping post.

After the Revolution, both Vermont and Manchester began to grow rapidly. Vermont was the fastest growing State in the Union from the end of the Revolutionary War to the War of 1812. Manchester, itself, also grew, rapidly reaching a population of about two thousand two hundred in 1800. Vermont had suffered no physical damage in the war, and its economy had not been bankrupted by the need to arm and equip large numbers of troops. Attracted by readily available land, settlers flocked to the Manchester area, and Vermont kept its frontier character while growing.
The Reverend Perkins visited Manchester in 1789 and wrote in his diary, “A half shire town hemmed in by lofty mountains. A number of houses in ye center, a small meeting house, half Baptist, a loose town.” Local industry began to develop and, taking advantage of the nearby marble quarries and abundant water, consisted of several marble mills. Growth slowed in Manchester, and Vermont generally, after the War of 1812, and had virtually stopped as the mid-point of the nineteenth century approached. In 1832 Burr Seminary, later to become Burr and Burton Academy, opened and offered education to young men in what was then the largest building in the State. Young women joined their male counterparts in 1849 and the school became one of the first coeducational institutions in the State. From 1840 to the Civil War, Vermont changed to the slowest growing State in the Union. In these two decades the population of the United States almost doubled, while that of Vermont grew by less than one percent. Vermont’s natural resources had been rapidly depleted, and its thin topsoil and harsh climate had proved to be unfriendly to farming. The mountainous terrain made transportation difficult and discouraged industrial activities. The raising of sheep had a brief boon in the 1840s, but the introduction of wool from Australia brought an end to this success. Twenty-three houses remain in the Village from this early phase. Architectural styles represented from this period are Federal and Greek Revival.

1.4 History - The Resort Phase

Beginning in the late 1850s, an outside force would make itself felt in Manchester, which would transform the Village. This force was the tourist. From 1850 into the 1920s, the Village entered, and continued in, its resort phase, with the most notable contributor being the Equinox Hotel. Enterprising citizens of Manchester, such as Martin Vanderlip and Levi Orvis, began to convert the town’s once infamous taverns into hotels. The Equinox, Manchester’s most famous hotel, was officially opened by Franklin Orvis in 1853. Tourists were drawn to Manchester by the natural beauty of the area, and its relative lack of development. The Equinox House hotel was soon to become the centerpiece of Manchester’s tourist industry. Begun as an inn in 1770, the hotel really came into its own when it was enlarged in 1853. The hotel catered to a wealthy clientele, many of whom were from New York. In 1863 the Equinox received a guest who was to establish both its reputation, and that of Manchester, as a tourist destination. On August 25, 1863, Mrs. Abraham Lincoln, and her son, Robert, arrived on the ten o’clock train for a two week stay. Mrs. Ulysses Grant was also a visitor. Manchester’s reputation was made, and the next forty years would see the summer trade boom as Manchester transformed itself into a mid-Victorian tourist destination. The Manchester Journal reported that: “In short, Manchester has established itself as a favorite summer resort...” Another article in The Manchester Journal stated: “Our quiet little village can almost vie with a Saratoga or a Newport...Every house in the village was as full as a Third Avenue car, almost entirely by New Yorkers. We heard a lady who had been the rounds of all the fashionable watering places remark that no other place has she enjoyed so well as here.” Twelve houses were built from 1851 to 1895. Representative architectural styles from this period included Italianate Revival and Queen Anne.

In the mid-1890s a new wave of wealthy people began to arrive in Manchester. Manchester’s citizens were thrilled at the Village’s newfound social status. Newspaper accounts began to refer to Manchester as being in the same league as Newport and Bar Harbor. Lord Curzon, the future Viceroy of India, courted the daughter of a summer resident in Manchester. Numerous social organizations were founded within the space of a few years. The local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution was founded in 1896; the Manchester Historical Society in 1897; and the Twentieth Century Club, the purpose of which was “…the study of Art, Belles-lettres, and Ancient and Modern Social Customs and Functions,” in 1899.

This turn of the century atmosphere of boom and optimism, with an emphasis on health and sports and on architecture that was uniquely American, would find one of its purest expressions in Manchester. Mr. E.J. Hawley, a longtime resident and substantial landowner, saw a great
future in attracting more wealthy summer residents to Manchester. The Village was poised and ready for the twentieth century. In 1894 Franklin Orvis built and in 1895 opened the first golf course in the Village for the entertainment of the guests at the Equinox. The first telephone lines connecting houses had been laid in 1895. The same year, the Manchester Water Company was formed to bring running water to the Village for drinking and fire protection. In 1899, the Manchester Light and Power Company began construction on an electric plant to bring electric lights to the Village. In 1900 the Ekwanok Golf Course, designed by Walter Travis, opened. Fast and luxurious railroad service from New York City was already in place. The "Green Mountain Flyer" and the "Mount Royal," featuring daily parlor and sleeping cars, made the trip from New York City in five and one half hours. The Manchester Journal remarked that the Village was a "...cosmopolitan and exclusive stronghold...established by the outside world of affairs, arts, letters, and social registers which...give the town an air of rich and cultured living." Twenty-two of the houses constructed in the Village from 1895 to 1925 remain. Architectural styles represented from this period include Colonial Revival and Shingle Style. The 1940s saw a period of decline and stagnation in the Village that was to last into the early 1980s. In 1973 the Equinox Hotel filed for bankruptcy and closed and the economy of the Village continued to languish. In 1985 a newly renovated Equinox Hotel reopened and the heart of the Village began to recover. That recovery continues today as new facilities are added and old ones renovated, refurbished, or replaced.

1.5 Important Historical Establishments, Buildings, Places, and Institutions

Throughout its history, events, people and businesses have contributed to making the Village what it is today. Many of the Village buildings, together with the institutions that formerly or currently occupy them reflect this.

The Equinox

Since 1769, what is now The Equinox has served as one of the country’s most historically significant resorts. "Serving the Republic before there was a Republic," the hotel was a meeting place for several fathers of the American Revolution, hosted American Presidents, including Ulysses S. Grant, William Howard Taft, Benjamin Harrison, and Teddy Roosevelt. The Equinox has served as a favorite vacation destination for Mary Lincoln and Robert Todd Lincoln, the widow and son of President Abraham Lincoln, and hosts of other well-traveled visitors looking to experience the year-round offerings of one of New England's most scenic locations.

In addition to providing food, spirits, and lodgings the Equinox and some of its earlier owners were responsible for the construction of the Equinox Golf Course, Equinox Pond, at the base of Equinox Mountain, and the bottling and sale of the spring waters emanating from the Mountain in pure, sparkling and flavored forms. The bottling plant closed in the 1920s.

The Mark Skinner Library Building

This building, now privately owned and no longer a library, stands at the intersection of the West Road and Vt. Route 7A in the heart of the Village. It is notable, not only for it’s unusually forward looking architecture, but also as a quintessential example of the results of the Library Movement which swept the United States between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of the twentieth century. Constructed in 1897 at the height of the boom in Library construction in the United States, the Mark Skinner Library was donated to the community of Manchester by Mrs. Frances Willing of Chicago, Illinois, the daughter of Mark Skinner, "an early friend of libraries," as a memorial to her father.

The Mark Skinner Library building was aggressively modern in design for its time. The handsome original structure and the subsequent addition constitute one of the most architecturally important structures in Manchester. The original building was designed by F.W. Stickney, a prominent architect of private and public buildings during the late nineteenth century.
A subsequent addition was designed by Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson and Abbott, one of the leading modern architectural firms.

In 2015, the Library responding to increased demand and the changing role of libraries today, moved to a new and expanded facility in Manchester Center and was renamed the Manchester Community Library.

Burr and Burton Academy

Burr and Burton Academy is the independent secondary school that has served as the high school for Manchester and its 12 surrounding towns for close to 200 years. Originally established as Burr Seminary in 1829, it opened its doors in 1832 and, in 1849 when women were allowed to attend, it became Vermont’s first co-educational school above the elementary level. Currently it accepts all student from Manchester and its 12 surrounding towns together with other tuitioning and international students from around the world. It is recognized as one to the finest secondary schools in the state and provides excellent facilities, challenging programs and an almost 100% graduation rate.

Hildene

Hildene was the summer home of Robert Todd Lincoln, the only surviving son of Abraham Lincoln, and was built in 1904. Constructed in the eclectic Georgian Revival Style, the house is now owned and operated as a museum by the Friends of Hildene, a not-for-profit organization. The main house has been restored and is open for tours. The Carriage Barn has been enlarged and converted into a visitors’ center. An educational facility, in period architectural style, has been built, in large part with estate harvested timber, and ecological and historically appropriate programs developed and made available to school children and adults. Agricultural and horticultural activities abound. Hildene’s Master Gardener and volunteers plant and maintain exquisite gardens and have cataloged many of the original peonies planted in 1907. There are a number of original outbuildings, including an observatory, on the property, and recently a Pullman railway coach was added to reflect Robert Todd Lincoln’s position as President of that company.

First Congregational Church

The First Congregational Church was originally organized in 1784 and was located in a variety of buildings prior to the present Church building being built on Main Street in 1871. Today’s church dominates the center of the Village. Its steeple, rising 150 feet, is the tallest building in Manchester and can be seen from around the valley. The front exterior and main sanctuary remain largely as they were originally constructed. The Church is a popular venue for weddings.

St. John’s Episcopal Chapel

The Chapel, located on Main Street, was built in 1910 as a replacement for the original sanctuary that was torn down in 1906. The chapel is a combination of Greek and Gothic Revival styles. The building is used for services only in the summer.

The Courthouse

The Bennington County Courthouse immediately opposite the Equinox House on Main Street was originally built in 1822 and, though renovated and enlarged over time, has presided over the center of the Village since that time. Currently it houses the Village Office in the lower floor and periodic use by the court system.

Dellwood Cemetery

The original Village burying ground was located on the site of the Village green, that today includes the ground on which the Congregational Church and the Courthouse stand as well as
the ground that now comprises the Green and the top of Union Street. In 1812 the headstones were moved to make a parade and marching ground for local militia preparing for war. The headstones were moved, along with some of the bodies, to a small cemetery at the South end of the Village that was to become the Dellwood Cemetery. That small cemetery expanded to 10 acres in the 1860's in order to receive the Village's Civil War dead and, in 1865, the Dellwood Cemetery Association was created by an act of the Legislature. Today, the Cemetery remains a beautiful and tranquil place with ponds, a stream, beautiful statuary and many interesting period headstones.

Southern Vermont Arts Center

The Southern Vermont Arts Center, located on West Road, near the north end of the Village, is one of Vermont's oldest non-profit educational and cultural institutions. Founded in 1922, and incorporated in 1933, the Arts Center's mission is “to make both the visual and performing arts an integral part of the life of the community and region…”

The Arts Center campus encompasses Yester House, the former residence of Gertrude Divine Webster, designed by the acclaimed architects, Dana & Murphy, together with 90 acres of woodland and meadow on the foothills of Mount Equinox. The site also contains the Arkell Pavilion, a performing art facility, and the Elizabeth de C. Wilson Museum.

Equinox and Ekwanok Golf Courses

The Village of Manchester was one of the earliest communities in the country to serve as the location of two golf courses; both of which still serve its residents and visitors.

The original Equinox course of 1894 had only 6 holes, but three additional holes were added two years later as the “new” sport proved very popular with the Hotel guests and local residents. In July of 1927 the course was refurbished and redesigned by Walter J. Travis becoming Manchester’s second 18 hole course.

The Ekwanok, a beautiful 18 hole course, was brought to life by a local group headed by James Taylor, a summer resident. Designed by John Duncan Dunn and Walter J. Travis, the Ekwanok course opened for play in the summer of 1900 and became one of the premier golf courses in the country, hosting tournaments and many of golf’s early great players.

The Orvis Company

The Orvis Company, Inc., a Village institution as well as major Village business enterprise, was founded by Charles F. Orvis, in the Village of Manchester, in 1856. The Orvis Company specializes in fine quality fishing tackle, shooting gear and shotguns, distinctive clothing for men and women, sporting artwork, and unique gifts. The country’s oldest mail-order outfitter, Orvis is also the longest continually-operating fly-fishing business in America.

The Orvis flagship store is located in the Village on Main Street, at the north end of the Village, in front of its historic Rod Shop manufacturing facility, where all of the company’s premium fly rods are still made and hand-finished. Its school offering fly-fishing and shooting instruction is located immediately across the street from the flagship store, while its outlet store immediately North on the other side of the Orvis Green.

Johnny Appleseed Bookstore

This building, located immediately North of the Equinox Hotel was the Batten Kill Bank building, currently it is a real estate office and a part of the Equinox Resort complex. This historic building is best known for the time it served as the Johnny Appleseed Bookstore. Walter Hard, Sr., (1882-1966) a poet, described in Holiday magazine as “a 120 pound, leather-bound compendium of Vermontiana,” immortalized his personal hero in the name he gave to his bookstore. Johnny Appleseed (real name John Chapman, 1774-1845), was an itinerant
agriculturist, missionary and folk hero, who spent 49 years of his life in the early American wilderness, creating apple orchards in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois.

Hard, born in Manchester, took over the family drug store upon the death of his father, a temporary move that lasted 31 years. Hard also operated the Johnny Appleseed bookstore, served five terms in the Vermont Legislature, and wrote a weekly newspaper column for 40 years. His poems depicted life in a small community, detailed the stories of people who “were big enough not to amount to much,” and captured the forces of change moving into the community his family had lived in for five generations.
2.0 GOALS FOR THE VILLAGE

A set of broad, long-range planning objectives has been established to guide Village of Manchester (Village) governing bodies and citizens in their evaluation of proposals for change and development. These objectives are designed to maintain and improve living and environmental conditions and to provide for acceptable, orderly growth in the Village.

1. Maintain the small, rural, primarily residential late 19th and early 20th century appearance of the community, particularly as viewed from the Main Street (Route 7A, and all Village through streets.

2. Every effort to preserve the unique and individual characteristics of the Village Core, including:
   - Historic Structures
   - Historic Architecture
   - Architectural Details
   - Historic Scenic Streetscapes
   - Mountain and Valley Viewscapes
   - Land Use Patterns, Including Streetscapes

3. Ensure that new buildings, and repairs or alterations to existing buildings, do not detract from the historic, residential appearance of the Village.

4. Maintain, and update as required, design controls to ensure future residential and commercial development is consistent with numbers 1, 2, and 3 above.

5. Preserve open space and scenic views such as Mount Equinox and its environs to the west, the Green Mountain ridgeline to the east, and the Orvis Green to the north.

6. Maintain traditional neighborhood lot sizes and densities consistent with numbers 1 and 2 above.

7. Limit commercial development to the Village center and the commercial areas north of the Village center, along Route 7A.

8. Encourage small businesses, which integrates seamlessly into the Village environment.

9. Discourage businesses that are high traffic, high profile, or that would otherwise detract from the residential nature of the Village.

10. Avoid situations that cause undue adverse impact on facilities, services, and utilities covering public health and safety, protection, schools, recreation, water supply, solid waste disposal, public and private roads, etc.

11. Limit business and residence growth to a rate commensurate with the ability to provide adequate facilities, services, and utilities.

12. Coordinate planning and development reviews when there are inter-municipal or regional implications. Coordinate the provision of services and facilities provided by the Town of Manchester.

13. Ensure that land development reflects the particular resource value and attributes of the site and bordering areas, such as historic sites, scenic areas and vistas, open lands, etc. Although Equinox and Little Equinox Mountains are not located within the boundaries of the Village, their ridgelines are vitally essential features of the Village landscape and ambience, as well as irreplaceable natural resources, which must be preserved in their natural and pristine states. Extreme care must be taken to ensure that current and future energy source development (alternative energy sources), does not adversely impact those features.

14. Special consideration should be given to cultural and educational institutions, and the need to accommodate their architectural design requirements and uses.
15. Adopt regulations and attract qualified personnel to implement the Plan's goals.

16. Every effort must be made to avoid causes of pollution, including development of industrial facilities, which, by their location, or in their construction, maintenance or dismantling, could have a negative impact on the water supply, atmosphere, or other aspects of the environment.

17. Develop and adopt a Hazard Mitigation Plan to prepare for and deal with possible catastrophic events.

18. Apply for Village Center Designation through the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development to help commercial property owners qualify for tax credits, and for the Village to receive priority consideration for state grants and other resources.
3.0 LAND SUITABILITY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Recognizing and accommodating the physical characteristics and natural elements of the landscape is critical for planning future land use. Steep slopes and unstable soils, drainage and flood prone areas, high elevations, and other land characteristics limit development. Water, timber, scenic vistas, open space, and other natural resources require protection and preservation.

3.1 Surface Hydrology

Surface waters such as the Batten Kill and smaller brooks and streams are critical to the Village’s water system. Any destruction, diversion, or pollution of drainage channels can affect public water supplies and plant and wildlife habitat. The Batten Kill and its watershed is a regional resource requiring regional cooperation in river planning and management. Continued vigilance is needed in enforcing environmental regulations for new and existing development to protect the quality of this resource. The Village, together with Dorset, Manchester, Sunderland, Arlington, and the New York towns of Salem and Jackson, must exercise appropriate control over land development near rivers and streams to prevent degradation of recreational and scenic values.

The Village contains several man-made ponds. The most visible is the pond on the Orvis Green. The largest pond in the Village is Equinox Pond. The surface area of which is fifteen acres. Equinox Pond is at an elevation of 1,100 feet, and contains a basin area of 537 acres.

Wetlands provide temporary storage for floodwaters and storm runoff; protect water quality; mitigate the effects of erosion; contribute to fish and wildlife ecology, and provide scenic beauty. Village wetland areas have been periodically mapped by the Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, and the Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Environmental Conservation. A wetland may be designated if the water table is at, near, or above the surface long enough to promote the formation of hydric soil or to support the growth of hydrophytic vegetation. Wetlands include marshes, swamps, flooded flats, wet meadows, bogs, ponds and sloughs. Vermont wetland rules were adopted by the Vermont Water Resources Board in 1990. These provide special protection for different classes of wetlands. Class I is considered exceptional and irreplaceable. No effort has been undertaken to date to determine whether or not there is a Class I wetland in the Village. However, all Village wetlands shown on the national wetlands inventory map are Class II, and as such are somewhat protected subject to field evaluation. Wetland coverage can be seen in Map 3-1. Flood plains and wetlands should ordinarily not be filled.

3.2 Topography

Topography may be classified by slope or gradient. Lands of a slope between 0% and 5% are usually suitable for all types of development. Lands of between 6% and 10% slope are ideal for subdivisions. A slope of between 11% and 15% poses moderate limitations to development. Land with slopes of over 15% may be limited for development, because of thin soils, susceptibility to erosion, and difficulty in siting roads. Land with slopes of 20% or greater have severe limitations and should not be developed.

Large areas of land with slopes in excess of 20% are primarily along the eastern boundary of the Village, on the west bank of the Batten Kill, and, to some extent, along the western Village boundary near the Southern Vermont Art Center.

3.3 Soil Suitability for Development

The permeability, stability, depth to bedrock, and content of soils can create limitations for septic systems, roads, and building foundations. Unstable soils in the Village are predominately along
the west side of the Batten Kill. Much of the land between these unstable soils and Main Street (Route 7A) has few apparent soils limitations to development.

3.4 Earth Resources
Marble, Sand, and Gravel
At one time, marble extraction was a major industry in Manchester and Dorset. However, the most recent investigations suggest that the quantity and quality are not sufficient to warrant economic investment in this resource. Given the existing and established pattern of development in the Village and goals, this plan neither encourages nor provides for commercial extraction or processing of earth resources. However, removal and reuse in conjunction with development projects is appropriate in accordance with a re-grading and site restoration and improvement plan.

Agricultural Lands
The Village does not contain commercial agricultural operations. Agricultural operations conducted at Hildene are primarily educational in nature. Much of the open land is in recreational, cultural, and institutional uses. Several large parcels (5-50+ acres) are also associated with estates, dwellings, and, to some extent, inns. Aside from recreational use of open lands, the balance tends to be maintained for aesthetic purposes associated with the use, or kept in a natural state.

Open lands may contain prime agricultural soils identified by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. The agricultural value of some soil series may have a bearing on development plans. Consequently, such soils should be evaluated, and if deemed important, considered in site plans. In addition to soil productivity, a site and area viability assessment should be made to determine how practical agricultural preservation is for a given parcel. Agriculture soils can be seen in Map 3-1.

Some agricultural uses may not be compatible with other uses (residential, lodging) in the Village, due to certain types of nuisance characteristics. State law limits zoning authority for accepted agricultural practices.

3.5 Scenic Roads, Trails, and Views
Vermont legislation provides for the recognition and retention of scenic roads. Until the Village's scenic roads are officially identified, public or private actions, which may have a negative impact on the scenic aspects of any Village road, should be stringently evaluated.

In 2007, the Village of Manchester Planning Commission, with the assistance of the Bennington County Regional Commission, prepared and published an Inventory of Scenic Resources to identify those critical elements that make the local scenery unique and valuable, and are particularly important in defining the character of the community. An understanding of the features that contribute to the Village’s unique beauty will greatly assist in planning for the protection and wise use of its scenic resources.

Additionally, the Village has a vast amount of trails. The Equinox Preservation Trust Trails are the most extensive and connect along the western edge of the Village before continuing up Mount Equinox. In addition, the Southern Vermont Arts Center also has some trails. These trails are shown on the Transportation Map in Chapter 8. Trail systems in the Village are beneficial to the community and visitors alike.

3.6 Open Space
The Equinox Golf Course, the Ekwanok Golf Course, Dellwood Cemetery, Hildene, the undeveloped areas of the Southern Vermont Art Center, lands of the Equinox Historic Preservation Trust, and some of the larger estates are all-important contributors to the open
aspect of the Village. These properties can be seen on the Community Facilities and Utilities Map in Chapter 9. Any proposals for development of these and other open areas in the Village should be carefully reviewed to minimize any negative impacts.

Some open lands have historic or cultural value, and exemplify the early rural settlement pattern of the Village, while others have recreation value. They contribute to the retention of views extending across open fields and open vistas. Retention, not only of historic structures and properties, but of the Village landscape is essential to protect examples of the historic settlement pattern. Some examples of important open spaces include: Quasi-Public - Hildene, Southern Vermont Art Center; Recreational - Equinox Golf Course, Ekwanok Golf Course; Large Estates - the Bremer and the Clark Estates; Small Estates - the Ross (Inslee), Redmond (Arkell/Wilson), and Olcott (Hardy) Estates; and other special types such as Burr and Burton Academy, Dellwood Cemetery, Equinox Pond, the Wilburton Inn, and Orvis Green property fronting along Route 7A. Other open lands may contribute significantly to preservation of natural resources such as the Batten Kill shoreline, or the retention of natural ridgelines, particularly those of Big Equinox and Little Equinox Mountains. The Vermont State Planning and Zoning Act enables municipalities to protect and maintain early settlement patterns. The Design Control regulations of the Zoning Bylaws are intended to implement the goals of the Plan and reinforce the historic settlement pattern of the Village.

3.7 Biological Areas

The Bennington Region and Towns contain a number of rare plant species, animals, and natural communities. Two such areas are identified as rare plant species locations in the Village. One area is in the vicinity of Equinox Pond, and the other is near the Dellwood Cemetery. A medical herb community (Veronica anagallis-aquatica L. – water speedwell) borders the Village at the base and slopes of Equinox Mountain. Rare plant and animal species can be seen in Map 3-2.
Map 3-2
Agricultural Soils

* Prime: Soil with the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed fiber, forage and oilseed crops.

State: Soil of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oil seed crops.

"B" Versions: These soils have a wetness limitation that may be difficult to overcome.

(Definitions taken from Vermont ANR Atlas)
4.0 FLOOD RESILIENCE

4.1 Overview

With changing climate conditions and more extreme weather events, flooding is likely to occur with much greater frequency. It is imperative that communities properly prepare to minimize future flood damage and to develop the capacity for post-flood resilience. The State of Vermont maintains a Flood Ready Website that provides comprehensive information for municipalities. Effective flood resilience requires several steps, including: assessing hazards, avoiding and reducing risks, preparing for an emergency, and insuring residual risk.

Once damage from a flood has occurred, it is important that communities have the capacity to effectively rebuild and recover. Following through on risk reduction strategies is critical at this stage, as is the ability to effectively access financial and other support from federal and state government agencies.

4.2 Assessing Community Hazards

Special flood hazard areas include areas that have been determined to have a one percent or greater chance of inundation from flooding in any given year. These areas are shown in the Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRM), and can also be seen in Map 4-1. As a participating municipality in the FEMA Flood Insurance Program, the Village of Manchester maintains land use regulations that control the type of development that occurs in these areas. In addition, the Village does not have any repetitive loss structures.

River corridors and Fluvial Erosion Hazard (FEH) areas require special attention because of the potential for flood-related damage to buildings and critical infrastructure resulting from the erosive force of floodwaters. River corridors include the meander belt of the channel and a fifty-foot buffer to allow for stable bank conditions adjacent to structures, in order to maintain dynamic equilibrium over time. River corridor maps have been developed based on scientific, location-specific assessment of the geomorphic condition of a river developed by the Vermont Rivers Program. The major river corridors in the Village of Manchester have been delineated by the Bennington County Regional Commission in cooperation with the Bennington County Conservation District and the state. The maps show corridors within which the rivers are likely to meander over time to find their most stable path while efficiently moving and storing sediment loads. The orientation and width of these meander belts varies with valley shape, surficial geology, and the natural channel length, slope, and width. FEH areas are equivalent to the meander belt, also known as the River Corridor Protection Area. River corridors can be seen in Map 4-1. Currently, the Village of Manchester has an ordinance in place to protect the river corridors and FEH areas.

As noted above, most flood-related damage in Vermont results from the erosive power of water causing damage to buildings and critical public infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and culverts. Public water and sewer systems, parks, and important historic sites also have been damaged by flooding-related erosion. Where stream meanders are confined by human activity, the waterways lose their equilibrium and become steeper, straighter, and more powerful, significantly increasing the risk for damage.

There are nine structures located in the flood hazard area, and four structures located in the river corridor. The flood hazard area maps (DFIRM) for Bennington County, and the Village of Manchester, became effective on December 2, 2015.

4.3 Limiting Risk from Flooding

Elements of the natural environment play an important role in minimizing the extent of the risk from flooding. Upland forests help to retain water during storms and minimize the erosive forces that would add sediment and debris to river channels. Wetlands, particularly those in floodplain areas, retain stormwater and protect water quality during and after heavy rains.
The Village’s Flood Hazard Ordinance controls development in areas prone to flood inundation, enables the Village of Manchester to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program and, through that program, for property owners to have access to flood insurance. The regulations required by the insurance program set development standards that minimize adverse impacts on structures that would be caused by high water. The Village also has adopted regulations to protect mapped FEH areas within river corridors. The most important reason to protect these FEH areas is to allow the river to adjust to changing levels of water, sediment, and energy, thereby dissipating destructive potential prior to impacting concentrations of residential or commercial development or critical public infrastructure. New municipal and state infrastructure should be located outside any of these hazard areas, or when that is impossible (as with the case of some bridge and water treatment facilities) that it be properly designed and constructed.

Roads and stream crossing structures (culverts and bridges) are particularly vulnerable to damage from flooding. Many existing culverts are too small to carry flood waters and too narrow to accommodate the stream channel, causing a back-up of sediments and creating plunge pools that damage roads and imperil nearby properties. Consequently, the Village is engaged in an ongoing assessment of the physical and geomorphic condition of its culverts and bridges and developing a plan for needed upgrades. The roadway design standards in the Village of Manchester should remain consistent with the most current “VTrans Orange Book” standards to correctly size replacement structures.

New Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF) Standards took effect in 2014. This program provides state funds to communities after a declared disaster to cover a portion of the cost of repair and restoration work not covered by federal funds. Communities receive additional state funding if they have taken specific steps to reduce the current risk (an extra five percent for steps 1-4, below, and another five percent for also implementing step 5):

1. Participate in the National Flood Insurance Program;
2. Annually certify that Town Road and Bridge Standards meet or exceed the standards in the current VTrans Orange Book: Handbook for Local Officials;
3. Annually update and adopt a Local Emergency Operations Plan;
4. Adopt a FEMA-approved local Hazard Mitigation Plan (or, a draft plan has been submitted to FEMA Region 1 for review);
5. Protect River Corridors from new encroachment; or, protect flood hazard areas from new encroachment and participate in the FEMA Community Rating System.

Local Hazard Mitigation Plans involve identification of local hazards while prioritizing the steps needed to mitigate risk and providing access to a funding source through the FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance Program. To be effective the local Hazard Mitigation Plan must clearly identify and prioritize specific projects. Funding to implement mitigation projects may be available through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) in Vermont or through other FEMA Flood Hazard Mitigation Assistance programs.

4.4 Preparing for an Emergency

Once a flood or other emergency situation occurs, it is imperative that municipalities have a consistent and reliable system for coordinating response. A Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP) is an effective way to coordinate local response and facilitate contact with other towns and agencies. The LEOP provides a list of local names, numbers and assigned roles, resources available, contact information, and provides a framework for coordination with support services available at the state and federal level. The LEOP should be updated annually and a copy submitted to the Vermont Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security.
During large events multiple towns may collaborate, sharing staff, equipment, and other resources to achieve the most rapid and cost-effective response. Bennington County’s Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC #7) provides an ongoing forum for inter-municipal communication and preparedness planning. Municipalities also can execute formal inter-municipal mutual aid agreements that specify how support services are requested, cost sharing, and other issues. Having formal agreements in place will not only assist in the response phase of an emergency, but also can help recover reimbursable costs through FEMA in the event of a federal declaration.

4.5 Insuring Residual Risk

Most homeowner’s insurance policies do not cover damage from flooding. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), however, offers flood insurance for properties anywhere in communities that participate in the program – including the high risk Special Flood Hazard Area. While lenders must assure that mortgages for structures in Special Flood Hazard Areas are insured for flood risk, many existing structures in these areas either do not carry flood insurance or are not fully insured to receive “replacement value” after a disaster.

Flood insurance information is available for consumers at www.FloodSmart.gov. That site helps to identify properties in areas of defined flood risk, explains the FEMA map products, and outlines insurance options. Recent federal changes to the NFIP have resulted in an increased costs, but insurance for affected properties remains available through that program.

If a structure is not insured the owner assumes the entire risk of property loss. In the event of a flood disaster the owner may be eligible for FEMA’s Individual and Households Program Assistance, but this funding will not cover any losses that could have been insured. At the time of Tropical Storm Irene, the maximum Individual Assistance grant was $30,200 and the average grant in Vermont was $6,752, while the average NFIP claim was $43,078.

Participation in the FEMA Community Rating System can decrease the cost of flood insurance for Village residents. By taking extra steps to reduce flood damage, flood insurance policies are discounted from 5% to 40%. Additional information about CRS and other flood hazard initiatives is available from the Watershed Management Division of the Agency of Natural Resources.

4.6 Recovery After a Flood

Following the immediate response to a flood, communities often are faced with significant costs. Repairs to bridges, removal of debris, and armoring banks can cost a municipality several million dollars. After a federally-declared disaster qualified losses may be reimbursed through the federal Public Assistance program and Vermont ERAF. It may take a considerable dedication of municipal resources to navigate the federal bureaucracy after a disaster, a process made somewhat easier when complete and accurate records of damage and repair are maintained by the municipality.

Effective long-term recovery from a flood requires that each of the steps outlined in this chapter are followed. Working to minimize risk and future damage, maintaining a current emergency operations plan, and insuring residual risk to the extent possible are the best ways to support recovery and ensure that the community is as resilient as possible.

4.7 Village Preparedness

The Village of Manchester is part of the NFIP, as mentioned above, has adopted the Town Road and Bridge Standards, and maintains a current LEOP through the Town of Manchester. The Village started developing a Hazard Mitigation Plan in the fall of 2015. The anticipated completion date for the Hazard Mitigation Plan, including adoption, is summer 2016.
4.8 Policies for Flood Resilience:

1. Continue to work cooperatively with the BCRC and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources to maintain accurate flood hazard maps and to identify specific areas of concern that should be targeted for mitigation actions.

2. Continue to work with state and federal agencies, and conservation and watershed organizations, to maintain and enhance the ecological integrity of rivers, streams, wetlands, and upland forests.

3. A buffer of natural vegetation should be established and maintained between rivers, streams, and other waterbodies to maintain water quality and to attenuate overland flow. This buffer should be at least 50 feet wide for streams with minimal potential for lateral or vertical adjustment or 100 feet for streams with significant potential for such adjustment.

4. Maintain up-to-date regulations to limit and control development in flood and fluvial erosion hazard areas. Any public infrastructure that must be located in these areas should be carefully planned and constructed to minimize the potential for loss and damage.

5. Remain current with the most recent Town Road and Bridge Standards.

6. Existing local and state bridges and culverts that would impede flow during flooding events should be reconstructed or replaced as part of regular scheduled maintenance or through special hazard mitigation initiatives.

7. Support efforts to provide education and outreach to property owners within flood areas to encourage flood-proofing or buy-outs of structures subject to repeated flooding that are eligible for funding under the FEMA hazard mitigation grant program.

8. Consider participating in the Community Rating System.

9. Owners of property in flood hazard areas should be encouraged to secure propane tanks, firewood, boats and other items that could float away in a flood.

10. Maintain an up to date Local Emergency Operations Plan.

11. Maintain a current Hazard Mitigation Plan.
Map 4-1
Surface Water and Flood Hazard Area

Structures in River Corridor
- Multi Family Dwelling
- Single Family Dwelling

Structures in 100 Year Floodplain
- Commercial
- Other Commercial
- Single Family Dwelling

Map produced June 24, 2015 by Bennington County Regional Commission 111 South Street, Suite 203 Bennington, VT 05201
5.0 LAND USE

5.1 Settlement Pattern

The Village has experienced an orderly, concentric growth pattern. Its late 18th Century structures, many of which are still intact, have been adapted to new uses and are complemented by 19th Century Greek Revival and Victorian buildings within the compact Village center, along Route 7A. Taconic Avenue and Seminary Avenue, which intersect this main thoroughfare, are lined with later structures of the Victorian and Queen Anne periods. Surrounding this nucleus are numbers of still later, early 20th Century, large estates of a variety of architectural styles, some typical of European manor houses, and others, neo-Colonial in design. Among these estates are numbers of once-working Vermont farms, which have now been converted into leisure country homes. This outer zone of large properties is integrated with the Village nucleus by lands developed and maintained for recreational purposes, primarily golf. Mature trees, wide expanses of lawn, marble sidewalks, ornamental street lights, walls, and entrances, are all integral features of the Village's character, as are the predominantly white exterior buildings with dark shutters. Another defining characteristic of the Village is the dominant scenic value of Mount Equinox, in its natural and undeveloped state, the loss of which would be immeasurable.

The northern quadrant of the Village, which includes Burr and Burton Academy, Southern Vermont Arts Center, the former Mark Skinner Library, First Congregational Church, a number of small homes and some commercial activities, is the community's physical and historical link to the neighboring Towns of Manchester and Dorset. The northern area along Route 7A is pressured by multiple use development.

The Village has several entrances. The entrance from the north, at the Town boundary, occurs where Route 7A turns a bend at Ways Lane, and a view up the hill to the Village center is revealed. Despite, and to some extent, as a result of, the cluster of buildings in this area, this gateway entrance is somewhat unstructured.

Positive developments in the area include the acquisition of the former Combe property by The Orvis Company, and that company's agreement to retain the re-named “Orvis Green” in its undeveloped condition. A limited number of tent sales and Orvis sponsored community events are held on the “Orvis Green.” Appropriate off-site parking as well as vehicular and pedestrian control measures will help to reduce the traffic impact of such events.

The Village center, particularly along Route 7A, has retained much of its residential character. Some of the 19th Century homes remain in single-family occupancy, although others have been converted to two-family use. The Equinox Resort Complex, the Equinox Junior Building's Shops, The Charles Orvis Inn, The 1811 House, the County Courthouse, the former Mark Skinner Library, and The First Congregational Church remain the pivotal structures of the Village center.

Maintaining a continuity of existing development types, primarily residential, must continue to be emphasized as the primary way of assuring continued preservation of the character of the Village.

The total area of the Village is 3.6 square miles, or 8.7% of the Town of Manchester area, which contains 41.4 square miles. Map 5-1 shows the development pattern of the Village.

Presently, the existing diversity of building types does not detract from the feeling of homogeneity in either the built-up, or the more rural, areas. Rather, it typifies continuing development, with each element adding its share to the whole and perpetuating the unique ambience of the Village. Ensuring that future growth is visually compatible with the existing character of the Village will continue to be the planning challenge of years to come, as will the
preservation of the residential appearance of the Village. Seasonal and transient occupancy will require continued monitoring to achieve this goal.

5.2 General Guidelines for Development

For the purposes of this Plan, "development" is defined to mean any change in any use of land and structures. Development includes the division of a parcel of land into two or more parcels; the construction, reconstruction, conversion, structural alteration, relocation, or enlargement of any structure; any mining, excavation, landfill, or land disturbance, and any use or extension of the use of land. The density of development is defined in the Zoning Bylaw.

1. Any type or style of development that would adversely alter historic structures, or alter the aspect of the small, well-preserved, late 19th and early 20th century village and resort community, must be avoided.

2. Land use and development must be consistent with the land's capability to support such use and development. The natural and irreplaceable resources such as the scenic backdrop of Mount Equinox and Green Mountains must be preserved.

3. Development projects must integrate natural features and resources, rather than reclaiming, modifying, or destroying them.

4. Open space and landscaping must be incorporated into development projects.

5. Development must consider the relationship to adjacent properties.

6. Utility lines should be off-street or preferably installed underground.

7. Parking shall be to the rear of the building whenever possible and feasible.

8. Land development may be permitted only on lots with a 50-foot frontage on a public street or, with approval of the appropriate municipal panel, with access to a public street by permanent easement or right-of-way. Right-of-ways serving one family shall be a minimum of 20 feet wide, and those serving two or more families shall be a minimum of 40 feet wide.

9. Noise levels in all districts shall not be greater than levels acceptable for residential environments, and in accordance with any standards established by the Village.

10. Signs shall not be located in the Village right-of-way except as required by law, needed for traffic and pedestrian safety or as otherwise provided.

11. Development and signage shall adhere to the design guidelines and/or criteria established for the Village.

12. Before any multiple ownership plans of five or more units (whether called time-share estates, time-share license, club form of ownership or otherwise) shall be permitted, the applicant must demonstrate that the multiple ownership plan does not jeopardize the ability of the multiple owners to raise the necessary capital required to maintain and vitalize the property. This Guideline shall be enforced and implemented to the full extent permitted by the Village Charter and 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117. This Guideline shall not apply if the property is owned by a single entity.
5.3 Clustering

Clustering is a planning tool designed to reduce the spread of housing development and to gain greater amenity without changing the overall density of the total area. Proposals for clustering single-family dwellings retain the overall density of the zoning district while retaining the remaining land as permanently open space. Clustering may be appropriate in some areas to facilitate the economical provision of streets and utilities, and enhance the environmental quality of the area through maximum preservation of open space.

In the Village Zoning Bylaws, the Development Review Board may permit clustering in Rural Residential Districts. In areas served by public water and sewerage, the tract of land to be subdivided must be 18 acres or larger. Where utilities are unavailable, the tract must be 30 acres or larger, and the proposed sewage disposal facilities must comply with the applicable Village, Town, and State Sanitary Codes.

A site plan must be prepared and reviewed at an open public meeting. Street design, lot layout, and locations of open space must implement the stated objectives of the Village Plan and must be approved by the Planning Commission.

5.4 Planned Development

Zoning provisions for Planned Unit Development (PUD) allow a Planning Commission, or Development Review Board, to waive its conventional zoning in favor of a development plan designed specifically for the characteristics of a particular large site. The site is developed as a single entity for a number of dwelling units and/or commercial uses. Under PUD, the development plan may cluster single-family homes, town houses, and apartments along with community facilities and commercial land uses in any pattern that is considered to be the most efficient and the best suited to preserve the natural landscape.

The Village Bylaws identifies one PUD, the Equinox Historic District. This district has been established to preserve the unique historic and architectural qualities of the Village center while enhancing its vitality and livability. The district consists of a variety of uses, including retail, office, personal-service, tourist oriented lodging and associated facilities (including a convention center), and residential uses. The development plan is an effective and unified treatment of the development possibilities of the project site, and makes appropriate provision for preserving the Village center's historic and architectural qualities.

Map 5-2 shows the location of each of the several zoning districts, with Rural Residential-3 being the most substantial. Each district is described in the following sections.

5.5 Major Development Projects

Major residential development projects include new developments and expansions of existing developments by five family dwelling units or more, or five or more lots for single-family dwelling units, and any residential project with an improved road of greater than 400 feet. These projects should be subject to a review procedure for growth management and for compliance with other goals and policies of this Plan. Consideration should be given to time phasing of projects when there is an undue impact on municipal services and facilities. Development timing should also be consistent with scheduled municipal capital investments and services.

Policies for Major Development:

1. Before any major development occurs, a road system capable of handling traffic in a safe and efficient manner must either exist or be planned for immediate construction.

2. Where provided in the Zoning Bylaw, the clustering of single-family homes may be used to protect open lands and natural resources. While the Zoning Bylaw provides a minimum general standard for density based on gross acreage, the density of major
development projects should be based on net density. That is, net density factors out lands not suitable for development such as: steep slopes, wetlands, major drainage ways, flood plains, and poor soils. The remaining net acreage is then divided by the minimum lot area applicable to the zoning district.

5.6 Residential Development

The 2010 Census indicated a total of 700 housing units in the Village of Manchester. Of the 700 units, 210 (30.0%) are classified as seasonal, recreational, or occasional use; 423 are occupied (60.4%) all the time.

Housing vacancy rates provide a measure of the degree of choice within the housing market. Vacancy rates are calculated as a percentage of the total number of units for sale or rent. A rate of 4%-4.5% suggests a healthy housing market. A lower vacancy rate correlates to tight market conditions, with high demand for a limited number of housing units. The 2010 Census provides a homeowner and rental vacancy rate. The homeowner vacancy rate in the Village of Manchester is 5.1%, 3.3% in the Town of Manchester, and 2.3% in Bennington County. Single family homes (one unit detached) represents the largest type of housing at an estimated 350 units, based on the 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. According to the Vermont Housing Finance Agency and US Census, the median home value in the Village of Manchester is $627,900, the highest in Bennington County. Additionally, the median rent is $772. Median family incomes are $134,063, also the highest in the county.
Planning for the use of the existing larger single-family dwellings may pose a problem for the Village and its residents. The architectural appearance of these structures and landscaping of these dwellings contributes significantly to the character of the Village. The Village would be best served by having the use and appearance of these buildings maintained. Residential use along Route 7A is favored over business, commercial, or other nonresidential uses.

To provide continued protection of the Village’s open, historic, and low-density settlement pattern, the existing predominant Rural Residential zoning should be maintained. While the Village Plan provides for variable land use districts and densities, the predominant residential classification is three acres to as much as five acres per dwelling unit. Cluster development may be permitted in Rural Residential Districts. By allowing smaller lots, such clustering of single-family homes should better protect open space, fragile areas, natural resources, and provide more efficient use of public facilities and services.

The Equinox and Ekwanok Golf Courses are important community assets, which should be preserved for open space and recreation. North of Union Street, clustered housing has been successfully incorporated into the fringes of the Equinox Golf Course. Such development exemplifies a well-designed compromise between providing orderly housing growth and protecting the Village’s character.

The Batten Kill is another significant community resource that requires careful protection. Although slopes, wetlands, and flood prone areas provide some natural limitations for development along the river, further zoning restrictions will ensure preservation of this valuable area. Housing development should not be permitted on lands designated Forest along the western boundaries of the Village, which lands include the area surrounding Equinox Pond.

5.7 Affordable Housing

The State of Vermont has identified the need for affordable housing as a central goal for local, regional, and state planning efforts. It is important that good quality housing, for purchase or rent, be available in a variety of types and price ranges. People need to be able to have sufficient income to pay housing costs, as well as food, clothing, transportation, and other necessities. One measure often used to assess housing affordability for residents of a community is the number of families paying over 30% of their income toward housing costs. In the Village, 24.7% of homeowners and 35.9% of renters pay greater than 30% of their incomes toward housing costs. These are not the lowest percentages in the county, but are among the lowest.

Even though the majority of homeowners and renters in the Village are paying less than 30% of their incomes towards housing costs, it is still important to provide affordable housing to residents in need. Though, providing affordable housing in the Village is difficult due to the high cost of property.

The Meadows Project provides subsidized housing for income eligible households. Shires Housing is a nonprofit organization that has developed quality and perpetually affordable housing, with emphasis on housing for people in the local workforce. Shires Housing currently owns 225 rental units in Bennington County, 36 are in the Town of Manchester. Habitat for Humanity also has a regional division that develops housing for area residents. Other organizations that support affordable housing include the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, Vermont Housing and Finance Agency, Vermont Community Loan Fund, Housing Vermont, NeighborWorks of Western Vermont, Bennington Rutland Opportunity Council, and other local businesses and non-profits with similar missions.
5.8 **Special Needs Housing**

The population of elderly residents has been increasing and with them the demand for safe and convenient senior housing facilities and services. The median age of Village residents is 52.0 and is among the highest in the State. The median age in Vermont is 37.7 and in Bennington County is 40.3.

To accommodate the increase in older residents, Equinox Terrace, a community care home for seniors, is located in the Village of Manchester. The facility was constructed in 1986 and is licensed for 76 rooms/beds. The facility is located approximately one mile from the Village center on Meadow Lane and provides assisted living care and services, Alzheimer’s, Dementia, and memory care services, health care services, and offers long-term and short-term stays. Equinox Terrance offers private living apartments with staff available at all hours. With the aging population in the region, this is an important facility for the Village to have.

**Purpose of Residential Districts:**

* To provide housing opportunities for residents of the Village.
* To provide a variety of residential districts and densities to preserve, as much as possible, the original settlement pattern (i.e., 1, 2, 3, 5 acres per dwelling unit).
* To control development of a variety of residences and densities.
* To encourage development in areas where public utilities and improvements may be efficiently installed and maintained.
* To control the density of development in other areas which permit the permanent use of private on-site sewage disposal and private water supplies.
* To maintain and enhance the scenic and environmental qualities and to encourage the preservation of adequate open space.

**Policies for Residential Districts:**

1. Provide for housing development consistent with the existing development pattern.
2. Planned Unit Development and Clustering may be recognized in some cases as a means of promoting the most appropriate use of land, facilitating the economical provision of streets and utilities, and enhancing environmental quality through better preservation of open space.
3. The BCRC and the Village of Manchester should work with Shires Housing, other public and non-profit housing organizations, and private developers to identify housing needs and develop an adequate supply of quality housing that is affordable to residents of the community and to potential members of the workforce who are seeking housing in the area.

**Purpose of Rural Residential Districts (RR-1, RR-2, RR-3, RR-5):**

* To preserve the natural, rural, and scenic qualities of areas planned to be predominantly residential.
* To provide housing at densities that minimize the impact on, or need for, municipal services.
* To maintain the historic settlement pattern of the Village.
Policies for Rural Residential Districts:

1. The basic lot area in all rural residential districts is three or five acres per family dwelling unit.

2. In RR-2 districts, a minimum lot area of two acres per family dwelling unit may be permitted where the lot is connected to public water and sewer systems. Two acres per family dwelling unit is also permitted where an adequate, on-site, potable water source is available; the sanitary sewage disposal facilities comply with the provisions of the applicable Town of Manchester and State of Vermont Sanitary Codes, and where seasonal water tables will not adversely affect proper sewage disposal.

3. In the portion of the RR-1 district that includes the Equinox Golf Course, dwelling unit density may be increased to not over one family dwelling unit per 60,000 square feet of developable tract area, provided the golf course is maintained as an operating course, and no part of the course is developed with buildings. In order to insure the maintenance of those provisions, development rights of the Equinox Golf Course have been deeded to the Village.

Purpose of Village Residential Districts (VR):

* To provide a limited area for compact residential development for one and two-family dwelling units in areas served by public water supply and public sewer systems.

* Suitable Village Residential Districts in the Village center include Seminary Avenue, along portions of Williams Street and Dillingham Avenue, and along West Road between Shepherds Lane and Dillingham Avenue, and Batten Kill Lane.

Policies for Village Residential Districts:

1. The minimum lot area for single-family dwelling units is 15,000 square feet, provided the lot has both public water and sewer hookups available and utilized.

2. In the case of two-family dwelling units, the minimum lot area is 10,000 square feet per family dwelling provided the lot has both public water and sewer hookups available and utilized.

3. For any family dwelling unit connected to either public water or sewer, but not both, the minimum lot size is 30,000 square feet per family dwelling unit.

4. For any family dwelling unit connected to neither public water nor sewer, the minimum lot size is 40,000 square feet per family dwelling unit.

Purpose of Multi-Family Residential Districts (MR):

* To provide and control locations for public and private schools, apartment buildings, town houses, congregate housing and similar group housing in planned development projects with integrated design serviced by public water and public sewer systems.

* To control the appropriate use of land; to ensure economical provision of streets and utilities; and to secure the best possible environment for multiple family dwellings.

Policies for Multi-Family Residential Districts:

1. Multi-family dwelling structures shall consist of not more than six family dwelling units.

2. For family dwelling units connected to both a public sewer and a public water supply, the minimum lot area is 10,000 square feet per family dwelling unit.

3. For any family dwelling units connected to either public water or sewer, but not both, the minimum lot size is 20,000 square feet per family dwelling unit.
4. For any family dwelling unit connected to neither public water nor sewer, the minimum lot size is 40,000 square feet per family dwelling unit.

5. A public or private school may be located on a lot having a minimum of 20 acres.

6. Congregate housing projects, which provide extended services to elderly and disabled residents, who may require more services than are available in independent dwelling units, shall not be treated as separate dwelling units under the zoning bylaw. If connected to both public water and public sewer, they shall contain at least 2,000 sq. ft. of lot area per bedroom.

5.9 Business Development

The Village business districts encompass both sides of Main Street (Route 7A), from north of Union Street and the Equinox Historic District to the Village/Town boundary.

In addition to businesses and professional offices, the district contains several single-family homes, apartments, and multi-family dwelling units. These residences are interspersed among the district’s businesses, which include professional offices, retail stores, restaurants, inns, Orvis Company, and art and furniture galleries.

The scope and composition of the business district complements the overall character of the Village. Structures are generally small, of traditional design and well landscaped. The district’s blend of business and residential uses reinforces the Village’s identity as a resort and residential area, and must be protected and maintained. Low intensity businesses that generate minimal traffic shall be encouraged, along with continuing residential use of some properties. Desirable businesses include professional offices, small retail specialty shops, and lodging facilities.

5.9.1 BUSINESS-1

Purpose of Business-1 District:

* To ensure that further business development is compatible with the present scale and character of the Village.
* To control the best use of land in areas most appropriate for locating suitable business establishments.
* To discourage large retail stores, shopping complexes, any business involving the manufacture or assembly of large or heavy goods, or any other business activity that is not compatible with the present scale and character of the Village.

Policies for Business-1 District:

1. Any change in property use is conditional and shall be generally limited to business, professional, and lodging facility uses.

2. Business uses, which generate increased traffic congestion, cross street traffic, and frequent turning movements, must be limited.

3. Projects that cause an undue impact on existing public services and facilities shall be discouraged, unless adequate provisions to correct such deficiencies are provided by the developer/applicant.

4. Combined access and shared parking shall be encouraged in cases where such use results in improved efficiency of land use and preservation and integration of open space.

5. Parking areas should be well screened from streets and adjoining properties, and should be located behind the required building setback. Parking shall be to the rear of buildings, whenever possible and feasible.
6. The small scale of buildings should be retained.

7. Historic buildings of state and national significance should be preserved and protected. New development must be compatible with the applicable Design Control District's goals and policies.

8. Significant natural or topographic land features are to be retained. Care should be taken to preserve openness and scenic views.

9. Signs shall be closely controlled.

5.9.2 BUSINESS-2

Purpose of the Business-2 District:

* To establish a defined area for those retail establishments providing necessary services to the community and to ensure that such businesses are able to continue to provide their important services. A supermarket is a self-service retail food market primarily selling foods, but also selling other convenience and household merchandise as less than 50% of total sales.

* To minimize the adverse impacts of heavy vehicular traffic, by concentrating it in this designated portion of the Village, and by designing access that promotes the smooth flow of such traffic.

Policies for the Business-2 District:

1. Projects that cause an undue impact on existing public services and facilities shall be discouraged, unless adequate provisions to correct such deficiencies are provided by the developer/applicant.

2. Combined access and shared parking shall be encouraged in cases where such use results in improved efficiency of land use and integration of open space.

3. Parking areas shall be well screened from streets and adjoining properties.

4. Parking areas should be designed to avoid the perception of large expanses of paved area.

5. The amount of required open space/green space may be less than in the Business-1 District, but shall be intensively landscaped.

5.10 Major Development Review

In both the Business-1 and Business-2 Districts, the Zoning Bylaw shall provide for detailed Planning and Zoning review, with specific criteria designed to implement the policies, goals, and purposes of this Plan, in the case of major developments. The Bylaw shall define major developments to include all projects that have the potential to adversely affect the character of the Village, or the policies, goals, and purposes of this Plan. Major developments may also be treated as conditional uses to insure a more thorough review by the appropriate municipal panel, or another zoning device could be used to accomplish this purpose.

5.11 Equinox Historic District

In 1769, less than ten years after Manchester was established, the first hotel was built on the site of the Equinox House. During the following 200 years, the site served as the focal point of the Village and set the tone of the community. This is still true today and hence, the future character of the Village is inextricably tied to the quality of development on the Equinox site.
The Equinox complex should be treated separately from other areas in the Village. The complex plays a critical role in defining the Village’s character, and the structures make up a unique historic asset of statewide significance.

**Purpose of the Equinox Historic District:**

* To encourage cohesive Planned Unit Development (PUD) of the Equinox complex which addresses the site as a whole. The PUD permits a mixture of uses, thereby allowing the adaptive re-use of the historic buildings and encouraging an integrated community with innovation in historic design, adaptation, and layout. Resulting in a more efficient use of land. The PUD approach permits both flexibility on the part of the developer to propose a project meeting the confines of the existing buildings, and flexibility on the part of the Village to impose a broad range of conditions to protect its interests.

**Policies for the Equinox Historic District:**

1. Development within the District must proceed in accordance with an overall development plan (PUD).
2. Development must be designed and landscaped to minimize any adverse effects on neighboring properties.
3. Land uses must be arranged so as to be compatible and ensure visual and aural privacy for residents of the project and neighboring properties.
4. The development plan shall make appropriate provision for preservation of unique historic and architectural qualities of the Village center.
5. The overall residential density shall be no greater than 3 dwelling units per acre. This requirement may be met by the preservation of open, cluster land, which may or may not be contiguous with the project parcel, so long as the open land is within the Village and is not within the Forest District.
6. Maximum building coverage shall be 15%.
7. Retail trade establishments shall contain a maximum of 2,000 square feet of total area for a one-story building, and a maximum of 3,000 square feet total in a 1-1/2 or 2-story building.
8. At least half of the PUD should be open space (vegetative green space, including ponds or lakes).
9. Equinox Master Plan: To further the objectives of the Equinox PUD District, a master plan of the property shall be updated and revised as individual projects and improvements proceed. The master plan will provide an overall context of project proposals. The most recently approved master plan shall be placed on file with the Administrative Officer.

5.12 **Design Control District**

The Design Control District encompasses the entire Village. To facilitate design control, the Design Control District is divided into three sub-districts (Historic Core District, Preservation District, and General Review District), each having different, but related, guidelines and criteria. The Design Control District can be seen in Map 5-3.

5.12.1 **Historic Core District**

The Historic Core District is the most restrictive sub-district. This district is defined as those lots, which may or may not be contiguous, that contain historic structures. For the purposes of design control, historic structures are structures, or portions of structures that pre-date 1925 and may or may not be listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Equinox Historic District.
5.12.2 Preservation District

The Preservation District is the next most restrictive sub-district and has its own design criteria and guidelines. This district is defined as all lands that are within 300 feet of the center of the right-of-way on all through roads and streets in the Village. In many cases the Preservation District overlaps the lots that make up the Historic Core District. For these cases the more restrictive design guidelines and criteria will apply.

5.12.3 General Review District

The General Review District is the least restrictive sub-district. This district is defined as those lots in the Village of Manchester that are not contained in either the Historic Core District or the Preservation District.

Purpose of the Design Control District:

* Provision of appropriate design criteria ensures that future development, alterations, or repairs, will preserve our historic structures and scenic streetscapes, and be compatible with the Village Plan of Development. The Design Control District, and its related sub-districts, affects the preservation of historic structures, and the visual appearance of structures, their relationship to each other, and to the area.

Policies for the Design Control District:

1. Within the Historic Core District it is the intent of this plan to prevent the demolition, or relocation (except to remedy a dangerous situation) of structures, or parts thereof, predating 1945. Additions, alterations, or repairs to structures within the Historic Core District must preserve or restore architectural detail to preserve the historic character of the structure.

2. Within the Historic Core District and Preservation District the following policies apply:
   a. The size, shape, and massing of structures shall be consistent with the lot size and with neighboring structures.
   b. Houses shall be arranged with respect to neighboring structures, streets, and roads to maintain the aesthetics, environment, and appearance of the late 19th and early 20th century village.
   c. Design shall be compatible with the surrounding area, and should be appropriate for a traditional late 19th and early 20th century village.
   d. Building exteriors shall be compatible with traditional Village of Manchester structures.

3. Within the Preservation District there are historic buildings and districts, such as “Pill Alley,” or “Doctor’s Row,” at the southern portion of West Road, where it joins Seminary Road, that may be less significant than those in the Historic Core, but should nonetheless be protected. Every effort shall be made to maintain and retain pre-1925 structures.

4. The General Review District standards include those that follow for the entire Village Design Control District. However, existing historic structures in the District will be reviewed with other applicable policies in the other two Districts.

5. For the entire Village Design Control District the following policies apply:
   a. Site plans and arrangements of facilities shall not be in conflict with adjoining uses of land.
b. Roads, streets, and driveways shall be designed to follow natural contours of the land.

c. Design, size, location, lighting, and other aspects of signs shall be closely controlled.

d. Landscaping and lighting shall be compatible with the surrounding area and must be appropriate for the particular design control sub-district.

5.13 Flood Hazard Area District

Areas subject to periodic flooding are identified by the Vermont Department of Water Resources, and can be seen in the Surface Water Resources and Flood Hazard Areas Map in the Flood Resilience section. These areas include the shoreline of the Batten Kill and low-lying land associated with the Batten Kill's tributaries.

Purpose of Flood Hazard Area District:

* To minimize hazards from flooding, erosion, and sedimentation.
* To maintain the capacity of stream channels to carry excess floodwater and sediment.
* To protect the recharge and water storage benefits of streams as they relate to flooding, and to protect streams as wildlife habitats.
* To minimize potential threats against life and property.

Policies for the Flood Hazard Area District:

1. No building shall be erected, altered, or moved within the flood hazard areas.
2. Suitable uses within flood hazard areas include agriculture and forestry, non-intensive outdoor recreation, activities connected with conservation and wildlife propagation, and flood control projects.
3. Intensive recreation uses should be restricted from fragile areas.
4. Vegetation shall be maintained for at least 50 feet back from the stream banks.

5.14 Forest Districts

Two of the three Forest Districts in the Village surround former public water reservoirs; the third encompasses lands associated with the Southern Vermont Art Center.

Purpose of Forest Districts:

* To preserve lands for their natural resource value and appropriate recreational uses suited to the natural environment.
* To provide peaceful settings for outdoor recreation.
* To protect water quality through careful forest management and use of land.

Policies for the Forest Districts:

1. Sustained or year-round residential uses and permanent improvements supporting such uses are not permitted on forestlands.
2. Allow for recreational uses which do not create impacts such as noise, odor or smoke.
3. Provide for appropriate educational, demonstration, and research related uses which support forestry management.
4. Motorized forms of recreation shall be prohibited in the Forest District.
Map 5-1
Development

SITE TYPE
- SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING
- MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING
- OTHER RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- OTHER COMMERCIAL
- GOVERNMENT
- FIRE STATION
- HEALTH CLINIC
- EDUCATIONAL
- HOUSE OF WORSHIP
- PUBLIC GATHERING
- LODGING
- UTILITY

Map produced June 26, 2015 by Bennington County Regional Commission
111 South Street, Suite 203
Bennington, VT 05201
Map 5-2
Zoning Districts

Rivers/Streams

Ponds/Lakes

Roads

State and U.S. Highways

Local Roads

Parcels

Zoning Districts

BUSINESS

EHD

FOREST

MR

RR-1

RR-2

RR-3

RR-5

VR

Map produced July 7, 2015 by Bennington County Regional Commission 111 South Street, Suite 203 Bennington, VT 05201
Map 5-3
Design Control Districts

Map produced July 7, 2015 by
Bennington County Regional Commission
111 South Street, Suite 203
Bennington, VT 05201

Legend:
- Historic Core District
- Preservation District
- General Review District
- Ponds/Lakes
- Streams/Rivers
- Roads

Miles
6.0 POPULATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Population
In the Village of Manchester, the average rate of population increase per decade from 1970 to 2010 is 18%. The highest growth rate was between 1970 and 1980, at 29.4%. According to the 2010 Census, the total population in the Village is 749 people. It is estimated that 514 of that total are residents and 235 are non-residents. This total represents 147 residents more than what was reported in 2000, resulting in a rate of growth of 24.4% between 2000 and 2010. Chart 6-1 illustrates the Village population as a percentage of the Town. The U.S. Census population estimate for the Village of Manchester in 2013 was 733, a decrease of 2.3% since 2010 (population estimates were not available for the Town).

![Chart 6-1: Village of Manchester Population]

Source: 2010 Census

6.2 Economic Development
The Village of Manchester is a vibrant and diverse community. Various shops, restaurants, recreational opportunities, and schools are located within the Village boundaries. The Village promotes sound economic development that can blend into the environment, while preserving...
the small, rural, and primarily residential community. This is achieved by limiting commercial
development to the Village center and the commercial areas north of the Village center along
Route 7A.

The Village discourages large retail stores, shopping complexes, and any business involving the
manufacture or assembly of large heavy goods. These types of businesses would increase
traffic, have an adverse effect on the environment, and detract from the charm of the community
and are not compatible with the scale or character in which the Village aims to sustain.

Business ventures supported by the Village involve hospitality, small-scale retail, restaurants,
internet-based and home-based businesses. In support of home occupations, the Village
zoning bylaws allow residents to use a minor portion of their dwelling for an occupation which is
customary in the home, and that does not have an undue adverse effect upon the character of
the residential area. Home-based employment and telecommuting is becoming an increasingly
popular option with advances in information technology and should continue to be supported by
the Village. It is also a priority for the Village to maintain established businesses that have been
sources of economic stability in the community.

The major employers in the Village are Orvis, Equinox Hotel, Burr and Burton and Maple Street
schools. As can be seen in Chart 6-3, most are employed in information, professional,
administrative, educational, health, social services, entertainment, arts, and food service type
industries. Chart 6-4 shows that the most dominant occupations are in the management and
professional fields and Chart 6-5 shows that almost 80% of the workforce are private wage and
salary workers.

![Chart 6-3: Employed Persons >16, by Industry]
Village Center Designation is a program created by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development that provides tax credits for commercial properties, and priority consideration for state grants and other resources for communities. Through the program's incentives, village center designation would help the Village of Manchester improve the ability of this historic village to attract residents and businesses, enhance livability, maintain a unique sense of place, and expand access to employment, housing, education and other public services.

The purpose of a village center designation is to support revitalization of what exists rather than to support areas of new growth, which is an important goal of the Village. Other goals established in this plan that support village center designation are:

* Encouraging small businesses;
* Maintaining traditional neighborhood densities;
Ensuring that new buildings and repairs, or alterations to existing buildings, do not detract from the historic appearance of the village;

* Discouraging businesses that are high traffic, high profile, or detract from the nature of the village and traditional settlement pattern, including strip development; and

* Preserving the unique and individual characteristics of the village core, including historic structures, historic architecture, architectural details, historic scenic streetscapes, mountain and valley viewscapes, and land use patterns.

The advantages of having a designated village center are recognized, and efforts will be made to establish designation in the Village.

6.4 Income

According to the Vermont Housing Finance Agency and 2010 U.S. Census, median family incomes in the Village of Manchester are the highest in Bennington County, at $134,063. In comparison, the median family income in Bennington County is $61,428.

6.5 Northshire Economic Development

In 2015, work began on the Northshire Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan. The project focuses on ways to strengthen economic development in Dorset, the Town of Manchester, and the Village of Manchester. By building upon the economic development elements identified in the Town and Village Plans, the Bennington Regional Plan, and other planning efforts, a guide to stimulate economic growth, with a focus on increasing the quantity and improving the quality of the jobs in the region, will be created. Particular attention will be devoted to developing and attracting jobs that allow individuals to both work and live in the three municipalities.

Through this project, community assets will be identified, as well as weaknesses, opportunities and threats. By identifying assets to the community, efforts can be made to strengthen them, which will then serve as the foundation for economic growth and development. Market conditions will also be examined to determine current and future demands for housing, retail, industrial, and commercial uses in the Northshire.

This study is especially important to the region because the majority of those working in the Northshire live elsewhere. According to the 2011 U.S. Census, 3,989 people work in the Northshire, but only 1,022 of them live there. In addition, 974 Northshire residents work outside of the area. With the results of this project, the Northshire can determine how to increase economic growth and encourage workers to live and work in the Northshire.

Policies for Economic Development:

1. The Village should continue to support new economic activities to provide rewarding jobs and good wages while not adversely impacting the environment or detracting from the charm of the community.

2. Planning and investments should promote growth in the Village and discourage development that would degrade the character.

3. Protect the natural, historic, cultural, and recreational resources that provide an outstanding quality of life for residents.

4. Take into consideration the actions and recommendations in the Northshire Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan when working with potential developments or businesses.
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

7.1 Legal Basis for Preservation in the Village of Manchester

The charter of the Village of Manchester was granted by the Vermont legislature in 1943. The charter authorizes the Village "To adopt and enforce within its limits building, police, sanitary, zoning, Village planning, and other similar regulations and ordinances..." The Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act (Title 24 VSA, Chapter 117) is the enabling act for planning and implementing bylaws. Among the required elements of a Municipal Plan is a statement of policies on the preservation of historic features and resources. The Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act (Title 24 VSA, Chapter 117), enables municipalities to establish design control districts, but also subjects Design Review Boards to the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission or Development Review Board, and requires local governments to take into consideration the historic resources of a Town in preparing the Municipal Plan. Under the provisions of the law, "consideration" means that the community must take an inventory of its historic resources and develop a plan for their protection.

7.2 History of Preservation in the Village of Manchester

The Village of Manchester Historic District was formed in 1984, and seventy-six principal structures and forty-four outbuildings were first listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Equinox Hotel was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972, and the Equinox Historic District was established in 1986. A survey of historic structures in the Village was compiled by the Vermont Historic Preservation Division. Individual buildings in the Historic District can be seen in Sketch Map 7-1, the boundary of the Historic Sub-District can be seen in Map 7-2. These buildings were evaluated based on a set of criteria designed to determine their significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture. The National Register criteria are as follows:

Criteria: The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

1. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

2. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

3. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

4. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

7.3 Preservation Procedure

Historic Preservation is a matter of public policy in the Village. The Village of Manchester Planning Commission was established in 1970 and the first Village of Manchester Plan of Development was adopted in 1972. Those actions requiring design review are indicated in the Zoning Bylaws of the Village of Manchester. The Historic Core and Preservation Design Control Sub-Districts reflect a mix of styles of historical and architectural significance. Each of the districts contain a mix of styles, such as "Colonial" or "Victorian," and embody important elements of the Village of Manchester culture and history. Therefore, when considering changes within the districts, not only changes to the structure, but also at the effect those changes will have on the districts as a whole. In the Historic Core Sub-District, design review is
guided by the standards developed by the United States Secretary of the Interior (as amended, 1992). Certain houses identified in the Zoning Bylaws, within the Preservation and General Review Sub-Districts, will also be subject to the Secretary of the Interior Standards. The Design Review Criteria provides a procedure for possible variation from the Secretary's Standards, where necessary. Provisions included in the Secretary’s Standards are:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence, or pictorial evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The purpose of the Design Review Standards is to see that the exterior of new buildings and exterior changes to existing structures, large scale landscaping and site plan changes (trees, hedges, and earth contour changes) are compatible with and can, therefore, enhance the overall character of the districts.
8.0 TRANSPORTATION

8.1 Roads Through the Village of Manchester

U.S. Route 7A (Main Street) serves as the primary transportation artery through Manchester, and the principal north-south highway in the western part of the State. A limited access section of Route 7 provides a bypass around the Village, and has relieved some of the congestion that once resulted from larger volumes of through traffic. Historic Main Street (Route 7A) continues to serve the local needs of Village residents and visitors.

West Road and Ways Lane to the north, River Road to the south, the Prospect-Seminary Loop, and Union Street are the Village’s other primary roads, which are part of the Preservation Overlay. The road network can be seen in Map 8-1. These roads could easily become more important in traffic circulation patterns in the Village, particularly if they begin to serve as collectors for future subdivisions, or are employed as a means to avoid congested areas of the Town’s central business district during peak vehicular traffic periods. West Road, for example, presently serves as a form of bypass for north-south trips. There are 9.087 miles of traveled Village roads, in total. This mileage, which has remained nearly constant for more than 200 years, is classified by the Agency of Transportation as follows: Class 1 - 2.007 miles; Class 2 - 3.390 miles; and Class 3 - 3.690 miles. Substantial growth in the Town of Manchester has contributed to increased traffic volumes both within, and surrounding, the Village. Maximizing safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and travelers will require controlling access to and use of Main Street (Route 7A), particularly in commercial areas, and is a priority of the Village. Such measures include controlling vehicular movement, and providing adequate off-street parking. Similarly, increased intensity of land use will generate additional trips to and from the Village. This increase will require careful monitoring to ensure adequate capacity, safety, and convenience for the motoring public and residents of the Village. The attraction of the Village for pedestrians, joggers, and cyclists also requires careful examination and consideration of their needs.

Retention of the existing system of roads is essential to protect and maintain the Village landscape. The pattern of development in the Village, and the road system, are intimately related. Consistent with other goals and policies of this plan is the need to minimize significant expansion of the existing road system. When such large expansions are proposed, special precaution must be taken to protect the natural landscape and historic settlement pattern.

8.2 Scenic Roads

The road pattern and streetscape, in and of itself, is a fundamental part of Village history and its aesthetic qualities. In the heart of the Village the relationship of the tree canopy, street lighting, marble walks, and tiers of grass strips, walks, and yards, form a unique bond of aesthetic qualities, which must be preserved. Other roads in the Village have unique qualities as well. River Road winds through an almost park like setting bordered by unique stone-walls, fences, ponds, and vistas, where the natural environment is the predominant experience. Union Street is yet another striking example of a dominant panoramic view of the east face of Equinox Mountain, with the Village’s clustered buildings in the foreground. It is essential that all of the positive elements of the streetscape, including immediate, nearby, and distant contributing elements, be recognized and protected.

The Vermont Byways Program provides a formal way for Vermont communities to identify, protect, and promote roads that have special qualities. These qualities might be primarily scenic, as the Scenic Road Law recognized; or they might relate to any of five other “intrinsic qualities” defined by the 39 National Scenic Byways Program - natural, cultural, recreational, historic, or archaeological. Under the new State program, a “Vermont Byway” is a road that has been so designated, because of one or more of these special qualities, and for which a management plan has been developed at the local level.
Unlike the previous law, the Vermont Byways Program does not impose uniform requirements on communities as to how designated roads may be improved or maintained, nor is its scope restricted to the right of way. Rather, the Byways Program takes a flexible approach, which only requires that the local community define what it is that is special about a byway, and then adopt a strategy for managing the byway, in a way that will protect the byway’s critical resources.

Efforts to designate the Shires of Vermont Byway began in 2006. The total length of the Byway, including side trips, is 75.8 miles. The Byway was named for the scenic region it passes through, from the southern border of Vermont in Pownal, to where it intersects with the Stone Valley Byway in Manchester. The Byway follows Route 7A through the Village of Manchester.

8.3 Public Transportation and Intercity Bus Travel

Green Mountain Community Network (GMCN) operates the Express transit service, providing a range of fixed-route, deviated fixed-route, and demand response services. A fixed-route service, the Orange Line, runs between Bennington and Manchester along Route 7A, with stops in Bennington, Shaftsbury, Arlington, the Village of Manchester, and the Town of Manchester, twice daily with one morning and one afternoon trip, seven days a week. This provides a valuable commuter link for many workers. The bus makes one stop in the Village at the Equinox Hotel, in Manchester, the bus stops at Shaw’s Grocery Store, Manchester Square, Merchants Bank, Manchester Town Offices, and Rite Aid. Connections can be made in Manchester for continued service on The Bus to Rutland.

GMCN also works with volunteer drivers to provide door-to-door transportation to and from medical appointments, as well as special trips for elderly, nursing home residents, and persons with disabilities. These services are very important to the people served.

The Bus, based in Rutland, provides travel between Rutland and Manchester (and the Village of Manchester) four times a day, six days a week. The Bus makes a few stops in Rutland, including the Rutland Airport, and then travels to Wallingford, Danby, Dorset, the Town of Manchester, and the Village of Manchester. Stops in the Village include the Village Post Office and Orvis. In the Town of Manchester, stops include Shaw’s Grocery Store, Merchants Bank, Manchester Town Offices, and the Chittenden Bank.

A new intercity bus service, operated by Vermont Translines, began in 2014. The service has two routes, one that connects Burlington to Albany, NY via Bennington and Rutland, and one that connects Rutland to White River Junction and Hanover, NH. This bus service makes one round trip, on each route, each day.

8.4 Air Transportation

Airports in the region include Rutland Southern Vermont Regional Airport, William H. Morse State Airport in Bennington, and Albany International Airport in Albany, NY. Rutland Southern Vermont Regional Airport operates direct flights, serviced by Cape Air, to and from Boston Logan International Airport several times a day. William H. Morse is home to the Bennington Civil Air Patrol wing, which serves the Southern Vermont region. There is no commercial passenger or freight operator based at William H. Morse, but it is a general aviation center used frequently by business travelers. Albany International Airport is the most frequently used airport to those living in, or traveling to/from Western New England, with commercial airline services including, Cape Air, Delta Airlines, Southwest Airlines, United Airlines, US Airways, and JetBlue.

8.5 Bus to Rail Service

Currently, a proposal is being reviewed on the operation of a thruway bus service between the Albany/Rensselaer Amtrak Station, Bennington, and Manchester. Under the proposal, two or more round trips would be made daily, making timed connections with Amtrak train service to Penn Station in New York City. The service would greatly expand access to the Southwestern
Vermont area for both vacationers and potential residents who could live in Vermont while maintaining a business connection in nearby metro areas. Vermont residents would also benefit from improved access to passenger rail service.

8.6 Electric Vehicles

The State Comprehensive Energy Plan emphasizes the importance of planning for new technologies to help reach the goal of meeting 90% of the state’s energy needs through renewable energy sources by 2050. Supporting the growth of electric vehicles is one way to help Vermont meet this goal. The use of electric vehicles will continue to increase by more than 15% by 2025. To attract those traveling in electric vehicles, municipalities need to provide electric vehicle charging stations. Currently, there is one private electric charging station located in the Village of Manchester at the Taconic Hotel, for hotel guests. In the Town of Manchester, there are three public charging stations, two located behind the Northshire Bookstore and one at Zoey’s Double Hex Restaurant. With the installation of more charging stations, the Village will be able to maintain electric vehicle travelers through supporting and accommodating their vehicle of choice.

Transportation Goals:

1. To provide safe and adequate transportation for Village residents and visitors, while preserving the Village character.

Transportation Policies:

1. To assure high standards of design and construction, great care must be taken in evaluating new subdivision streets.

2. Street standards must be established in accordance with Village standards.

3. Every opportunity must be taken to ensure that adequate road geometry results from improvements in street alignment and intersections.

4. Landscaping and sidewalks must be properly and adequately maintained wherever they exist.

5. All new road construction must take into account the limitations imposed by topographical conditions, natural resources, unique sites, fragile areas, and must be designed to avoid disruption to the historic settlement pattern and open spaces.

6. Land use intensity must consider trip generation in relation to traffic efficiency, safety, and road-intersection capacity. If necessary, the cost of mitigating impacts must be borne, in relation to the impact caused.

7. Preservation and maintenance of the transportation system is a high priority for the next several years. Route 7A must be preserved as a two-lane road to insure compatibility with the late 19th, and early 20th Century Village.

8. The Village should continue to support existing public transportation services, including intercity bus service, to meet current and future demands.

9. The Village supports the use of alternative fuels and should consider them in planning, when feasible.

10. Maximize safety for pedestrians and cyclists throughout the Village.
9.0 COMMUNITY FACILITIES, UTILITIES AND ENERGY

9.1. Education and Childcare

The Village of Manchester is part of the Town of Manchester School District, which is a member of the Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union. From kindergarten through eighth grade, Village students attend Manchester Elementary Middle School (MEMS) or other private schools. MEMS is only a PK-8 school, so secondary school students (grades 9-12) are provided tuition funds to allow attendance at private schools. Most local students attend Burr and Burton Academy, an independent, coeducational New England secondary school that serves as the school of choice for 680 students from Manchester and twelve surrounding communities as well as over sixty students from overseas. Burr and Burton Academy is located in the Village and occupies almost 90 acres of campus, headmaster residence, athletic fields and student housing.

MEMS has maintained a student enrollment close to 400 with a student capacity of 575. Burr & Burton Academy has maintained an enrollment of around 700 students. Maple Street School, an independent K-8 co-educational day school that opened its doors in 1998 had an enrollment, during the 2014-15 school year of 121, and the capacity is 125. Finally, the Manchester Village School (MVS), an independent, therapeutic day school serves the educational needs of general education students and students with special needs. Burr and Burton Academy, Maple Street School and Manchester Village School locations can be seen on Map 9-1.

Other education opportunities in the region include Southwest Career Development Center (SVCDC), sharing a site with Mount Anthony Union High School in Bennington, is a technical education center serving towns throughout the region. SVCDC offers 20 technical programs and related classes for high school age students. A wide variety of adult education offerings are also available. There are six colleges in Bennington: Bennington College, Southern Vermont College, units of the Community College of Vermont, Vermont Technical College satellite campus, Johnson State College External Degree Program through online and weekend courses, and the Northeast Baptist College. Each of the colleges provides important services and imparts significant benefits to the region. All of these educational facilities are within 30 miles of Village of Manchester.

More education and training opportunities are also being provided through online courses and degree programs, many of which are coordinated through, and supplemented by, local schools and institutions such as the Community College of Vermont and Vermont Technical College. Organizations such as the Green Mountain Academy for Lifelong Learning in Manchester and the Vermont Arts Exchange in North Bennington offer accessible and diversified educational programs to the public. In addition, a good telecommunication network makes course offerings from colleges and universities around the country available to local residents. Maintaining comprehensive broadband to serve schools, colleges, libraries, and the general population is critical to supporting education and community development.

Childcare centers and in-home childcare are significant services that contribute to the area’s economy. Childcare centers vary in size and function and range from small in-home facilities to larger state registered and licensed facilities. The Village encourages quality childcare services commensurate with the need and demand for such services that are compatible with the Village “residential” setting.

Policies:

1. Proposals for development must address and help to mitigate the impacts of related growth on the local educational system and childcare.
9.2. **Police, Fire, and Emergency Services**

The Town of Manchester Public Service Departments (Police, Fire and Emergency Management) provides protective services for the Village through a mutual aid agreement. The Manchester Rescue Squad, Inc., an independent non-profit organization, provides emergency medical services to five towns, including the Village.

**Policies:**

1. Continue to provide emergency services to the residents of the Village.
2. Proposals for development must address and help to mitigate the impacts of related growth on local police, fire, and emergency services systems.

9.3. **Health and Social Services**

The Southwestern Vermont Medical Care (SVMC) in Bennington and Rutland Regional Medical Center (RRMC) in Rutland serve as the primary hospitals for the Village. The SVMC Northshire campus provides primary care for many in the Village located north of the Town’s Center. Manchester Health Services, Inc. (MHS), is a non-profit agency that provides a variety of health programs and services in the Manchester area. These programs and services include home care, outpatient therapy and special programs including child health respite, hospice, exercise programs, clinics, and the Thrift Shop, accepting donations of clothing and small household items.

Other health and social service serving the Manchester area include, Bennington Outpatient Clinic operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), United Counseling Service (UCS) provides mental health, developmental disability and substance abuse services and The Community Food Cupboard, provides nutritious food to people in need.

**Policies:**

1. Proposals for development must address and help to mitigate the impacts of related growth on local health and social services systems.

9.4. **Solid Waste**

The Vermont Legislature passed the Universal Recycling Law or Act 148 in 2012, to significantly reduce the amount of material going into landfills. To abide by this law, the Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance (BCSWA) was formed. Manchester Village, through Manchester’s participation, is part of the BCSWA. The mission of the BCSWA is to reduce the amount of waste disposed in landfills, by incineration or other similar means by reducing the amount of waste generated, conserving resources and promoting recycling and reuse.

To accomplish this, the Alliance has adopted the following goals:

1. Reduce the disposal rate or the amount of municipal solid waste disposed by 25% by 2020 from the 2015 amount.
2. Increase the diversion rate, or the amount of material diverted from landfills to 50%.

In June of 2014, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources adopted a Materials Management Plan, as required under the Universal Recycling Law. The Towns of Arlington, Bennington, Dorset, Glastenbury, Manchester, Pownal, Rupert, Sandgate, Searsburg, Shaftsbury, Stamford, Sunderland, and Woodford are responsible for implementing state materials management policies and the requirements of the Universal Recycling Law. These towns cooperated to develop a Solid Waste Implementation Plan (SWIP) in conformance with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Materials Management Plan. The plan discusses solid waste facilities and services offered in the area, and includes how the solid waste will be managed and reduced.
Five Northshire Towns, including the Village, utilize the Sunderland Transfer Station under contract with Casella Waste Systems, Inc., which owns and operates the facility. Some residents also utilize the Northshire Transfer Station in East Dorset also operated by Casella Waste Systems, Inc.

Policies:
1. All efforts should be made to reduce the volume of solid waste generated in the Village. Source reduction, recycling, and composting should be encouraged.
2. The transportation of waste must be controlled with regard to weights, hours, routes, and types of transporting vehicles.

9.5. **Wastewater Treatment**

The Village wastewater treatment is provided by the Town of Manchester. The Manchester Wastewater Treatment Facility is located at the eastern boundary of the Village along the Batten Kill River (seen in Map 9-1). The facility is permitted to treat and discharge an average day flow rate of 600,000 GPD (gallons per day).

Policies:
1. The sewer system should be extended within the Village, particularly to serve problem areas consistent with the Town’s service area policy.
2. New subdivisions shall be connected to the public system, wherever possible.
3. In cases of new residential and non-residential developments, the cost of extensions, larger lines, or treatment plant improvements shall be a part of development costs.
4. The sizes of new sewer lines should be based on the long-range needs of the whole area to be served.

9.6. **Water Supply**

The Town of Manchester’s water system serves parts of the Town and Village. At the current time, all potable water comes from two wells just outside the Village at the foot of Union Street. Barring any conditions affecting water quality, this source is adequate to meet the Town and Village needs for a considerable period of time. The Board of Water Commissioners feels it is necessary to seek a secondary source as a long-range priority. This would serve as insurance in the event of contamination of the Batten Kill well site. The Board of Water Commissioners has adopted regulations for use, connections, extensions, and ownership. These tend to support the existing service area except in instances of upgrading the system or abating significant problem areas in the absence of other solutions. An Aquifer Protection Area (APA) in the Town is identified for protection of the ground water supply source. A portion of the APA extends into the Village. Precaution must be taken to ensure those uses within the APA present low risk of contamination to the water supply.

Policies:
1. Public water service should be extended in instances where water supplies are contaminated and are within reasonable distance to the existing service area.
2. Public water service should be extended to new subdivisions whenever they are within reach of existing water mains and can meet the policies and regulations of the Town Board of Water Commissioners. These extensions should be provided by the developers as a part of the cost of subdivision improvements.
3. As the Village grows, improvements should be made to assure an adequate supply of water to both Village and Town.

4. Development should be planned to minimize water consumption.

9.7. Village Finances

The fiscal year of the Village is May 1 through April 30. In 2015 (April 30) Village revenues totaled $480,880.27 compared to $546,306.92 of expenses, resulting in a General Fund loss of $65,426.65. The Special Fund balance was $158,407.86; this included the Permits and Fees Fund, Employee Benefit Fund, and Equipment Reserve. The largest expenditure is for highway maintenance at $386,861.02 (70.8% of total expenses). The primary revenue source is Property Taxes at $391,657.85 (81.4%).

A separate assessment by the Town of Manchester funds municipal services such as schools, police protection, and municipal water and sewerage. The Town of Manchester is periodically updating its Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The Village Trustees and Planning Commission should review the CIP and provide input as appropriate. The Village should evaluate its own future capital needs, and when desirable or necessary, coordinate those with the Town.
9.8. **Energy**

The Bennington County Regional Plan identifies goals and policies applicable throughout the Region. Special emphasis is placed on energy conservation, both in standards for construction and in siting buildings. The Vermont Department of Public Service also provides standards for public buildings. This Plan advocates and encourages energy efficiency in all buildings.

Small-scale technologies using solar radiation/collectors and wind may become more popular as efficiencies and paybacks make them more competitive with other conventional sources. Whatever the source, this Plan encourages clean non-polluting sources and emissions in the Village. The appearance of facilities and structures is a significant area of concern. The location, height, and design of rooftop solar collectors, wind turbines/generators and towers may have an adverse impact on historic structures and design goals and policies advocated in this Plan. Where conflict between accommodating energy structures and achieving the design review objectives of this Plan exists, every effort should be made to mitigate such a conflict.

All new utility lines shall be off-street and underground.

**Policies:**

1. The value of energy conservation and development of renewable resources should be given significant weight when evaluating new projects and programs.

2. All practical energy conservation measures should be taken during the siting, design, and construction or reconstruction of buildings.

3. Use of renewable energy systems and other innovative energy efficiency technologies are encouraged in the construction and reconstruction of buildings.

4. Commercial businesses should include energy conservation and efficiency in their business plans and operating procedures.

9.9. **Siting of Solar and Wind Electric Generation Facilities and Cell Towers**

The Village of Manchester (Village) principally implements its Plan of Development (Plan) through its Zoning Bylaws. Not all development in the Village can be regulated by the Zoning Bylaws. The State of Vermont (State), through its Public Service Board (PSB), has exclusive jurisdiction over development in the areas of solar and wind electric power generation and may exercise jurisdiction over placement of towers used to facilitate cell phone and wireless communications.

This section of the Plan is intended to assist the PSB in making its decisions about the possible placement of these facilities within the Village by clearly stating standards for the PSB to implement in reviewing projects. The Village may also choose to petition for status as a party in proceedings under 30 V.S.A. § 248 and § 248a to help assure that these standards and any other local concerns will be addressed.

The Village Economy: The Village is a summer and winter resort and vacation destination that depends on its proximity to population centers, the beauty of the area in which it is located, and the historic beauty of the Village itself. It is this beauty that has drawn and continues to draw visitors and vacationers, and it is their presence and activities that form the foundation of the Village’s economy. The preservation of the Village and its natural setting as it currently (2016) exists is critical to both its physical and economic preservation.

Solar Facility Siting: The Village supports responsibly sited and developed solar facilities within its boundaries. It recognizes that financial considerations may require projects to be located in close proximity to electric power lines capable of transmitting the load proposed to be generated and easy access from major transportation networks for construction. However, the Village desires to maintain the open landscape and scenic views important to the Village's sense of
place, tourism economy and rural cultural aesthetic. Not all solar or wind facilities proposed can meet this standard. Projects must meet the following criteria in order to be supported by this Village Plan:

Siting Requirements: New solar and wind facilities shall be sited in locations that do not adversely impact the community's traditional and planned patterns of growth of a compact center surrounded by a rural countryside, including working farms, golf facilities and forest land. Solar and wind facilities, therefore shall not be sited in locations that adversely impact scenic views, roads or other areas identified in the Scenic Resources Inventory, nor shall solar or wind facilities be sited in locations that adversely impact any of the following scenic attributes identified in the Scenic Resource Inventory, i.e., views across open fields, especially when those fields form an important foreground; prominent ridgelines or hillsides that can be seen from many public vantage points and thus form a natural backdrop for many landscapes; historic buildings and districts and gateways to historic districts; and, scenes that include important contrasting elements such as water. The impact on prime and statewide agricultural soils currently in production shall be minimized during project design.

Preferred Areas: The following areas are specifically identified as preferred areas for solar facilities, as they are most likely to meet the siting requirements:

- Roof-mounted systems shielded from view to the degree possible,
- Systems located in close proximity to existing large scale, commercial or industrial buildings;
- Proximity to existing hedgerows or other topographical features that naturally screen the entire proposed array,
- Facilities that are sited in disturbed areas, such as gravel pits, closed landfills, former quarries, or water treatment facilities,
- Areas specifically identified as suitable for solar facilities on a map approved by the Board of Trustees.

1. Prohibited (Exclusion) Areas: In addition to those areas that do not meet the siting requirements set forth above, solar and wind facilities shall be excluded from (prohibited within), and shall not be supported by the Village, in the following locations:

   - Floodways shown on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs);
   - Fluvial erosion hazard areas as shown in the Village Land Use and Development Regulations;
   - Class I, II and III wetlands;
   - A location that requires fragmentation of the Village’s working landscape, including undeveloped forestland and primary agricultural soils (as defined in Act 250 and as mapped by the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service);
   - Rare, threatened, or endangered species habitat or communities as mapped or identified through site investigation, and core habitat areas, migratory routes and travel corridors;
   - Ridgelines: Equinox, specifically, and the Taconic and Green Mountains, generally;
   - Steep slopes (>25%)
   - Surface waters and riparian buffer areas (except for stream crossings);

   Areas specifically identified as unsuitable for solar facilities on a map approved by the Village Trustees.
Topography that causes a facility to be visible against the skyline from common vantage points from public and private vantage points such as roads, homes and neighborhoods;

A site in proximity to and interfering with a significant view shed identified in the Scenic Resource Inventory;

A location where a site cannot be screened from the view of neighbors and thus prohibits them from exercising the peaceful enjoyment of their property;

A site on which a solar facility project cannot comply with the Village's prescribed siting and screening standards, including the screening requirements set forth in the Village's Screening of Solar Facilities Ordinance;

A site that causes adverse impacts to historical or cultural resources, including state or federal designated historic districts, sites and structures, and locally significant cultural resources identified in the municipal plan. Prohibited impacts to historical and cultural resources include:

- Removal or demolition,
- Physical or structural damage, significant visual intrusion, or threat to the use,
- Significant intrusion in a rural historic district or historic landscape with a high degree of integrity,
- Significant visual intrusion into a hillside that serves as a backdrop to a historic site or structure,
- Creating a focal point that would disrupt or distract from elements of a historic landscape,
- A significant intrusion in a rural historic district or historic landscape that has a high degree of integrity,
- Impairing a vista or view shed from a historic resource that is a significant component of its historic character and history of use,
- Visually overwhelming a historic setting, such as by being dramatically out of scale and
- Isolating a historic resource from its historic setting, or introducing incongruous or incompatible uses, or new visual, audible or atmospheric elements.

2. **Mass and Scale**

   Except for solar facilities located in preferred areas, solar facilities larger than 10 acres, individually or cumulatively, cannot be adequately screened or mitigated to blend into the municipality's landscape and are, therefore, explicitly prohibited.
10.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND COORDINATION

10.1 Implementation

Among the requirements for a municipal plan is a recommended program for the implementation of the objectives of the plan. The following serves to identify those activities that the Village feels are most important to plan implementation. It is noted here that the Village first enacted a zoning bylaw in 1932, and, since that time, it has served as the primary tool for land use and development. The Village also has a comprehensive set of ordinances adopted, and enforced by, the Village Trustees.

10.1.1. Historic Preservation

A major objective of the plan is preservation of Village historic qualities as reflected in architecture, landscaping, and settlement patterns. To this end, the entire Village has been designated a Design Control District. The Design Control District is divided into three sub-districts. To facilitate review within these districts, design review criteria have been developed as part of the Village Zoning Bylaws.

10.1.2. Growth Management

As indicated in the plan, population growth has been very small. In addition, during the same period, there was a shift to a more elderly population with fewer demands for educational services. Higher property values and the cost of housing does, and is likely to continue to, influence family residency, especially with younger children, in the Village. Housing development, on the other hand, resulted in an increase of 413 units or 144% between 1980 and 2010. An increased percentage of the housing stock is for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, and, in 2010, represented 30% of the total housing stock. Maintaining a desired mix of housing for year-round use versus meeting transient needs requires careful monitoring.

Another important concern for the Village is the extent of commercialization. One of the Village goals is to maintain a desired mix of uses while maintaining the quality of the residential and natural environment. The review of master development plans, cluster and planned unit development provisions, and appropriately zoned areas are fundamental tools for implementation. In this regard, a build-out analysis for commercial and related uses in the Village of Manchester was commissioned and prepared to provide a benchmark from which to evaluate potential change. A copy of that study is available at the Village Office.

10.1.3. Open Space

The protection of open space can be achieved through both regulatory and non-regulatory means. Regulatory protection can occur through site plan design and open land set-aside via clustering or planned unit development. The Equinox golf course development rights were deeded to the Village to allow the Equinox on the Batten Kill condominiums off Union Street. The Village is fortunate in having large holdings, in estates and cultural or historic facilities, such as Hildene or the Southern Vermont Art Center. Retention of these open lands contributes considerably to the open space characteristic of the Village. Natural features such as wetlands, ponds, or other natural resources also contribute to open space. Extensive recreational use, such as the two golf courses and the Orvis Green parcel in the heart of the Village, are also important open space features.

10.1.4. Technical/Professional Assistance

Given the technical and complex nature of some zoning provisions, it is necessary to retain expert assistance (master site plan review, design review, cluster and planned unit development).
development, etc.). The Village will continue to utilize special expertise as conditions and situations warrant.

10.1.5. Mapping

The State statute requires that certain maps be included with the Village Plan. These are incorporated with this plan and prepared by the BCRC. Because this information can be displayed in a variety of ways and scales, it serves as an important tool in the planning process. The Village should keep the mapped information current, especially when new information is added to the system. The Village may also have a need for special or customized maps for special projects or needs.

10.1.6. Special Housing Needs

Equinox Terrace is a community care home for the elderly constructed in 1986 and is licensed for 76 rooms/beds. It is located on Meadow Lane and contains sixty-seven single rooms and seven double rooms. The adjacent “Meadows” project provides subsidized housing for income eligible households. The feasibility of affordable housing to lower income persons is complicated by the high value of land and buildings in the Village.

10.2 Coordination and Relationship to Other Plans

The principal areas of coordination, especially with respect to land use planning, is with the Town of Manchester (Town Plan) and the Bennington County Regional Commission (Regional Plan). Consistency, or at least avoiding significant inconsistencies, between and among these jurisdictions is encouraged in the State Planning and Zoning Act.

10.2.1. Town of Manchester Plan and Bylaws

The Town of Manchester Plan is substantially consistent with the land use classifications bordering the Village. Density requirements vary somewhat, but this variance is intended to maintain, as much as possible, the historic settlement patterns and open spaces in the Village, as advocated in the Village Plan. The Village complements the Town, as a major attraction for tourism and recreation. Both the Village and Town seek to maintain the quality of the environment. The north, south, and east perimeter of the Village has rural residential designations similar to those of the Town. The westerly, very low residential density and forest designations, are consistent with the Forest and Recreation designation of the Town. The Village of Manchester seeks to avoid excessive strip development. Since Main Street is a vital link between the Village and Town, it is important to understand, coordinate, and manage the movement of people, goods, services, and land uses along this constrained corridor. Similarly, some of the rural residential roads, such as West Road, in the Village and Town serve as a type of bypass of the Town center. The implications of land use decisions, on or in conjunction with road improvement investments, or lack thereof, need to be considered jointly by the Village and Town.

10.2.2. Bennington County Regional Plan

The Bennington County Regional Plan was adopted March 19, 2015. Land use classifications in the Regional Plan, which encompass the Village include: Village, Urban, and Rural, and Historic Preservation designations. Together, the Village and Historic classifications of the Regional Plan reinforce the Village Plan and bylaw, which seek to preserve historic settlements, buildings, and places, while providing for economic growth, housing, and other needs. The Regional Plan states that: “A variety of residential, commercial, industrial, and cultural and recreational uses is appropriate in villages, but at a significantly smaller scale and lower density than in urban centers.
Public investments and private initiatives should support growth in existing or planned village areas. New development should respect the small scale and historic character of existing village development.” The Village of Manchester Plan agrees that development should remain small scale to retain the historic character of the Village. The Rural land use district of the Regional Plan encompasses more than half of the Village area, and corresponds closely to the Village Plan’s Rural Residential land use districts.
APPENDIX

Statutory Requirements
The Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act encourages towns and villages to develop plans that are compatible with the plans of other municipalities and with the regional plan, and which are consistent with the goals that are contained in 24 V.S.A. § 4302. The following section will detail this plan’s consistency with those goals and will include a brief discussion of the Village of Manchester Plan of Development in the context of the Bennington County Region and nearby municipalities. The statute also requires that the plan include a recommended program for implementing the objectives of the Plan. That requirement is met through the specific policies and recommendations that accompany each element of the Plan.

Consistency with State Goals
The Planning and Development Act contains one set of goals that deals with the planning process—24 V.S.A. § 4302(b):

- To establish a coordinated, comprehensive planning process and policy framework;
- To encourage citizen participation;
- To consider the use of resources and the consequences of growth and development;
- To work with other municipalities to develop and implement plans.

The Village of Manchester has a long-established planning process implemented through the trustees, boards and commissions, staff, the Plan, Design Control Districts and Zoning Bylaws, and through active participation in the Bennington County Regional Commission. Citizen participation is actively encouraged at all stages of the planning process; Planning Commission and Board of Trustee meetings are open to the public and an effort is made to encourage attendance by citizens with an interest in topics being discussed.

Recognition must be given to the fact that the impacts of growth and development do not stop at the Village boundary. Cooperation and consultation with the Town of Manchester and the Bennington County Regional Commission ensures that the inter-municipal and regional effects of growth and development can be properly evaluated.

Citizens are encouraged to join or otherwise involve themselves with local boards, commissions, and organizations, such as the Planning Commission, Design Advisory Committee, Development Review Board, and Board of Trustees, as well as regional organizations like the Bennington County Regional Commission, Bennington County Industrial Corporation, and the Regional Affordable Housing Corporation.

Fourteen specific goals (24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)) are reflected in the Village Plan. Those goals are presented below with a discussion of how each is addressed in the Plan.

1. To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.

The Village of Manchester places a high value on maintaining historic qualities of the Village. One of the goals of the Village is to maintain a small, rural, primarily residential late 19th early 20th century appearance. The preservation of historic structures, architectural details, historic scenic streetscapes, mountain and valley streetscapes, open space and scenic views, and land use patterns is very important to the Village. Maintaining traditional neighborhood lot sizes and densities is also a priority.
2. **To provide a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities and that maintains high environmental standards, and to expand economic opportunities in areas with high unemployment or low per capita incomes.**

   The economic development section discusses economic sectors that the Village supports and would like to expand on, such as hospitality, small-scale retail, restaurants, internet-based and home-based businesses. The Plan also looks at the various industries and occupations that currently exist in the Village.

   The Northshire Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan is also discussed.

3. **To broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure the realization of the abilities of all Vermonters.**

   Educational institutions located in Manchester Village and the Town of Manchester are discussed. In addition to the local educational facilities, the Plan includes an overview of education opportunities available in the region, such as colleges, adult education facilities, and other training and continuing education opportunities, all available within 30 miles of the Village.

4. **To provide for safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient transportation systems that respect the integrity of the natural environment, including public transit options and paths for pedestrians and bicycles.**

   The Plan discusses the main transportation routes through the Village, measures to reduce traffic flow and to increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists, scenic routes, the Shires Byway, and public transit options. Providing safe and adequate transportation for residents and visitors, while preserving the Village character, is a priority of the Village.

5. **To identify, protect, and preserve important natural and historic features of the Vermont landscape.**

   The Village of Manchester aims to preserve its open lands that have historical or cultural value that contribute to the retention of views extending across open spaces that show the Village landscape, which is essential to viewing the historic settlement pattern. Other open lands that contribute to the preservation of natural resources and the retention of natural ridgelines are also to be protected by the Village. In addition to these open spaces, preservation of historic buildings is also a priority. All these areas are highly valued and fully discussed in the Plan. And through Design Control regulations and Zoning Bylaws, the Village aims to protect and maintain these areas.

6. **To maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, and land resources.**

   Maintaining the quality of air, water, wildlife, and land resources is a priority of the Village. In the Plan, areas that should be protected and preserved from destruction, diversion, or pollution are discussed. The Village contains a number of rare plant, animal, and natural communities that should also be protected. In addition to these sensitive areas, the Plan states that every effort must be made to avoid causes of pollution, including the development of industrial facilities that could have a negative impact on the water supply, atmosphere, or other aspects of the environment.

7. **To encourage the efficient use of energy and the development of renewable energy resources.**

   The Village Plan advocates and encourages energy efficiency in all buildings, and clean, non-polluting sources and emissions in the Village. The Plan also discusses the siting of solar and wind electric generation facilities and cell towers.
8. **To maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for Vermont residents and visitors.**

   The Plan discusses the vast amount of trails maintained by the Equinox Preservation Trust and the Southern Vermont Arts Center. Other recreational areas such as, two golf clubs, the Hildene property, the Batten Kill and various open spaces all contribute to the Village’s recreational offerings.

9. **To encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries.**

   There are no forest industries located in Manchester Village, nor are there any commercial agricultural operations. However, the Plan states that open lands may contain prime agricultural soils, and that such soils should be evaluated and considered in site plans, where necessary.

10. **To provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont’s natural resources and to facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources and the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the area.**

    The Village Plan discusses the different natural resources found in the area and within the village boundary, and states that the Plan neither encourages nor provides for commercial extraction or processing of earth resources. The Plan also states that natural resources require protection and preservation by the Village.

11. **To ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing for all Vermonters.**

    The plan discusses different organizations that build, manage, and support affordable housing in the region. The plan also mentions the affordable housing options available in the area. It is mentioned that affordable housing is difficult to develop in the Village of Manchester due to the high property costs. However, there are currently 36 affordable housing units available in the Town of Manchester.

    The Plan also recognizes the increased need for convenient and safe housing for elderly residents. Equinox Terrace, a community care home, is discussed and considered a great asset to the community.

12. **To plan for, finance, and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet future needs.**

    The Village receives the majority of its services from the Town of Manchester. The community facilities section discusses public facilities, services and programs available to Manchester Village residents. The Community Facilities section also includes a current financial analysis of the Village.

13. **To ensure the availability of safe and affordable childcare.**

    The Plan states that childcare centers and family childcare homes are vital to the area’s economy, and that the Village encourages quality childcare services.

14. **To encourage flood resilient communities.**

    The Village Plan contains an extensive section on flood resilience. Some of the topics covered in this section include special flood hazard areas, river corridors, fluvial erosion hazard areas, limiting risk from flooding, ERAF standards and hazard mitigation plans, participation in the NFIP, and recovery after a flood.

    The section also includes information on the Village’s Flood Hazard Ordinance and regulations to protect mapped FEH areas within river corridors.
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<tr>
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<th>Consistency with 24 V.S.A. § 4382</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A statement of objectives, policies, and programs of the municipality to guide the future growth and development of land, public services and facilities, and to protect the environment</td>
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| 2 | A land use plan, consisting of a map and statement of present and prospective land uses, indicating those areas proposed for forests, recreation, agriculture (using the agricultural lands identification process established in 6 V.S.A. § 8), residence, commerce, industry, public, and semi-public uses and open spaces reserved for flood plain, wetland protection, or other conservation purposes; and setting forth the present and prospective location, amount, intensity, and character of such land uses and the appropriate timing or sequence of land development activities in relation to the provision of necessary community facilities and service | Sections: All of Chapters 3.0 and 5.0  
Maps: 3-1, 5-2, and 5-3 |
| 3 | A transportation plan, consisting of a map and statement of present and prospective transportation and circulation facilities showing existing and proposed highways and streets by type and character of improvement, and where pertinent, parking facilities, transit routes, terminals, bicycle paths and trails, scenic roads, airports, railroads, and port facilities, and other similar facilities or uses, with indications of priority of need | Sections: All of Chapter 8.0  
Map: 8-1 |
| 4 | A utility and facility plan, consisting of a map and statement of present and prospective community facilities and public utilities showing existing and proposed educational, recreational and other public sites, buildings and facilities, including hospitals, libraries, power generating plants and transmission lines, water supply, sewage disposal, refuse disposal, storm drainage, and other similar facilities and activities, and recommendations to meet future needs for community facilities and services, with indications of priority of need, costs and method of financing | Sections: 3.5, 3.6, and all of Chapter 9.0  
Map: 9-1 |
| 5 | A statement of policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic and historic features and resources | Sections: All of Chapter 3.0 |
| 6 | An educational facilities plan consisting of a map and statement of present and projected uses and the local public school system | Section: 9.1  
Map: 9-1 |
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<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A recommended program for the implementation of the objectives of the development plan</td>
<td>All of Chapter 10.0</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>A statement indicating how the plan relates to development trends and plans for adjacent municipalities, areas and the region developed under this title</td>
<td>10.2, 10.2.1, and 10.2.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>An energy plan, including an analysis of energy resources, needs, scarcities, costs and problems within the municipality, a statement of policy on the conservation of energy, including programs, such as thermal integrity standards for buildings, to implement that policy, a statement of policy on the development of renewable energy resources, a statement of policy on patterns and densities of land use likely to result in conservation of energy;</td>
<td>9.8 and 9.9</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>A housing element that shall include a recommended program for addressing low and moderate income persons' housing needs as identified by the regional planning commission pursuant to subdivision 4348a(a)(9) of this title. The program should account for permitted accessory dwelling units, as defined in subdivision 4412(1)(E) of this title, which provide affordable housing</td>
<td>5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, and 5.8</td>
</tr>
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<td>11</td>
<td>An economic development element that describes present economic conditions and the location, type, and scale of desired economic development, and identifies policies, projects, and programs necessary to foster economic growth</td>
<td>All of Chapter 6.0</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>A flood resilience plan that:</td>
<td>All of Chapter 4.0 Map: 4-1</td>
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<td>(i) identifies flood hazard and fluvial erosion hazard areas, based on river corridor maps provided by the Secretary of Natural Resources pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 1428(a) or maps recommended by the Secretary, and designates those areas to be protected, including floodplains, river corridors, land adjacent to streams, wetlands, and upland forests, to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure and improved property; and</td>
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<td>(ii) recommends policies and strategies to protect the areas identified and designated under subdivision (12)(A)(i) of this subsection and to mitigate risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures, and municipal investments.</td>
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