

planBTV Rough Draft/Outline
Working Markup DRAFT
For PC Discussion August 2018

1. Section 1: Welcome to planBTV (Introduction)
 - a. Part A: Purpose of the Plan

This section is the introduction that explains at a high level what the plan is, its statutory foundation, how we use it, how it relates to other plans, etc.

Welcome to planBTV: Burlington's Comprehensive Plan

"planBTV" refers to a collection of plans that outline a vision for how we will use and develop land in Burlington over the next ten to twenty years. All of the plans in this collection are rooted in this overarching policy document: *planBTV: Burlington's Comprehensive Plan*. Our Comprehensive Plan is both visionary and strategic. It articulates our aspirations as a community, and identifies goals for how we will turn them into reality—as well as how we can improve, iterate, and problem solve along the way.

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Principle Land Use Guide

planBTV: Comprehensive Plan outlines Burlington's goals and objectives for the future and is the City of Burlington's principle guide directing land use policy and decision-making. It defines the policies, programs, and specific actions necessary to attain these objectives, prepares the City for the future, and provides a reliable basis for public and private investment. This plan also recognizes that our population, economy and environment are always changing, so planBTV is also a work in progress, continually evolving to reflect the ways in which we are seeking to improve what we do and how **we do it.**

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- Outlines a future land use vision
- Focused on next 10-20 years
- Provides policy direction to achieve this vision.

The Comprehensive Plan is like a road map, providing a big picture view of where we are today and where we want to go, and it points us in the general direction to get there. But it's up to us as public, private, institutional and citizen organizations to use this guidance as we select the exact route for how we will reach our destination—our vision. As we create supplemental plans and programs which affect land use and development, we must ensure that the specific actions and projects they recommend conform to the vision and policies found in this overarching plan.

Purpose and Role of the Comprehensive Plan

Addresses common state-wide planning goals

Often referred to as the Municipal Development Plan, the Comprehensive Plan is updated and adopted at least every 8 years in accordance with the Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act (V.S.A. Title 24, Chapter 117). Chapter 117 identifies a set of common state-wide planning goals that all communities' plans must address, including topics like housing, transportation, economic development, flood hazards, and energy. Our Comprehensive Plan quantifies these issues for Burlington, and identifies how we will do our part to address these state-wide priorities. More information about these goals can be found in **Appendix X.**

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Provides a foundation for other in-depth plans and studies

The Comprehensive Plan is greatly advanced by the inclusion of many other planning studies and technical reports, which together comprise “planBTV”. These include area master plans and topic-specific plans which update elements of this plan, and provide a more in-depth look at and understanding of the dynamics of distinct areas within the City. As such, the Comprehensive Plan is a living document, regularly being reviewed, modified, and supplemented as necessary to reflect changing circumstances and opportunities.

Enables the use of regulatory implementation tools to advance the plan’s vision

Keeping this plan current enables the City to utilize a range of regulatory tools to advance the vision of the plan. Most importantly, these tools include the ability to assess development impact fees and amend the Comprehensive Development Ordinance- Burlington’s zoning and subdivision regulations. Additional regulatory and non-regulatory implementation tools authorized by statute are listed below.

How we use this plan

In Burlington, we use this plan to inform a whole range of land use and development activities. The plan’s vision and policy direction inform zoning changes, inspire underutilized properties to be redeveloped, prioritize lands for conservation, recommend funding mechanisms to carry out specific actions, or direct the creation of other plans and studies which investigate issues and areas of the city more thoroughly.

It’s important to keep this plan up-to-date, not only to ensure that we’re accurately understanding and addressing our community’s needs, but to enable us to continue to utilize tools that will help us implement our vision. With a current plan in place, the City is authorized by state statute to take advantage of the following implementation tools:

- Influence state regulatory proceedings including Act 250 Land Use Permits and Section 248 Certificates of Public Good
- Adopt and amend the Burlington Comprehensive Development Ordinance (zoning and subdivision regulations)
- Adopt a capital plan and budget
- Assess impact fees for development projects
- Designate Downtown and Neighborhood Development Areas, providing financial and regulatory benefits to the City and property owners within these areas
- Apply for Municipal Planning Grants and other grant funds to assist with planning, transportation improvements, brownfield redevelopment, community development, and affordable housing

Related Plans and Studies

This Comprehensive Plan is the foundation for more specific plans and studies which make up “planBTV.” These include community planning efforts like *planBTV: Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan* and *planBTV: Walk/Bike*. Each of these builds upon the big ideas established in this plan, and provides more specific direction on how those ideas can be implemented within an area of the City, or in order to address a particularly community-wide challenge. Additionally, there are plans and studies that include inventories, historical references, or regional context that inform the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is not to duplicate these plans, but instead to incorporate the key takeaways or high-level information from these plans as necessary to inform its vision. Throughout this plan there will be many references to related plans and studies, including:

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- The titles of outside plans and studies that are considered to be part of planBTV, and adopted herein by their reference. These plans will appear in ***bold, italicized blue text***.
- The titles of plans that provide context, supporting data, or other information that is helpful but are not adopted by their reference. These will simply appear in *italicized text*.

All plans cited throughout this document, and their relationship to this plan, are included in **Section X**.

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1. Section 2: Welcome to planBTV (Introduction)

a. Part B: Community Profile

This section provides context for what’s happening in Burlington today to inform the policies and actions in the next chapter. This includes an introduction to Burlington as a community; selected stats regarding land use, population, economy, housing; other unique features of the city if necessary; and identifies some of the challenges facing the city.

Burlington Today

By nearly every definition, Burlington is a city: it has tall buildings; an important airport and transit system; colleges and universities; theaters, galleries, offices, restaurants, hotels, banks, and shops. It is at the heart of an urbanizing region that is the principal economic and cultural engine for the northern Champlain Valley, as well as the state of Vermont. The city itself is the most populous and most intensely developed community in Vermont, and it serves as a central place for commerce, housing, education, industry, government, and a wide range of recreational resources. It has a reputation as one of the country’s most celebrated progressive livable and dynamic small cities, and is a recognized world leader in promoting sustainable development, renewable energy use, and energy efficiency.

Yet in many ways, Burlington is still a traditional Vermont village: its population remains at just over 40,000 residents, and the city is small and compact. People know local business owners, and often encounter family and friends throughout their day-to-day activities. Neighborhood boundaries are defined less by where you live, but more importantly by the people who live near you. Burlingtonians are actively engaged in local events and government, and are passionate about their city.

Burlington’s vitality and sense of community is rooted in a strong sense of place, the cohesiveness of its residential neighborhoods, and the diversity of its people. Burlington is, and has long been, home to a wide range of cultures, people, and households—traditional, non-traditional, and multi-generational families; unrelated individuals living together based on shared values; people from different cultural experiences and income levels; and people of differing abilities, ages, and mobility and job preferences. Throughout the city, in its diverse businesses, public art, and cultural and community events we see our residents’ backgrounds, beliefs, and aspirations on display.

Burlington exemplifies the metaphor of an “urban village,”³ which is a way of describing the personality of our community and how it evolves over time, more than its physical attributes. It is this sense of place, combined with the quality of the built and natural environment, that form the foundation of Burlington’s outstanding quality of life. This identity as both a city and a village is the essence of what makes Burlington such an attractive place to live, work, and visit. This character and sense of place is widely celebrated, both locally and nationally. And this character has evolved over time by respecting historic development patterns and architecture; cultivating community in our neighborhoods; protecting valuable natural and recreational resources; developing lively cultural events, resources and activities; fostering a youthful, passionate, and creative culture; welcoming new community members from all over the world; and putting the needs of residents above the desires of visitors.

Read on to learn more about what’s happening in Burlington today.

How is Burlington developed? (Land Use & Land Area)

The entire city consists of only 6,457 acres of land-- or just over 10 square miles-- situated on a peninsula between the Winooski River and the eastern shore of Lake Champlain. 25 of the 32 miles of the city's political boundary are defined by these two water bodies. Burlington has a strong central urban mixed-use core surrounded by residential areas of varying scales and densities. Most residential neighborhoods are served by smaller mixed-use centers that provide basic goods and services. The University of Vermont and its academic medical center sits atop the height of land on the city's eastern edge overlooking the downtown and lake, while the lowlands of the Winooski River floodplain are actively farmed or conserved wetlands.

Commented [MT8]: Insert 2017 Land Use Map to accompany this discussion.

The basic land uses in Burlington are identified on **Map X**, and include residential, commercial, mixed use, industrial, institutional, civic, parks and recreation, agriculture and forestry, and utilities and infrastructure. The largest percentage of this land area, 37%, is used for residential purposes including a wide range of housing styles and types (i.e. single family and apartments), and owner and renter occupied units. Because Burlington is both the state's largest urban center and a center for education and medicine, **32.8%** of all land in Burlington is tax-exempt, including land owned by public, institutional, religious, and non-profit housing entities. This includes about 11% of the city's land area used by our major institutions—the University of Vermont and Champlain College, both residential institutions of higher learning, and the University of Vermont Medical Center.

Significant Natural Areas & Open Spaces

Like much of the landscape around us, Burlington is incredibly green. According to the 2014 Open Space Protection Plan, just under half of all land within the City of Burlington is either a public or private open space or an important natural resource. Many of these resources are found on properties that might be considered to be developed for another purpose. In fact, only about 11% of our city's land area is considered to be used *primarily* as open space, and approximately another 7% for agriculture and forestry. The Open Space Protection Plan identifies not only those areas that are conserved or utilized primarily as open space, but also resources on developed sites with some other primary land use—including residential, institutional, and even commercial sites around the city.

These spaces provide incredibly valuable natural, recreational, and economic resources for the city and much of our region. Shorelines are fragile, and serve as an important greenbelt around the city. Wetlands capture and treat urban runoff, which is critical as our growing city adds impervious surfaces. These areas are also important areas to protect from development, as they are especially prone to damage from flooding and fluvial erosion hazards. The city's significant natural areas, distinct natural communities, and urban wilds provide habitat for rare, threatened, or endangered species and are important areas for conservation. Steep slopes, particularly along shorelines and streambanks, are protected from development activity that can degrade the slope's stability and water quality and diminish the city's natural and scenic landscapes. The city's soils, particularly in the Intervale, provide opportunities for urban agriculture in the form of incubator farms, community supported agriculture, community gardens, and even backyard gardens. Trails provide access to both publicly and privately managed open spaces and forested lands for recreation, transportation, and wildlife corridors. Similarly, our urban forest - forested blocks and street tree corridors - provide wildlife habitat and corridors, carbon sequestration, and access to nature. And increasingly, integrated green stormwater

infrastructure—in the form of rain gardens, infiltration parks, and the like—is utilized to capture, slow, and treat runoff; lessen impacts on our sewer systems; and beautify our community. [To see more about these significant natural areas and features, check out the Open Space Protection [Plan](#).]

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Developable Land

Because Burlington is a mature and well-established city, less than 1% of the land area in Burlington is considered to be “vacant”. Due to the fact that the vast majority of developable lots in Burlington are currently utilized, and a significant portion of the land in the city provides an essential natural or recreational system, there is relatively little truly undeveloped land remaining on which to grow.

However, this is not to say that Burlington cannot grow. Many properties remain significantly underdeveloped, offering opportunities for some lots to be more intensively re-developed with multi-use structures, taller buildings, and smaller setbacks. Without any change to the scale, pattern and intensity of the development we already have, Burlington can continue to grow significantly just by redeveloping and infilling on underdeveloped lots all around the city. In fact, a 2001 study of potential build-out capacity within the downtown found that the amount of existing development could nearly [double](#) within the constraints of current zoning. Similarly, a 2003 build-out analysis by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission showed that city-wide Burlington had the potential to add thousands of residential units and millions of square feet of non-residential development. While complete build-out of the City is not likely to happen, analyses such as these provide important information and assurance that the City can accommodate future development within its compact size and shape. As a result, it is important and possible to target that future growth into appropriate locations that then allow us to preserve the unique qualities and defining characteristics of others.

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Parking utilization studies completed as part of the development of planBTV: Downtown & Waterfront Master Plan and the Downtown Parking and Transportation Plan have found that even at peak parking times, as much as 35% of the total supply of parking downtown remains unoccupied. When it comes to supporting growth within our downtown core, these existing but underutilized spaces are an example of how we can leverage our existing built infrastructure to support additional growth—without building any more new parking.

Utilities & Transportation

None of this would be possible without an extensive and robust network and system of public infrastructure. Another significant portion of land in the city is used to provide power and water, process waste, and facilitate movement and storage of vehicles, bikes, and people—21.5% of all land to be exact (not counting our waterbodies)!

Links:
planBTV Downtown & Waterfront Master Plan
Relationship: Adopted & Incorporated by Reference

Downtown Parking & Transportation Plan (2015)
Relationship: Reference?

- The city relies on Lake Champlain to provide our drinking water and to receive our treated wastewater, and it utilizes a number of facilities scattered around the city to process and deliver this water. The drinking water system consists of the Water Treatment Facility on the northern waterfront, the Main Street Reservoir, and two water towers connected by a system of distribution pipes with enough capacity to serve up to 60,000 residents.
- The wastewater system consists of three treatment plants (on the southern waterfront, Riverside Avenue and North Avenue), 25 pumping stations, 5 combined sewer outfalls, and over 50 miles of pipes.
- Electricity is generated within the city by various publicly- and privately-owned renewable energy generation facilities. The most significant of these include the wood burning McNeil Generating Plant located in the Intervale, for which Burlington owns 50%, and the Winooski One hydroelectric facility, technically located in Winooski on the bank of the Winooski River, for which Burlington also uses half the capacity. The McNeil plant alone is capable of generating 40% of Burlington’s total electric energy use. And as of July 2017, there were 200 small-scale

sites around the city generating solar energy, accounting for nearly 1% of the city's total energy use.

- We travel our city via 95 miles of roads, 130 miles of sidewalk, 12 miles of shared use paths, 14 miles of bike lanes, 48 miles of off-road trails—36 of which are publicly owned, and on 18 different transit lines, including connections to much of Chittenden County, serviced by Green Mountain Transit. All of this infrastructure helps us to ensure that we minimize our footprint on the land and grow in a responsible and sustainable way.

Who lives here?

The City of Burlington remains Vermont's most populated community – by a lot. It is about twice the population of Vermont's next most populous town of Essex. According to the 2010 US Census, Burlington's population was 42,417, and the estimated 2016 population was 42,556. This accounts for just over 26% of Chittenden County's total population. Over the last 50 years, Burlington's population has experienced a series of "ups and downs" with only small real increases over time. In fact, the city's population has only increased by about 3,608 since 1970, which is a growth rate of approximately 8.5%. According to the Chittenden County population projections for next 30 years, Burlington is anticipated to continue to represent 25-30% of the regional population, with a 12.8% population increase by 2050. It is important to note that this is a conservative projection, based on our past growth trends. However, it is possible that our actual growth rate over the next decade or more could exceed this, as small and mid-sized cities—particularly those with strong economies and a high quality of life—are increasingly attractive to young professionals due to being more affordable and livable than major metropolitan areas.

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Another thing that sets Burlington apart from its Vermont neighbors is that Burlington is a relatively young city, with a median age of 26.8 years old in 2016. This is compared to the state median age of 42.9, which is now the second oldest in the US. The population of 18 and 24 years olds has become and continues to be the largest age group in Burlington. In 2017, the combined enrollment of these two institutions was 12,411. While the majority of residents in the 18-24 age group are enrolled in college, enrollment trends at the University of Vermont and Champlain College have been fairly level, and there appear to be more young professionals in this age group living in Burlington. According to the US Census, the percentage of residents in the 18-24-year-old age group enrolled in college has decreased from 83% in 2010, to an estimated 76% in 2016.

Commented [MT12]: Chart showing % of age cohorts as a trend each decade since 1980.

The number of children under 18 continue to represent a shrinking part of the population, with an estimated 13% of the population in this age group in 2016, compared to XX% in 1980. The US Census estimates that in 2016, 40% of households in the city were families (6,402 of 16,104), and of those family households 44% had children. In fact, only 19% of all households city-wide were estimated to include people under 18. Conversely, older adults (those over 65) are growing as a percent of the city's population- an estimated 10.8% in 2016, compared to 4.9% in 1980. In 2016, it was estimated that 28% of all households in the city included people over the age of 60, and 6.6% of households in the city were occupied by an individual over the age of 65 living on their own.

And finally, Burlington's population as a whole is increasingly non-native, and becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. In 2016, 9.56% (foreign born) of Burlington residents were born outside of Vermont or the US. Historically Burlington has always been a hub for immigrants – Irish, German and French Canadian, and over the last nearly 30 years, as a federal refugee resettlement community,

Vermont has welcomed 6300 refugees, many Asian, eastern European, and African immigrants. The Census estimates that in 2016, 14% of the population was non-white, which is a significant increase from 2.7% in 1990. And in fact, the decline of school aged children seen across Vermont has been slowed in Burlington in part due to the number of immigrant families relocating to our community. In the 2016/2017 school year, 35% of students in the Burlington School District were non-white, compared to just 9% of students across Vermont.

Where do they live?

The Census reported that there were 16,897 housing units in Burlington in 2010. According to data submitted annually to the CCRPC for the Housing Database, there have been an additional 628 housing units built in Burlington through 2017, not including dormitories and other group quarters. This represents a 3.7% growth rate in the number of housing units since 2010. Burlington's housing units account for approximately 25% of all housing units in Chittenden County, and about 14% of all housing growth in Chittenden County since 2010. Unlike some of the City's municipal neighbors, Burlington's housing stock is comprised of a majority of multi-unit structures—only 33% are estimated to be detached single-family homes, while nearly 48% are in structures that include 3 or more units. A majority of Burlington residents rent their homes—in 2016 estimates, approximately 40% of these housing units were owner-occupied, while 60% of them were renter-occupied.

Regardless of rental or ownership, there has been little housing vacancy and increasingly high housing costs. While rental housing vacancies have experienced some ups and downs over the last several decades, the average apartment vacancy from 2010 to 2016 has only been 3.63%. A 5% vacancy is considered to be the signal of a "healthy" housing market, offering opportunities for housing mobility, newcomers, and keeping prices in check. The average rent for a 2 bedroom unit has increased by 3% since 2015, and the median home price has increased about 4.5 % since 2010, to an estimated \$264,300 in 2016. According to the US Census 2016, 54.3% of renters and 29.6% of homeowners pay more than 30% of their income on housing costs. While affordability is a major challenge across all income spectrums, it is especially impacting low and moderate income and minority households. The most housing cost burdened are renter households earning 30% of the area median income or less. The rate at which low and moderate income households is experiencing severe cost burden has been increasing, and minority households are disproportionately likely to experience severe cost burden.

While the presence of the institutions and the student population associated with them certainly impact housing availability and cost—reports estimate that rents in residential areas surrounding UVM could be as much as 15-20% higher than in the rest of the city—this is not the only factor. The University of Vermont now houses 60% of its undergraduate students in campus housing, and Champlain College now houses 71% of its students in on-campus and College supported housing. Significant lack of housing growth in the city over the last two decades has contributed not only to extremely low vacancy rates, but also increasing housing costs.

Where do they work?

Burlington has a number of industries that characterize its economy. Healthcare and academic institutions offer the latest in intellectual technology and scientific opportunities. Food production is joined with agricultural entrepreneurship in the Intervale. The South End is home to a thriving mix of

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To put this number in perspective, a home with a sale price of \$260,000 would be affordable to a household of 2 making \$XX,XXX per year.

In 2016, the estimated Median Household Income for Burlington was \$46,754. For a household of 2, this number is \$XX,XXX.

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arts, industrial, and creative enterprises. The Old North End is home to small businesses representing the City's diverse cultures. And arts and entertainment have a unique presence throughout the city.

Medical and educational institutions undoubtedly form the basis of the economy in Burlington. 34% of Burlington residents who are employed work in education, healthcare, and social services. This is more than the two next most frequent industries combined—arts, entertainment, and recreation (16%) and retail (13%).

Other Stats that will be included here:

- Number Jobs in BTV, Sectors/Industries
- Unemployment Rate, Residents employed in BTV vs Residents employed outside BTV
- Economic Contribution of Major Employers

Other Economic Characteristics of Residents

- Median Income, Income Levels by % population/households, Poverty Rate
- Educational Attainment, Population that speaks English as a Second Language
- Population in School, **Childcare shortage**
- The Burlington School District is the largest in the state, with a total enrollment of 3,935 in the 2016/2017 school year. And like the Winooski School District, the Burlington district is also likely to be among the poorest and most culturally diverse systems in the state. Nearly 45% of students received free or reduced meal programs, and 45% of students speak at least one language other than English at home.

Other Community Stats & Features

- Current Energy Use & Energy use projections
- % of Population within walking distance of (Maps)
 - Bus Line/Bus Stop (and number of facilities)
 - City park (and acreage of facilities)
 - Childcare/School facility (licensed/formal)
- Historic resources- number of structures and levels of listing, something about archaeology.

Challenges facing the City—Today and in the Future

Suburbanization in our Region

This will discuss the suburbanization around the fringes of the city, which threatens the region's traditional patterns of development, future economic growth, natural environment, and sense of community, and how these areas will urbanize in the future.

Changing Demographics with Complex Needs

This will discuss the decrease in youth, increase in older adults, and increasing diversity of residents and its impacts on the housing stock (homeownership rates, affordability), services (neighborhood amenities, school district), transportation systems (ie not driving, not owning a car, bike/walk/transit).

Hazards to our Built and Natural Environments

Climate change poses significant environmental, economic, and quality of life threats to our region and beyond. According to the Vermont Department of Health, the state of Vermont is already experiencing many impacts of climate change. In the last 50 years, average air and water temperatures have increased, spring now arrives two weeks earlier and winter one week later, annual precipitation has increased by almost 7 inches, and days with more than one inch of rainfall occur twice as often.

These changes are leading to increases in heat-related illness, allergies, and asthma, particularly for the young and elderly and for those with homes and businesses that are not designed to deal with extreme heat and polluted air. Extreme weather events have become more frequent, with 18 federally-declared disasters in Vermont from 2007-2016—twice as many as in the previous 10 years. Heavy rains are increasing the amount of contaminated water runoff and unplanned combined sewer overflows into our drinking and recreational waters, which can result illness and restricted recreational opportunities. Warming trends are resulting in more frequent toxic cyanobacteria blooms in our waters, increasing cases of tick and mosquito-borne diseases, and bringing invasive species to our natural communities.

The 2017 Chittenden County All Hazards Mitigation Plan identified a number of additional hazards for which Burlington is most at risk in the future—both as a result of climate change and vulnerabilities in our built environment. These include natural hazards, such as severe winter storms, rain storms, and flooding; technological hazards, such as multi-structure fires, water pollution, and major transportation incidents; and societal hazards, such as epidemic, civil disturbance, and economic recession. If realized, these hazards can impact our community's security (such as disrupting power or heat services), health (such as contaminating our drinking and recreational waters), damage infrastructure (such as roads or sewer pipes), or result loss of life or property (such as from fire or flooding).

Increasing Cost of Living

This will discuss the lack of growth in housing supply, the challenges of affordability/inclusivity in housing, and the conundrum of increasing home values vs affordability.

Changes in technology

This will discuss changes in technology such as online shopping, transportation technology (ride sharing, autonomous vehicles, and home sharing (Airbnb, etc).

1. Section 2: Our plan for BTV

a. Part A: Vision/Theme & Future Land Use Plan Introduction

High level “elevator pitch” version of the vision that introduces the 4 themes and the short form description of them. Generalized Land Use Plan organized by the three elements: Conserve, Maintain, & Evolve.

Our Vision for BTV

planBTV is all about ensuring that Burlington continues to be a dynamic city at the heart of a regional population, and that as it evolves over time it preserves its distinctive identity, becomes more inclusive, and strengthens its connections. This plan provides a big picture view of who we are and where we want to go guided by these core characteristics and values.

planBTV is organized around four themes, rather than the traditional structure of a comprehensive plan which focuses on housing, transportation, economic development, etc. These themes have been distilled from the long-standing land use policies of the *Municipal Development Plan* and its supplemental plans, as well as the community’s input on this plan update. These themes reflect the City’s core characteristics and values, and will guide its growth as:



A dynamic city.

Burlington is a major growth center in Chittenden County and Vermont, despite occupying just 10 square miles. It will continue to grow by leveraging its strengths while being nimble, creative, and purposeful in addressing its current needs and future challenges. It will prioritize innovative solutions that are environmentally, economically, and socially sound.



A distinctive city.

Burlington is an urban village, with a rich architectural legacy set within an exceptional natural setting. Together these characteristics provide the foundation for its vital economy, human-scale environment, and high quality of life. Burlington will remain the core of a regional population, economic and cultural center, and will grow in a way that allows it to meet its current and future needs without compromising these celebrated characteristics.



An inclusive city.

Burlington will grow in a way that meets the needs of both its current and future residents. It is part of a region that, together, shares in the responsibility of providing a diverse housing stock and a healthy job market. It is accessible, affordable, provides jobs for all skill levels, and offers meaningful opportunities for participation in decision-making. The city welcomes residents of diverse social, demographic, cultural, and economic backgrounds and of all abilities.



A connected city.

Burlington will grow through the benefit of a thoughtful and holistic understanding of the city's many and inter-connected physical, social, economic, and environmental systems, and through the careful coordination of land use and development policies and decisions.

Each theme is meant to complement the others, in order to demonstrate the interrelatedness of individual planning issues (housing, transportation, etc.). The structure of this plan reflects the reality that the decisions we make within our community can impact—positive or negative—a broad range of people and issues.

planBTV also provides direction for how we will use and develop land within the City based on these characteristics and values. This plan provides a land use framework for what type and scale of development can occur throughout different parts of the City. This framework shapes the policies and regulations that we will use to implement our vision.

This plan identifies areas in Burlington where existing land uses and development patterns will:

Conserve

These are parts of the community that we will take great care to protect and conserve largely as they are today. These include places like our natural areas, shore lands, floodplains, agricultural areas, recreational resources, and significant buildings and sites. This plan envisions that they will continue to look and be used primarily as they are today, with only relatively few adaptations that allow them to maintain their current functions, remain economically viable, and be well-maintained.

Evolve

These are parts of the community where we anticipate small and incremental change within the existing development pattern, building scale, and neighborhood character. These include places like our low and medium density residential neighborhoods. However, these areas aren't locked in time. This plan anticipates that these areas will see some small and subtle changes over time that support their ability to meet the evolving needs of current and future families and households within their current development pattern and scale.

Grow

These are parts of the community where we expect to see the most change over time, and are the areas that will accommodate most of the city's future growth. These include places like our downtown core, major street corridors, and neighborhood mixed use, enterprise, and institutional areas. This plan recognizes that in order to conserve and maintain vast parts of the City as described above, we need to have places where we can accommodate future growth and development in order to maintain our vibrancy, tax base, and character.

The city is made up of unique neighborhoods and sub-areas that have many distinctive characteristics—both in terms of how land is used and what type and scale of development is appropriate. While the basic vision of planBTV applies to the entire city, what it means to conserve, evolve, or grow will differ across geographic areas. This plan recognizes these unique geographic characteristics by highlighting the

parts of the City that we can expect to conserve, evolve, or grow, and identifying the highest priority goals and actions from across the plan for each of these areas.

The following sections go into greater detail regarding the four themes and the land use framework described above. Each theme includes a discussion of Burlington’s vision, the importance of the theme to Burlington, and a list of specific goals and actions. Each geographic focus area includes a description of its unique characteristics and the priority goals and actions for that part of the city.

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2. Section 2: Our plan for BTV

a. Part B: Our Plan for Action (aka The Policies & Actions, by Theme)

The themes described in greater detail (aka a more extensive vision statement), along with a narrative of the importance of the theme/the related issues within it, and then the specific policies (to be followed by specific actions) that follow.

Burlington as a dynamic city.

Burlington is a major growth center in Chittenden County and Vermont, despite occupying just 10 square miles. It will continue to grow by leveraging its strengths while being nimble, creative, and purposeful in addressing its current needs and future challenges. It will prioritize innovative solutions that are environmentally, economically, and socially sound.

Vision

Over the next 20 years and beyond, Burlington will prioritize meeting the basic needs of all of its residents, protecting its natural resources and consume them at the same rate it replenishes them, and maximizing the benefits of local wealth and resources and invest that wealth back into the community.

In order to achieve these hallmarks of sustainability, the city will continue to evolve and grow, and will fulfill its opportunity and responsibility as Vermont’s largest city. In order to balance the benefits and burdens of this growth, the city will continue to iterate its land use and development policies in order to prioritize areas that should grow, and reinforce areas that should be protected and maintained.

The city will continue to be a leader in developing and implementing measures to become a Net Zero Energy Community, protect our natural resources—particularly Lake Champlain, adapt to the effects of climate change, promote the health of residents, address the rising cost of living, and respond to major demographic and technological shifts.

We will celebrate and build upon our strengths, but continue to take stock of the ways our community and the world around us is changing, and adapt our policies, tools, and programs to be responsive to the opportunities and challenges presented. Burlington will build upon its ‘big ideas, bigger ideals’ ethos by thinking beyond the limits of its size and location, and utilize bold, creative, long-term solutions that will address our community’s needs and opportunities.

Why is this important?

Because Burlington is a regional nucleus with a relatively small geographic footprint.

Burlington is at the heart of a larger urbanizing region that is the principal economic and cultural engine for the northern Champlain Valley, and much of the state of Vermont. Despite making up less than 2% of Chittenden County’s land area, Burlington is the most populous and intensely developed community in Vermont, and has been defined in the *ECOS Regional Plan* as a growth center. Regional population and employment projections through 2050 anticipate Burlington will continue to be home to 25-30% of the regional population and a third of the region’s jobs.

Commented [MT16]: Dynamic, is really about:

- Regional nucleus, growth center in County
- Meeting basic needs in a way that is economically, socially and environmentally sound
- Evolving in response to new and chronic challenges, rather than being static in a point in time
- Becoming a Net Zero Community
- Adaptation to and Resiliency against Climate Change (particularly infrastructure)
- Economic Vitality
- Leader of/center for innovation and problem solving
- Diverse economic, housing, and transportation choices
- Management of public utilities & services (having enough capacity)

Commented [MT17]: This is largely distilled from the Land Use chapter

Commented [MT18]: Add growth center definition as a call out box:

“Growth centers in our region must be small enough to concentrate development, yet large enough to accommodate projected growth through high-density infill and adaptive reuse. These areas must encourage higher density mixed-use development, be served by adequate public infrastructure, respect historic and cultural resources, preserve and create recreation and natural areas, promote public transit, walking and biking as the preferred forms of transportation.”

The City welcomes the opportunities and responsibilities associated with serving as not only the historic core of our region, but also a regional growth center in the future. Being the most urban agglomeration in the state brings challenges and opportunities to Burlington that are similar to larger metropolitan areas. As such, this plan anticipates continued and sustainable growth in housing, services, employment and population, while protecting the city's natural systems, maintaining its moderate scale and high-quality urban design, supporting its neighborhoods, and celebrating its heritage.

To do so, we define boundaries of our growth areas that reflect existing and proposed development within the city, and recognize the fact that portions of these areas may be either unavailable or undesirable for future development. The city has relatively little remaining undeveloped land on which to grow—in fact less than 1% is considered vacant—and many parcels are substantially developed, some with historic buildings, or include areas that are inappropriate for intense development. However, Burlington can easily accommodate additional growth and sustain itself as an important nucleus of the region without threatening its unique and defining qualities. To do so, we will continue to identify strategies that ensure a more efficient use of properties that are already developed or properties that are currently underutilized and could undergo significant redevelopment. Areas within the City that present opportunities for this growth to occur are identified in the **Grow section of the Land Use Plan Framework**.

To ensure there is adequate infrastructure to support our future growth.

Without adequate public infrastructure and services, the city cannot sustain its current level of development, let alone continue to grow and serve as a regional hub. In order to plan for this growth, the City will continue to carefully coordinate areas identified for development with the capacity and capability of its municipal facilities, utilities, and transportation system. This will enable us to maximize these systems' efficiency and reliability, maintain a high-quality level-of-service, limit degradation of the natural environment, and not unnecessarily burden taxpayers.

In particular, this will require innovative approaches to challenges like stormwater management, water and wastewater services, and energy generation and utilization, and transportation system investments. The city's work to-date on these issues has made us a national leader, most notably in the achievement of 100% renewable energy generation within the electricity sector by Burlington Electric Department. Based on the ECOS Plan Energy Targets, and the Burlington Electric Department's Integrated Resource Plan, Burlington's electric utility will be adequate to service a sustainable level of growth over the next several decades. However, we will continue to pursue strategies for reducing energy demand, increasing efficiency, and expanding renewable energy resources, particularly in the thermal and transportation sectors—all of which are at the core of BED's goal to become a Net Zero Community.

Beginning with the passage of the 2016 Sustainable Infrastructure Capital Plan and bond vote, the city began reinvesting in and upgrading its municipal water and wastewater systems and its transportation network at an unprecedented level. Aging infrastructure, particularly at the Main Wastewater Treatment Plant, will prove an increasing and costly challenge, and it is critical to the city's future that we be responsible and proactive stewards of our infrastructure. The city will prioritize upgrades and improvements in this system, while also proactively implementing green stormwater infrastructure and conservation measures, to reduce the plant's load and protect our highly valuable resource—Lake

Commented [MT19]: Some of this is excerpted from the community facilities and utilities section.

Champlain. The Capital Plan also calls for extensive street and sidewalk repairs and upgrades, new bike and pedestrian facilities, and new street connections which foster a growing and vibrant community.

To be more resilient to the effects of climate change.

While increases in global temperature are often highlighted as one of the primary outcomes of climate change, many impacts that are more serious may result—many of which the state of Vermont is already experiencing. Additionally, the 2017 Chittenden County All Hazards Mitigation Plan identified a number of natural, technological, and societal hazards for which Burlington is most at risk in the future. Therefore, it is essential to continue to aggressively develop and implement strategies to expand our community’s adaptation to and resilience against these impacts, including:

- strengthen compact mixed-use land development patterns
- advance alternative transportation options
- increase local food production
- expand energy efficiency and renewable energy generation
- promote urban forestry and carbon sequestration
- improve waste reduction and recycling
- develop an integrated stormwater management system
- mitigate flooding, fluvial erosion, and water pollution
- ensure building, site, and public space design accounts for both harsh winters as well as increasingly hot summers, and more frequent severe weather events

The City’s Climate Action Plan is a primary resource regarding the actions necessary to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pollution, protect the environment for future generations, improve human health and economic vitality, and create a more livable community.

Because the economy, technology, and demographics are changing where and how we live.

The population is aging rapidly in the US and in Vermont, while Millennials now make up the largest generation in the workforce. Baby Boomers and young professionals alike are bringing new preferences and attitudes regarding work, housing, community, transportation, and families. We will expand housing availability and types so that empty nesters and older adults have suitable options that meet their needs, allow them to age-in-place within their community, as well more housing types and price points for young professionals and families—from those looking to live in an apartment close to the center of things to those with families who want to purchase a home in one the city’s neighborhoods.

Further, the sharing economy, online shopping, and advancements in transportation technology, such as autonomous vehicle development, are rapidly changing how we use our homes and cars, and where we shop. These changes will continue to demand more innovative approaches to land use and housing designs so that we can balance the benefits—such as offsetting housing costs or reducing the demand for parking—with the potential impacts on how we allocate space on our public streets, the value of homes city-wide, and the vitality of local businesses.

Commented [MT20]: This section comes both from the Energy Plan element as well as from CCRPC All Hazard Mitigation Plan

Commented [MT21]: This is discussed to some degree in the Education Chapter

Commented [MT22]: This is loosely based on a current policy in the Built Environment Chapter.

Policies & Actions

As a dynamic city, Burlington will: [insert Policies & Actions from DYNAMIC tab of spreadsheet]

Burlington as a distinctive city.

Burlington is an urban village, with a rich architectural legacy set within an exceptional natural setting. Together these characteristics provide the foundation for its vital economy, human-scale environment, and high quality of life. Burlington will remain the core of a regional population, economic and cultural center, and will grow in a way that allows it to meet its current and future needs without compromising these celebrated characteristics.

Vision

Burlington is located within an outstanding natural setting—situated on a peninsula surrounded by Lake Champlain and the Winooski River, with views of the Adirondack Mountains to the west and the Green Mountains to the east. Burlingtonians value—and the city is known for—being in close proximity to both natural and recreational resources, supporting high-quality arts and educational opportunities, and benefitting from a diverse and robust year-round economy.

The City is a place where people can get their start—from companies launching, experimenting and growing, to residents of diverse cultures having access to jobs and housing. The city leverages the industries at the core of its economy—education, healthcare, the arts, industry, technology, food production, and environmental services—to provide economic and cultural value for the city and the region.

Development patterns enable growth, while also protecting important natural and man-made features. This is achieved by concentrating high density, mixed-use development in the downtown core, which is a distinctly urban place, and in activity centers that support surrounding neighborhoods. Residential neighborhoods are diverse in their scale and character, and possess unique built, social, and cultural identities. Medical and educational institutions have a respected place in the community and are concentrated on core campuses. And developed areas are surrounded by and integrated with a network of open spaces and natural systems which are cherished as valuable natural and economic assets of the community.

The city is built for people, with buildings offering connections to streets that are attractive public spaces. The built environment reflects a legacy of moderately-scaled buildings, high-quality urban design, and a rich architectural heritage, and new construction and development complements the unique and historic design characteristics of each neighborhood.

Why is this important?

Because Burlington's identity is complex and always evolving.

By nearly every definition, Burlington is a city. And yet, in many ways, it is still a traditional Vermont village. This dual identity is the essence of what makes Burlington such an attractive place to live, work, and visit. Its vitality and sense of community come largely from its high quality natural resources, the strength of its residential neighborhoods, and the creativity and diversity of its people—characteristics that regularly place Burlington on someone's top ten list. Throughout the city, in its diverse businesses, public art, and cultural and community events we see our residents' backgrounds, beliefs, and

Commented [MT23]: Distinctive, is really about:

- Natural context and features
- Lake Champlain, and how to protect it
- Architecture/Built Environment
- Mixed Use Centers
- Community & Neighborhood Character (how we buck the norms of business, community, etc. Not locked into convention.)
- Youthful City (both age and culture)
- Social and cultural diversity, and more so than other parts of the state
- A place where people can get a start
- Our place in history and in the future
- Center for innovation and technology
- Center for education and healthcare
- Arts and Entertainment
- Industry and agriculture
- How institutions add to the community's cultural richness.

aspirations on display. One of the primary objectives of this plan is to encourage future growth and development, while nurturing this human scale, social character, and sense of place.

Because Lake Champlain and other natural resources are cherished and valuable assets.

The natural environment is the foundation and a chief ingredient in defining Burlington’s character and contributes much to our uniqueness. In particular, Lake Champlain is one of the region’s most iconic and valuable resources—providing drinking water to more than 145,000 people and generating \$300 million in tourism in Vermont annually.

Commented [MT24]: This is excerpted the Open Space Protection header of the Land use chapter, and the Natural Environment chapter

Lake Champlain, the Winooski River, and the many other unique and natural systems and open spaces are protected and cherished as valuable natural and economic assets for the city and the region. Burlington clearly recognizes that conservation of these assets and development are not inherently at odds. Rather, protecting these resources, and our sense of place, is good for everyone: residents, property owners, businesses, and visitors. This plan underscores that natural and recreational systems play an essential role in enhancing environmental quality, economic prosperity, and quality of life.

Because the built environment is an important factor in making Burlington the special place it is.

The built environment is made up of all the things (streets, buildings, etc) we put upon the land, and is characterized by how they relate to the city’s landscapes, layout, and history.

Commented [MT25]: This is adapted from the Land Use, Historic Preservation, and Built Environment chapters

The city is laid out for people to experience on foot, and many places are in walking distance. Our streets will be vibrant public spaces that encourage social interaction, designed to reinforce the character and support the activities of the adjacent land uses and building designs. They accommodate all modes of transportation and users of all abilities while remaining functional for utilities, service, and maintenance. The gateways to our city—from land, water, and air—will reflect the city’s character and provide a welcoming introduction to visitors from near and far. And public art enhances the overall quality of the built environment—a mural on a building wall, a sculpture in a park, unique architectural details on a building, street performers, festivals, rallies, demonstrations. These creative expressions personalize the city and activate our streets, provide a sense of community, and offer seeds for contemplation and conversation.

Burlington has a legacy of rich architectural heritage, moderately-scaled buildings, and high quality urban design. Burlington’s rich and varied archeological, historic, and architectural legacy is illustrated in many significant places around the city which remain a vital link to the city’s history and sense of place and time. Protecting historic structures is really part of a larger endeavor to conserve the existing elements and design characteristics that are at the heart of the city’s neighborhoods and commercial areas, and ensuring their continued function in serving the needs of residents and the economy.

Our mixed use, institutional, and enterprise core areas are where we expect our tallest buildings and most intense development. Development within these core areas will feature buildings that are close to the street and frame the public realm, with facades that invite pedestrian activity. Larger buildings are complimentary of the scale and pattern of their surroundings, and parking is hidden behind, within, or underneath buildings. Gradual transitions in the intensity of development and the uses permitted will blend these core areas with lower density residential areas that surround them. In residential areas, the unique design characteristics of each neighborhood will be retained—such as front yards, porches, and

building facades—while allowing for properties to evolve to meet the changing needs of residential areas through adaptive reuse, renovation, or expansion.

Burlington is in the fortunate position to be able to blend these high-quality urban amenities into its beautiful natural setting. Developed areas are complimented by and integrated with open spaces, parks, and natural areas. And throughout the city—at the end of streets, and from parks and other public spaces—view corridors and scenic vistas have been retained which frame views of the lake, river, mountains, forested and natural areas, and prominent building landmarks. Streets are also opportunities to integrate natural resources within our urban environment, particularly by supporting healthy street trees and green stormwater infrastructure.

Because the city's distinctive characteristics fuel its economy.

Burlington is widely recognized as an environmentally friendly community, an incubator for new and locally-owned businesses, and a highly desirable place to live and work. It also benefits from a strong, mixed economy, with enough economic diversity to weather temporary weaknesses in different sectors and larger global market fluctuations. These are powerful tools to attract and retain businesses that place a premium on entrepreneurship and social and environmental factors, and are important not only to the city's economy, but in supporting regional job creation.

Burlington's economy is undoubtedly dominated by the health and education fields. But it has also long been recognized as a creative economy, an arts and entertainment center, a center for government and social services, and home to a diversity of environmental enterprises and services. The institutions are responsible for and uniquely positioned to take advantage of the city's emerging technology businesses and telecommunications innovations, and to be a partner in bringing the latest in science and technology to market to create spin-off businesses in our region. And as the creative economy continues to evolve, there are tremendous opportunities for synergies between art, manufacturing, food and goods production, research and development, and creative and digital design that will create new economic opportunities. The city will continue to leverage its competitive advantages and evaluate how it fits within broader community-based objectives and regional economic development goals. As we look to the future, neither manufacturing, tourism, education, small business, healthcare, finance, nor retail is the single answer to maintaining and improving Burlington's economy—it's all of them.

Our institutions not only reinforce the economic base, but also provide rich educational, cultural, and medical resources for Burlington and beyond. In fact, many of the city's businesses contribute to and enhance our city's identity by supporting festivals and events, contributing to public spaces and infrastructure, and being stewards of our natural resources through environmentally-friendly business practices. Promoting and supporting locally owned and controlled small businesses committed to investing in our community will be an important focus for the city going forward.

Policies & Actions

Burlington will preserve and foster its distinctive identity by: [insert Policies & Actions from DISTINCTIVE tab of spreadsheet]

Burlington as an inclusive city.

Burlington is part of a region that, together, shares in the responsibility of providing a diverse housing stock and a healthy job market. It is accessible, affordable, provides jobs for all skill levels, and offers meaningful opportunities for participation in decision-making. The city welcomes residents of diverse social, demographic, cultural, and economic backgrounds and of all abilities.

Vision

Neighborhoods provide a rich quality of life for households that are diverse in age, family situation, income, and cultural background. All people have access to safe, decent, and affordable housing that meets their needs. Diverse housing options have significantly reduced the need for shelters for the homeless, offered new opportunities for low- and moderate-income people to own their own homes, and relieved the pressure on the rental housing market.

The City's economic base includes both regional businesses and services focused within the downtown, as well as businesses and services within vibrant neighborhood centers that support nearby residents. The economy includes meaningful job opportunities that pay a livable wage for all skill levels, and residents who are not fully participating in the city and regional economy have access to educational, job training, and job retention services. Our public education system, early childhood learning programs, and childcare resources ensure that parents are able to participate in the workforce, and that all Burlington children have the opportunity to succeed regardless of family income.

Whether a native of Burlington, a transplant from another state, or a new arrival from another country, all members of our community feel safe, welcome, and included. All residents can participate in the city's recreational, educational, and civic opportunities. City buildings, facilities, parks, and streets are accessible by the public and are designed to be inclusive of people of all abilities.

Burlington is a community where a broad section of its residents passionately participate in decisions that affect them, have a clear voice in policy-making that is open and accessible, and have access to information from city government that aids in participation and decision-making. Elected officials and public servants continue to engage with the community using methods that are appropriate for and convenient to residents, and are responsive to the long-term needs of our community as a whole.

Why is this important?

Because safe, decent, and affordable housing is fundamental to the well-being of all residents and our economy.

In order to grow in a way that is sustainable and to continue to serve as a hub in our region, Burlington will increase the availability, quality, and affordability of housing in the city—not only to meet the needs of our current population, but also of future residents. An essential element of our future vitality is providing a diversity of housing types and income ranges—Burlington cannot and will not be a community that favors just one population or group. To do so, we must fill in the gaps in the “housing ladder,” providing greater opportunity to those for whom opportunity is currently limited. We must also take care to provide this housing in an equitable way across the City, and to ensure that all parts of our city play a role in contributing to our housing interventions.

Commented [MT26]: Inclusive, is really about:

- Economy & Job Market
- Housing
- Cultural and Social
- Community Services?
- Access to education, childcare
- Responsive Government
- Community Engagement- this is really about engaging more audiences in a greater variety of ways, and having more reflective representation on boards/commissions/council to include diverse communities in decision making
- Accessibility—physical and social, all ages, incomes, backgrounds

Commented [MT27]: A lot of this is paraphrased from the Housing chapter.

Commented [MT28]: Callout with description of the housing ladder.
The “housing ladder of tenure” provides housing options that offer increasing amounts of security and equity as one moves “up” the ladder. This ranges from shelters for the homeless at the lowest “rung,” to fee-simple home ownership at the top of the ladder. The ladder includes a wide range of housing options including basic shelter, group homes, single-room occupancy rentals, limited-equity cooperatives and condominiums, rental apartments, limited-equity home ownership, and fee-simple home ownership.

Illustrate an example:

Within downtown Burlington, much of the housing development in the last decade has been either expensive market-rate housing, or housing built with public subsidies for the lower income range, while housing for people in the middle-range income is a gap that is not being adequately addressed.

Within Burlington and Chittenden County, there has been a shortage of available housing and rapid inflation of median home prices and rents for close to 30 years. These challenges have persisted despite the hard work of the city, residents, and non-profits to develop innovative funding mechanisms, permanently affordable housing units, and ordinances and policies to address underlying market dynamics. As a result, the 2015 Housing Action Plan was created which outlined 22 strategies to reduce the cost of housing for residents across all incomes, increase the supply of both subsidized and non-subsidized housing, and to providing appropriate housing for our community's most vulnerable including older adults, residents with disabilities, and those who are homeless. Burlington will advance the strategies of the Housing Action Plan by advocating for and developing additional funding sources, partnerships, and creative regulatory solutions to fill its current housing gaps. An important underlying element of this is to actively promote and encourage the development of higher-density housing in our growth areas where it currently permitted.

Because access to meaningful employment and support services are essential to our vitality.

Burlington's economy has been largely resilient to economic downturns, but not all residents are fully employed. While only around 4.5% of residents are unemployed, there are others who are employed but do not earn a livable wage to support themselves or their families within Burlington's housing market, and still others who are under employed, working in positions that do not make the best use of their talents and abilities. These economic challenges impact residents across Burlington's economic sectors—from teachers and nurses who provide essential services to our community to those working in small, local businesses in the service and retail sectors.

Commented [MT29]: This is from Economic Development Chapter

It is critical to improve the economic well-being of residents of all socioeconomic backgrounds, but particularly for the working class, young people, people with disabilities, women, and minorities. The City will encourage the creation of additional well-paying, meaningful jobs that offer workers a safe workplace, job security, a wide variety of salaries and benefits, and training and advancement opportunities. Further, we will expand the supporting infrastructure necessary to ensure residents can participate meaningfully in the economy—including life-long educational opportunities, high-quality and affordable childcare, access to services and amenities near where they live and work, and reliable transportation systems.

Ensuring all residents have what they need to participate in the workforce and our community begins at a very early age. While Burlington is home to a range of public, private, and alternative schools, pre-schools and daycares, as well as post-secondary educational opportunities, additional resources are needed to meet the diverse needs of our residents. 25.3% of children are in households whose income falls below the federal poverty rate. During Burlington School District's 2016/2017 academic year, nearly 45% of students received free or reduced meal programs, 16.6% of students received services as English Language Learners, and 24% of students had a disability and were on a plan to adapt their educational experience to their needs. Through our school system, and efforts such as the Early Learning Initiative, the city and partners will expand the availability, quality, and continuity of support services beginning at the earliest stages of life, in order to reduce the educational and lifetime achievement gap experienced by low-income children and children with special needs.

To ensure the built environment provides equal access and opportunity in all parts of our city, to everyone.

As we plan for and promote new investment and reinvestment we must consider the needs of all parts of the city. In particular, the City’s Capital Plan, planBTV’s area-wide and topic specific plans guide public investment in areas that have suffered from deferred maintenance or a lack of infrastructure such as parks, transportation connections, or streetscape enhancements. Housing and commercial growth will be targeted into mixed use areas throughout the city, with an emphasis on providing services and amenities that support nearby residents. We take care to implement these investments in a way that is consistent with the character of surrounding neighborhoods, and that balances providing economic opportunity without inadvertently displacing our community’s most vulnerable populations.

Further, public and private buildings and public spaces must provide equal access for people with sensory and mobility sensitivities and impairments. Equal opportunity for people with disabilities means that doors open easily and ramps are not too steep, signs are appropriately located and large enough to read; there are accessible parking spaces, transit loading/unloading zones, and other public amenities. And it means that arts, culture, education and public decision-making are all also available to people with accessibility challenges. New development and renovations, whether public or private, must go beyond the minimums established by regulation and pursue innovative ways to enhance convenience and accessibility for all residents. This is especially challenging, yet critically important in the city’s older building stock, which will require creativity and resourcefulness to improve accessibility. And in popular outdoor gathering spaces, we will carefully incorporate benches, bike racks, waste and recycling containers, drinking fountains, public restrooms, information kiosks, public art and other amenities to not only ensure access but the comfort of users. Our public facilities and spaces will be designed and managed to be welcoming of all people, free from crime and aggression, and include amenities that support the needs and preferences of nearby residents.

Because our community is stronger as a result of its diverse values and viewpoints

Burlingtonians are known for their passion and engagement in political, civic, and community issues. As we implement plans and make choices about how to address our community’s challenges, it is essential to be informed about the opinions of those most likely to be impacted by them. We must include diverse viewpoints and ensure that public dialogue is respectful and tolerant of all voices. The City will continue to share information with the public, listen to their concerns, and act upon them, increasing its accountability and responsiveness to voters. We will continue to expand opportunities for citizen education about the community as a whole, and about individual issues in particular, and provide meaningful participation in decision-making by iterating the process and tools used to involve community members. We will increase diversity on elected and appointed boards, particularly by including more youth and minorities, to ensure that the diversity that exists within our community is represented by our decision-makers. And we will ensure that both critical information and opportunities for involvement are available to and accessible by people from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and who speak languages other than English.

Policies & Actions

Burlington will become a more inclusive community by: [insert Policies & Actions from INCLUSIVE tab]

Commented [MT30]: This is from Built Environment chapter and the ONE Enterprise element of the Land Use Chapter.

Burlington as a connected city.

Burlington will grow through the benefit of a thoughtful and holistic understanding of the city's many and inter-connected physical, environmental, economic, and social systems, and through the careful coordination of land use and development policies and decisions.

Vision

The urban fabric of the city integrates areas of mixed-use development, residential neighborhoods, and open spaces in close proximity to one another so that they are easily accessible by transit, walking, and biking, making needing access to a car less of a burden. Burlington is at the core of a regional transportation system, which is interconnected and offers a wide range of mode choices that are increasingly competitive with the automobile, and are safe, affordable, and convenient for residents, employees, and visitors.

Public and private investments have protected significant natural areas and important natural and recreational systems for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. The shorelines outside of downtown and along the river remain largely undeveloped, with a network of protected and conserved lands that offer habitat and travel corridors for wildlife; agriculture; trails and paths for recreation; and ecological, natural and cultural interpretation.

Parks and open spaces, public facilities, and schools serve as public gathering spaces and community centers, and include facilities that serve the needs of the surrounding population. These are places where residents of diverse cultures and backgrounds enjoy opportunities to engage with their neighbors and are welcome in the community.

Elected officials and public servants are purposeful and thoughtful in decision-making and public administration, with careful consideration given to how action on one issue can impact others—positive or negative—over time. City services and facilities are managed in a way that are highly efficient and conserve resources. A high priority is placed on maintaining, upgrading, and improving the effectiveness of existing systems, facilities, and infrastructure before building new.

Why is this important?

Because the complex and integrated natural, built, economic, and social systems are what make our city work—or not work.

Land use, housing, urban design, transportation and parking, climate change, the economy, and our community's well-being are all inter-related topics that we cannot plan for in isolation. For example, residents must have access to a robust economy with jobs that pay a livable wage so that they can afford to rent or own their home, while a robust job market relies on the availability and affordability of homes for workers of all incomes. Burlington is also inextricably linked to our municipal neighbors and our region. It is a hub of cultural facilities and amenities, human and social service agencies, education and healthcare resources, jobs, events and programs. Conversely, we own and operate facilities on land in adjacent municipalities, including the hydroelectric plant in Winooski, the airport in South Burlington, and the bike path which extends across the river into Colchester and beyond.

Commented [MT31]: Connected, is really about:

- Coordinated land use and development with transportation, utilities, natural environment considerations
- People and place
- Economy and Natural Environment
- Transportation systems/options
- Connections to recreation/natural resources
- Cohesion in decision-making, public administration (ie. not making decisions in silos), and understanding how decisions on one issue impact decisions on others
- Opportunities for diverse cultures and backgrounds to connect/interact/engage- examples like St Joe School in ONE as a facility that is fostering this interaction
- Connections like internet, communications systems within the community?
- Connectivity (economic, social, physical) to Region

Ultimately, planning for the sustainable development of Burlington as a core community requires that we make careful, well-planned choices about these issues as they have a direct influence on the success and outcomes of each and every other issue. Our decision-making must consider a wide range of factors and outcomes, and proactively pursue partnerships between and among neighboring communities, governments, institutions, non-profit agencies, and private businesses in order to maximize our resources and talents, share responsibilities, and serve the future vitality.

Because our physical, cultural, and economic health are inseparably linked to our natural systems.

Sustainable development begins with a respect for and understanding of how our natural systems provide us with necessary resources to function and grow, support our natural setting and natural communities, and enhance our overall quality of life. The elements of the natural world do not recognize political or legal boundaries, nor can they be compartmentalized, fenced off, and isolated from our day-to-day activities. Our connections to them are no more obvious than the fact that our city is surrounded by water and sheltered by trees. It is important to recognize our environment and natural landscape as part of an “urban ecosystem” that contains not only natural resources, habitats and systems, but also human adaptations and enhancements such as a street trees, culverted streams, and stormwater runoff.

The Open Space Protection Plan is a critical resource that complements this and other land use plans for the city. It reinforces the importance of guiding development into core mixed-use areas of our city, in order to protect and preserve natural areas and open spaces that are of local, regional, and statewide significance; ensure long-term stewardship of these areas; and improve our community’s access to and interaction with these areas. Further, the Urban Forestry Master Plan identifies goals for maintaining and improving the integrity of the city’s urban forest, and includes the ambitious goal of 50% tree canopy across the city.

To ensure we have vibrant nodes of activity that support the needs of the surrounding neighborhood.

It is important that neighborhood activity centers support the everyday needs of nearby residents, are within walking distance of where people live, and linked to the rest of the city via multi-modal transportation corridors. Uses within these neighborhood centers need to be calibrated to the neighborhoods’ needs, and should include basic services (such as groceries, banks, laundry, medical offices, etc), educational and childcare facilities, community facilities (community or senior centers, library or other public service branches, etc), as well as other amenities (restaurants, galleries, local shops, etc). Schools in particular are an essential element of a neighborhood, and they should be located within walking distance of residential areas, transit, and other critical neighborhood services. Burlington’s educational facilities are more than just schools—they are community assets providing a focal point and meeting place within neighborhoods, establish a connection between families, provide meeting and outdoor recreation facilities, and host other culturally appropriate programs.

Burlington contains approximately 520 acres of public parkland, both for intensive use as well as for passive recreation and conservation purposes, and dozens of facilities—libraries, community centers, marinas, community gardens, etc—that support residents, workers, and visitors. These resources are important to ensure people feel connected to nature and to each other, and have opportunities for health, wellness, social, and educational programming. Using resources like the 2015 Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Master Plan and the 2016 Sustainable Infrastructure Capital Plan, the city should prioritize the maintenance of these amenities and expand access to them, in order to fully utilize

Commented [MT32]: Need to add discussion about our natural systems connections beyond BTV: Winooski River Tactical Basin Plan and the Direct Northern Lake Champlain Basin Plan.

Commented [MT33]: This is a combo of built environment and education.

Commented [MT34]: Highlight St. Joe Center as an example:
Former school transformed into a neighborhood serving amenity, with space for community gatherings, education and childcare services, a senior center, youth center, English language and nutrition classes, recreation programs, and more.

available resources. We must also renovate and add new facilities and programs where they're needed—especially for indoor recreation and social purposes in the winter—in order to respond to the changing needs of our diverse community.

Because mobility is necessary for residents to participate in all our community has to offer.

Our streets and transportation infrastructure are a critical part of the city's urban form—a sort of skeleton that holds everything else together—and a strong contributor to how the city is experienced in our daily lives. This infrastructure is a key piece of our land and economic development goals. Robust transportation options and frequent transit service rely on and reinforce compact and efficient land use patterns, and transportation connectivity can unlock development potential in parts of the city that are currently underdeveloped or inaccessible, creating new opportunities for job and housing creation.

But transportation is just as much about how we move around the city as it is about supporting a diverse and inclusive community. Interconnected transportation systems, which feature a variety of modes that are increasingly competitive with the automobile, provide access to economic opportunity by ensuring residents can reliably access jobs and affordable housing that meet their needs. Transportation options ensure access to basic services and amenities, promote safety, improve human and environmental health, help residents balance their cost of living, afford independence and mobility to people who cannot or prefer not to drive, and allow us to more efficiently use our streets and parking resources. And finally, our streets and transportation system are a reflection of our community character, complementing adjacent building design, supporting business activity, encouraging social interaction, and supporting green and natural elements within an urban landscape.

The 2011 Transportation Plan, 2017 planBTV Walk/Bike, and the 2018 NextGen Transit Plan outline a number of critical improvements to the city's transportation infrastructure to ensure that a robust, interconnected system is in place, and that routes are safe, efficient, appropriately designed, and well-maintained.

To more efficiently use public buildings, and deliver more effective services and results.

City employs over XXX people, located in many different buildings and sites throughout the city. These buildings and facilities are an important capital asset, and present a visible expression of the City's values, priorities, and expectations. The City must be a responsible steward of these resources, placing a priority on the preservation and enhancement of historic public buildings, stewardship of all public facilities, and innovative rehabilitation and new construction projects that demonstrate high quality design, energy efficiency, and green building techniques.

Commented [MT35]: Largely from Community Facilities chapter

While there are many examples of collaborative projects and decision-making across the city, the distribution of quasi-independent departments does create some silos, requires an additional level of coordination, and presents space-management challenges. Particularly in the development permitting realm, the separation of related functions causes confusion and hassle for residents, property owners, and contractors who need to interface with these services. As such, one of the primary recommendations of the 2017 Permit Reform Study was to establish a Permitting Center that includes all departments, or department offices, responsible for permitting in one centralized location. To do so would not only improve public access and make the overall process easier to understand, but would also facilitate streamlining and improving coordination and collaboration between the various departments that issue permits.

As technology and telecommunications play an ever-increasing role in our residents lives, so should they enhance connections among departments and with the public in order to improve service and information delivery. This includes shared information systems for land records/assessment/permitting information, digitizing records, and even leveraging high-speed fiber internet technology to boost the performance and maintenance of public utilities.

Policies & Actions

Burlington will increase the connectivity among and integrity within its systems by: [insert Policies & Actions from CONNECTED tab]

DRAFT

3. Section 2: Our plan for BTV

a. Part C: Our Future Land Use Plan, (aka the Conserve-Evolve-Grow framework, by Geographic Area)

This provides a more detailed discussion of the land use plan from the beginning of the document—it provides a greater level of detail on the distinction between the areas to Conserve-Evolve-Grow themes and a discussion of the relevant policies and actions.

So, what is our plan for land use in Burlington?

As articulated in ‘Our Plan for Action’, planBTV’s vision is all about ensuring that Burlington continues to be a dynamic city at the heart of a regional population, and that as it evolves over time it preserves its distinctive identity, becomes more inclusive, and strengthens its connections. When it comes to how we will use and develop land in the future, this vision will primarily be achieved by reinforcing Burlington’s existing development patterns: promoting greater utilization of developed areas through infill development and redevelopment within core growth areas, strengthening our diverse residential neighborhoods, and protecting our most vulnerable natural and culturally significant lands and sites. Ultimately, our neighborhoods are important areas that are well-connected to both to mixed use areas that provide critical jobs and services, as well as to open space/natural resources for recreation and health. This development pattern has been at the core of the City’s land use and development policies for decades, and will continue to guide thoughtful, well-planned growth in the future.

Read on to learn more about our future land use goals for these parts of the City.

Commented [MT36]: Insert Future Land Use Map here: Potentially a finer-grain version of the Conserve, Evolve, Grow framework.

DRAFT

4. Section 3: Implementing our **Plan**

a. Part A: Implementation Framework

This will organize all of the policy statements and corresponding action items by theme into a chart that also helps provide some level of prioritization (short/med/long term) and what area of the city the policy is most applicable to. It will also discuss who should take the lead and any/potential resources available to assist with this implementation.

Commented [MT37]: This is a newer statutory requirement in terms of the level of detail required for how to implement the plan.

Items	D&W	ONE	N Av	ELM	Rt 7	East	When	Who	Resources
Dynamic									
<i>Policy Statement</i>									
Action Item				X			Long Term	DPW, CEDO	Area Wide Plan, Brownfields Program
Action Item									
<i>Policy Statement</i>									
Action Item	X	X				X	Short Term	P&Z, BED	District Energy Working Group
Action Item									
Distinctive....etc...etc.									

DRAFT

5. Section 3: Implementing our Plan

a. Part B: Relationship to Other Plan

This is how we will acknowledge separate but essential and related plans that will not only help us implement the plan, but which are either incorporated by their reference, or which should provide a helpful basis/context for implementing.

planBTV- Incorporated & Adopted by Reference		
Plan	Topic	Date
planBTV: Downtown & Waterfront Master Plan	Area-wide Master Plan	2013
planBTV: South End Master Plan	Area-wide Master Plan	2018
Brownfields Area Wide Plan	Land Use, Economic Development	2016
Burlington Transportation Plan	Transportation	2011
planBTV: Walk/Bike	Transportation	2017
Chittenden County All Hazards Mitigation Plan, Annex 3 Plan for the City of Burlington	Land Use, Natural Environment	2017
Chittenden County Energy Guides		
Chittenden County Population & Employment Forecast		
Open Space Protection Plan (2001 and 2014 update- both or just 2014?)	Natural Environment	2000, 2014
Climate Action Plan		
Urban Reserve Interim Use and Stewardship Plan		1997
Winooski Valley Park District Master Plan		2012
Burlington Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Master Plan		2015
Urban Forestry Master Plan		
Sustainable Infrastructure Capital Plan	Facilities & Services	2016
Housing Action Plan		2015
Downtown Parking & Transportation Management Plan		
Background and Historic Context (not incorporated or adopted by their reference)		
Plan	Topic	Date
Land Use Plan 1947		
1952		
1970		
1973 Municipal Development Plan		
1979 "		
1985 "		
1991 "		
1996 "		
2001 "		
2006 "		
2011 "		
2014 "		
Burlington Comprehensive Development Ordinance		2018
planBTV: Downtown Code		2018
Burlington: A Shared Vision	Economic Development	1989
Vermont Downtown Program Renewal Application 2017-2022	Economic Development	2017

Burlington Downtown Improvement District Phase 1 Feasibility Assessment		2018
Jobs & People IV (the 2018 update?)		2018?
Americans for the Arts: Arts & Economic Prosperity Report V		2017
Burlington Early Learning Initiative		
Waterfront Urban Renewal Plan, 1998 Update		1998
Common Ground: A Strategic Plan for the Old North End Enterprise Community		1994
North Street Revitalization Plan		1998
CVOEO North Street Study		2017
Harbor Management Plan		2000
Historic Sites and Structures Survey Plan	Historic Preservation	2000
Legacy Action Plan	Land Use, Economic Development	2000
Legacy Plan Update	Land Use, Economic Development	2010
Burlington Electric Department Integrated Resource Plan		
Chittenden County Regional Build-out Analysis	Land Use, Housing, Economic Development	2003
Lake Champlain Byway Chittenden County Corridor Plan	Land Use, Community Facilities & Services, Economic Development, Natural Resources	2017
Lake Champlain Basin Program/Plan		
Winooski River Tactical Basin Plan		
Chittenden County ECOS Regional Plan		2018 update
Consolidated Plan for Housing & Community Development		Most Recent?
Burlington School District Strategic Plan		2017?
Burlington School District Long Range Facilities Plan		2016?
University of Vermont Campus Master Plan & Design Guidelines		2006
Champlain College Master Plan: A Roadmap for the Future		2007
UVM Medical Center Master Facilities Plan		
CATMA Joint Institutional Parking Management Plan		2014-2019 Update
GMT NextGen Transit Plan		When updated- 2018?
Riverside Avenue Plan		
Permit Reform Study & Recommendations		2017
The Neighborhood Project		When complete- 2018?

6. Section 4: Appendices

a. Part A: Cross Reference to Statutory Requirements

This is will organize all of the policy statements and corresponding action items by theme into a chart to demonstrate the relationship to the distinctive planning topics required to be addressed in a Municipal Development Plan per VT statutes. The Icons associated with these discreet planning topics will also be found throughout the document for readers' reference.

DRAFT

List of Maps & References

DRAFT

Other Stuff- TBD on Appendix

A *(really) brief history of planBTV*

Land use planning has played a formal role in shaping the City of Burlington since 1925, when voters authorized the creation of a Municipal Planning Commission. This action eventually resulted in the city's first land use plan and zoning ordinance in 1947 and a subdivision ordinance in 1955 to control the layout of city streets. Since 1973, the Planning Commission has prepared a Municipal Development Plan (MDP) for Burlington every five years, consistent with the requirements of state statute.

Changes to statute in 1988, known as "Act 200," encouraged comprehensive planning at the state, regional, and local levels; facilitated cooperation between communities; and offered a forum to resolve disputes. The 1991 Burlington Municipal Development Plan was Burlington's first plan to be guided by these new goals. Subsequent amendments to this statute added and modified the requirements of plans; these new requirements were addressed in each of the plan's 5 year updates as necessary. In 2015, the legislature expanded the interval for plan updates from five to eight years, and required more robust guidance regarding the implementation of plans. This update is the first plan in Burlington to be prepared under these new guidelines.

Beginning with the creation of planBTV: Downtown & Waterfront Master Plan in 2011-2013, the Planning & Zoning Department launched a new approach to creating and updating the Municipal Development Plan. This new approach rebranded the Municipal Development Plan as "planBTV," and established a new framework to update the plan. The Department recognized that the creation of area-wide master plans and topic specific plans is a more relevant and effective way to update and expand various elements of the Municipal Development Plan, rather than working on an overall update to the entire plan on the interval defined by statute.

The 2019 update is the first extensive update to the Municipal Development Plan in more than 20 years. The most significant components of this update include rebranding the plan as the Comprehensive Plan to more accurately reflect its role and content; a change to how the plan is organized in order to more clearly link the plan's policies and actions to its vision; and, to clarify this new approach to updating the plan and the relationship of related plans and studies. This update establishes the foundation for planBTV's continual update and expansion through the preparation of area-wide and topic-specific plans in the future.

Commented [MT38]: This paraphrases and brings up to date this section from current MDP.