

Pathways to a Vital Economic Center

*Funded by a Municipal Planning Grant from the Department of Housing and
Community Development and the Town of Bradford*

BRADFORD BUILDOUT
ANALYSIS, CAPACITY
STUDY AND
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
ANALYSIS

**DuBois
& King** inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction.....	2
II.	Project Overview.....	3
III.	Public Survey Summary.....	4
A.	Response Rate and Demographics.....	4
B.	Shopping Habits and Business Preferences	5
C.	Interest in Recreational Opportunities.....	6
D.	Preferred Locations for Development	6
E.	Development Patterns.....	10
IV.	Economic Development Analysis Summary.....	12
A.	Retail Potential & New Business Opportunities	12
B.	Capitalize on Community Assets.....	14
C.	Wayfinding and Marketing	15
V.	Buildout Analysis & Capacity Study.....	16
A.	Overview.....	16
B.	Spatial Analysis Methodology & Results	17
C.	Capacity Study	18
D.	Development Potential Analysis.....	22
VI.	The path to implementation.....	24
A.	Planning and Policy Implementation Activities.....	24
B.	Economic Development Activities	33
VII.	Appendices.....	38

I. INTRODUCTION

The Town of Bradford is located along the Connecticut River in Orange County Vermont. The community, with a population of just over 2700 residents, includes a downtown, commercial and industrial areas, and a wealth of natural resources for residents and visitors alike to take advantage of. Bradford is roughly 30 miles north of the Hanover/White River/Lebanon Area, which positions the community well to serve its immediate neighbors as a small hub of commerce. Commercial development is concentrated in two specific areas, Bradford Village and the Lower Plain.

Separated by less than a mile, the two areas are distinctly different. The Village is representative of many of Vermont's villages, with a high-density core (13 acres), multi-story buildings, a main commercial block and a mix of uses centered around the main road through the village, Route 5. The Lower Plain, which is served by municipal sewer and water, is located south of the Village around the junction of Routes 5 and 25. It is a larger geographic area (263 acres) than the core of the Village. As such, the lower plain lends itself to accommodating larger scale developments that would be out of scale for a densely developed village or downtown. Several large businesses have located in the lower plain, including a Hannaford supermarket, Oakes Brothers lumberyard and Farm-way, Bradford's premier outdoor outfitter. In addition to the commercial area of the lower plain, there is an adjacent 36-acre dedicated industrial park that is nearly full.

The Bradford Planning Commission has wrestled with how to encourage economic growth in the Village and Lower Plain without compromising the character of their community and negatively impacting the vitality of either area. Despite having a zoning ordinance that is very business friendly, growth over the past decade has not been as robust as is desired by the town. The Planning Commission has undertaken a planning process to:

- Determine how to bring new businesses to the community,
- Identify what barriers exist to future economic development,
- Identify new opportunities to connect the Village and the Lower Plain; and
- To develop a road map to making the community a vital commercial center for the region.

This project provides the Planning Commission with the action items necessary to foster development within the designated Village Center while allowing for good planning practice that supports the natural growth and changing needs of a town in the 21st century. Project analysis has identified some of the natural limits to growth and generated the data needed to make informed infrastructure capital planning.

II. PROJECT OVERVIEW

In 2016, the Town applied for and won a Municipal Planning Grant from the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development, for the purposes of conducting a buildout analysis and capacity study of the lower plain, and developing an implementation plan that will provide steps to encourage economic growth while maintaining the traditional pattern of development – densely populated villages and downtowns surrounded by open countryside. The town hired DuBois & King, Inc. and Camoin Associates, to assist with this project.



The project consisted of five distinct components which have identified specific details that will provide insight for the Planning Commission as they move forward to implement their plan for economic development. The resulting information provides the town with empirical data that enables thoughtful long term planning that will support the economic sustainability of the town in conjunction with state and town goals of maintaining existing compact settlement patterns.

The components of this project include:

- Public Survey
- Economic Development Study
- Buildout Analysis & Capacity Study
- Demonstration Designs
- Implementation Recommendations

III. PUBLIC SURVEY SUMMARY

A. Response Rate and Demographics

In any planning process community input is essential for several reasons. First, it provides a level of transparency to the process, allowing the community (and in the case of this project, the greater Bradford economic region) to understand how land use policy is developed. Second, it provides local planners with valuable information that helps them determine what types of policy to implement.

The Planning Commission, with assistance from Dubois & King, developed a survey that focused on how Bradford could serve the economic region's needs, what types of businesses and resources were of interest, how and where growth should occur and what it should look like. The findings of the survey are summarized in this report, for a complete overview of the survey and its results, see Appendix A.

The Town distributed roughly 1500 paper surveys, and also offered the survey in an online format. The survey netted a response rate of about 17% (258 surveys completed), which is considered a very good return rate for a written survey. A significant majority (75%) of survey responses came from people age 55 and older. Bradford's median age is 42, and less than half of the total population is age 55 or older, which means there was a younger segment of the population that chose not to respond or was unaware of the survey. These results are not surprising, as it is often challenging to get participation in written surveys from younger generations, particularly those that are busy taking care of children.

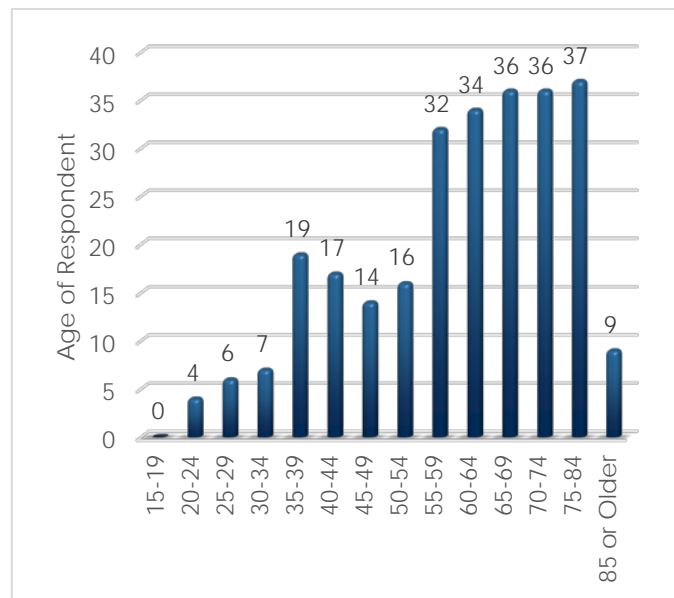


FIGURE 1 - SURVEY RESPONSES BY AGE GROUP

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In future outreach efforts, the Planning Commission may want to identify ways to connect with residents under 55 to determine if their opinions vary from those already collected.

Because Bradford acts as a small economic center for the communities of Corinth, Fairlee, Newbury, Topsham, Vershire, West Fairlee, and Haverhill, Orford and Piermont, NH; residents outside of Bradford were invited to respond to the survey as well (see Figure 2). Eighty-one percent (81%) of responses came from Bradford residents.

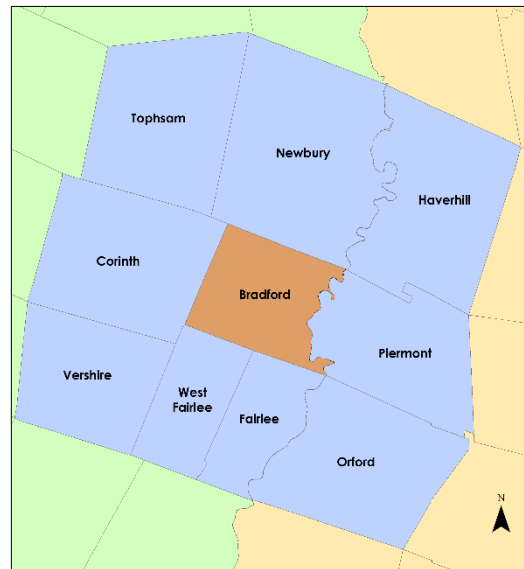


FIGURE 2 - BRADFORD AND BRADFORD'S ECONOMIC REGION

B. Shopping Habits and Business Preferences

Survey takers were asked about their shopping habits in and outside of Bradford. While there is a national trend toward buying online, respondents indicated that they do less than 1/3 (27%) of their shopping online. Nearly 50% of shopping is done locally, primarily due to the presence of Hannaford Supermarket. Retail and meals/entertainment were the most commonly frequented types of businesses in Bradford.

When asked what types of businesses they would most like to see in town, clothing stores, co-op style food stores and a classic 5 and 10 were the commonly cited. The loss of Hill's 5&10, which closed in 2015, and Perry's Appliance Store and downtown gas station clearly impacted the community, as they were mentioned as a need.

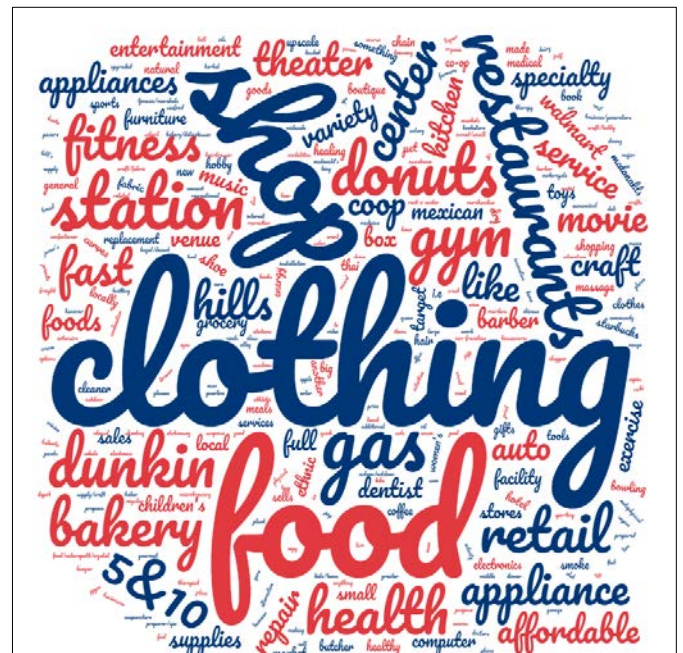


FIGURE 3 - THE TYPES OF BUSINESSES SURVEY RESPONDENTS ARE SEEKING. LARGEST WORDS WERE MENTIONED MOST OFTEN.

C. Interest in Recreational Opportunities

Residents are clearly interested in increasing indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities in Bradford. People identified movie theaters, community recreation center, community pool and a gym or workout facility as most the most important indoor recreation opportunities. Outdoors, residents desired bicycle and recreation paths, particularly a sidewalk or dedicated bike path along Route 5 that would connect the Village with the Lower Plain.

It should be noted that Bradford does have several significant outdoor recreation resources. The Wright's Mountain Trail is appropriate for hiking, skiing, snowshoeing and some horseback riding or mountain biking. The 268 acre Wright's Mountain/Devil's Den property is conserved as wildlife habitat and forestland and is open to the public for recreation. Outdoor recreation and its value to the community will be discussed further in later sections of this report.

D. Preferred Locations for Development

In an effort collect land use information that would help the Planning Commission refine the Town Plan and Zoning Bylaw, survey takers were asked where they would prefer specific types of commercial development. They were asked to choose from Downtown, Lower Plain or Service Area, but were not limited to one location. Responses ultimately indicate that survey takers were comfortable with most types of development in all locations.

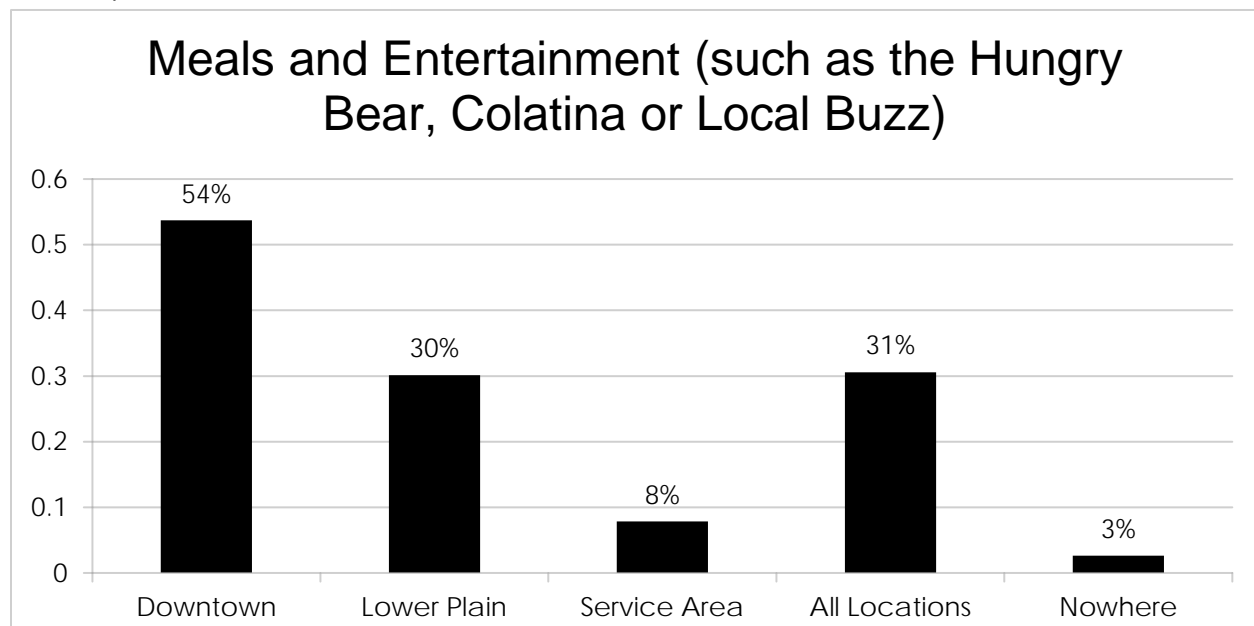


FIGURE 4 - PREFERRED LOCATION FOR MEALS & ENTERTAINMENT

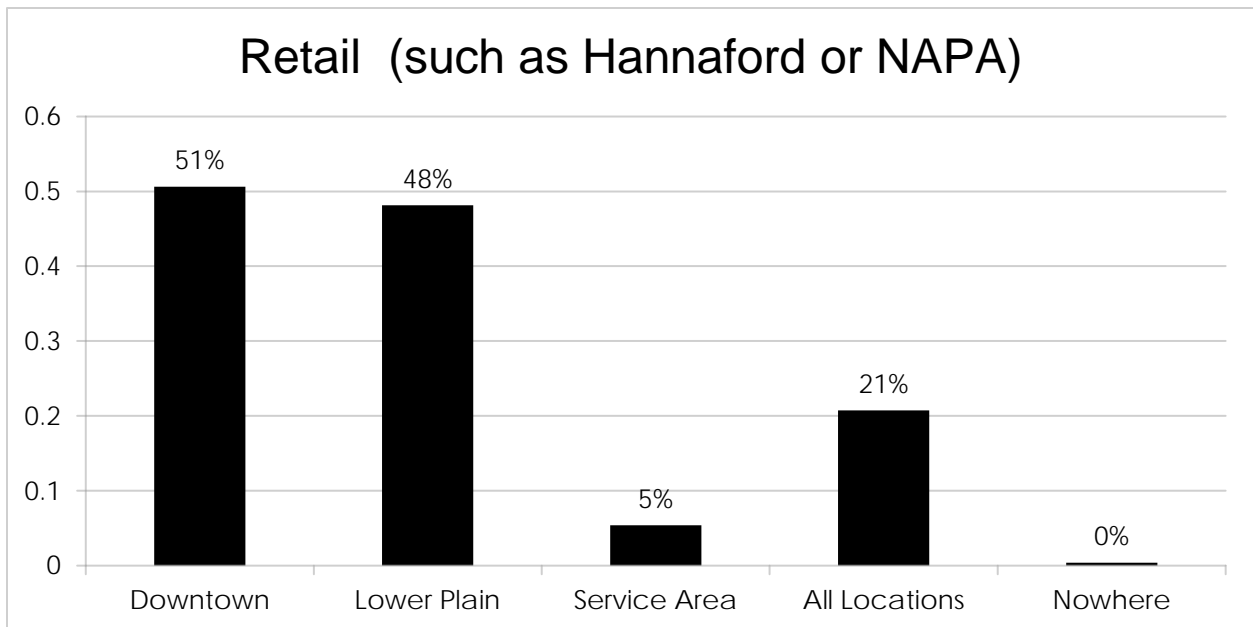


FIGURE 5 - PREFERRED LOCATIONS FOR RETAIL

It was particularly valuable to learn that retail development, which planners often identify as responsible for creating patterns of development that lead to urban sprawl, was supported relatively equally in the Downtown and the Lower Plain. This is important as it provides community support for the pattern of development proposed in the Bradford Town Plan, which includes retail development in the Lower Plain. As will be demonstrated later in this section, survey responses indicate that people are more concerned with how development looks and feels than *where* it is located in Bradford.

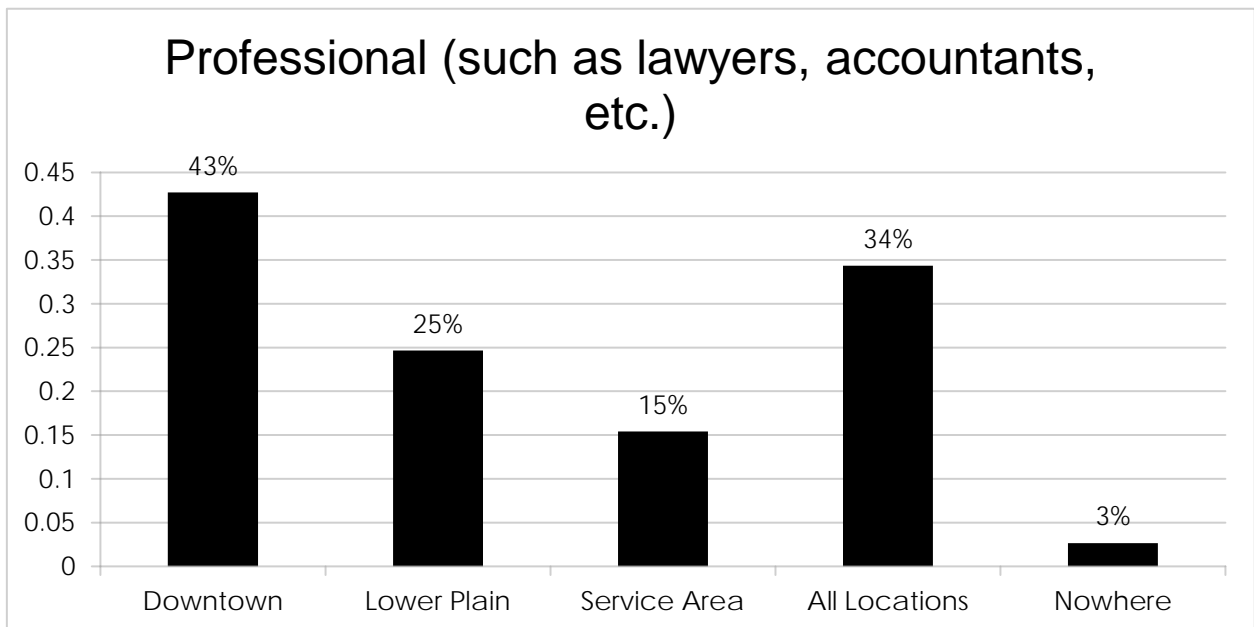


FIGURE 6 - PREFERRED LOCATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL OFFICES

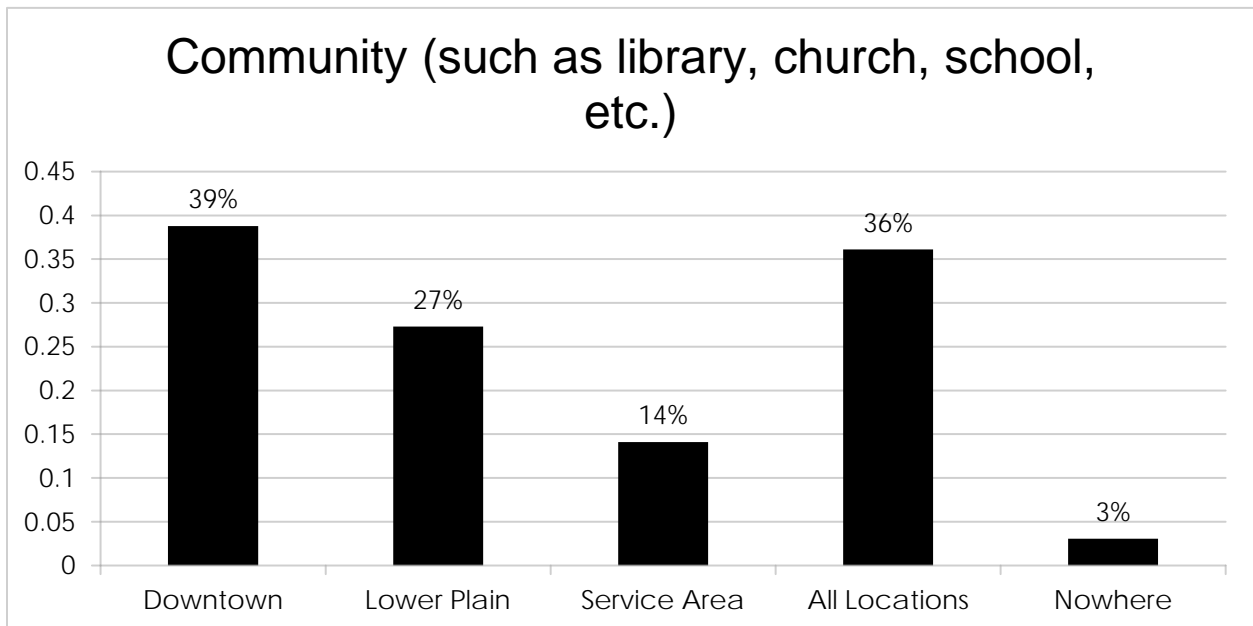


FIGURE 7 - PREFERRED LOCATIONS FOR COMMUNITY OR CIVIC INSTITUTIONS

Survey responses showed strong support for multi-family or condominium-style residential in the Lower Plain rather than in the downtown or service area. Yet, when asked if residents would be interested in occupying high density housing in the lower plain, 51% indicated that they would not, and only 31% indicated that they would. A detailed housing market analysis should be conducted to determine the economic viability of additional housing types in the Lower Plain.

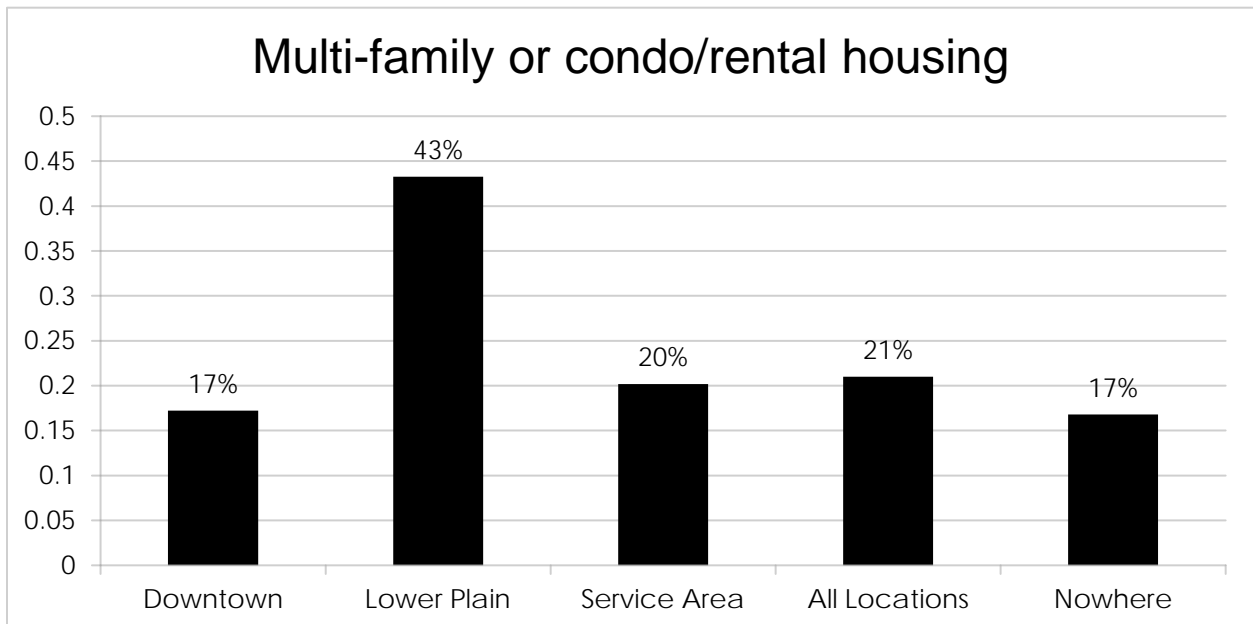


FIGURE 8 - PREFERRED LOCATIONS FOR MULTI-FAMILY OR CONDOMINIUM HOUSING

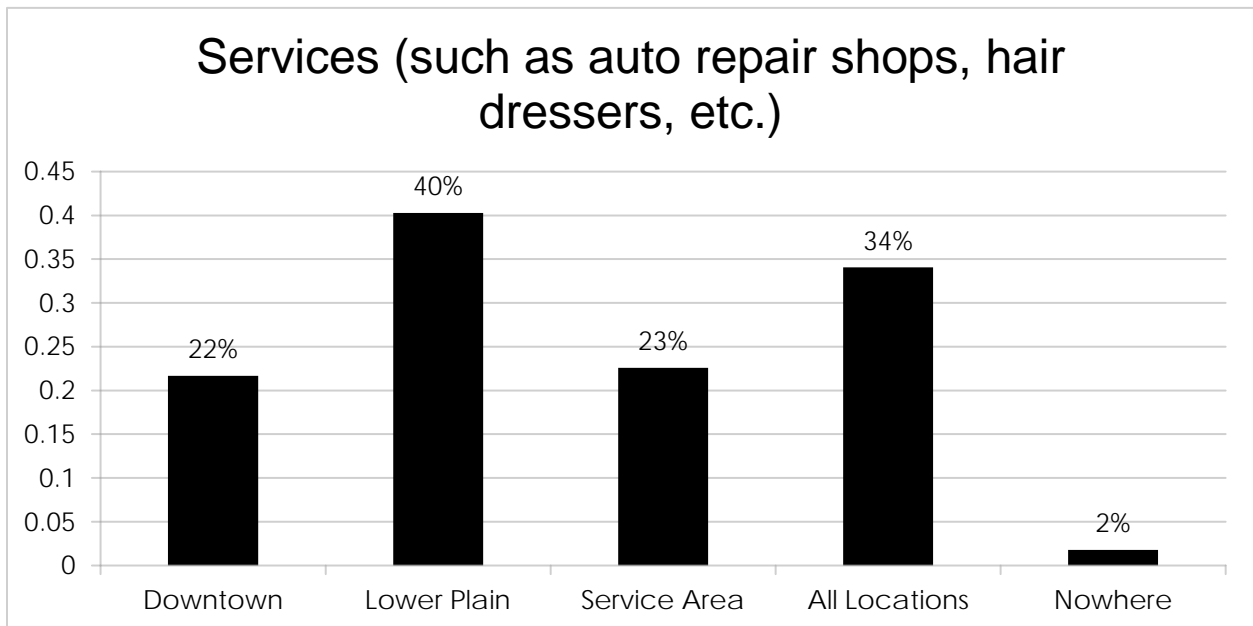


FIGURE 9 - PREFERRED LOCATIONS FOR SERVICES

Responses to open answer questions regarding indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities, clearly showed a strong desire for more things to do in Bradford, and that they should be located in all areas indicated in the survey.

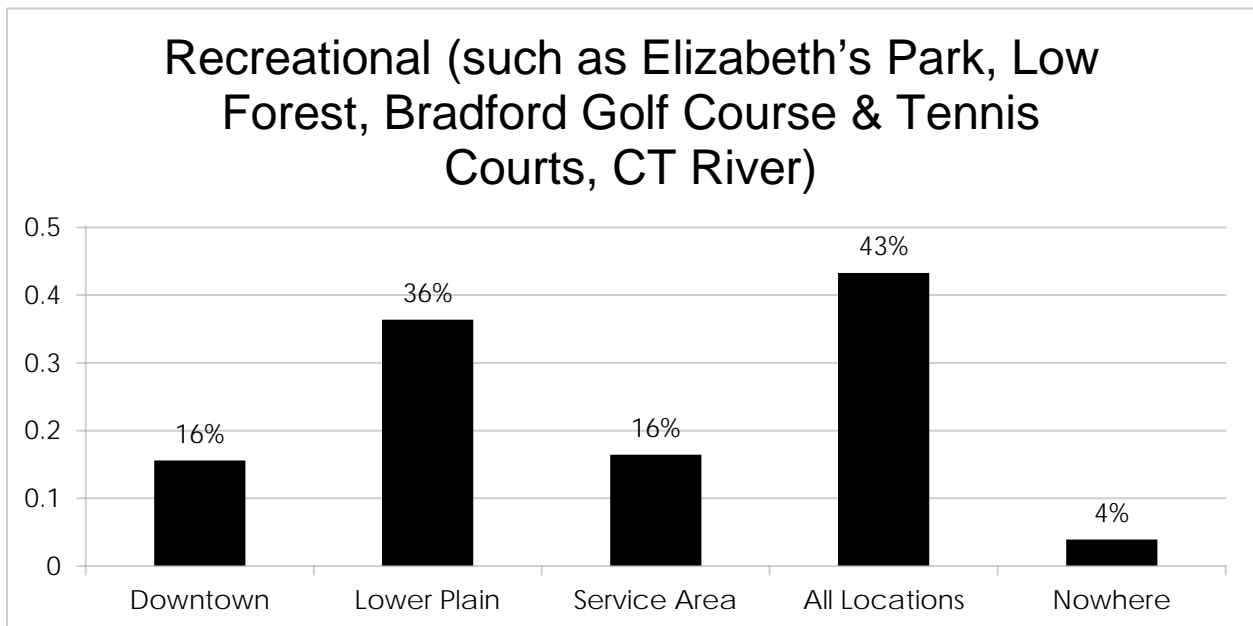


FIGURE 10 - PREFERRED LOCATIONS FOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

To further determine how to balance economic growth in the lower plain with the vitality of the Village, survey takers were asked whether or not they support the idea that “the types businesses in the lower plain should not compete with the types of businesses in the downtown.” Responses were fairly split, with 42% indicating that they were comfortable with competition between businesses in both areas, and 39% indicating that they were not. Indicating that further analysis may be necessary.

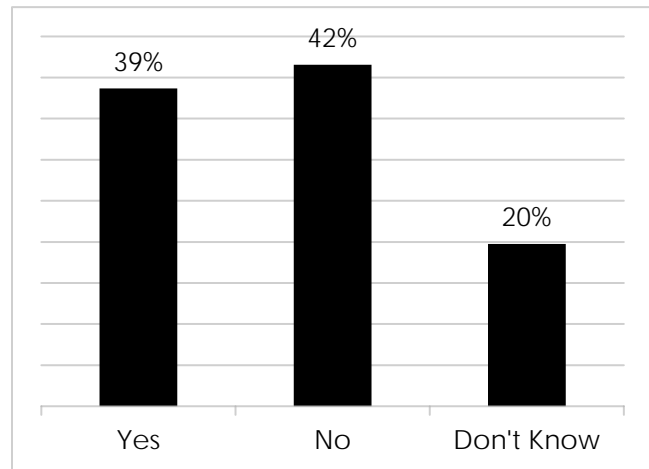


FIGURE 11 - SUPPORT FOR THE IDEA THAT BUSINESSES IN THE LOWER PLAIN SHOULD NOT COMPETE WITH THE VILLAGE.

E. Development Patterns

Vermont's statutory land use goals are clear that strip development is not the desired pattern. This goal has further been supported by changes to Act 250's criterion 9L (which relates to settlement patterns) and is mirrored by the Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Plan (which discourages sprawl and prohibits retail development outside of villages and downtowns).

Strip development, as defined under Act 250 and the Regional Plan, is primarily a pattern of development. While it is the case that examples of poor planning exhibit this pattern of development in many areas in Vermont and beyond, through good planning techniques and careful consideration it is possible to allow commercial development and avoid a pattern of strip development.

Survey takers were invited to offer their preference for illustrations that showed patterns of development as it might occur in the Lower Plain. The results were very valuable for the Planning Commission (see following page for two examples). Essentially, respondents strongly preferred a traditional village style development – high density, mixed-use, multi-story and walkable. They strongly disliked the pattern of development most associated with “strip development,” which favors “big-box” stores and large areas of parking.

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Village style buildings, which may or may not have multiple stories, screening requirements, parking behind or to the side and sidewalks.



Photo Source: NNECAP Photo Library

82%
Like

14%
Neutral

4%
Dislike

Large buildings on single lots with ample parking available to customers. Limited access by pedestrians.



11%
Like

23%
Neutral

66%
Dislike

IV. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS SUMMARY

In order to better understand the factors that impact commercial growth in Bradford's Village and Lower Plain, a basic market analysis was conducted by Camoin, Associates. The economic analysis focused on the specific data necessary to understand the existing small business and entrepreneurial environment in Bradford and its economic region (see figure 2). Data collection included an assessment of the average size of businesses in area, number and industry of self-employed residents, a retail leakage analysis, retail market analysis, and other economic indicators relevant to the Project. In addition, interviews with key stakeholders, including public officials, business owners, economic development professionals, real estate agents, and others who would be able to provide insight into the existing conditions and opportunities for small business development in Bradford were conducted. The complete analysis is included in Appendix B.

A. Retail Potential & New Business Opportunities

One of the key components of the economic analysis conducted for this project is the "Retail Leakage" analysis. This process analyzes the retail gap (the difference between retail supply and demand) to make inferences on what kinds of businesses might be successful, and sales leakage (the demand for goods and services that is not met locally), which offers insight into opportunities to capture unmet demand.

The study identified a **surplus** in the following sectors in the greater Bradford economic region:

- Gas stations
- Department stores
- General merchandise stores
- Food and beverage stores
- Grocery stores

A surplus indicates that there are likely enough, or more than needed, of these business types to serve the area. For example, it is unlikely that the Bradford economic region could support another large grocery store like Hannaford Supermarket.

The study identified sales leakage in the following sectors of the greater Bradford economic region:

- Restaurants/other eating places
- Clothing stores
- Other miscellaneous store retailers
- Sporting goods and hobby stores

Pathways to a Vital Economic Center, Bradford, VT – March 2018

- Electronics and appliance stores

When compared to data collected from the community survey regarding what types of businesses are of interest, opportunities identified by the leakage data results are supported. Survey takers specifically mention their desire to have a clothing store (such as Target), a craft/hobby store, an appliance store (to replace Perry's) and additional restaurants. However, it is important to recognize that although there are opportunities to capitalize on unmet demand, the scale of any new businesses would be small, because the Bradford economic region is compact with a relatively small population when compared to the Upper Valley (a much larger economic region).

Through a combination of average sales estimates, 10% recapture rate and average sales per square foot, a rough estimate of how many square feet of supportable commercial space is appropriate for the economic region can be determined (Figure 12).

<i>Type of Business</i>	<i># of Supportable Businesses</i>	<i>Total Supportable Square Feet</i>
<i>Restaurants/Other Eating Places</i>	2	2450
<i>Clothing Stores</i>	1	2732
<i>Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers</i>	1	1382
<i>Sporting Goods & Hobby Stores</i>	1	3534
<i>Electronics & Appliance Stores</i>	1	1320

FIGURE 12 - SUPPORTABLE RETAIL – BRADFORD ECONOMIC REGION

Ultimately, the economic study shows that there are potential opportunities for new retail commercial businesses in Bradford, but they are only one component of business types that should be encouraged. Other options suggested through the economic analysis and survey responses include:

Brewery with accompanying restaurant: Multiple interviewees pointed to a brewery as a potential opportunity in Bradford, as well as the need for more dining options. A craft brewery would not only attract out-of-towners and passersby, but would also satisfy the local craving for additional dining options and need for entertainment. Many other small towns throughout Vermont have seen much success in opening craft breweries, as the demand has sky-rocketed for these unique experiences nationwide. A brewery would be well-suited for the Lower Plain area.

Unique restaurant: While Bradford already has several popular restaurants, interviews and the community survey indicated that residents are interested in more unique dining opportunities, similar to Samurai Soul, which is located in Fairlee. This would also attract visitors from outside the town, which will then encourage spending at other town businesses.

Multi-purpose store: Survey responses indicated that they wished to have a replacement for Hills 5 & 10 store, which closed in 2015. A similar, locally-owned, multi-

Pathways to a Vital Economic Center, Bradford, VT – March 2018

purpose store would be a great addition to Bradford and would be have the potential to be successful, based on the community survey results.

Appliance store: Many community members have felt the loss of Perry's Oil Services and have expressed need for a new appliance and repair shop in the town.

Health care businesses: Recent growth in health care demands presents an opportunity for a new health care establishment in the Bradford which can serve the surrounding economic region. This could take the form of an outpatient facility, urgent care, etc. This type of business would be best suited in the Lower Plain area.

Wellness/fitness center: Alongside growing demand for health care evolves the demand for healthy food options and unique fitness opportunities. Interviewees mentioned the lack of these amenities within the town and neighboring towns; thus, facilities for fitness and wellness pose an additional opportunity, which could be satisfied by a gym, yoga studio, or health foods store. This option is also strongly supported in the survey results.

Additional business opportunities are discussed in Appendix B.

B. Capitalize on Community Assets

While economic data indicates that the Town of Bradford has lost jobs over the past 5 years (a total of 27) at a rate of -1.9%, the economic region and the town are projected to gain jobs at a slow but steady rate of 1% over the next five years. One way to support and improve Bradford's economic outlook is to take advantage of existing assets.

Farm-way is one of Bradford's most successful businesses, selling a broad range of products ranging from outdoor wear and camping gear to furniture and saddlery. The company has strong reputation for being a "green" company having located in an area identified as a brownfield, which required clean up and monitoring. Since 2009, Farm-Way has developed a solar system that provides 100% of the electricity needed for their operation. The unique nature of the store, and their reputation for customer service, makes Farm-Way a significant draw for shoppers in and out of Bradford's economic region. Recognizing this, Bradford should encourage business growth in areas that compliment Farm-Way. Complimentary businesses might include a brewery (to take advantage of the Vermont craft brewing craze), local cheese production with a tasting room, additional outdoor outfitters/rental options, and new restaurants.

Bradford also has several significant outdoor recreational assets, including the Connecticut River and the Wright's Mountain/Devil's Den property. Wrights Mountain is Bradford's highest peak, providing excellent views and miles of footpaths and logging roads for hikers. This completely forested area appeals to multiple types of outdoor recreation enthusiasts – the type of individual who may very well shop at Farm-Way. Leveraging this asset and marketing Bradford as a place for outdoor recreation enthusiasts may be one way to stimulate the local economy.

C. Wayfinding and Marketing

In addition to Farm-Way and Bradford's recreational assets, the community also has a classic traditional downtown, which offers guests several excellent dining opportunities, access to local parks, the municipal golf course and a wide-range of historic architecture. However, for individuals who are not familiar with the area, the community's assets may not be obvious. Bradford should develop a "wayfinding" plan that includes signs that direct visitors to community assets like Farm-Way, Wrights Mountain/Devils Den and the Village (See section IV).

Bradford should work with local businesses, particularly Farm-way to direct visitors to the downtown area and advertise any local outdoor recreational opportunities, entertainment options and events, when possible. A comprehensive marketing strategy, with a designated group to lead it, should be developed. Local businesses should be allowed to contribute materials and ideas to the process.

V. BUILDOUT ANALYSIS & CAPACITY STUDY

A. Overview

A buildout analysis is a multi-purpose tool used to estimate the amount and location of potential development for an area. In the context of this project, the analysis considered several components:

- **Spatial Analysis** – Geographic Information Systems (GIS) were used to analyze existing land use regulations to determine how they are encouraging or limiting potential future development. Zoning rules, such as setback requirements, density limitations, parking requirements, etc., can all limit the potential for development in an area.
- **Capacity Analysis** – This considered the potential of the land and municipal services to carry additional development. Constraints such as floodplains, steep slopes and soil types are identified as they can limit the ability to develop a parcel. Additionally, municipal services, particularly sewer and water have a capacity that is limited by the infrastructure that makes up each system. If sewer and water capacity are reached, no additional development can be served by those systems without expensive upgrades. Some development, particularly commercial and industrial, may not choose to locate in an area that is not served by sewer and water.
- **Parcel Development Potential Analysis** – Each parcel within the project area has differing constraints that may encourage or limit potential development. The most obvious is that a parcel is completely built out. In other circumstances, a parcel may have existing development, but may include enough area to be subdivided.

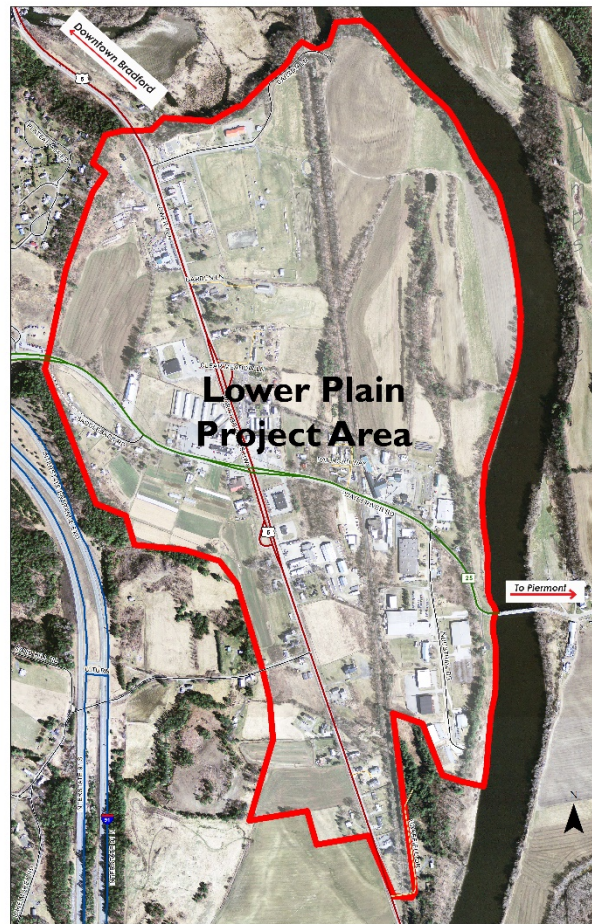


FIGURE 13 - BUILDOUT ANALYSIS & CAPACITY STUDY PROJECT AREA

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Collectively, these analyses helped provide information that will guide changes to the Municipal Plan's land use policies and the community's zoning regulations.

B. Spatial Analysis Methodology & Results

In an effort to identify any potential barriers to future development in the lower plain that may exist due to current zoning regulations, a spatial analysis was conducted within the project area.

Inputs

GIS analysis was used within the project area to determine the maximum amount of square footage that would be allowable under Bradford's zoning regulations. Inputs into the analysis are primarily spatial (see sidebar).

Assumptions

To provide an effective analysis, it is necessary to make specific assumptions about how development will occur. For the buildout analysis the following assumptions were made:

- Use of Available Land - 100% of the land area in the Lower Plain was available for residential and commercial use.
- Efficiency Rating - In order to account for onsite infrastructure such as parking and stormwater retention, an efficiency rating was applied. For uses in commercial areas such as the Lower Plain Commercial zone where parking and stormwater investments would be significant, efficiency was assumed at 50% - that is 50% of the available space on a parcel would be dedicated to roads, parking, stormwater, etc. In residential areas, efficiency is assumed to be significantly higher – 80%.
- Types of Development – The Bradford Town plan describes the purpose of the Lower Plain Commercial Area is “to provide space for concentrated commercial development.” As a result, it was assumed that commercial development would be favored over residential, although some residential was included in the analysis. The benefits of mixed-use development, are discussed later in this report.
- Building Scale – The Municipal Plan sets a threshold of 36,000 square feet for total building area in the Lower Plain. For the purposes of analyzing buildout, 36,000 square feet was set as the maximum, although additional analyses were conducted using multiple stories, and smaller square footages.

Lower Plain Spatial Requirements

Spatial requirements for development in the Lower Plain Commercial Area include the following:

Lot Area Minimum

Residential -10,000 ft² per unit

Non-Residential – None

Setbacks & Frontage

Minimum Lot Frontage – 100 ft. or 20 ft. right-of-way

Minimum Setback – 25 ft. from edge of right-of-way

Side & Rear Setback – 20 ft.

Other

Max. Building Height – 35 ft.

Maximum Allowable Building Footprint – 50% of lot area

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- Developable Area – Not all parcels in the Lower Plain were identified as developable. Undevelopable areas included road and railroad rights-of-way, completely occupied parcels (such as Oaks Brothers or Hannaford), conserved properties (such as the Newmont farm property), and properties with environmental constraints (brownfields).

Results

Spatial analysis determined that roughly two million square feet of development is possible within the areas of the lower plain identified as developable. Figure 14 indicates new potential buildings in red, yellow and grey dots. Depending on the maximum allowable building area, this could amount to 150-220 new buildings in the Lower Plain. While buildout analysis is not a substitute for parcel by parcel site analysis, it does provide insight into the impacts of Bradford's zoning regulation.

It is clear that Bradford's zoning is not an impediment to development in the Lower Plain. If anything, Bradford's bylaws are extremely permissive, allowing most types of development at any scale feasible; dependent on sewer and water, parking requirements, stormwater requirements, etc. It should be noted that this analysis did not consider the potential impacts of Act 250 (discussed later in this section).

C. Capacity Study

In addition to spatial analysis, the capacity of the land and existing services was analyzed to identify any potential constraints. One of the most appealing elements about the Lower Plain in terms of development potential is its lack of physical constraints. In other places, steep slopes, wetlands and floodplains make development challenging. The Lower Plain, on the other hand, is relatively flat and contains minimal natural resource issues. The factors that limit capacity in the lower plain are described below.

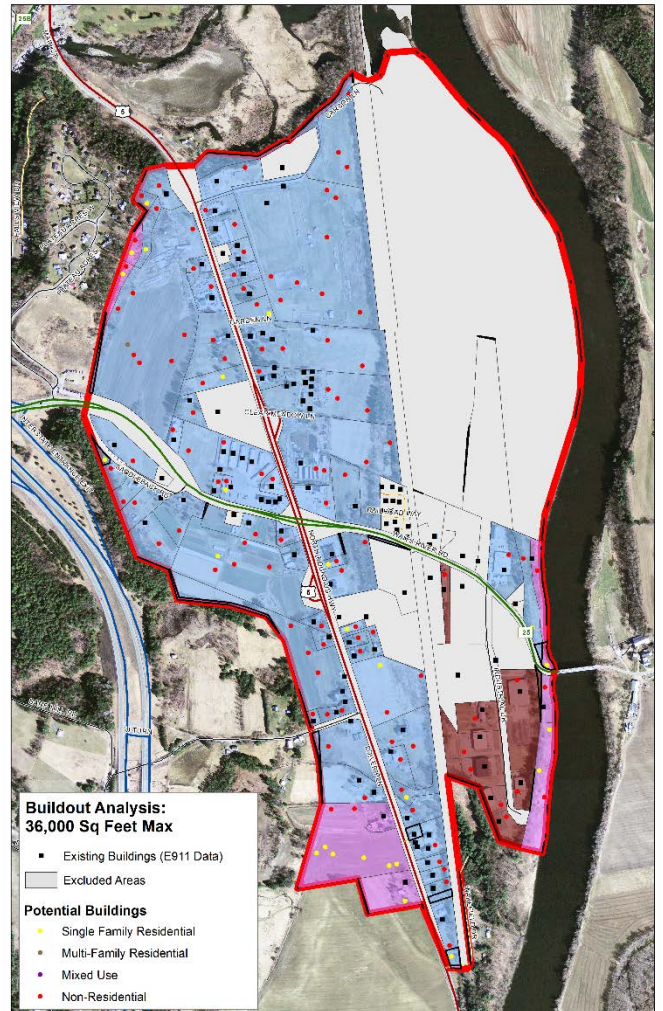


FIGURE 14 - BUILDOUT ANALYSIS RESULTS - 36,000 SQ. FT. (NOTE: A LARGER VERSION OF THIS MAP CAN BE FOUND IN APPENDIX C)

Sewer and Water

Sewer and water are available in the Lower Plain, however investigations into current capacity determined that there are significant limitations to existing infrastructure. In 2012, Bradford completed an extension of their existing sewer system, which provided much needed access to businesses in the Lower Plain. The availability of this service was essential to Hannaford's Supermarket, allowing them to dismantle a smaller, older grocery store and replace it with a larger, modern and appealing store that effectively serves the Bradford economic region.

Bradford's sewer system has a permitted capacity of 137,000 Gallons per day (GPD), of which 94,000 GPD is currently being used. State law requires community wastewater systems to plan for upgrades to the facility when 80% of the system capacity is reached. Eighty percent of Bradford's existing capacity is approximately 109,600 GPD. Based on this threshold, calculations determine that there are roughly 15,600 GPD of remaining wastewater capacity in the Bradford sewer system before planning for upgrades will be required.

Bradford's sewer treatment plant is located on the north end of the village. The topography between the sewer treatment plant and the Lower Plain is such that pumping of effluent is required. An engineering analysis of the sewer line extension and its pump station (which is located in the industrial park) has determined that, based on the number of active users in the Lower Plan, the pump station cannot support 15,600 GPD. The estimated remaining capacity of the Lower Plain pump station is roughly 10,000 GPD.

For the purposes of this analysis, a rough factor of $9.38\text{ft}^2 \cdot \text{GPD}$ was developed to determine how many square feet of commercial development could be served by existing sewer capacity. It should be noted that this factor is an *estimate only*, and further engineering study will be required on a site-by-site and use-by-use basis to pinpoint accuracy. For planning purposes, these numbers are reasonable.

Based on the ft^2/GPD factor, there is enough capacity in the Lower Plain sewer extension to serve approximately 93,000 square feet of new mixed-use development.

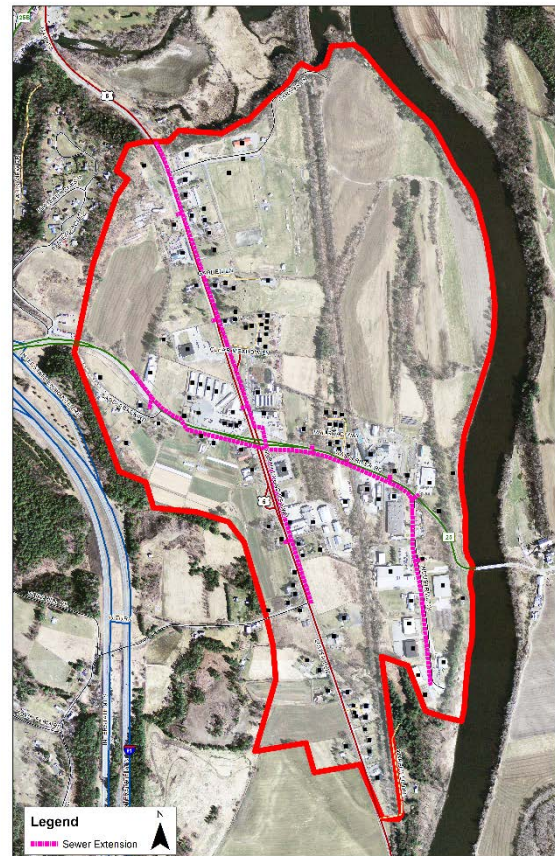


FIGURE 15 - LOCATION OF BRADFORD SEWER LINE EXTENSION (LOWER PLAIN)

Act 250

To properly understand the constraints that limit development in the Lower Plain, the impacts of Act 250 must be considered. Act 250, Vermont's landmark quasi-judicial permitting process, was designed for the purposes of managing the impacts of development, particularly as they relate to natural resources. When a proposed development in a community triggers Act 250 (see sidebar on following page) the proposed project is reviewed against ten specific criteria (and sub criteria), which include:

1. Air and Water Pollution
2. Water Supply
3. Impact on Existing Water Supplies
4. Soil Erosion
5. Traffic Safety and Congestion
6. Impact on Schools
7. Impact on Municipal Services
8. Wildlife, Historic Sites and Aesthetics
9. Impacts of Growth
10. Conformance with Local and Regional Plans.

Because Bradford has only Zoning Regulations and no subdivision regulations, the lowest Act 250 trigger threshold (1 acre or more) applies for all commercial development. This means that any new commercial development on one-acre or more (or modification to an existing permit) in the Lower Plain will be subject to Act 250 review. Of specific importance in the context of capacity for new development in the lower plain, are criteria 9(B), 9(L) and 10.

- **9(B) Primary Agricultural Soils** - If a project subject to Act 250 jurisdiction contains soils that are mapped by the NRCS as "prime" and/or "statewide" agricultural soils" the Agency of Agriculture will review and provide recommendations. Typically, developers are required to design their proposals to avoid impact to Prime Ag Soils. This may mean reducing the proposed scale of the development to preserve open ag-land. In some cases, off-site mitigation, is allowed. This involves paying a fee based on the agricultural value of the soils. There are a significant number of Prime Agricultural soils in the lower plan, much of which has been identified as Ag Value 1 – the highest value, and most expensive to mitigate. As of 2017, District Three's cost per acre for mitigation was \$2,654. This number is multiplied times a factor of 3 for each acre of Ag Value 1 soils mitigated. Nearly \$8000 an acre for off-site mitigation of Ag Value 1 soils. See

Act 250 Triggers

Act 250 permitting becomes a consideration under a number of specific circumstances including (but not limited to) the following:

Commercial Development on 1 acre or more in communities with only zoning or subdivision (or no land use regulation).

Commercial development on 10 acres or more in communities with BOTH zoning or subdivision (or a unified bylaw).

Subdivisions of 10 lots or more, or 6 lots in towns without zoning AND subdivision regulations.

map #4 in Appendix C for more information.

- **9(L) Settlement Patterns** – All development subject to Act 250 must demonstrate that it will make efficient use of land, energy, roads, and other supporting infrastructure; and will not contribute to a pattern of strip development along public highways; or if the development or subdivision will be confined to an area that already constitutes strip development, will incorporate infill and is designed to reasonably minimize the patterns of development as outlined in Act 250's definition of "Strip Development." If reviewed objectively, it could be argued that the pattern of development that exists in the Lower Plain does include a number of the characteristics identified as strip development. Commercial buildings in the Lower Plain are predominantly single-story, there is limited shared highway access, there is no significant connection to the village other than Route 5 and there is limited access for pedestrians.
- **10 Conformance with Local and Regional Plans** – All development reviewed under Act 250 must conform to local and Regional Plans. In the event that there is a conflict between the two plans, Act 250 typically defers to the local plan. However, in the event that the Regional Commission is able to demonstrate that a development meets its criteria (defined in the TRORC Regional Plan) for Substantial Regional Impact, the District Commission shall adhere to the Regional Plan.

The potential for conflicts between the local and Regional Plan is significant when retail development is proposed outside of the Village. The Regional Plan includes the following specific, and mandatory (due to the use of the word "must") language:

"Principal retail establishments must be located in Town Centers, Designated Downtowns, or Designated Growth Centers to minimize the blighting effects of sprawl and strip-development along major highways and maintain rural character."

How Act 250 Defines "Strip-Development"

Strip development means: linear commercial development along a public highway that includes three or more of the following characteristics:

- broad road frontage
- predominance of single-story buildings
- limited reliance on shared highway access
- lack of connection to any existing settlement except by highway
- lack of connection to rounding land uses except by highway
- lack of coordination with surrounding land uses
- Limited accessibility for pedestrians.

While this language can be interpreted as a prohibition on all commercial development outside of villages and downtowns, it is not, as it specifically identifies retail development. Yet, any proposed development that includes retail could be challenged by the Regional Planning Commission under Act 250 as was the case in 2007 when Gizmo Realty/VKR Associates, LLC proposed a 45,350 square foot commercial development with a retail component on a 5.7 acre parcel south of the junction of Route 5 and 25. The Act 250 permit for this development was initially denied, but when appealed to the Environmental Court, the decision was overturned. In this case, the RPC's definition of Substantial Regional Impact was not applicable.

D. Development Potential Analysis

Parcels were evaluated for their suitability for development in order to identify which parcels were the most likely to be developed. Development potential was analyzed through three different lenses:

- **Proximity to Existing Sewer.** The desirability of a parcel is based in part by the cost of providing essential services, such as power, water and sewer. Areas of the Lower Plain that are in close proximity to existing wastewater infrastructure, will be less expensive to develop because a stand-alone onsite wastewater system will not need to be designed and built. Additionally, municipal wastewater may offer the ability to generate higher quantities of effluent than could be processed onsite. See Map #7, Appendix C.
- **Proximity to Existing Roads.** Nearby road access is valuable to the developer, particularly when the nearby road is a well-maintained state transportation corridor like Routes 5 and 25. Being in close proximity to existing roads will minimize costs of building internal roads or having to negotiate an easement with an adjacent

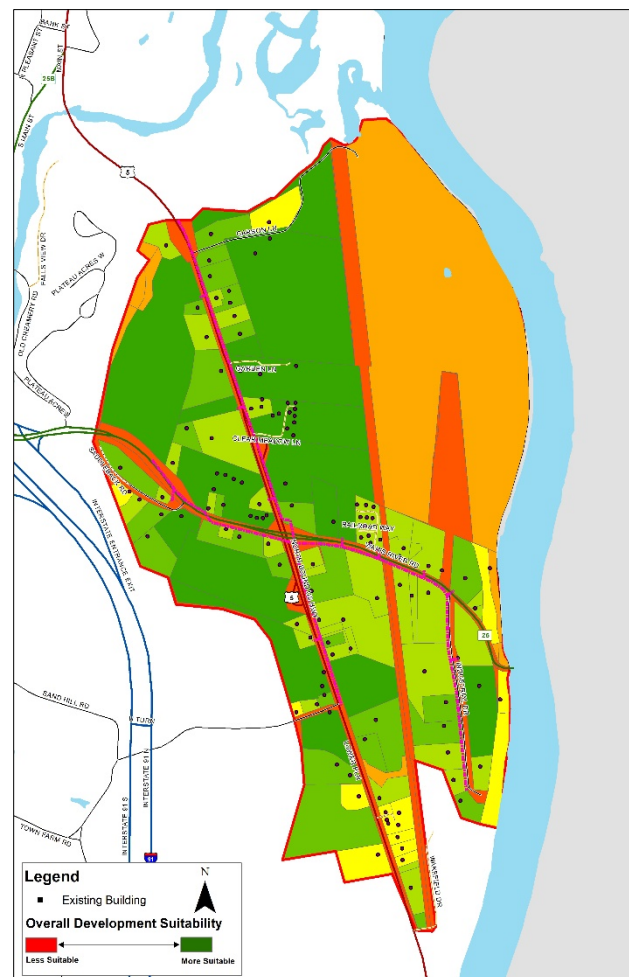


FIGURE 16 - OVERALL DEVELOPMENT SUITABILITY (NOTE: A LARGER VERSION OF MAP CAN BE FOUND IN APPENDIX C)

property owner. See Map #8, Appendix C.

- **Parcel Desirability.** Notwithstanding proximity to sewer and roads, parcels were ranked based on their desirability. Criteria included the presence of other buildings, available space for subdivision of property, natural or man-made constraints (such as rivers or roads), or conservation easements that would limit development potential. See Map #9, Appendix C.

Utilizing the rankings provided from each level of analysis for development potential, an overall ranking of parcels was developed, which identified the parcels most likely to attract developers in the future (see Map #10, Appendix C). It should be noted that most parcels in the Lower Plain have high development potential, unless they are fully developed (such as the Oaks Brothers or Hannaford properties), publically owned (such as the fire station) or conserved. While the maps included in Appendix C show a range that appears to indicate many locations are marginal,

Goal: Village Scale Development in the Lower Plain

Stakeholders have clearly identified a desire to encourage new commercial and mixed-use development in the Lower Plain, provided that it reflects a more “village-like” aesthetic.

This goal can be achieved by fostering a more human-scale style of development, one that is designed for people rather than automobiles. This means incorporating measures into development that encourage public interaction such as parks or civic spaces, or walking and biking opportunities. It means designing buildings to appeal to people on foot, rather than in cars, a very different pattern of development than has occurred in the Lower Plain over the past twenty years.

By encouraging a broader mix of uses that encourage residents to live, work and play in the same area; built at an appealing, human scale, Bradford can encourage economic growth.

VI. THE PATH TO IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation is often the most significant challenge for communities to address once a Plan has been developed. It is the step between the vision and the reality, which requires a commitment and willingness to move forward that involves town staff, volunteer boards, and community stakeholders. Implementation also often has costs associated with it.

A. Planning and Policy Implementation Activities

Bradford is focused on encouraging the growth of new economic opportunities that support a healthy and vibrant village while allowing for village-scale expansion into the Lower Plain, which represents a prime location for new development. While many projects require the assistance of expert consultants outside of the community, there are opportunities for Bradford to push forward on implementing the community's economic vision through community participation and the tools available to towns.

The priority for any new initiatives will be to prioritize the steps that need to be taken based on a unified vision. The Planning Commission has identified the desire to encourage economic growth and vibrancy in a way that balances and enhances the qualities of Bradford's Village Center with the Lower Plain. Residents have indicated support for this idea, and have helped refine the concept through their participation in the public survey.

Revise the Town Plan

The Bradford Town Plan will be due for revision and re-adoption in 2021, however, a community may revise and adopt their plan at any time. Communities will often do so in the event of a significant change that makes their current plan out-of-date or out of touch with the current municipal vision. Because the municipal plan serves as the community's vision for the future, and as the foundation for land use regulation (zoning, subdivision, etc.), the Bradford Town Plan should be revised to incorporate important elements generated through this project. The Planning Commission can opt either to bring components of this project (data, implementation items, etc.) into the Plan or can adopt this report as part of the Plan by reference.

Responsible Parties
Planning Commission & Selectboard

Timeframe for Implementation
As soon as possible

As part of the process of revising the Town Plan, it may be valuable to organize additional public input sessions to gather additional citizen input regarding building design in the lower plain. Discussion could begin with the design examples included as part of this report in Appendix D. This process could include a design charrette which allows participants an opportunity to be more "hands on" in imagining a new way to

approach development in a specific area. This process would most likely require assistance from the Regional Planning Commission or a private consultant and could be funded through a Municipal Planning Grant at minimal cost to the Town.

Adopt an Official Map

State Statute enables communities with an adopted Municipal Plan to adopt an Official Map. The Official Map is a tool that communities can use to control design by identifying locations of future public facilities. For example, an official map can include future streets, planned trails, sites reserved for public buildings, and areas reserved for stormwater or flood control. Through the official map, municipalities have the authority to require the reservation of easements

Responsible Parties

Planning Commission & Selectboard

Timeframe for Implementation

After the community has taken ample time to determine the optimal locations for future infrastructure and conducted a sound, public process that includes education and outreach to the community.

What does “village-style” development look like?

Survey takers and stakeholders indicated a preference for development that was more similar to a village center than a shopping center or mall complex.

Characteristics of village-style development include:

- **Homes on narrow lots.** In many Vermont villages and downtowns, homes are on lots that are narrow, but deep. Public interaction and activity is often centered on the street.
- **Building design that is context sensitive and oriented to the street.** A neighborhood is in part defined by its architecture. Buildings often have similar design characteristics, and in villages and downtowns, they face the street.
- **Mixed Use.** Villages and downtowns always contain a dense mix of residential, civic and commercial uses. Housing types often vary in villages as well.
- **Designed for People.** In traditional villages, design is focused on the human environment, rather than on automobiles. Building scale, streets and sidewalks are generally designed in a way that enhances pedestrian safety and public interaction.
- **Encourages Social Interaction.** The nexus between private spaces like porches and yards and the streetscape provide people with opportunities for interaction.
- **Streetscaping.** Public spaces often have a specific design, including landscaping, where plants, trees and shrubs provide visual interest, shade, and other aesthetic benefits.

or land to accomplish a public purpose, such as the creation of a new road or a public park. As part of the permitting process, applicants can use the official map to understand where public facilities like roads or trails are going to be developed and how their development must be designed to accommodate them.

The adoption of an official map identifies the areas where a community plans public facilities and establishes the procedure by which sites can be acquired (typically through financial compensation) before they are developed for other uses. At any point in that process, a municipality can opt not to acquire property and allow a proposed development to proceed. Adopting an official map does not commit the municipality to purchase properties on which future public infrastructure projects are shown.

Adopt Subdivision Regulations

As noted in Chapter V, section C, Bradford has zoning but no subdivision regulations. Because of this, the Act 250 permit threshold for commercial development is one acre. If the town were to adopt Subdivision regulations as a companion to Zoning, that threshold would rise to 10 acres. This could simplify permitting for potential developers significantly.

Responsible Parties

Planning Commission & Selectboard

Timeframe for Implementation

As soon as is reasonable after adequate public education and outreach to ensure support.

In addition, Subdivision regulations control the pattern of development by creating rules for the way land is divided and infrastructure is provided. This will be particularly important if the Planning Commission seeks to implement the vision of a Lower Plain that has a pattern of development that is more similar to a village than a commercial strip. In addition to basic subdivision requirements, the Town should consider:

- **Specific lot design standards for the Lower Plain Commercial Zones:** This might include detailed requirements for the layout of lots, blocks, roads, and pathways; the placement of lot markers and survey monuments; the construction and installation of roads, curbs, sidewalks, utilities, and water, wastewater, and stormwater management facilities; the layout of recreation, common, or open space areas; and landscaping. For the Lower Plain, this might specifically require that:
 - Internal roads be designed with pedestrian comfort and safety as a critical goal along with the safe and efficient flow of traffic and other important considerations, such as the accommodation of emergency vehicles, on-street parking, etc.
 - Internal roads must connect adjacent parcels in order to limit access points to major roads.
 - Internal roads only be wide enough to accommodate slow, two lane traffic and emergency vehicle needs; and designed include on-street parking to reduce speeds on internal roads and to create a village feel.

Pathways to a Vital Economic Center, Bradford, VT – March 2018

- Bike lanes be included in internal road design, unless a separate bike path is proposed within a subdivision.
 - Planned parking areas should not be located in front of building areas, but instead should be located behind or to the side, with the exception of on-street parking.
 - Developers should be required to include adequate space to allow for landscaping accommodations at the edge of internal roads, including trees.
- **Alternative lot design standards for the Lower Plain Commercial Zones:** This could include “cluster” or “open space design” requirements to protect open space or traditional neighborhood design to require more compact, higher density development a village style development pattern.

The Planning Commission should seek assistance from the Regional Planning Commission to implement these additions to a basic subdivision regulation. At the same time, it will be important for the Planning Commission to provide education and outreach to the community (the RPC might be able to assist with this as well) that helps them understand why Subdivision Regulations would be beneficial in Bradford. Without adequate buy-in from the community, it may be challenge to get subdivision standards adopted.

Revise and Adopt Zoning Regulations

Once the Bradford Town Plan has been revised to reflect the information collected through this report, a complete revision of the zoning should be undertaken. In addition to routine updating to ensure that the regulation is compliant with state law, the Planning Commission should focus on addressing its approach to regulating the pattern of development that occurs in the lower plan. Survey results indicate that citizens favor a more compact and village-like pattern of development than has occurred historically. To achieve this pattern, the following zoning principles should be considered for incorporation into revised zoning regulations:

Responsible Parties
Planning Commission & Selectboard

Timeframe for Implementation
As soon as is reasonable after adequate public education and outreach to ensure support.

- **Create a Design Control Overlay District for Commercial and Mixed Use Development the Lower Plain:** In order to push future development toward a more village-style pattern of development, there will be a need for greater control with regard to design and site planning. Because the Bradford Municipal Plan suggests variations on the types of uses allowed in different parts of the Lower Plain (Lower Plain 1, Lower Plain 2 and Industrial), an overlay district that imposes design controls specifically on commercial and/or mixed use development is the most logical approach. A design control overlay, will allow

Pathways to a Vital Economic Center, Bradford, VT – March 2018

the Town to regulate the design and site plan requirements for new commercial or mixed use development in the Lower Plain, while continuing to allow less-specific regulatory requirements for the same types of uses elsewhere.

One option to address design is to utilize a Form-Base Code (see figure 17). Form based codes regulate the details that are most commonly connected to what are considered walkable, human-scaled neighborhoods. These details include building placement, height, width, and the way then interact with the public space (called “frontage”). They can also include regulations that address the layout and design of streets, parking and pedestrian infrastructure. Some communities have adopted a “hybrid” form-based code, which only applies to a specific area, usually a village or downtown.

- **Design for Village Context:** To achieve a village-style of development in the Lower Plain, developers will need to be required to orient buildings and entrances to the street (not to parking areas), break up larger buildings to maintain a visually compatible scale of development, consider pedestrian scale and orientation through street level storefronts, windows, etc. Parking should be screened and landscaped. If formula businesses (such as fast food chains or franchises) are permitted, they must be designed to fit in with a village style of development as defined in the zoning regulations.

One of quintessential examples of how design control can be utilized to ensure that development is designed for a village context is shown in figure 16. This example shows a McDonalds franchise that match’s classic village architecture, lot layout and site design. The Form-Based Code approach shown in figure 17 controls building placement, lot occupation and building form and type.



FIGURE 17 - McDONALDS FRANCHISE, FREEPORT, ME (SOURCE: NNECAPA PHOTO LIBRARY)



KEY --- Property Line (ROW)

BUILDING PLACEMENT — PRINCIPAL BLDG

Front Setback, Principal Frontage	3ft min, 20 ft max	A
Front Setback, Secondary Frontage	3ft min, 20 ft max	B
Side Setback	5 ft min - 20 ft max"	C
Rear Setback	greater of 3 ft min or 15 ft from center line of rear alley	•
Frontage Bulldout	40% min - 75% max	

" Except 0 ft for common walls of Live/Works, Rowhouses, Duplexes, Small Commercial Buildings and Apartment Houses

YARD TYPES

(see Table 13.4.2)

Edgeyard	permitted
Sidyard	permitted
Rearyard (Not synonymous with Backyard)	permitted

BUILDING & LOT USE

See Section 13.4.11

LOT OCCUPATION

Lot Width	18 ft min, 70 ft max
Lot Coverage	70% max

BUILDING FORM-PRINCIPAL BUILDING

Building Height	3 stories max
Ground Floor Height	12 ft min, 25 ft max
Upper Floor Height	9ft min
Facade Glazing	20% min - 70% max "
Roof Type	gable, hip, gambrel
Roof Pitch	gable: 6:12 min, 12:12 max hip: 3:12 min gambrel: 6:12 min, 30:12 max

" 70% min for shopfront

BUILDING TYPES ALLOWED

House, Duplex, Rowhouse, Live/Work, Small Commercial Building, Apartment House

FIGURE 18 - RIVERSIDE FLATS CHARACTER-BASED DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, JERICO, VT, ADOPTED AUGUST 24, 2017.

- **Address Building Form.** One of the commonly identified components of “sprawl” or “strip development” is an excess of single-story buildings. To move beyond this pattern, establish a minimum building height that encourages multi-story development. For example, requiring a minimum of two stories, but allowing three stories will provide a variety of potential forms, while breaking free of the single-story model (note that it is important to balance this minimum height requirement with the capabilities of your fire department). To encourage more village scale buildings, consider setting a maximum building width requirement along the front right of way.
- **Address Building Placement.** Establish a “build to line” for buildings along internal roads. This will help create a more pedestrian-scale environment. To this end, setbacks from internal roads should be minimal for village-style development, only allowing for adequate space between the roadway and buildings for pedestrian and landscaping enhancements. Lot widths along internal roads should be minimized to create a more compact area in which to develop structures.
- **Revise Lot Coverage.** Bradford’s current zoning ordinance sets maximum building coverage in the lower plain for commercial development at 50% of the total lot area. This ultimately makes creating village style of development more challenging because in truth, building covering in Vermont’s villages and downtowns is often more than 50%. In order to ensure that a higher coverage allowance does not encourage extremely large buildings, building placement standards and lot width limitations should be instituted (see “lot occupation,” figure 17 as an example).
- **Address Architectural Design.** It is possible to get extremely detailed and proscriptive with architectural design requirements, initially consider including simple architectural design guidelines that reflect traditional Vermont village architecture, while offering a range of types to allow for reasonable flexibility for differing uses that still achieves the vision for the area. Use photos or illustrations to clearly identify appropriate and inappropriate architectural styles. There are a number of styles of architecture represented in Bradford Village, including Greek revival, French Second Empire, Federal, Queen Anne and Victorian, that can serve as models for preferred styles of development.

What is the Right Set-Back?

The best way to determine what an appropriate “build to line” or setback should be is to find locations that represent the community’s vision; and analyze those areas for guidance. What are the general setbacks? How far apart are the buildings? What kinds of yards are there? With this reference data, the appropriate standards can be developed.

- **Revise Parking Standards.** Bradford's parking standards are out-of-date, requiring a significant amount of space for parking depending on the use. For example, commercial uses in the Lower Plain are required to have one parking space for every business and employee vehicle, plus one space for every 200 square feet of floor area. Based on this calculation, a 10,000 square foot building would require 50 parking spaces (not including those needed for employees or company vehicles). The average parking space is 9 feet wide by 18 feet long, covering a total of 162 square feet. 50 required parking spaces would necessitate 8,000 square feet of parking, not including the necessary travel areas, pedestrian zones and stormwater infrastructure – nearly the same amount of coverage for parking as for the example 10,000 square foot building.

The Planning Commission should remove minimum parking standards in Lower Plain and replace them with maximum parking standards. Maximum parking standards have two benefits. First, they improve the area by preserving open space and limiting impervious surfaces; encourage attractive, pedestrian-friendly urban design; and promote transportation choices. Second, from the developer's standpoint, maximum limits reduce costs for parking construction, operations, maintenance; and increase leasable space within a given floor-to-area ratio. On street public parking should be considered when calculating necessary parking. Parking lots should not be allowed in front of buildings. In areas where they are visible from streets, they should be screened with appropriate landscaping.

- **Limit Access to Routes 5 and 25.** To further establish a more village scale pattern of development, regulations should be revised to require shared access points between parcels, particularly along Routes 5 and 25.

Change Regional Future Land Use Designations

The pattern of development identified through this project suggests that changes to the Regional Plan's Future Land Use classifications in Bradford may be warranted. Currently, parts of the Lower Plain are identified in the 2017 Regional Plan as Interchange Areas (see figure 18, indicated in yellow). The Regional Plan indicates that

"appropriate uses include highway-oriented lodging and service facilities, trucking terminals, truck-dependent manufacturing, and park-and-ride commuter lots." While some of the uses that are identified by the Regional Commission may be appropriate in the Lower Plain (such as lodging) based on the public input provided during this analysis, others are less so.

Responsible Parties

Bradford TRORC Representative,
Planning Commission, Selectboard
& TRORC

Timeframe for Implementation

Well in advance of next scheduled
revision of the TRORC Regional
Plan's Future Land Use element.

Pathways to a Vital Economic Center, Bradford, VT – March 2018

If the community is to foster a more village-scale, mixed use approach to development in the Lower Plain, it should work with the Regional Commission to identify the best approach to regional land use policy as it relates to Bradford. One approach (pictured in Figure 19) may be to expand the TRORC Town Center area to include the parts of the Lower Plain in which Bradford intends to encourage higher density, mixed use development.

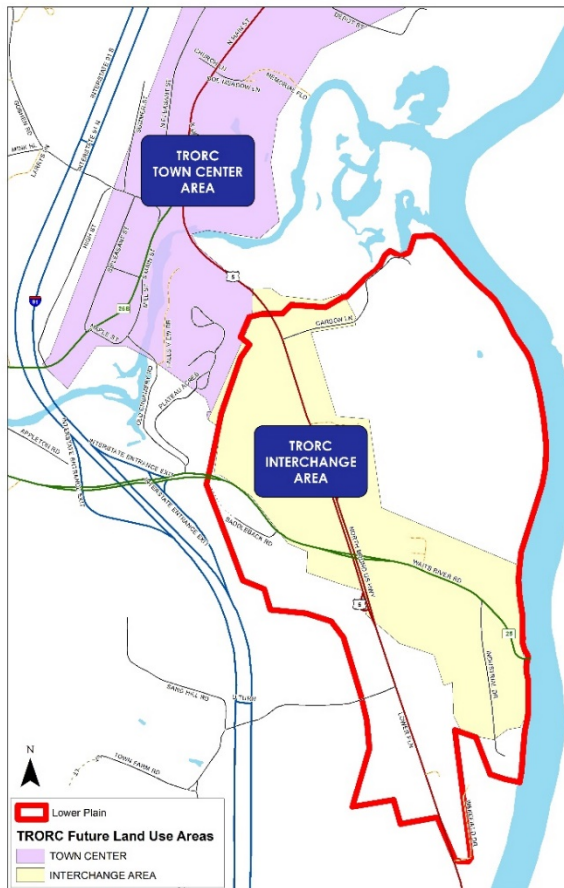


FIGURE 20 - TRORC FUTURE LAND USE AREAS, 2017

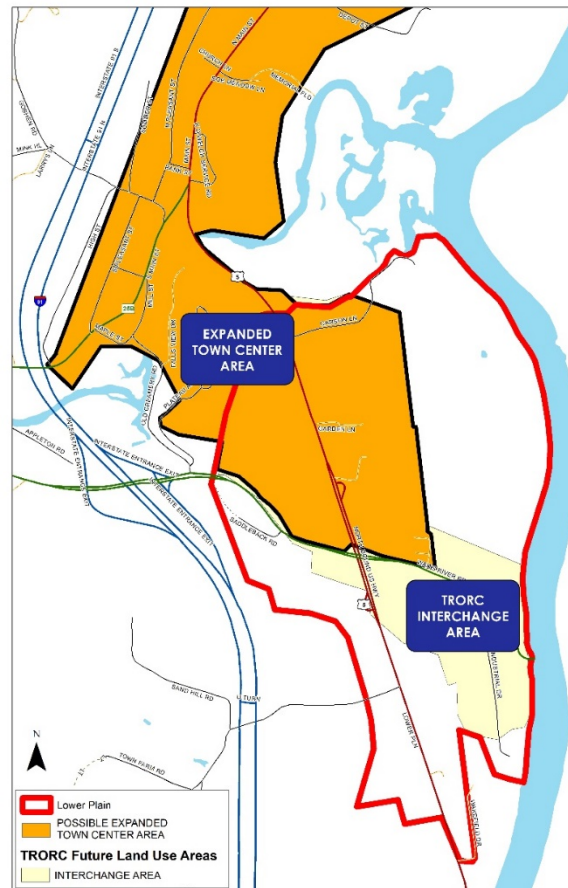


FIGURE 20 - POSSIBLE EXPANDED REGIONAL PLAN TOWN CENTER AREA

The Regional Commission identifies Town Center Areas as “those areas where central public utilities for water and sewer are available, and where there exists a central location for commercial activities and schools, cultural and civic activities for the town and the surrounding community.” Considering that residents and survey responses indicate a desire to have a mix of housing, commercial and civic activities in the lower plain that complement the downtown, it would appear that such a change could be considered consistent with the general goals of the Regional Plan.

The Bradford Town Plan (which was approved by the Regional Commission) identifies areas north of the Routes 5 & 25 junction as appropriate for retail, whereas to the south retail is discouraged. With the proposed expansion of the Regional

Commission's Town Center Area into the northern section of the Lower Plain, the potential for conflicts between the Bradford Town Plan and TRORC Regional Plan relative to retail development under Act 250 would be reduced. Existing retail activities outside of the expanded Town Center area would be grandfathered. Given the limited amount of new retail potential (less than 10,000 square feet) identified by the Economic Development analysis (Chapter IV), Bradford should be encouraging economic growth through a mix of village scale uses that extend beyond retail, including services (such as restaurants), activity centers (exercise facility) and possibly light manufacturing, etc., uses that the Regional Plan is generally supportive of in most locations depending on scale.

It is important to recognize that the Regional Commission will balance the vision of the community against their statutorily mandated need to be consistent with Vermont's planning goals. While the community might prefer to have the entire Lower Plain treated as at Town Center by the Regional Commission in terms of allowed uses, such an approach would be unlikely to be viewed as consistent with state statute by TRORC.

An incremental approach to encouraging high density mixed use development in the Lower Plain is much more likely to be considered. If, for example, the Regional Plan was modified as is suggested in Figure 16, the community could focus on growth within that area. At such a time where the northern section of the Lower Plain was fully and efficiently developed and the community's vision was achieved, it might be reasonable to approach TRORC about further adjusting the Regional Town Center boundary.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is an economic development plan required by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) for areas to be eligible for planning and construction funds to improve their economies.

In 2016, EDA approved a revised CEDS which was developed by TRORC, Southern Windsor County RPC, and a wide group of stakeholders. This document can serve as a resource that identifies potential economic development initiatives.

B. Economic Development Activities

Land use planning policy and regulatory changes should not be the only avenue Bradford takes to achieve the vision of a Lower Plain that is vibrant and complimentary to the downtown. In order to take advantage of economic opportunities identified in the Camoin Report (Appendix B) conducted as part of this project, the Town should work to implement strategies that encourage economic growth and vitality.

Improve Economic Outreach

It is important that Bradford make its commitment to economic success known. The Town should provide outreach to ensure that residents understand that their desires and goals for the town are recognized and that their input is essential for the town's successful development. Resident goals should be incorporated with the town's ongoing strategies, including the Municipal Plan and any revisions to Bradford's Land Use Regulations. If residents believe that Bradford is a good place to live, work, and raise a family, they will be the strongest advocates for the town. To do so, Bradford will need to engage local businesses, business groups and the community at large to increase participation and community action. This could be done by co-hosting workshops or forums with the Bradford Business Association or Green Mountain Economic Development Corp (GMEDC) that are focused on educating local businesses about marketing, state programs that may benefit them (such as Village Center Designation), etc. At the same time, these workshops could provide valuable input to the community as to what the needs of their businesses are.

Responsible Parties

Bradford Business Association,
Planning Commission, Selectboard.

Timeframe for Implementation

As soon as possible.

Develop a Wayfinding Plan

One of the key recommendations in the Camoin report was the development of wayfinding. Wayfinding is a tool used in many communities to help direct visitors to important locations, businesses, activities or resources. The Lower Plain is essentially the gateway into Bradford and, more importantly, into Bradford's downtown. There is currently limited signage to tell visitors where the downtown is, and what unique services are available.

Responsible Parties

Selectboard, Bradford Business
Association, Planning Commission

Timeframe for Implementation

As soon as possible.

Potential Funding Sources

Municipal Planning Grant

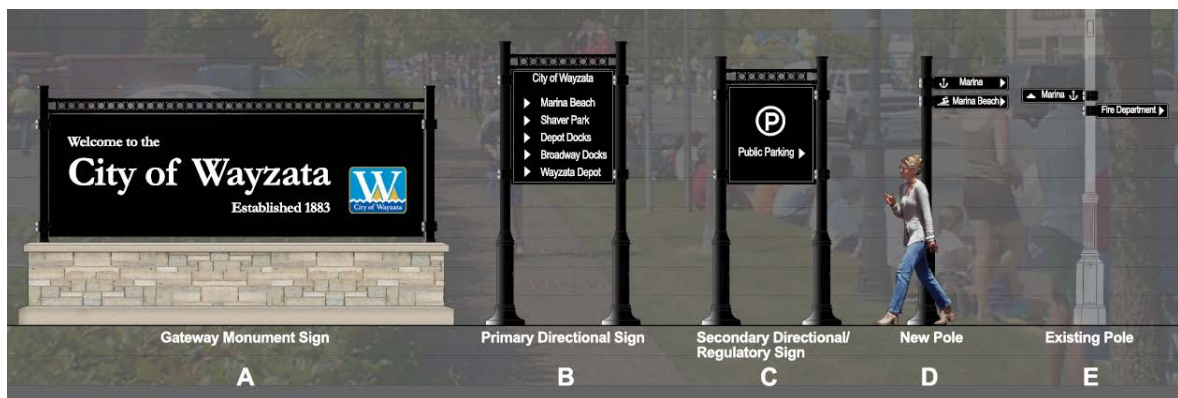


FIGURE 21 - CITY OF WAYZATA, MN, WAYFINDING DESIGN LAYOUT, DAMON FARBER ASSOCIATES

Enhance Bradford's Gateway

In addition to utilizing wayfinding in the Lower Plain, Bradford should ask the Regional Planning Commission to conduct a traffic study in the Lower Plain for the purposes of identifying opportunities to improve traffic circulation and safety. The area around the intersection has been identified by the Agency of Transportation as a high crash location, which may warrant a study. Future improvements to Routes 5 and 25 may be able to eliminate some of the road elements (such as the jug handles and center islands) that make Bradford's gateway less visually appealing. Plus, future improvements may be designed to accommodate bicycle travel.

Responsible Parties

Selectboard, Planning Commission, TRORC, VTrans

Timeframe for Implementation

As soon as possible.

Bradford should consider hiring a consultant to develop a wayfinding plan that will help visitors identify where the civic, cultural, natural and economic destinations are in the community. A wayfinding plan typically involves the development of theme for wayfinding signage including color, graphics, fonts, etc. Differing styles of signage are identified and a community-wide list of routes and destinations is determined. Signage locations are mapped and put into the plan for future placement. Implementation steps can be prioritized and completed over time, as funding allows.

Build on Farm-Way as a Destination

Farm-Way is one of Bradford's most significant economic assets. The store attracts a wide range of customers both local and from outside of the Bradford Economic Region. Developing businesses that compliment Farm-way, will increase the length of stay by Farm-Way visitors and circulate more spending locally. This may begin by working with Farm-way to identify what their customers want and find opportunities that will be mutually beneficial. As complimentary businesses develop, work with them to develop collaborative marketing opportunities that send customers between businesses.

Responsible Parties

Bradford Business Association, Planning Commission, Farm-Way

Timeframe for Implementation

As soon as possible.

Conduct a Housing Inventory

Feedback from survey takers and interviews conducted during the economic development analysis indicates an interest in additional types of housing – particularly workforce housing. The Planning Commission believes that one of the components of village style mixed-use development in the Lower Plain should be

Responsible Parties

Planning Commission, Selectboard

Timeframe for Implementation

As soon as possible.

Potential Funding Sources

Municipal Planning Grant

Pathways to a Vital Economic Center, Bradford, VT – March 2018

housing. However it is important to identify what types of housing is most needed, and what mix of housing is most likely to be economically viable. Bradford should hire a consultant to conduct a thorough analysis of the local housing market, inventory existing resources, and identify opportunities to expand housing in the Lower Plain.

Help Downtown Businesses Access Village Center Benefits

Bradford's downtown is part of Vermont's Village Center Designation program. This program, provides commercial properties in Designated Villages with access to a range of tax credits that are designed to facilitate revitalizations. As of 2018, these benefits include:

Responsible Parties

Planning Commission, Selectboard

Timeframe for Implementation

As soon as possible.

- 20% Federal historic tax credits for improvements to income producing properties that are listed or eligible for listing on the National Historic Register.
- 10% State historic tax credits for improvements to income producing properties that are listed or eligible for listing on the National Historic Register.
- 25% Tax credits for façade Improvements to buildings built before 1983 and located within the designated Village Center.
- 50% Tax credits for technological improvements including installation and improvements to data or networking wiring and heating, ventilating and cooling (HVAC) systems related to technology upgrades. Eligible buildings must be buildings built before 1983 and located within the designated Village Center.
- 50% Code improvements for elevator, sprinkler and lift systems as required by the Department of Public Safety. Eligible buildings must be buildings built before 1983 and located within the designated Village Center.

In order for businesses to take advantage of the Village Center benefits, they must be made fully aware of the program and how it relates to Bradford's downtown. The Town should contact Village Center Program representatives and invite them to present to local businesses at an organized event. Additionally, materials that provide information about the program should be provided to any commercial property owner within the Village Center.

Sidewalk/Bike Path Study

Survey responses indicated support for bicycle and pedestrian connections between the Village and the Lower Plain. Walkability is essential to creating a vibrant village center. Without sidewalks and trails, pedestrians are unable to safely travel on foot to important locations in the community. While there is road shoulder available for pedestrians along Route 5 (see figure 21, from 2015), and recent upgrades to

Responsible Parties

Planning Commission, Selectboard

Timeframe for Implementation

As soon as possible.

Potential Funding Sources

Municipal Planning Grant, VTrans
Bicycle and Pedestrian program

Pathways to a Vital Economic Center, Bradford, VT – March 2018

Route 5 included a painted bike lane on the southbound lane, pedestrians walking in this area are likely to feel exposed and unsafe. When compared to a road shoulder, a sidewalk feels significantly safer. By providing facilities that are more comfortable, there is an increased likelihood that they will be used.

To facilitate village-style development in the Lower Plain, it has been suggested that bicycle and pedestrian facilities be included for internal roads. Likewise, these internal connections should be connected to a larger bicycle and pedestrian network that connects the Village and the Lower Plain. Sidewalks that have no destination are unlikely to be used, but a sidewalk that leads to places of work, stores, transit stops, restaurants and other cultural amenities will have more value.

Bradford should work with the Regional Planning Commission and the Agency of Transportation to conduct a scoping study that identifies possible alternative connections between the Village and the Lower Plain.



FIGURE 22 - A PEDESTRIAN USING ROAD SHOULDERS ON ROUTE 5.
(SOURCE: GOOGLE STREET VIEW, 2015)

VII. APPENDICES

- **Appendix A** – Survey Results Summary
- **Appendix B** – Market Analysis
- **Appendix C** – Buildout Analysis Maps and Data
- **Appendix D** – Demonstration Area Maps

APPENDIX A

Survey Results Summary

APPENDIX B

Market Analysis

APPENDIX C

Buildout Analysis Maps & Data

APPENDIX D

Demonstration Area Designs