

Burlington Conservation Board

645 Pine Street
Burlington, VT 05401
<http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/dpi>
Telephone: (802) 865-7188

*Rebecca Roman, Chair
Ryan Crehan
Zoe Richards
Don Meals
Leslie Spencer
Ethan Ely
Evan Horne
Dale Azaria
Kelly Farrell*



Conservation Board Meeting Public Notice

Monday, September 8, 2025, 5:30 PM

311 North Avenue, Conference Room or Remote via Zoom

Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/95590052709?pwd=MIhQcTVTNmUydW5qelBLeFUwZk9LZz09>

Webinar ID: 955 9005 2709

Password: 346560

Telephone: 1 929 205 6099

1. Minutes

1.1. Accept minutes from August 4, 2025 meeting

2. Board Comment

3. Public Comment

4. Update & Discussion

4.1. PlanBTV New North End

Design concepts discussion with Office of City Planning staff

4.2. Nature Based Climate Solutions Grant Program

Review available funds and program adjustments

4.3. Open Space Plan

Review and discussion of the new draft Open Space Plan

5. Project Review

5.1. ZSP-25-8; 77-91 North Winooski Ave (RM, Ward 3) Neil Gardner / Wayne Nelson / Martin Courcelle

Sketch plan review for proposed construction of memory care facility to the rear of three existing properties.

6. Adjournment

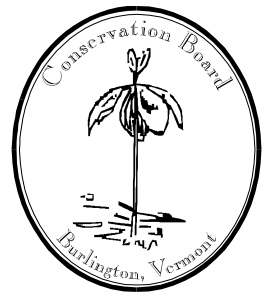
7. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements

The City of Burlington will not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination on the basis of political or religious affiliation, race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, disability, HIV positive status, crime victim status or genetic information. The City is also committed to providing proper access to services, facilities and employment opportunities. The programs and services of the City of Burlington are accessible to people with disabilities. Individuals who require special arrangements, auxiliary aid, service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of the City of Burlington, should contact the office of the Title II Burlington ADA Coordinator at 802-865-7000 as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

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Conservation Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 4, 2025 – 5:30 pm

Remote & In Person Meeting

Attendance

- **Board Members:** Zoe Richards (ZR), Rebecca Roman (RR), Leslie Spencer (LS), Ethan Ely (EE), Ryan Crehan (RC), Dale Azaria (DA), Evan Horne (EH), Kelly Farrell (KF), Don Meals (DM)
- **Absent:**
- **Public:** Sharon Bushor, Kate Krusei, Dan Boardman, Adelle York, Joshua Carel, Cynthia Silvey, Scott Homested, Paul Rosenfeld, Marty Spaulding, Mike Willard
- **Staff:** Scott Gustin (Permitting & Inspections), Daniel Schmidt, Dan Cahill (Parks & Rec)

RR, chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Minutes

July 7, 2025 minutes

KF noted that DM was in attendance but not shown as present.

A MOTION was made by KF and SECONDED by ZR:

Approve the July 7 minutes as written.

Vote: 9-0-0, motion carried.

Board Comment

DM commented that he needs to exit the meeting at 6pm. Two of the projects before the Board tonight include demolition. He's bothered philosophically by tearing homes down because of the statewide housing shortage and the energy and resource demands of demolition and reconstruction. Maybe consider a tear down fee to go into the city's housing trust fund to support additional housing.

SG noted the Office of City Planning communication about enabling housing development on city property. It will be an agenda item in September.

SG also noted that a draft Open Space Plan has been received from our consultants. He'll put the draft online and enable a comments feature. It will be before the Conservation Board as a draft in September and an action item in October. RR requested an email to BCB noting when the draft is online.

Public Comment

Kate Krusei commented on the Arms / BHS planting item. Viburnum and high bush cranberries like medium to moist sites. The proposed planting locations are on relatively thin soils and get hot and dry. She made some suggestions for adjustments.

The programs and services of the Dept. of Permitting & Inspections are accessible to people with disabilities. For accessibility information call 865-7188.

Project Review

1. ZP-25-312; 2 Starr Farm Beach Rd (RL, Ward 4) Daniel Bordman

Demo seasonal camp and replace with new residence

Dan Boardman on behalf of this application.

Dan Boardman overviewed the project. He purchased the property some 25 years ago. It sits on the ground and has incurred substantial rot at this point. We are keeping the existing footprint size. No work is proposed along the lakeshore. The new building will have a foundation. An erosion control plan has been submitted and approved by Water Resources. No trees will be removed. A cedar tree that he planted about 10 years ago will be relocated onsite. He would like to start construction this fall and be done for occupancy in time for next summer.

ZR, are all of the neighbors seasonal? Dan, yes. Its leased land. There are about 75 years left on the lease. It will remain seasonal per the terms of the lease.

KF pointed out discrepancies between the architectural and civil site plans. Dan said to go with the civil plans.

RC asked about grading. Dan said there will be a walk-out basement under the deck. Retaining walls will enable this feature.

DA asked about the west elevation. What's proposed with earthwork to enable the walk-out basement? Dan, there will be 4' of excavation with an east/west retaining wall and another north/south with stairs up to access the deck.

RC, what is the current foundation? Dan, cinder blocks and bricks.

KF, what is the plan for plantings between the house and the water? Dan, open to suggestions. RR noted that the existing includes knotweed. She would like to see removal of this and replacement with native species.

EE, if the knotweed is removed with excavation, don't use the soil anywhere else. Bury it deep underground.

RC asked where the low mow zone is. Dan said its between the house and the lakeshore. SG said there's opportunity to put native plantings in here. RC asked about moving the proposed building further east. Dan, we did consider that. We considered a bigger building placed further east. By moving it back, the lake views are constricted. He'd like to preserve the existing views.

A MOTION was made by ZR and SECONDED by KF:

Approve the plans as noted with encouragement to manage the invasive plants under the lakeside porch and to plant native shrubs within the low mow area, including the stone rip rap area.

Vote: 9-0-0, motion carried.

DM left the meeting.

2. ZP-25-298; 506 Appletree Point Rd (RL, Ward 4) Joshua Carel

Demo seasonal camp and replace with new residence

Adelle York, Joshua Carel, Cynthia Silvey, and Scott Homested appeared on behalf of this application.

Adelle York overviewed the project. The existing camp and garage will be demolished and replaced with new structures of similar size. She is looking to preserve as many trees as possible.

Cynthia Silvey noted the tree preservation plans. The site's ground cover is pretty sandy and shady under the trees. There's no lawn. It is easy and natural to leave a portion as a low mow zone. A couple patches of lawn are proposed. An existing lakeside patio will be retained. The new residence will be pulled away from the lake about 12'. Stormwater management will include a new rain garden. Scott Homestead said he's worked with the city's Water Resources in coming up with appropriate stormwater management. The back of the house will sheet flow into surrounding vegetation. Almost all of the driveway will drain into the proposed rain garden. Scott said the property is affected by the steep slopes overlay. He thinks it may be mis-mapped. The only steep slopes are manmade and minimal in extent. The new residence will abandon the onsite septic system and will connect to the city's municipal wastewater system.

RR, will the new home be a primary residence? Adelle, yes.

RC, is the driveway footprint changing? Scott, it will be similar but reconstructed.

KF, what's existing versus proposed impervious surface? Scott, it will go from 26% to 30% lot coverage, well below the 45% maximum permissible.

RC asked about new plantings. Cynthia said that a variety of new plantings are proposed, but no new trees are proposed, primarily due to lack of sunlight from the many existing trees to remain. RC, what are the soils? Cynthia, quite sandy with some ledge.

KF, what will be done to preserve trees onsite along the lakeshore? Cynthia pointed to the large oak at the southwest corner of the site. Fill will be held back with boulders. Discussion of further mitigation if grading-related impacts.

ZR, with lakeshore redevelopment, we should be making a positive impact on the lake. She sees some improvements here like switching from septic to municipal wastewater. The addition of lawn area and impervious surface are not improvements. Cynthia, introduction of topsoil will enable improved infiltration and vegetation onsite. A low mow conservation seed mix will be used.

RC, do you know how much fill is proposed? Scott, hasn't done the calculations yet, but it will not look drastically different. RC, impervious surface could be reduced by removing the loop driveway. Cynthia said that the only way to get into the garage is to use the further entrance into the loop. There are also several existing trees within the driveway island they would like to keep.

Adelle, it makes sense not to face the garage door towards the street. The new garage will minimize disturbance by being set in the same place as the existing garage.

EH, sees a lot of ash trees on the property. A fair number of trees are being removed. Have you thought about replacement species? Cynthia, the ash trees onsite currently appear to be fine.

RR, the city arborist is actively removing ash trees because the EAB is active in the city. Guidelines outside of Burlington are to leave ash trees in place. The applicants should assess whether EAB is on the property.

ZR, how many trees will be removed for the front lawn? Cynthia, trees are being removed for the new foundations, to remove dying trees, and for building placement. Nothing is being removed exclusively for lawn area.

ZR, are any plantings proposed in the low mow area? Cynthia, low growth sumac will be planted.

LS, what is the proposed wastewater equipment? Scott, it's a pump station.

ZR said she could support the project with less impervious surface and deletion of the lakeside lawn area but not as currently proposed.

A MOTION was made by ZR and SECONDED by RC:

Approve the project if impervious surface does not increase and if the low mow zone is a minimum of 15' wide with native plantings installed, with the understanding that increasing the low mow zone will decrease grading impacts on the oak trees to be retained.

Vote: 8-0-0, motion carried.

3. ZP-25-313; 147 South Cove Rd (RL, Ward 5) Paul Rosenfeld
Construct new residence on vacant lot

Paul Rosenfeld appeared on behalf of this application.

Paul Rosenfeld overviewed the project. The property is currently vacant with crushed gravel at the homesite. We are trying to retain the driveway as is. There are lakeside fruit trees we'd like to keep. The low mow zone will be established and native species will be planted in conjunction with Horsford Nursery.

RC, is the existing dock in the low mow zone? Paul, it's a wooden deck on top of some rocks. It does not go into the water.

RC, what is proposed for grading? Paul, we may need more earthen material to support a level concrete pad for the home.

KF, it looks like the grade will need to be raised by a foot.

ZR, its set back from the lake and has a good low mow zone.

KF, will any trees be removed? Paul, just one tree will be removed. KF noted that some of the proposed topo lines go up to existing trees. The applicant should clarify the intent to retain trees with his architect.

EE asked about vegetation along southern property line. Paul, they are small bushy shrubs.

A MOTION was made by DA and SECONDED by EE:

Approve with a recommendation that tree retention be clarified on the site plans. Only native plantings in the low mow zone, and no invasive plants installed onsite. Remove buckthorn and replace with native trees or shrubs.

Vote: 8-0-0, motion carried.

Update & Discussion

1. Site Plantings / Restoration at Arms for BHS Project

Follow up at to native plantings installed as part of the new Burlington High School construction

Marty Spaulding, Mike Willard, and Daniel Schmidt appeared on behalf of this item.

Marty Spaulding overviewed the item. One of the Board's conditions of the BHS permit was to work with Parks & Rec to come up with a planting plan where the fill was placed and capped along the Arms property. We have since worked with Daniel Schmidt at Parks & Rec to develop a plan.

KF asked about the soil cap. Marty, it is 18" deep. Soils underneath are contaminated. KF, hickories may be appropriate here, but I'm not sure about the soil limitations. Daniel Schmidt is happy to consider.

Kate Krusei, the 18" soil depth may inhibit hickories. Marty, there is fabric underneath the 18" cap.

RC, is there a stewardship plan? The site is fairly harsh, facing south. Daniel, yes, there is. This is phase one. He pointed out that the trail to Arms from BHS is through this site. We've talked about doing some improvements to that trail. Its got some erosion going on.

RR, this is a good opportunity for place-based education.

2. Dog Task Force

Follow up discussion and decision as to further board action, if any

RR, this is a follow up discussion. RR summarized the status of the dog task force work. A report has been generated and is under consideration by the Parks Commission. BCB considered it initially last month. ZR noted that no one from the task force consulted with the Parks Conservation Team. Dan Cahill concurred. Ecological considerations have been lacking.

RC, the cove at Oakledge seems like a tight site for off-leash dogs. RR clarified we're considering specifically the off-leash dog possibilities. ZR, Northshore natural area seems like it should not be open to off-leash dogs. Dan Cahill, Oakledge should have a more integrative management plan to address its natural areas. Dan's not sure the list of areas under consideration can be affected. DA, her understanding is that no more than one area will be selected. If that's correct, that gives us flexibility in recommending against some of the potential areas. RR said that her recollection was that Nate Lantieri (Parks Commission Chair) thought it would be difficult to come up with a recommendation for more than one place, not that there's an express limit.

ZR, Northshore and Oakledge Cove are both poor choices for off-leash areas. RR noted the areas under consideration: North end of Leddy Beach, Oakledge Cove, Northshore, Blanchard Beach, Texaco Beach, lower Calahan Park, Schmanska Park, open area of Smalley Park, and the gravel path within the Urban Reserve. ZR noted we've got a pretty natural beach edge at Leddy Park. Dan said he spent most of yesterday there. The end near Killarney is where the rare plants are clustered. Impacts at Leddy could be dispersed. Human impacts are significant. Dog impacts may not be much more.

EE said that separating north and south ends is likely to be ineffective. People will ignore the boundaries.

ZR is concerned with E Coli potential with dogs near water. RR said any new off-leash areas should have poop bags.

RC said there's already a plan for a fenced in area at Oakledge.

DA, its worth putting in a request for good signage, particularly reminding people to pick up after their dogs. Its not just being polite, it has environmental benefits.

Dan, if Leddy becomes the only place, we should recommend that it not expand beyond the north end of the beach area.

RR recapped concerns with several of the potential areas and noted that a decision to allow off-leash should be consistent with management plans for the areas selected.

Adjournment

7:45 PM.

TO: Burlington Conservation Board
FROM: Charles Dillard, AICP, Director, Office of City Planning
Sarah Morgan, AICP, Principal Planner, Office of City Planning
DATE: August 4, 2026
RE: planBTV: New North End Design Concepts

The purpose of this communication is to provide an overview of *planBTV: New North End* and additional detail regarding the role of development concepts within the plan. Additionally, the memo addresses community feedback received to date, a limited subset of which we understand has been raised with members of the Conservation Board.

Overview of planBTV: New North End

Burlington's Office of City Planning, in collaboration with the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, launched *planBTV: New North End* this past January. This neighborhood plan aims to create a long-term vision for the New North End, guiding growth and infrastructure investment over the next decade.

The planning process is divided into three phases: Visioning the Future, Planning & Urban Design, and Assembling the Plan. We initiated public engagement in December as part of Phase 1 to gather community values and establish a guiding vision.

Focus Area Concepts

On July 23rd, we kicked off Phase 2: Planning & Urban Design with a Neighborhood Design Workshop. During this phase, the project team will work with community members, stakeholders, and city leaders to refine a comprehensive plan for the neighborhood integrating land use, transportation, housing, and infrastructure.

A key component of this plan is the identification of "Focus Areas" for potential positive change based on community feedback. The illustrations presented at the workshop reflect the diverse aspirations of New North End residents and depict redevelopment concepts for five Focus Areas, addressing critical needs:

- **Housing:** Burlington is experiencing a severe housing shortage, both in sheer numbers but also in specific types of housing, like senior housing or homes that can fit growing families, so we've worked with our team of planners, architects and urban designers to depict how diverse housing options might fit in the Focus Areas
- **Commercial and Mixed-Use Spaces:** New North End residents we've spoken to desire more places to spend their time and money in close proximity to where they live, so we've looked for opportunities for more commercial and community spaces.
- **Transportation & Mobility:** The New North End works pretty well for people in cars, but only sometimes, or not so much at all, for people who walk, bike, roll, or ride the bus. So we've looked for opportunities for improving streets and neighborhood connections in these Focus Areas, all of which ultimately will make it easier for everyone to move around, people in cars included.
- **Proximity to Parks & Greenspace:** Of course, cities are more than just homes, shops and streets. To create a more sustainable and highly livable New North End, we've depicted new and improved open spaces in these focus areas.

These illustrations are intended to help residents envision what long-term change might look like.

Frameworks For Growth: Utilizing community resources to solve the housing crisis

Given the severity of Burlington's housing emergency, which impacts people of all incomes, our team has looked far and wide for opportunities to build housing and community in the New North End. We have taken note of how communities of varying sizes in the United States and beyond are building sustainable and equitable communities on city land. In our engagement work, New North End residents have also suggested looking at city-owned land as sites for housing.

planBTV: NNE has identified several city properties as potential sites where new homes, but also community facilities, new park amenities and even small commercial spaces could be built in an equitable and ecologically beneficial way. These include portions of park land (but never the majority of an individual park) and could include portions of school yards.

Developing housing and community on city-owned land is not a new concept for Burlington. While *planBTV: South End* (2019) recommends developing a portion of the Champlain Elementary school site, we are approaching the concept differently.

First, it is imperative that we move carefully and thoughtfully through a process to educate and learn, to assess community support, and make sure that if we do build new communities on the City's land, it's done in a way that reflects what the people want to see. We are early in the "educate and learn" phase of this concept. Following *planBTV: NNE*, the City, in the coordinated inter-departmental work that has begun on an update to *planBTV*, a new BPRW system plan, and citywide transportation and economic development plans, will assess current parks programming and level of service, as well as the future needs of the Burlington community regarding parks and recreation spaces. This planning effort will also employ a scenario planning approach that will test hypothetical impacts to parks and/or ecological spaces emanating from various housing and economic development scenarios. For example, this approach will help us understand how and where the City should prioritize new and/or improved park spaces to offset any park area lost to housing. It is important to note that the Administration and the Office of City Planning do not envision the City selling any land depicted in the *planBTV: NNE Focus Areas* but instead long-term leasing it for affordable and mixed-income communities.

The second major way in which *planBTV: NNE's* approach to city-owned land differs from the South End plan is the degree to which the concept is envisioned as a holistic strategy to accomplish multiple city goals at once:

- Social housing on public land: cities, counties and states, (e.g. Montgomery County, MD, Seattle, Atlanta and Rhode Island) are developing or beginning initiatives to build mixed-income housing, including ample affordable housing. Burlington is exploring the feasibility of this approach, which is a fundamental component of what makes places like, Vienna, where 60 percent of residents live in social housing, consistently rank as one of the world's most livable cities.
- Reducing development costs: land typically accounts for 10-20 percent of a housing development's cost. The contribution of city land for affordable housing, and potentially even market-rate housing, could significantly improve the feasibility of a more affordable Burlington housing market.
- Procurement control: communities across the world that are building housing on their own land get to decide what is built. Our office is exploring procurement alternatives to the open-ended Request for Proposals process, which often fails to deliver community-supported and desired outcomes. One such alternative is a process employed in Europe wherein rigorous community engagement regarding desired program, housing counts and other elements informs design competitions and/or highly prescribed RFPs.
- Ecological design: the draft concepts envisioned in *planBTV: NNE* show housing built on what is predominantly unprogrammed lawn. The Office of City planning views housing on city-owned land, including parks and others, not as a zero-sum game, and instead sees potential for these hypothetical projects to improve the ecological health of these lands.

- Park programming: as Burlington grows, the community's parks and recreation needs may change. Community-led development projects on city land could elicit new and evolved programming opportunities at existing and new parks.

The Ethan Allen Parkway/North Avenue intersection was identified as one such Focus Area, due mostly to a desire to improve the safety of the intersection and an acknowledgement that the intersection, with its access to multiple open spaces, schools, transit and other amenities, is a great location for more homes. The illustration we shared to communicate this concept showed some neighborhood-scaled development in what is now a handful of properties, Ethan Allen Parkway, and a small portion of Ethan Allen Park near North Avenue. It also showed a new community garden and gateway at the park, a new public plaza, and small commercial spaces for the neighborhood. In our engagement we have heard from residents who support this concept, and others who oppose it.

We want to reiterate that the illustrations we shared are meant to help residents envision what change might look like. And at this stage, our goal is to understand what residents like and don't like about the future these illustrations envision.

Next Steps & Opportunities for Feedback

In addition to engaging residents at in-person events, [Burlingtonians can view and submit feedback related to these concepts online.](#)

Our office has been invited to discuss this topic with the Parks Commission during its meeting on August 12th. We will also present these concepts to the Planning Commission that same evening, following the Parks Commission meeting. We look forward to discussing these ideas with the Conservation Board during its September meeting.

Our office anticipates kicking off the adoption process for *planBTV: New North End* this coming winter and into the new year.



Document tabs +

Tab 1

Conservation Legacy Grant

Burlington Conservation L...

Overview

Summary of the Grant

Dates

How to Apply

Contact Information

Program Description

Priorities

Eligibility

Grant Timeline

Review Processubric / E...

Accountability

Conservation Legacy Grant

Burlington Conservation Legacy Grant: Notice of Funding Opportunity (2025-26)

Overview

The Conservation Legacy Grant is managed jointly by the Departments of Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront and Permitting and Inspections. Grant applications will be reviewed and awarded by a joint committee of Conservation Board and Parks Commission members. This is an annual grant program.

Summary of the Grant

For the 2025-26 grant cycle, the total amount of available funding is \$68,000. Minimum grant awards will be \$10,000 up to a maximum of \$30,000.

Dates

Grant applications will be accepted October 1, 2024 to November 30, 2024.

How to Apply

All application forms must be filed online on the OpenGov portal. You will need to create an account to log in to the portal. Get started by filling out the [Conservation Legacy Grant Application Form](#).

Contact Information

Email Dan Cahill, City Land Steward.

Program Description



BURLINGTON
PARKS
RECREATION
WATERFRONT
VERMONT

September City Land Steward Report - Conservation Team

Nature Based Solutions Programming (includes partnership with BSD)

- ongoing site management of wildlife corridors/pocket forests/outdoor classroom areas: invasive removal, watering, etc.
- ongoing management of BSD stick & seed nurseries
- worked with BSD facilities to coordinate best practices for stormwater projects & landscape maintenance
- hosted UVM Upward Bound (10 students) for service day in CES Englesby Woods
- facilitated two tours of Lakeview Cemetery Lawn Alternative Demonstration Sites (~20 combined participants)
- planned & prepped new Lakeview Cemetery sites for autumn/spring planting
- working with City Stormwater Program to develop best practices for including native plantings post-construction

Bike Path Maintenance

- Painted mile markers on the greenway in half mile increments for users and EMS
- Cut back sewage treatment plant and Perkins pier vegetation
- Routine knotweed removal from knotweed mitigation pilot plots
- Hosted 25 person UVM volunteer day at Kieslich removing invasives to save the plugs planted last fall, remove garden compost and create new walking trail
- Hosted 10 UVM Trek students to remove invasives on the greenway
- Touched up and seal coated the Northshore Graffiti prevention installation that was installed last year

-Turtle Alert management - supporting the crossing of the bike path of newly hatched baby snapping turtles. Near HULA. Working to make contact at HULA with their operations team to identify potential locations to build ideal nesting habitat closer to lake.

Natural Areas and Natural Surface Trails

-Partnership with VYCC forestry crew, cleared 7 acres of buckthorn from Oakledge and Ethan Allen Park

-Supported completion of Memorial at Kieslich. Cut all black locust branches, hosted evening work event, built gravel trail and pad for arch

-Hosted 50 person UVM Medical Student volunteer group. This was a continuation of the work VYCC did earlier in the summer. Removed old puncheon from the new puncheon installation work site.

-Completed mapping and rerouting of Wildways trail through Ethan Allen Park and Arms Forest

-Kiosk installation planning - at Arms Forest and Leddy Park. permits are clear, install in coming month.

-Ongoing work to support the trail connections at Leddy that intersect with new bike park. Preparing trails to receive increased volumes

Burlington Area Community Gardens

- 2025-26 - registration ready to launch for mid September

-installation of water catchment, and season extension for water capabilities at all BACG sites

-Work day with 25 UVM Medical Students

City-wide Conservation

- 2025-26 notice of funding opportunity being prepared and reviewed for the Conservation Legacy Funds Nature Based Grant Program. 68K will be available for grants in the upcoming cycle.

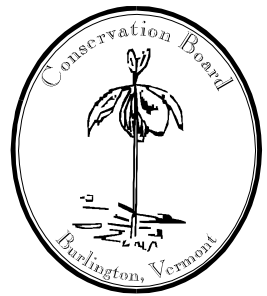
-Open Space Plan in final stages of review and approval. Process has been robust both internally with working group and city staff, as well as externally with strong and diverse public input opportunities

- Conservation Team operations staff have been working hard to support the installation of a memorial at Kieslich Park. The memorial commemorates the thousands of children who lived at the St. Joseph's Orphanage.

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TO: Conservation Board
FROM: Scott Gustin
DATE: September 8, 2025
RE: Draft Open Space Plan

Following a year of collaborative work including assessments, outreach, visioning, and writing the draft 2025 Open Space Plan is ready for review. The effort to rewrite the city's Open Space Plan kicked off in Summer 2024 in partnership between the core city team, UVM's Spatial Analysis Lab, and Agency Landscape & Planning.

Initial work included needs and values assessments and the start of spatial analysis and mapping work. Stakeholder meetings took place in Fall 2024, and the first round of public outreach and engagement started in January 2025 and spanned into early March. Spatial analysis and mapping work concluded in March 2025 as well. This initial work formed the vision and foundation for the new Open Space Plan.

Information gained from the spatial analysis work and the initial wave of stakeholder and public engagement was compiled and distilled into a framework for the draft plan. Four primary themes emerged:

- Conserve (Stewarding Burlington's network of protected lands to support health ecosystems and a healthy city)
- Connect (A landscape stitched together by stewardship and sustainable development)
- Experience (Diverse outdoor experiences)
- Cultivate (Growing sustainable and accessible local food systems that meet community needs)

A second round of stakeholder and public outreach and engagement spanned the months of May and June 2025. In all, two dozen outreach and engagement events were hosted in a variety of settings such as Winterville, the Library Book Sale, Twilight Block Party, skating at the Sea Caves, and NPA meetings. In addition to these 24 outreach events, the Open Space Plan rewrite was an item of discussion at Planning Commission, Parks Commission, Conservation Board, and Parks, Arts, & Culture Committee meetings over the past year.

Since conclusion of the second wave of outreach and engagement, the initial framework of the new Open Space Plan has been fleshed out. Within each of the four foundational components, strategies and priorities have been articulated, and related implementation matrixes have been formed. The core city team has reviewed the draft and has made recommendations for revision. Now, in September 2025 the draft plan will be reviewed by the Conservation Board, Parks Commission, and Planning Commission.

Following completion of draft review, the plan will be revised and refined to reflect recommendations and will return to the Board and Commissions for approval in October and, ultimately, adoption by the City Council in November 2025.



BURLINGTON OPEN SPACE PLAN





"WHILE IT INITIALLY TAKES
EFFORT TO NOTICE SOMETHING
NEW, OVER TIME A CHANGE
HAPPENS THAT IS IRREVERSIBLE.
REDWOODS, OAKS, AND
BLACKBERRY SHRUBS WILL
NEVER BE "A BUNCH OF GREEN."
A TOWHEE WILL NEVER SIMPLY
BE "A BIRD" TO ME AGAIN, EVEN
IF I WANTED IT TO BE. AND
IT FOLLOWS THAT THIS PLACE
CAN NO LONGER BE ANY PLACE."

- JENNY ODELL,
HOW TO DO NOTHING



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Letter from City of Burlington, VT

To be added



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Acknowledgments

To be added





Table of Contents

Plan at a Glance		10
Introduction		12
Burlington's Open Spaces Today		38
Vision and Goals		56
CONSERVE		66
CONNECT		90
EXPERIENCE		114
CULTIVATE		128
Way Ahead		142
Appendices		148





Plan at a Glance

Nestled on the shores of Lake Champlain at the confluence with the winding Winooski River, Burlington sits at a regionally significant location. Open spaces are at the heart of what makes Burlington special -- enabling high quality of life for our community, supporting our city's economy, growing local food, providing home to local and migrating wildlife, and keeping us cool in a changing climate.

VISION

SEE PAGES 56 - 65

Burlington is a Nature-Filled City

with healthy open spaces where wildlife thrive in forests, streams, and the lake; where people enjoy nature's various offerings and eat what their gardens and farms grow; and **where people and ecosystems flourish together.**



GOALS

GOAL ONE



CONSERVE

Stewarding Burlington's network of protected lands to support healthy ecosystems and a healthy city

GOAL TWO



CONNECT

Knitting the landscape together through stewardship and nature-based development

GOAL THREE



EXPERIENCE

Expanding a variety of nature experiences across Burlington

GOAL FOUR



CULTIVATE

Growing sustainable and accessible local food systems that meet community needs



The Open Space Plan provides a roadmap for how to continue to protect the city's open space and urban forest network through a collaborative stewardship approach. Balancing the need to grow with healthy ecosystems is possible with thoughtful planning and collaboration.

STRATEGIES

SEE PAGES 66 - 141

Expand restoration and management city-wide

Support wildlife movement and ecological health

Evolve the conservation fund to be flexible to changing needs

Collaborate to protect open space for future generations

Grow and celebrate nature-based climate solutions

Cultivate an ecosystem of stewardship

Enhance and protect Burlington's urban forest

Encourage new development to incorporate nature-based principles

Increase awareness about Burlington's open spaces

Grow public access to nature-based experiences

Break down barriers to open space access

Cultivate sustainable and resilient agriculture practices

Expand community gardens

Support the cultivation of alternate food sources

IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

The open space plan is a collaborative roadmap to stewarding the future of our city's open spaces.

While the focus is on actions the City of Burlington can take, it also offers strategies we all can take to expand stewardship.

The implementation roadmap identifies:

- Implementation Lead
- Key Partners
- Implementation Timeframe





A large, mature tree with a thick trunk and a wide canopy of green and yellowing leaves stands in a grassy park area. In the background, there are blue recycling bins, a playground structure, and some buildings under a clear blue sky.

1

Introduction

Burlington wouldn't be Burlington without our open spaces. This plan provides a vision and roadmap for protecting them together now and in the future.

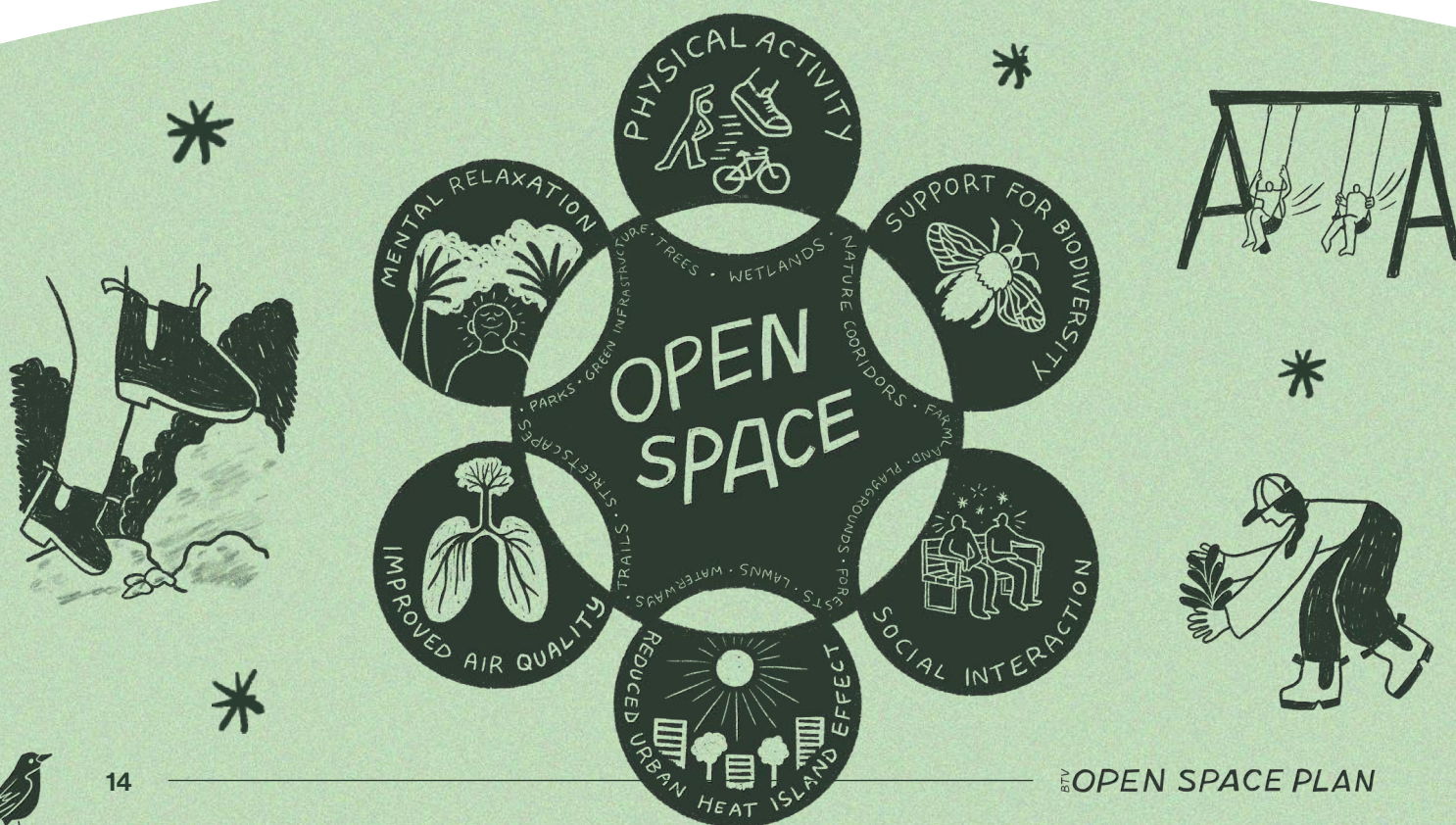


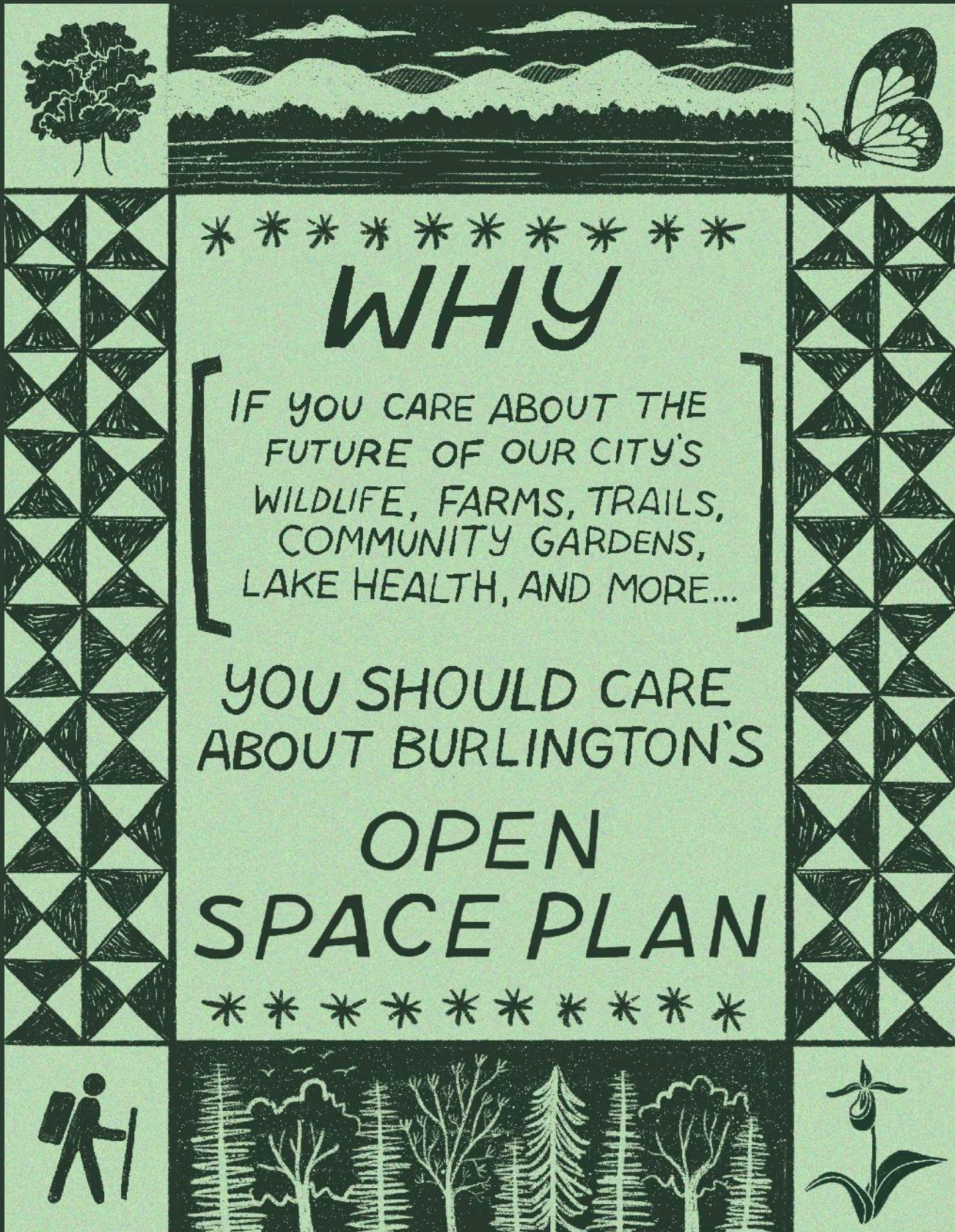
Burlington is a place where open spaces and the built environment are intertwined with one another in a symbiotic relationship that helps to make Burlington the unique place that is it. The conservation of open space enhances the quality of life for residents and allows for the continued functioning and restoration of the natural systems of which we are a part.

As Burlington continues to intensify in density to accommodate its increasing population, the City aims to continue its long-standing commitment to providing equitable access to quality open spaces and stewarding the health of the city's ecosystems.

Burlington's Open Space Plan takes an interdisciplinary approach to documenting the City's open spaces, updating open space goals, and identifying specific resource targets and timelines through a robust community-focused engagement process.

Open space matters to Burlington in so many ways!







?



WHAT IS

“Open space” encompasses all the green, outdoor spaces in our city that are important for its ecological health. It includes natural areas, urban agriculture, parklands, greenbelts, rain gardens and pocket parks, trees, and even school grounds, campuses, and yards.

Open spaces are used by people for many reasons, including recreation, play, leisure, and growing food. Environmentally, they’re critical for wildlife and for climate resilience. They also provide residents with a connection to nature. Open spaces include publicly accessible green spaces owned by the City of Burlington, as well as privately owned open spaces. Together, our open spaces create an important network for people, nature, and our city.



WORKING LANDS

50
miles of
shoreline

380
acres of
wetlands



WATERS +
WETLANDS

14
community
gardens

Scenic Views





OPEN SPACE?

Everyday Nature
Experiences

50%
of the city's
land area is
open space



PARKS



FORESTS

50+
parks and
urban wild
areas

40%
tree
canopy



GREEN
INFRASTRUCTURE



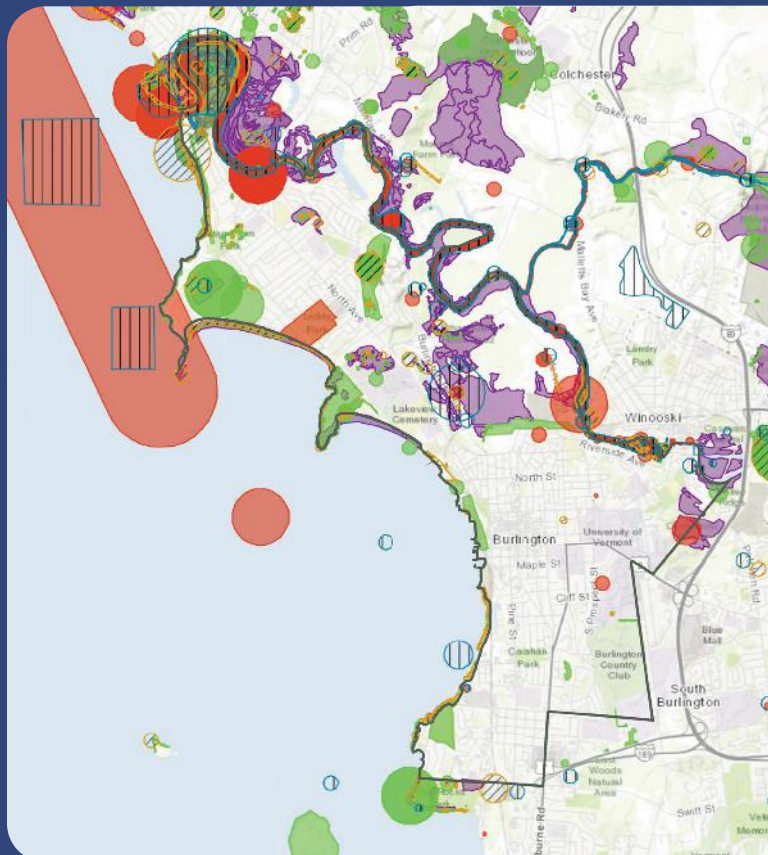
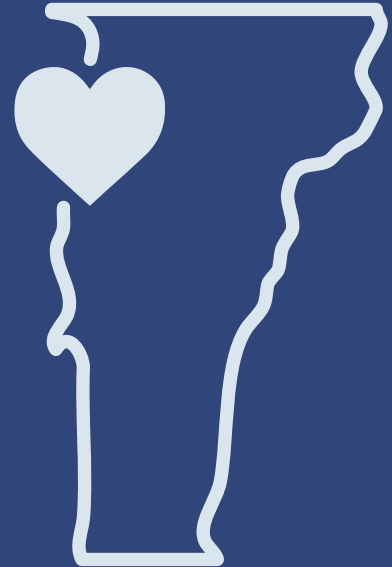
LAWNS+
AUXILIARY
GREEN SPACES



Why does Open Space matter?

Burlington's open spaces play a critical role in regional ecosystems.

At the confluence of the Winooski River and Lake Champlain, Burlington is home to not only 44,000 residents, but also a rich diversity of plants and wildlife species. The City includes plants, animals, and natural communities that are uncommon in Vermont, as well as species classified as rare, threatened, and endangered by the State. Many of these significant natural communities are found along Burlington's waterways, from the shores of Lake Champlain to the Winooski River corridor.



VT Uncommon Species

- Plant
- Animal
- Natural Community

VT Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species

- RTE Animal
- RTE Plant

VT Significant Natural Communities

- VT Significant Natural Communities

VT Natural Resources Atlas



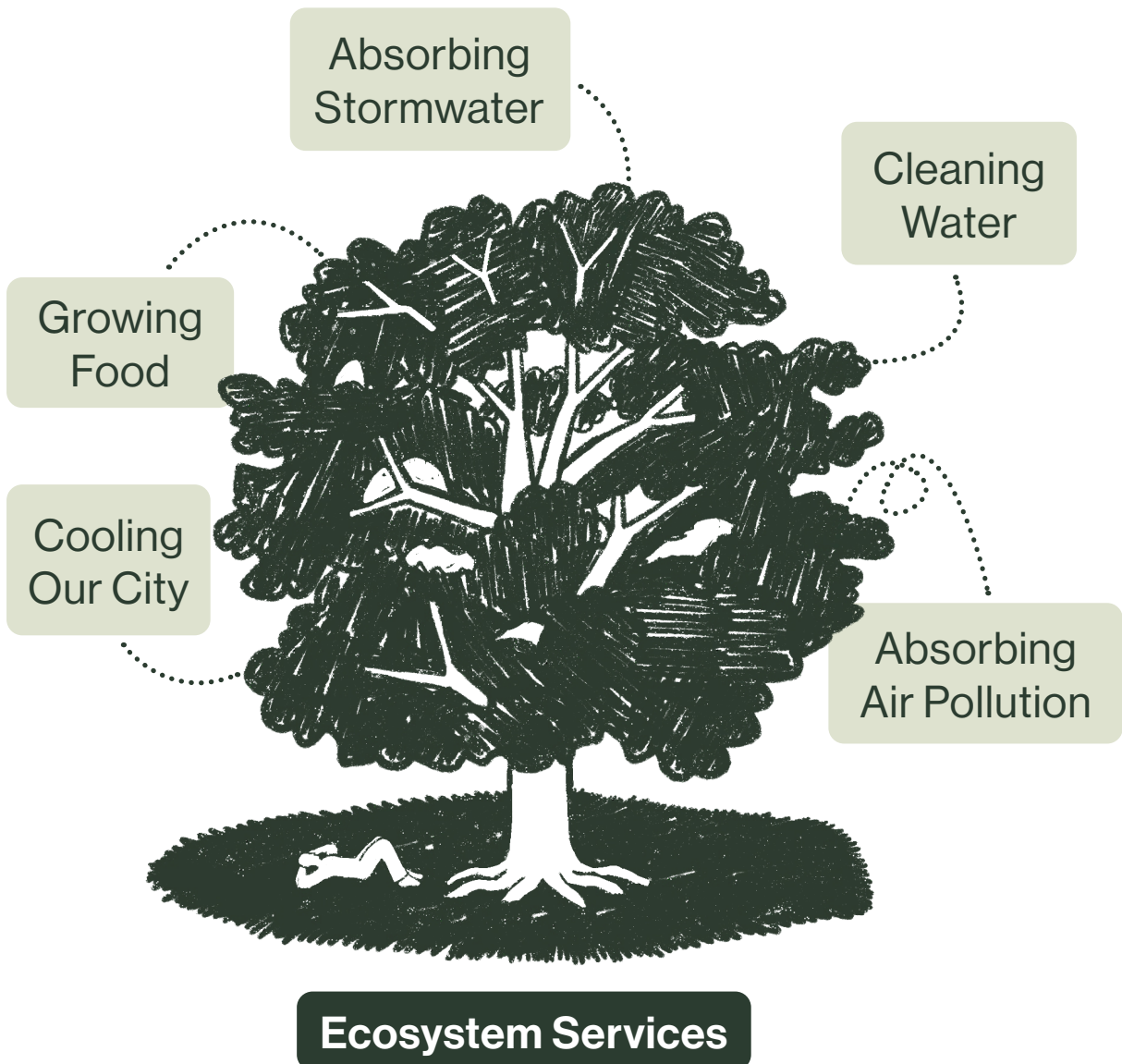




Why does Open Space matter?

Burlington’s open spaces act as “natural infrastructure” for our city.

Our city’s green spaces are just as important for its function as roads and hard infrastructure, like pipes and powerlines. Like other kinds of infrastructure, they keep our city running. You might not think of a tree as a piece of infrastructure, but it and the other green spaces in our city provide important services like cleaning water, absorbing pollution, and keeping our city cool.





**Our open spaces are
increasingly important
as our climate changes.**

**Burlington is the 4th fastest
warming city in the US.**

Burlington's tree canopy and green spaces act as natural air conditioning, keeping our city cool. Green spaces can cool the area around them and a shaded house can save on air conditioning. The cooling power of open spaces is just one example of how they keep our city livable and healthy for all of us. These superpowers will be even more critical as our climate changes. We need our open spaces now more than ever.





Why does Open Space matter?



Supporting Human Health and Wellbeing

From providing places for being active to quiet spots to relax and recharge, our open spaces help keep us healthy. They also provide spaces for us to gather, strengthening our community. Public parks offer free spaces to recreate, and research signifies that parks brings savings in healthcare costs.



Being in Burlington's open spaces make you feel...



\$ Supporting Our City's Economy

Open spaces also contribute to our local economy. From direct employment of city staff who care for parks, to saving our city money with the ecosystem services open spaces provide. They also play an important role in our city's economy by driving tourism and supporting outdoor recreation businesses.

**Local
Jobs**

**Spending
by Locals**

**Spending
by Visitors**

**Local
Businesses**

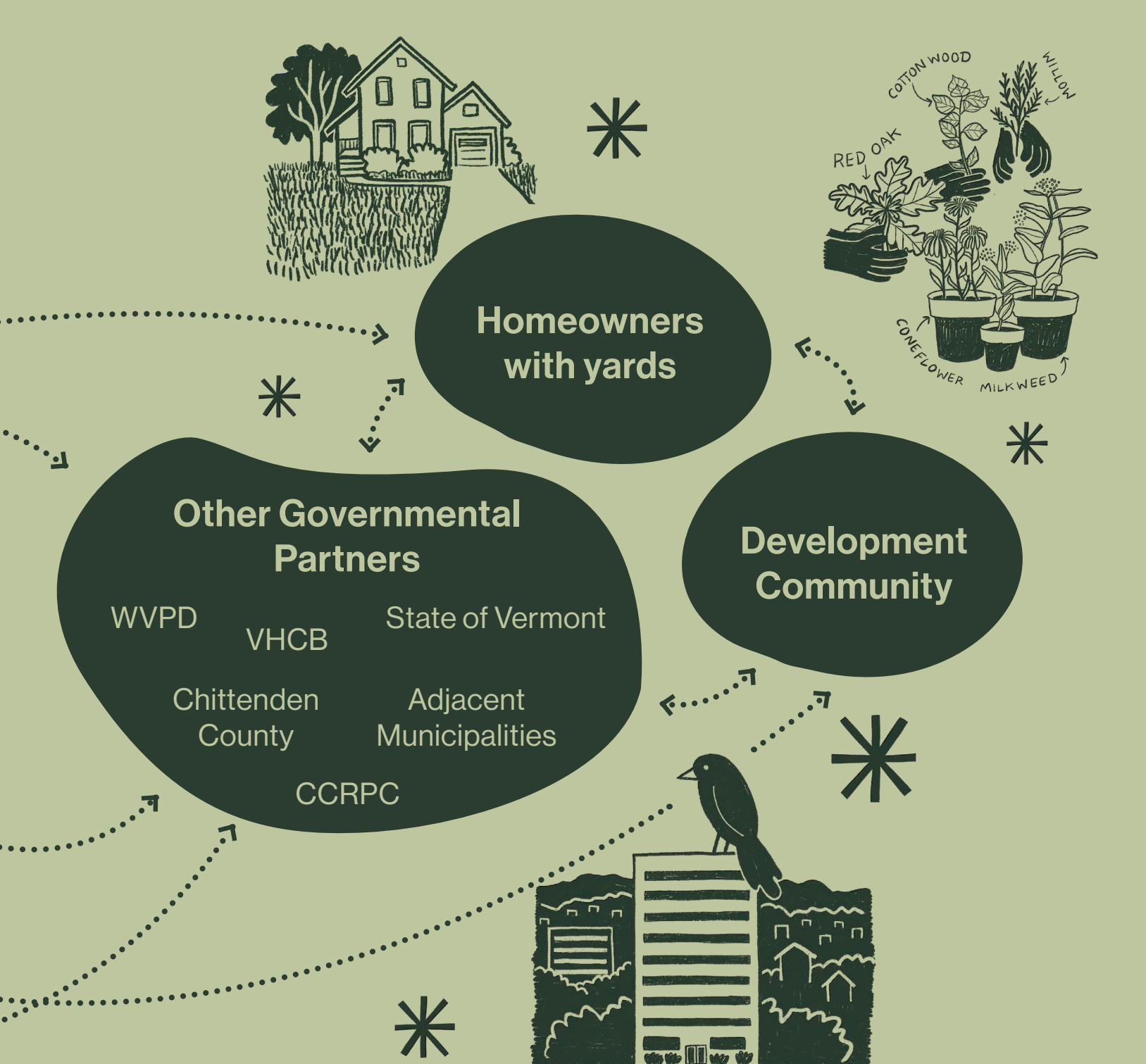


Ecosystem of Stewardship

We're all partners in the future of Burlington's open spaces.

While this document is primarily a roadmap for the City of Burlington, by working together, we can expand our collective impact. Continuing to steward, protect, and enhance our open spaces depends on all of us. Many of these organizations are regularly collaborating on open space initiatives and knowledge sharing—and many more are not listed. These are but a few of the champions who make a difference in open space stewardship.







Plan Process Overview

The Open Space Plan builds on the decades of open space planning and protection in Burlington.

The Open Space Plan reinforces the ongoing commitment to conservation, with a renewed roadmap to guide the next chapter of collaborative stewardship and a policy vision for management and access. As the city grows, Burlington wants to make sure everyone has fair access to high-quality open spaces while maintaining the ecological health of natural areas. The Plan expands on previous plans by:

- Connecting it with other city plans, like the Urban Forestry Plan.
- Working across City departments to make sure the Plan is visionary and feasible.
- Partnering with private owners to expand stewardship to more than City-owned land.
- Finding more ways to not just conserve open space but expand it as well.

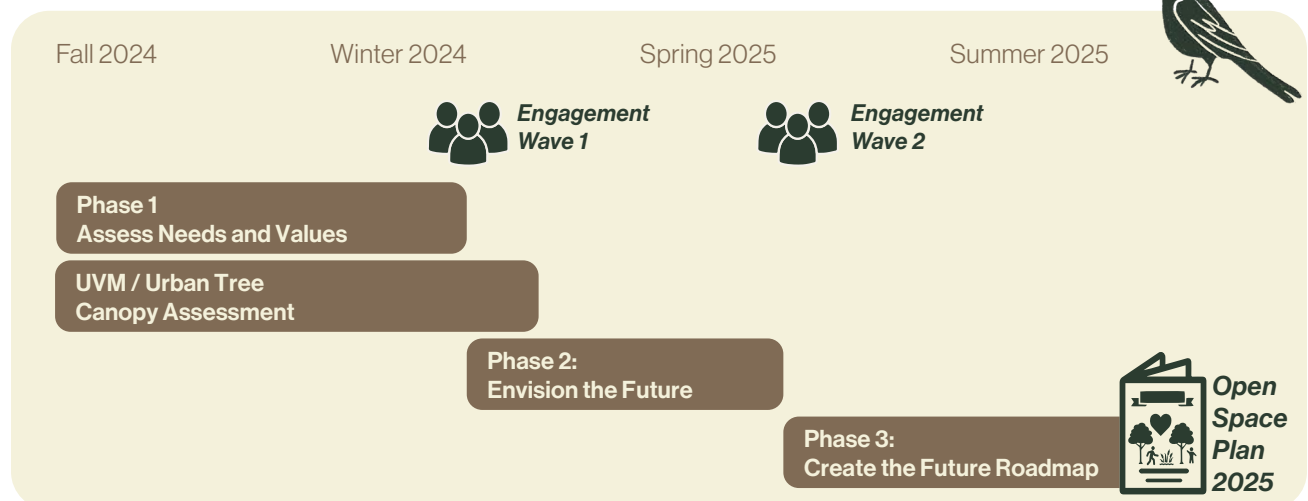
The Plan was created over a year across three planning phases with many collaborators and broad public input:

Phase 1: Assess Needs and Values

The first phase centered on understanding the history and current state of Burlington's open spaces. It assessed open space needs and values of the community.

Stakeholder focus groups were held to understand the most prominent issues faced by those who work with open spaces, and the community shared about their hopes and concerns for the future. In tandem, the University of Vermont's Spatial Analysis Lab conducted a Tree Canopy Assessment. The assessment included analysis on the city's land cover and the patterns and distribution of tree canopy changes over 10 years (from 2014 to 2023). Findings were shared with the public and incorporated into the Open Space Plan.

Project Schedule

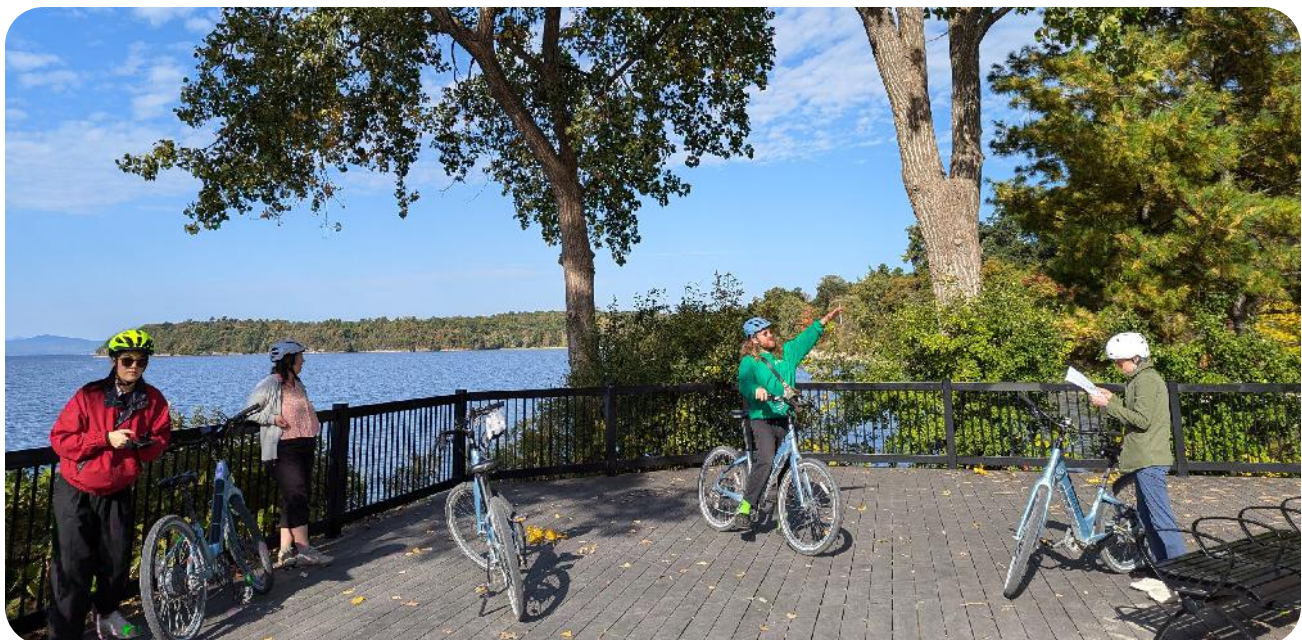
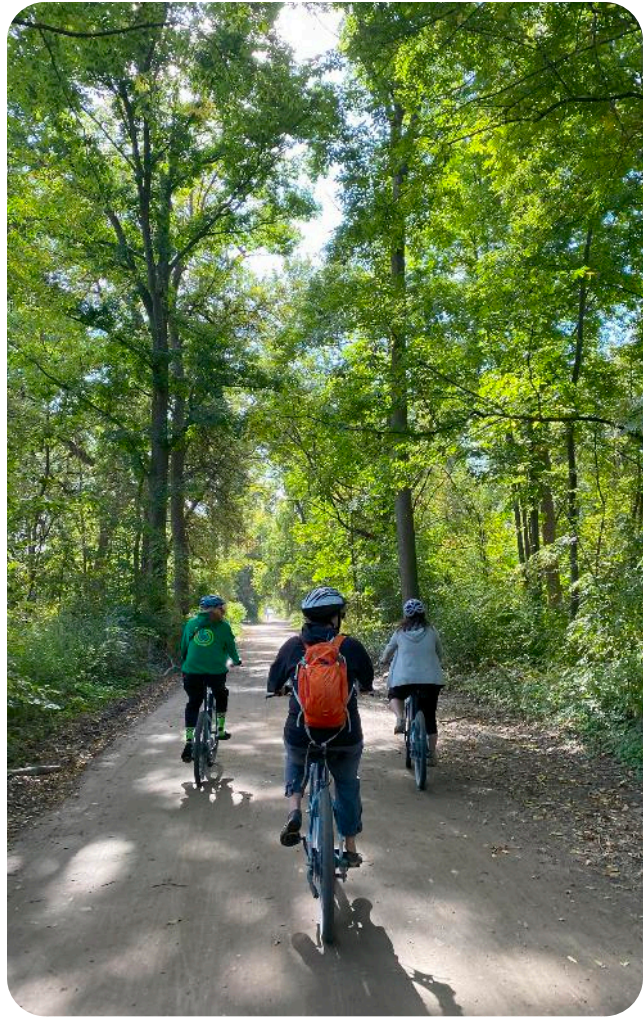


Phase 2: Envision the Future

Building on the community's stories and stakeholder input, the second phase envisioned the future and turned feedback into a draft policy vision with implementation steps. The vision was shared back with the community and stakeholders for input.

Phase 3: Create the Future Roadmap

Finally, the last phase created the future roadmap—this plan—that is guided by a vision statement and four key goals that reflect the core planning goals expressed by the community and stakeholders alike.





Community Input

“Open Space is for the people of Burlington—present and future.”
- 2000 Open Space Protection Plan

The Burlington community has been an integral collaborator throughout crafting this plan update, from the broad vision to the most specific action. The Open Space PI

and attended 18 events across two waves of engagement in 2025: the first in January and February centered around visioning and open space stories, and the second in May and June focused on the plan framework and policy recommendations. Across both waves, the project team shared details about the Plan and process to gain informed feedback from residents. Each wave included in-person events and online engagement to reach a broad audience. Some of these events included Winterville, Sea Caves skating, farmers markets, and Beach Bites.



Open spaces help build community.

Everybody should have access to fresh air and natural spaces!

18
events across
four months



3
school groups
engaged



Education of our youth is key—the entire city is a classroom!



I love this community and our commitment to open spaces.



125
open space
stories
shared

Open spaces are free, beautiful, connected places to gather and learn.



>230
online survey
respondents

>20
organizations
connected
with



12
stakeholder
focus groups

Greenspaces are tied within the fabric of the city.



Create a community and culture of respect and reciprocity.



Community Perspectives on Open Space Opportunities

Hope for the future of Open Spaces

Importance of Burlington's open spaces



- A Ecosystem Services
- B Human Health and Wellbeing
- C Flooding in Food Growing Spaces

Balancing needs for people and nature



- A Open Space is Integral to a Thriving City
- B Connections to Nature
- C Balance Growth and Open Space Preservation

Community Concerns

- A Irregular Quality of Park Spaces
- B Pollution in Open Spaces
- C Flooding in Food Growing Spaces



- A Preserve Open Space While Meeting Housing and Other Needs
- B Maintaining momentum for ongoing care and preservation of open spaces



Feelings and Activities



Peace



Calm



Happy



Energized



Relaxed



Connected



Walk



Swim



Bike



Friends



Boat



Lake

Takeaways from common themes



Burlington's parks and open spaces are intertwined and support healthy air, water, people, and wildlife.



There are pressures from development and housing demands that need to be **balanced with future open space investments.**



Providing a variety of experiences



- A Open Spaces Support Social Interaction
- B Bolster the Local Economy and Make Burlington a Destination

Stewardship and climate resilience



- A Connections to Nature
- B Diverse Experiences
- C Mitigating Climate Change

- A Waitlist for Community Gardens
- B Park Rule Breakers
- C Physical Access for Persons with Disabilities



- A Funding for Maintenance
- B Impacts of Pollution and Aggressively Introduced Species



Be Active



Be Restful



Be Communal



Connect with Nature; Wildlife Habitat; Recreation; Clean Water and Air; Food Growth; Climate Resilience; Community Character



Natural spaces should be **accessible for all and support a range of experiences** and activities.



Healthy open spaces **connect us to nature and support a climate ready future**, so it is our job to protect and maintain them.





History of Open Space Use and Protection



Burlington has a long history of open space use and protection, stretching back to pre-colonial times and continuing to today. While there were times when forests were cleared and pollution was common, Burlingtonians over the past decades have realized how important nature is to our city. We've become a leader in open space planning in the nation!

A Pre 1700s

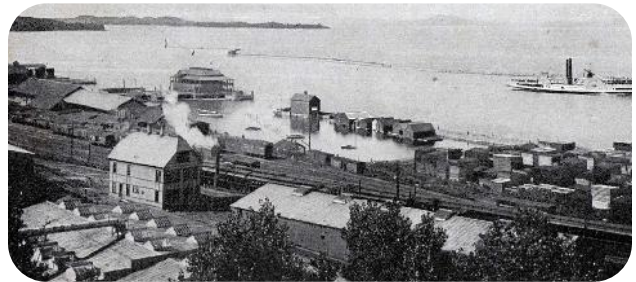


Abenaki couple, 1700s.
Source: City of Montreal

Early Inhabitants

Indigenous Groups: For hundreds of years, the Abenaki people inhabited and stewarded the land in the northeastern US and Canada. In and around modern-day Burlington, they grew beans, corn, and squash in the rich agricultural soil of the Winooski Floodplain.

B 1700s to 1800s



Burlington's Waterfront, 1800s.
Source: University of Vermont

Resource Extraction

In the 1700s, American settlers arrived and farmed the floodplain to support their communities. Some forests were cleared for new farmland.

In the 1800s, Burlington became a trading hub. More forests were cleared for lumber, farmland, and grazing land. The waterfront was lined with lumber yards, train companies, power generating plants, and water pumping facilities.



C Early 1900s

Logging in Vermont, 1900s.

Source: VT Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation

Industrialization and Ecological Decline

In the early 1900s, the Industrial Revolution ramped up across the US, and factories and coal gas plants popped up across Burlington, including the Barge Canal. Farming in the Intervale declined, and some of Intervale's land became dumping grounds.

D Mid 1900s



Gardening at the Intervale, 1980s.

Source: Vermont Community Garden Network

Environmental Movement

By the 1970s, the environmental movement was in full swing. Oil tanks on the waterfront were phased out and finally removed as part of a long-term waterfront plan. Conservation efforts began with the Winooski Valley Park District's acquisition of land and lake shoreline. Tommy Thompson's "Gardens for All" began to reclaim some of the farmland that had previously been lost and set up community gardens.

E 1900s and early 2000s



The Urban Reserve, 1990s.

Source: City of Burlington

Codifying Conservation

In the 1990s, residents called for more conservation efforts to protect natural areas in and around the City. The City purchased 40 acres of land now known as the Urban Reserve.

In the early 2000s, Burlington passed the city's first Open Space Protection Plan, becoming a pioneer among US cities to plan for the future of its green spaces. The Plan included the creation of the Conservation Legacy Fund and was closely followed by the Urban Forestry Master Plan.

F 2020s to today!



Burlington City Hall rain garden, 2020.

Source: Burlington Free Press

Planning for Climate and Equity

2020s: The City shifts open space planning to focus on equity and fighting climate change with "Nature Based Climate Solutions". Burlington recognizes that a thriving human community is necessary to protect existing natural areas, restore ecosystems, and steward natural resources for a green future.



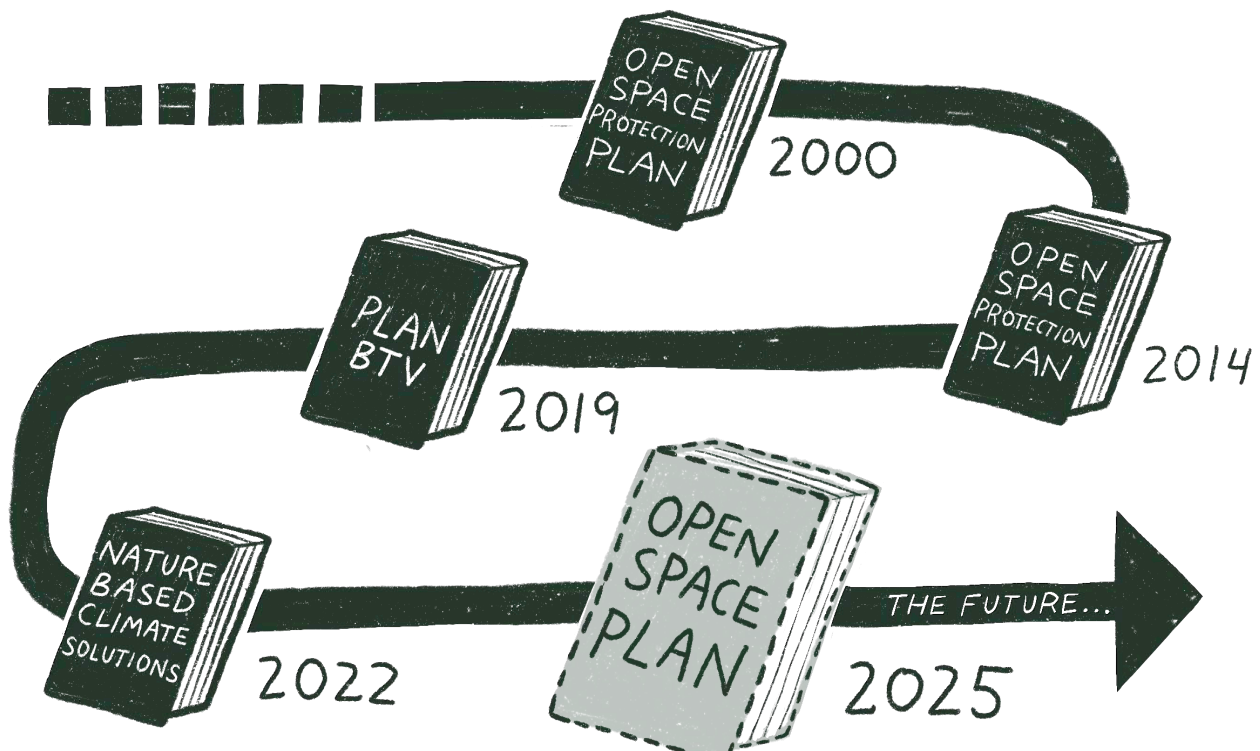


Legacy of Open Space Planning

Burlington's original Open Space Protection Plan was adopted in 2000.

It grew out of a 1997 City Council Resolution calling for the creation of "a plan to protect important natural areas and open spaces" and had a variety of goals related to identifying, protecting, and preserving the City's natural areas and open spaces. The Plan also created the Conservation Legacy Fund, which is still in use today. It was a visionary plan that grew from a long history of open space stewardship in Burlington and laid a foundation for both Burlington and other cities to protect their futures.

The City's 2014 Open Space Protection Plan Update inventories open space lands and characterizes them with respect to natural areas, urban agriculture, parklands, and green infrastructure. The 2014 Plan also assesses the proximity of residents to existing open space



amenities such as community gardens, parks, and the waterfront. The tactical nature and updated goals of the Plan can be used to identify underserved areas of the city and to determine the best places for open space protection and related open space amenities like community gardens and parklands.

Burlington continued to further the goals of the Open Space Protection Plan in 2022 through the adoption of “Nature Based Climate Solutions: An Addendum to the Burlington Open Space Protection Plan”. This addendum was written to further the goals identified in earlier plans, including the Open Space Plan and PlanBTV: Burlington’s Comprehensive Plan, while specifically identifying nature-based solutions that will combat climate change. It focuses on climate change and equity and is built on the inextricable link “that a thriving human community is necessary if we want to ensure thriving ecosystems.”

“Burlington’s citizens, non-profits, and government have a proud tradition of protecting what is important to them and what sets Burlington apart - its sense of place, natural environment, open spaces, and recreational opportunities

As needed growth continues, a comprehensive plan to protect the city’s most vulnerable natural areas and significant open spaces becomes a necessity.”

- 2000 Open Space Protection Plan



Open Space Stories

Conservation Legacy Fund

The Conservation Legacy Fund supports the ongoing protection of our open space network.

Zoe/Scott to share bulletpoints about fund history and use

350+
species of
native bees
in VT





Growing Open Space and Stewardship

In recent years, the City of Burlington and other partners have continued to expand open space and increase stewardship. Here are a few examples...



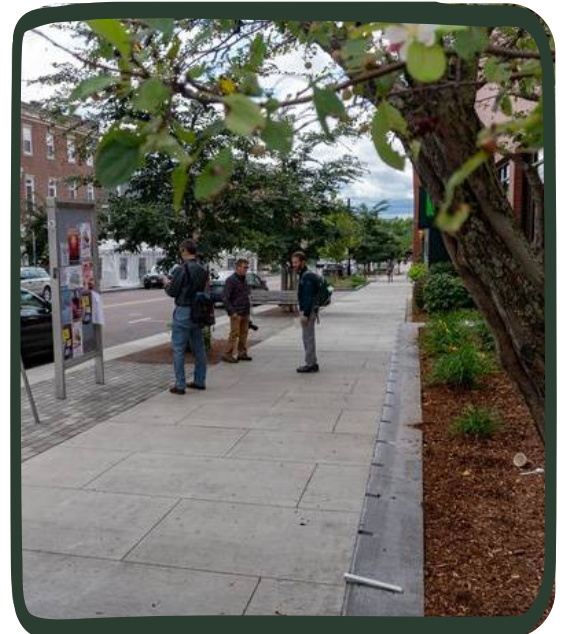
Northbend Orchard on Manhattan Drive

In 2020, residents on Manhattan Drive petitioned the city to plant fruit trees and move boulders to bring more life into a roadside grassy median. It was converted from a space with no ecological or community purpose to a no-mow zone that reestablishes habitat, attracts pollinators, and increases tree canopy.



St. Paul Street Green Infrastructure

St. Paul Street saw a major overhaul in 2018 that combined pedestrian-bicyclist initiatives with green stormwater infrastructure. Corner bumpouts made intersections safer and widened sidewalks became more comfortable while rain gardens, permeable pavers, and soil cells guide runoff to flow into the stormwater system.





Conservation Legacy Grants

The Conservation Legacy Grant is an annual grant program that supports local work on Nature-Based Climate Solutions. Since its inception, grants were awarded to projects that address strategies and actions identified in the Addendum's Implementation Matrix for at least two of the Addendum's six core principles.



Grow Wild Native Plant Giveaway

Grow Wild—a part of Burlington Wildways—has now run its third annual native plant giveaway in collaboration with the University of Vermont. They gave away over 1,300 seedlings in 2025. Planting native plants to enhance native plant diversity is a nature-based solution that can strengthen the local environment and help mitigate effects of climate change.



Burlington City and Lake Semester

Run out of Burlington High School, the Burlington City and Lake Semester program treats the city as its classroom to “explor[e] the people, places, problems and possibilities of our community.” Its curriculum covers a wide breadth of topics. Those pertaining to open space have included native species restoration and climate resilience tree-planting with Burlington Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department and restoring reptile habitat at Delta Park.







2

Burlington's Open Spaces Today

Our city has many types of open space, from large parks to backyards. Together, these open space create a network that supports people and wildlife.



What is Open Space?

“Open space” describes areas that are green and have natural elements, like plants and animals.

They are used by people for many reasons, including recreation, play, leisure, and growing food. Environmentally, they’re critical for wildlife and for climate resilience. In cities, they provide residents with a connection to nature.

Typically, open space in cities is thought of primarily as parks, trails, water bodies, and natural areas. Burlington has an abundance of these that are frequented by residents and visitors alike, from the smallest Smalley Park to the trail-filled and mostly wild Arms Forest. Much of the city’s publicly-accessible open space lines waterways like Lake Champlain and the Winooski River—evidence of the city historically stewarding open space for public enjoyment and conservation.





There's more to Open Space than we think...

There are lots of other green spaces that should be cared for and planned for. Many other open spaces also contribute to Burlington's open space network, providing home to our city's wildlife and providing ecosystem services that we all benefit from.

Burlington's unique landscape includes working lands (such as the Intervale Center and community gardens), private open space, and other green spaces. Smaller spaces, such as lawns, pocket parks, and green infrastructure, can also be important interstitial pieces of the overall open space network. The ecological and environmental health of our city is not limited to public land. Water flows and wildlife movement seamlessly cross parcel boundaries, and 38% of our urban forest lives on private residential parcels. This Plan aims to guide actions by the City of Burlington, while also offering ways other partners and residents can also support open space stewardship.



E Working Lands

The Intervale Center, Starr Farm Garden



F Private Open Spaces

University of Vermont, Rock Point



G Other Green Spaces

Lawns, pocket parks, green infrastructure





Types of Open Space

Burlington is unique in the rich diversity of its open space. While it has those typically found in urban areas—parks and playgrounds—it also has many natural communities of statewide significance in natural areas like Derway Island and water bodies like Lake Champlain and the Winooski River. Burlington's open space network is not complete without areas that are not typically found in an urban space plan: working lands, private open spaces, and other open spaces. Planning for these types of land is critical to ensuring the health of the overall system and not just those on public lands.



Parks

Parks are areas used primarily by people for recreation and gathering. They vary greatly in size: some are many acres large, like Leddy Park, while others are a small patch of grass on a street corner, like Dewey Park. They also vary greatly in available amenities. They may include benches, water features, playgrounds, ballfields, and even skate parks.



Water Bodies

Water bodies include natural or man-made lakes and streams. They form a network of waterways that serve important ecological functions—including circulating water throughout natural areas and bringing water to wetlands and floodplains. They are also commonly enjoyed recreationally for swimming, kayaking, and other water-based activities.



Natural Areas

Natural areas are lands with outstanding natural resources that function with little interference from people. These include forests, wetlands, and wildlife habitats. They may have trails and limited amenities and are generally not intensely managed. In addition to serving ecological functions, they also provide people with direct connections to the natural world. In Burlington, natural areas include Derway Island, Arms Forest, Rock Point, and Centennial Woods.





Trails + Greenways

Many natural areas and parks have paths used by people for recreation and mobility. They can be paved or unpaved, single or multi-modal, through forests or along the water's edge. The Burlington Greenway is among the most well-known and well-loved multi-use paths in the city, stretching from its entire north-south extent along Lake Champlain. The 127 Bike Path serves a similar function on the eastern edge along the Intervale, and many trails connect between them through open space—including some that are part of Burlington Wildways.



Private Open Spaces

While local governments tend to concentrate open space efforts on public land, there is much privately owned land with green space that can also contribute to the ecological health and even sometimes the recreational experience of the community. Collaboration with landowners and actions by private property owners are critical to supporting the overall health of our city's ecosystems.

Examples: University of Vermont, Rock Point, Burlington Country Club



Working Lands

Working lands are considered lands used by people to grow food and other flora. They can be for personal or commercial use and span small community gardens to large agricultural plots like the Intervale. Having access to local working lands and their products allows communities to be more self-sustaining, relying less on supply chains for sustenance.



Other Open Spaces

In addition to the previously mentioned types, there are other areas—many small ones—that serve or have the potential to serve greening and cooling purposes throughout the city. They are often overlooked as being interstitial spaces but, all together, can contribute positively to open space network. They can include lawns, pocket parks, green infrastructure, planted medians, school yards, vacant lots, and cemeteries.





Open Space Inventory

This map shows the current inventory of open space in Burlington.

It includes the seven types of open space with the addition of the tree canopy. Shown together, we can see how green Burlington is. Though not all this land is publicly accessible, we can also get a sense of in what areas we can enjoy natural spaces—much of the green space shown is not in an officially designated park, it could be in your backyard.

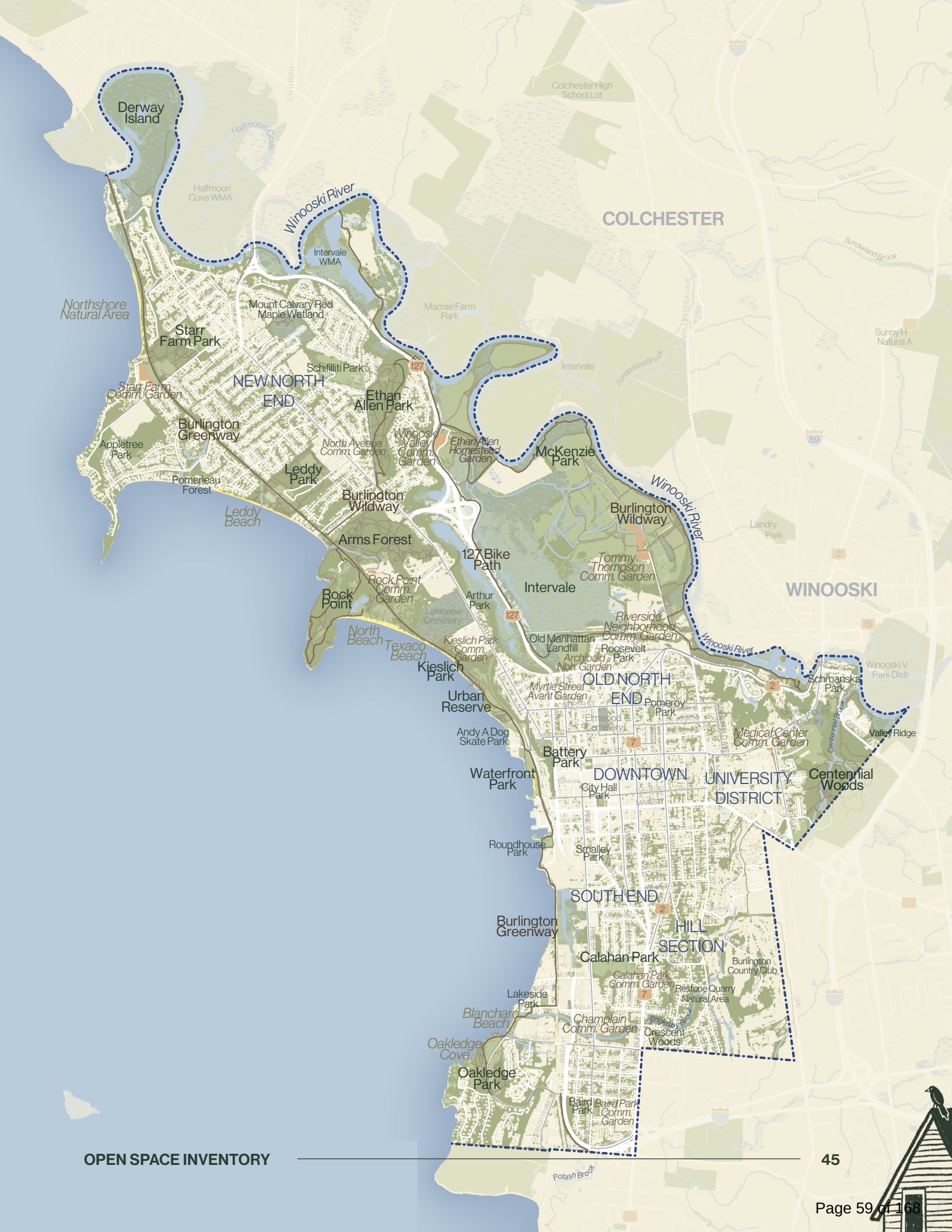
Find your favorite open space and see what else is nearby!

-  Burlington Border
-  Trails & Greenways
-  Bike Infrastructure
-  Tree Canopy
-  Parks & Natural Areas
-  Cemetery*
-  Community Gardens[†]
-  Beach
-  Water
-  Wetland

* Cemeteries are considered other open space, along with lawns, pocket parks, green infrastructure, planted medians, school yards, vacant lots.

[†] Community gardens are a type of working land. The Intervale, shown on this map as a park or natural area, is the main agricultural working land in Burlington.







Burlington's Natural Communities

The 2014 Open Space Protection Plan identified several natural communities that comprise most of the natural and semi-natural lands (about 67 percent) of the City's 6,775 acres of undeveloped land and water. The communities listed below represent the majority of the naturalized land surface in Burlington's natural areas and parks.



Dry Oak-Pine Forest

Small forests on ridgetops, south to west slopes, with thin soil and rocky outcrops.



Mesic Pine-Oak Sandplain Forest

Small to moderate-sized forests on gentle slopes and level ground in sandy outwash and lakeplain; most extensive upland forest type in City.



Red Maple Swamp

Small to moderate-sized depressions in landscape; high water table; floods in spring.



Silver Maple Floodplain Forest

Moderate-sized to large forests in the floodplain of the Winooski River; most extensive forest type in City.



Alder Swamp

Small depressional areas in level to gently sloping landscapes, including floodplains.



Emergent Marsh

Low, permanently inundated areas in floodplains and at edges of lakes and rivers.



Natural Community Types



* * * * *

Dry Oak-Pine Forest

Main Species

- Red oak
- White pine
- Black oak
- Big-tooth aspen
- Hickory

Soil

Farmington extremely rocky loam; Colton and Stetson sand

Major Issues

- Tree regeneration suppression by common buckthorn, Morrow's honeysuckle
- Managing transition from Norway maple and black locust to diverse canopy

Restoration Priorities

- Ensure native tree canopy replacement by controlling structure-altering unwanted species
- Maintain continuous forest canopy cover
- Manage understory shading to support tree seedlings and native shrubs/herbs
- Reduce edge effects by reversing forest fragmentation



* * * * *

Mesic Pine-Oak Sandplain Forest

Main Species

- White pine, oak (red, white, black)
- American beech
- Ironwood
- Eastern hemlock
- Sugar maple
- Red maple
- Black cherry

Soil

Adams and Windsor loamy sand; Hartland very fine sandy loam

Major Issues

- Tree regeneration suppressed by buckthorn (common, glossy), Morrow's honeysuckle, Norway maple
- Managing transition from single-species pine plantations to diverse forest canopy

Restoration Priorities

- Ensure native tree canopy replacement by controlling structure-altering unwanted species
- Maintain continuous forest canopy cover
- Manage understory shading to support tree seedlings and native shrubs/herbs
- Reduce edge effects by reversing forest fragmentation





Burlington's Natural Communities

Natural Community Types



Red Maple Swamp

Main Species

- Red maple
- Ash (green, black)
- Oak (black, red)
- Paper birch
- White pine

Major Issues

- Small size invites aggressively introduced species and over-use
- Alteration of groundwater due to surrounding impervious cover and surface drainage
- Colonization by deep-shade-casting trees and shrubs (e.g. sugar/Norway maple; glossy buckthorn)

Restoration Priorities

- Reduce edge effects by native shrub plantings at margins
- Monitor and manage tree canopy regeneration
- Monitor and manage shrub layer to support native ground layer

Soil

Au Gres fine sandy loam (seasonally wet)



Silver Maple Floodplain Forest

Main Species

- Silver maple
- Box-elder
- Cottonwood
- Green ash

Major Issues

- Many unwanted community-altering plant species due to frequent flooding
- Edge effects in narrow bands of forest

Restoration Priorities

- Identify most abundant structure-altering species for control
- Focus control on early infestations of these species
- Reduce edge effects by reversing forest fragmentation

Soil

Limerick silt loam; Winooski very fine sandy loam; Hadley very fine sandy loam—all types are flooded





* * * * *

Alder Swamp



Main Species

- Speckled alder
- Willow
- Quaking aspen
- Reed canary grass
- Sedges
- Bluejoint reed grass



Soil

Covington silty clay (wet), others

Major Issues

- Reduced plant and pollinator diversity due to local dominance by reed canary grass

Restoration Priorities

- Identify and evaluate candidates for restoration where other plant communities are being restored and managed for the long term



* * * * *

Emergent Marsh



Main Species

- Narrow-leaved cattail
- Giant reed
- Reed canary grass
- Bulrushes
- Sedges



Soil

(Unknown)

Major Issues

- Dominance by a few plant species
- Low plant and pollinator diversity

Restoration Priorities

- Identify and evaluate candidates for restoration where other plant communities are being restored and managed for the long term





Urban Forest Snapshot

The University of Vermont's Spatial Analysis Lab conducted a Tree Canopy Assessment to detect and analyze changes in the city's tree canopy across a ten-year period, from 2014 to 2023. Using LiDAR data and processes developed by the USDA Forest Service, they found that Burlington has 40% tree canopy coverage—an overall 1.6% decrease in ten years.

The change was not consistent across the city's area: some places lost trees (like parts of the New North End, Downtown, and South End) while others gained (like the University District, Intervale, and Rock Point). Tree canopy change was attributed to a number of factors: some losses were individual tree removals on private yards while others were cleared patches for new construction. Growth of existing tree canopy was the biggest contributor to gains.

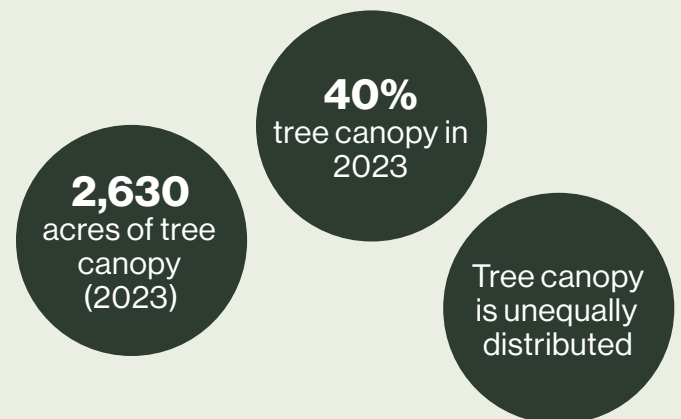
To aid the city in planning how to maintain or grow tree canopy for the next ten years, the assessment also included analyzing landcover to quantify existing tree canopy, possible tree canopy, and land not suitable for trees. Areas with possible tree canopy could be vegetated areas that do not currently have trees, such as grass or shrub area, or paved areas that could be converted to green, such as bare soil or parking lots. 33% of the city's land area falls into this category—though some, like agricultural land in the Intervale, is culturally not suitable for trees. Combined with local knowledge, this assessment can help the city plan for opportunities to increase tree canopy.

Urban Tree Canopy Assessment by UVM

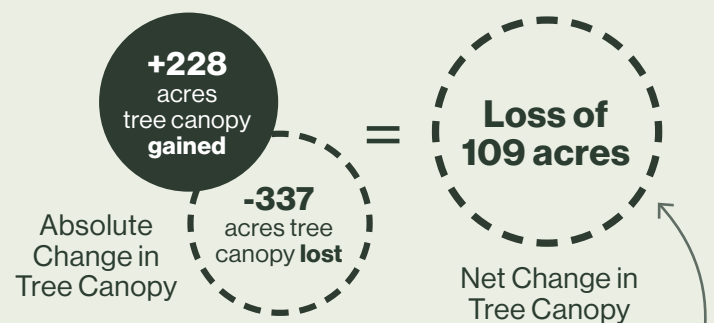


Trees in Burlington

111,912+
Individual trees
estimated in 2023



Change in Tree Canopy (2014-2023)



*That's the equivalent of
18 Battery Parks,
15 Sea Cave skating areas, or
1.5 Ethan Allen Parks!*





Burlington's urban forest includes a mix of larger patches to smaller patches to isolated trees.



Larger forests like at Rock Point, Arms Forest, and Ethan Allen Park support a range of local and migrating wildlife.



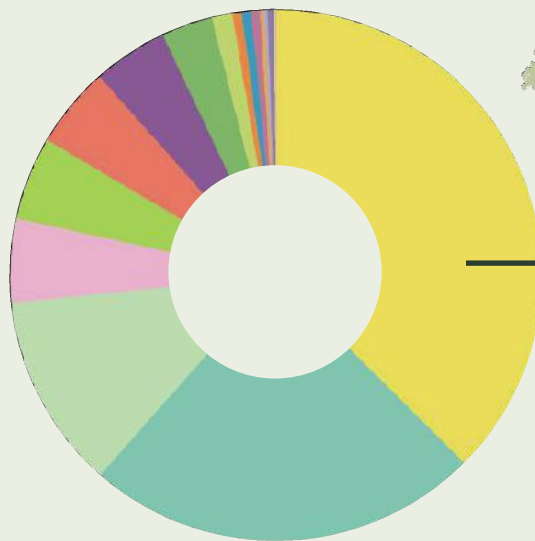


Urban Forest Snapshot

Urban Forest Today

Trees by Land Use

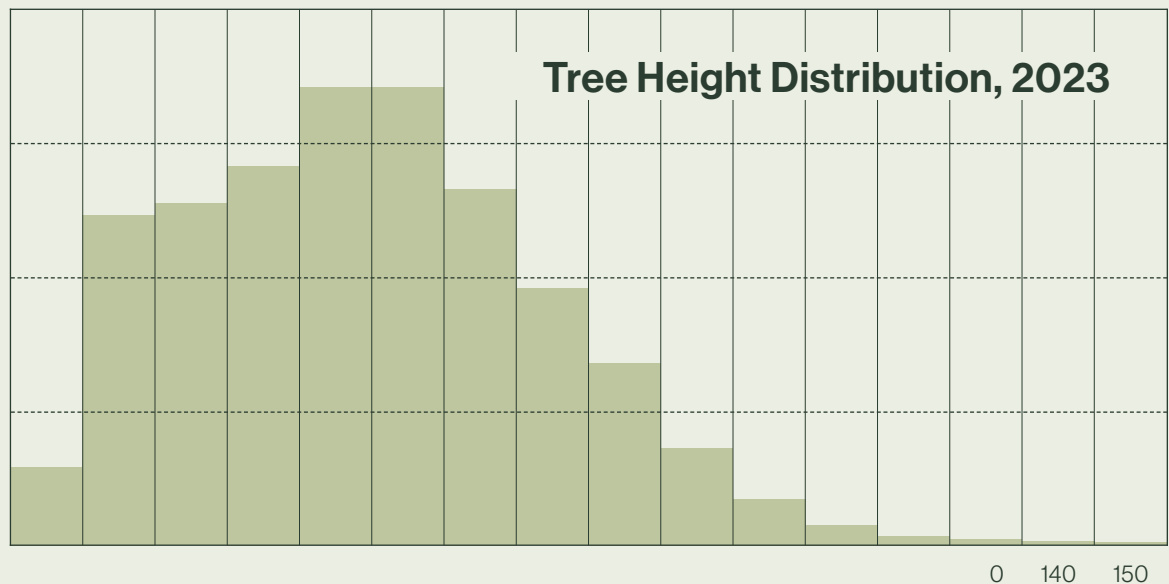
- Parcel Land Use
- City Park
 - City Property
 - Commercial
 - Education - Champlain
 - Education - City Owned
 - Education - Private
 - Education - UVM
 - Farm
 - Farmland
 - Federally Owned
 - Land
 - Mixed Com/Resident
 - ROW - Railroad
 - ROW-Private
 - Religious Institution
 - Residential
 - State Owned
 - Unknown
 - Vacant Land
 - Winooski River



37.5%

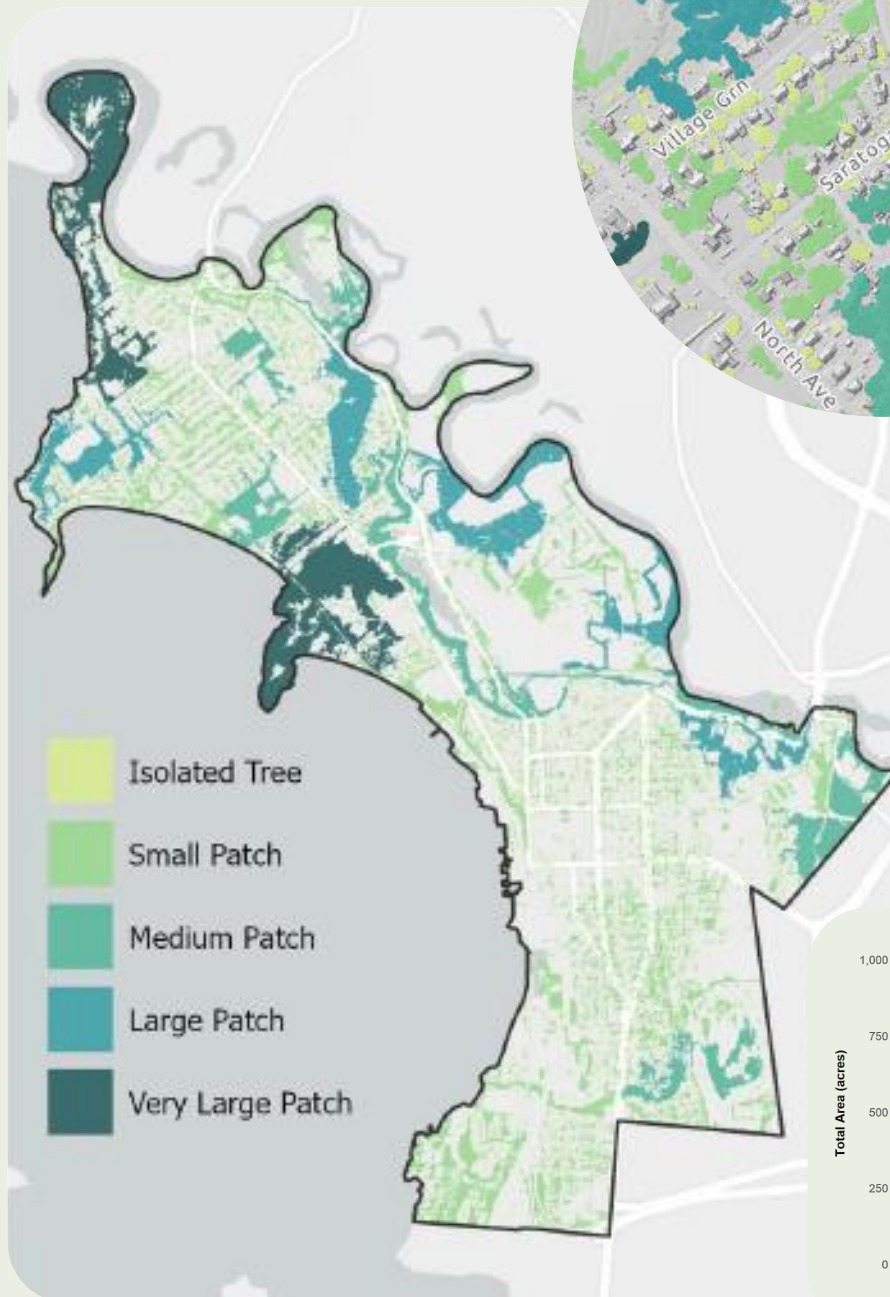
of Burlington's tree canopy exists on **residential parcels**.

Engaging with land owners will be key to managing the city's tree canopy.

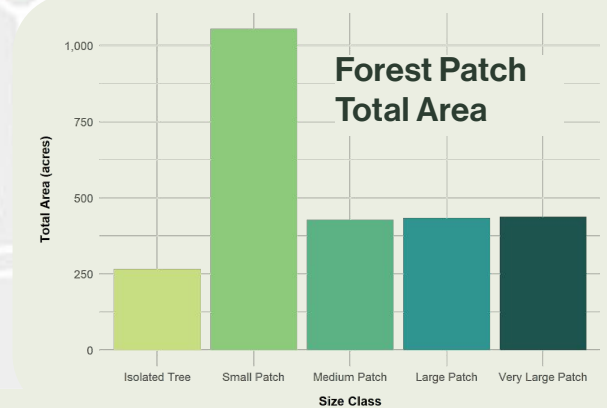


Urban Tree Canopy Assessment by UVM





ize



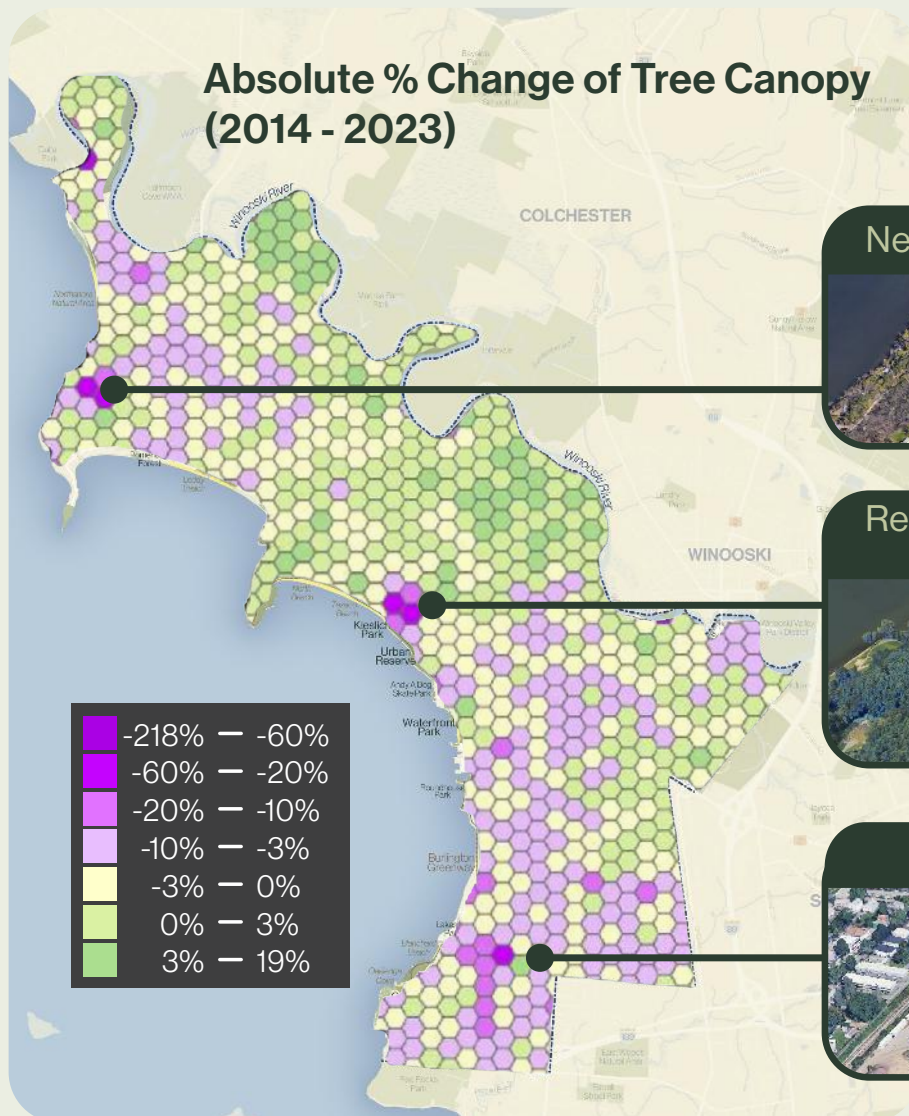


Urban Forest Snapshot

Changes in last 10 years

Burlington has experienced a net decrease in tree canopy over the 2014 to 2023 time period, but the story of change is more nuanced, with a mix of loss and gain. All areas of the city experienced both gains and losses of tree canopy, though some

areas saw a net increase and others a net decrease. Removal and die off of mature trees resulted in the loss of large patches of tree canopy. Mature trees with large crowns contribute substantially to tree canopy and take decades to grow, so their loss



Example Areas of Significant Loss

New North End Solar Array



Redevelopment of the former Burlington College

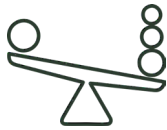


Champlain Parkway



Urban Tree Canopy Assessment by UVM





Losses in tree canopy are outpacing gains, resulting in a net decrease in tree canopy. Burlington has experienced 4% relative loss of tree canopy.



Growth of existing tree canopy is the biggest contributor to Burlington's tree canopy gains.

creates large, localized declines in tree canopy. Even though there was evidence of tree loss throughout Burlington, planting efforts, preservation programs, and natural growth helped offset losses and stem decline.



Open Space Stories

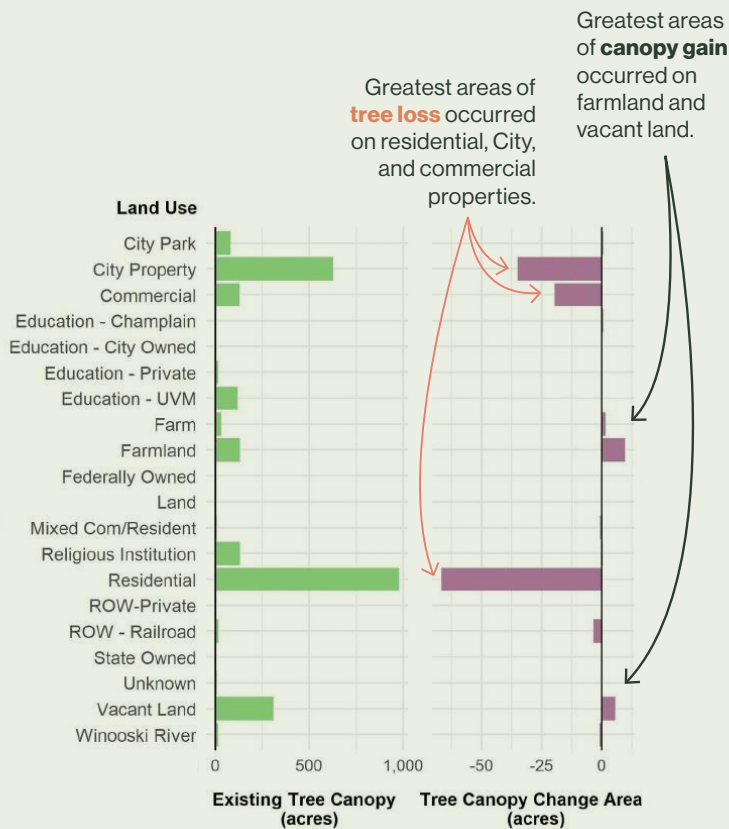
Role of Trees

Tree canopy is important for human health for so many reasons.

Trees help clean the air by removing pollution, which makes it easier to breathe and reduces asthma and other lung problems. They provide shade, keeping neighborhoods cooler during hot weather, which can prevent heat-related illnesses.

Trees also reduce stress and improve mood; just being around nature can make people feel calmer and happier. Between 2014 and 2023, Burlington lost 4% of its tree canopy, which is almost 500 trees.

By planting just one new tree, Burlington can remove enough CO₂ to offset 13 miles of car travel and absorb six bathtubs of stormwater!



What does the lost tree canopy over the last ten years equate to?

-109 acres
of tree canopy change





A photograph of a person riding a bicycle away from the camera on a paved path. The path is surrounded by dense trees with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of yellow, orange, and green. The scene is bright and sunny, with dappled light on the path.

3

Vision and Goals

Building on the original vision from the 2000 Open Space protection plan, this chapter reaffirms our city's commitment to stewarding Burlington's open space network.



Vision Statement

Burlington is a Nature-Filled City





Healthy open spaces that connect lake to river create a linked network where wildlife thrives. Around every corner, there are a variety of natural experiences that can be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Community gardens and urban farms burst with local produce. Burlington's open spaces invite all to explore, play, and grow — **creating a city where people and ecosystems flourish side by side.**



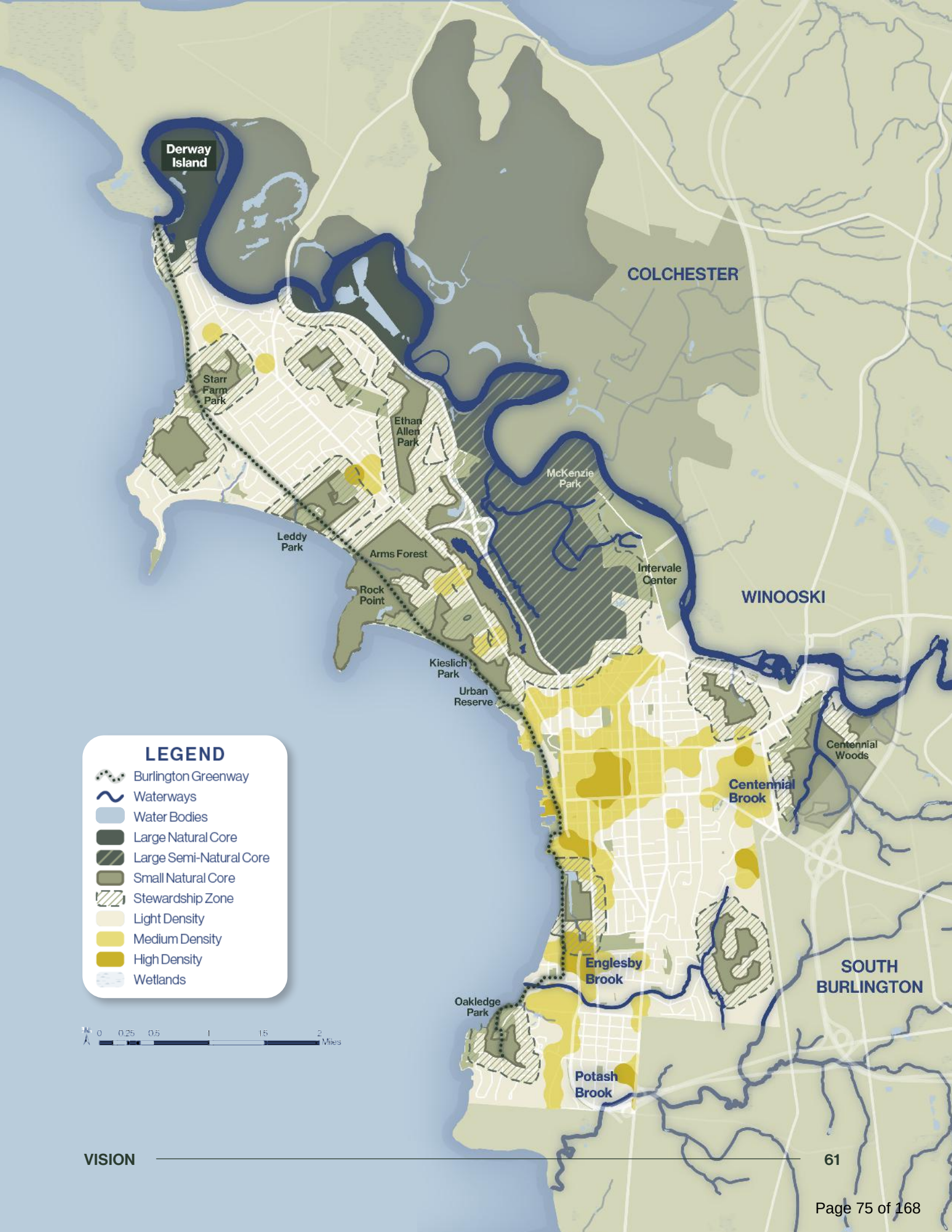


Healthy Connected Ecosystems Framework

Since the first settlers arrived in Burlington and settled along the shores of what is now Lake Champlain, the city's ecosystem has undergone significant changes to meet the needs of a growing population, shifting industry demands, and the impacts of human activity on wildlife patterns. To reinvest in the city's open spaces, wildlife health, and human connections to nature, the plan outlines a comprehensive, scientifically based ecological framework that is widely accessible and actionable by city staff, advocates, and the broader public.

Burlington's healthy ecosystem framework describes the conditions that enable an ecosystem to maintain its structure, function, and ability to recover from change and development. This includes a foundation of protected core natural areas that are large enough and continuous enough to support wildlife that depend upon large natural areas to live. This framework identifies where to prioritize conservation efforts and sustainable resource management to have the greatest impact. It shows where actions in and near open spaces should be considered with a heightened lens for their open space impacts and stewardship opportunities.





LEGEND

- Burlington Greenway
- Waterways
- Water Bodies
- Large Natural Core
- Large Semi-Natural Core
- Small Natural Core
- Stewardship Zone
- Light Density
- Medium Density
- High Density
- Wetlands

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles



Layers of the Healthy Ecosystems Framework

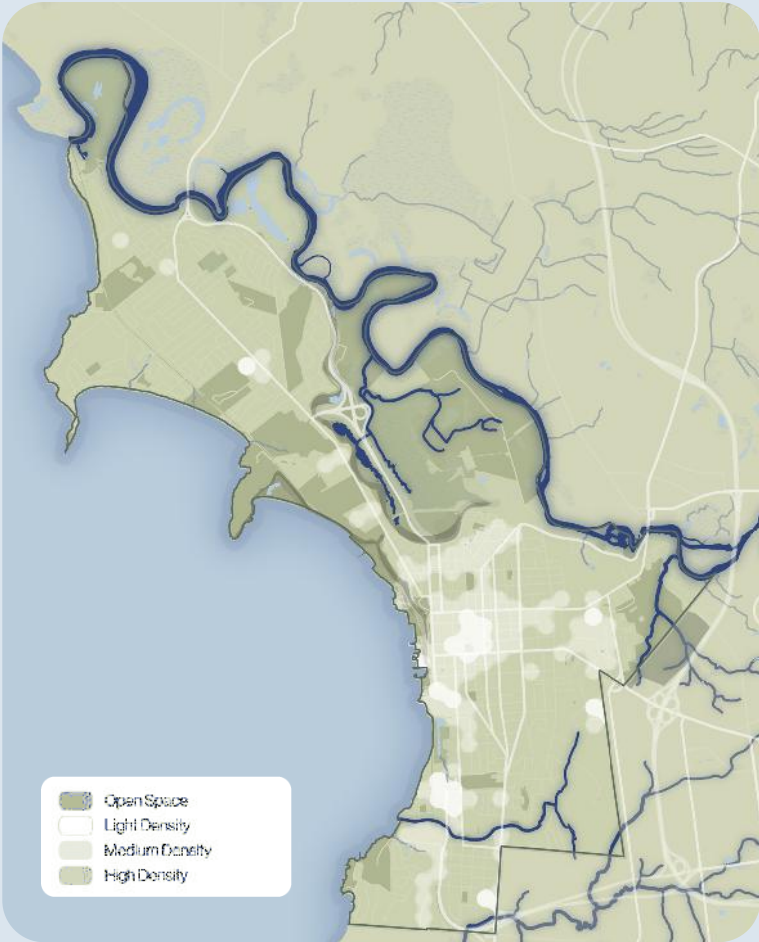
Core Ecological Areas



Water, Wetlands, and Floodplains



Impervious Surface Density



Tree Canopy





Goals and Strategies Overview

CONSERVE

Stewarding Burlington's network of protected lands to support healthy ecosystems and a healthy city

- CS1** Expand restoration and management city-wide
- CS2** Support wildlife movement and ecological health
- CS3** Evolve the conservation fund to be flexible to changing needs
- CS4** Collaborate to acquire land to protect open space for future generations



CONNECT

Knitting the landscape together through stewardship and nature-based development

- CN1** Grow and celebrate nature-based climate solutions across the city
- CN2** Cultivate an ecosystem of stewardship
- CN3** Enhance and protect Burlington's urban forest
- CN4** Encourage new development to incorporate nature-based principles



EXPERIENCE

Expanding a variety of nature experiences across Burlington

- EX1** Increase awareness about Burlington's open spaces
- EX2** Grow public access to nature-based experiences
- EX3** Break down barriers to open space access



CULTIVATE

Growing sustainable and accessible local food systems that meet community needs

- CL1** Cultivate sustainable and resilient agriculture practices
- CL2** Expand community gardens
- CL3** Support the cultivation of alternate food sources

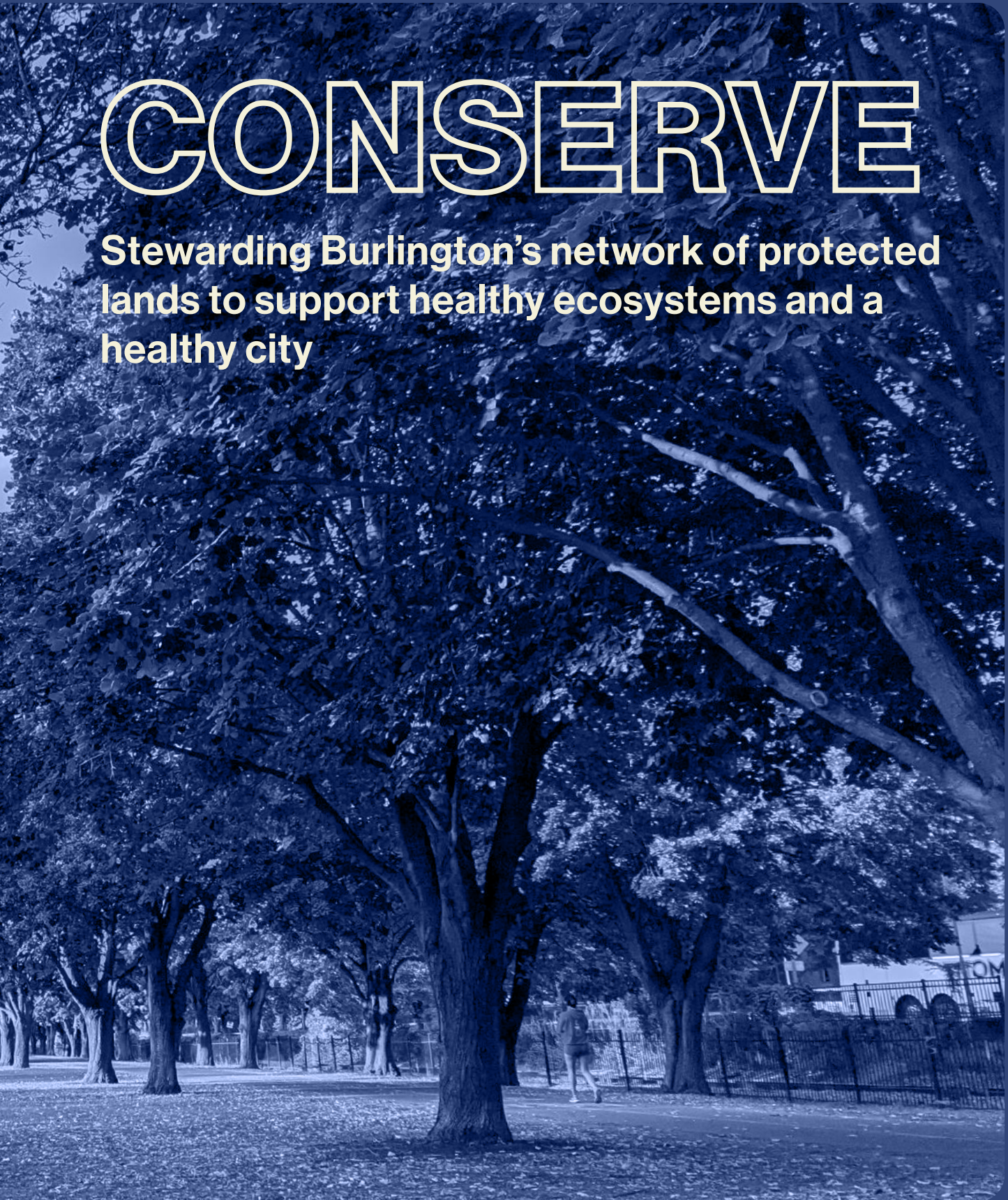




GOAL ONE

CONSERVE

Stewarding Burlington's network of protected lands to support healthy ecosystems and a healthy city





CONSERVE Overview

Building on a long legacy of open space protection

Burlington's open space network is special because it includes not just urban parks for people to enjoy, but also large natural spaces that are both locally and regionally significant for wildlife and connected to areas outside the city. Expanding on the 2000 Open Space Protection Plan, this new update provides a roadmap for ongoing protection, restoration, and management efforts undertaken by the city or large land stewards.



CONSERVE Strategies

- CS1** Expand restoration and management city-wide
- CS2** Support wildlife movement and ecological health
- CS3** Evolve the Conservation Fund to be flexible to changing needs
- CS4** Collaborate to acquire land to protect open space for future generations



"Preserving and protecting ecosystems, restoration of impaired ecosystems, community involvement in natural areas/local ecosystem."

"Focuses in preservation, maintenance and resiliency in the face of climate escalated weather events."

Connections linking open space and natural areas

Improving water quality

"Restoration projects to maintain forest health, remove aggressively introduced species, increase water quality, help wildlife habitat by increasing corridors etc."

Stewardship of core natural areas

"Balancing the human benefits with of these spaces with the ecosystem health."



CONSERVE

Overview

Burlington's ecosystems depend upon healthy waters and a network of preserved lands.

All elements of the natural world are connected. While the relationships that people have with water and land differ vastly, their relationship to each other is inextricable. The flow of water brings nourishment to the land—including through the flooding of floodplains—while runoff from and drainage through land replenishes and enriches the water. Together, they form a network of connected habitats that allow wildlife populations to thrive.

The CONSERVE goal outlines a framework for shared stewardship to support the long-term health of our city's waters and lands.

Water, Wetlands, and Floodplains

From Lake Champlain to the Winooski River to urban brooks, water is integral to healthy ecosystems and community life in Burlington. The ecological health of these waterways is largely influenced by actions and land use across their full watersheds, but Burlington can help by reducing pavement, adding more green spaces, and reducing runoff.



L Champlain

Lake Champlain's 12 miles of shoreline on Burlington's western edge is lined with open spaces. Much of Burlington's land area drains directly into the Lake, including via Englesby Brook. Though the lakeshore was once full of industrial plants, it has in many areas returned to a more natural state that many wildlife species call home.



U Brooks

A number of brooks flow through Burlington, such as Centennial Brook, Englesby Brook, and Potash Brook. In some areas they are surrounded by tree canopy and open space while in others they abut private properties. There are on-going stewardship efforts and opportunities to manage issues like erosion and aggressively introduced species.



- Waterways
- Water
- Floodplains
- Wetlands

COLCHESTER

Winooski River

WINOOSKI

Lake Champlain

Centennial Brook

Englesby Brook

Potash Brook

SOUTH BURLINGTON

Winooski River



With a total length of 90 miles and watershed spanning 1,080 square miles, the Winooski River starts in the Green Mountains and drains into Lake Champlain. It is a critical part of a riparian system that floods its banks—such as the Intervale—and serves as a protected wildlife corridor.

Wetlands



Wetlands are rich ecosystems that support a wide variety of species across all seasons. Development pressures and lack of understanding of their ecological functions resulted in widespread wetland drainage throughout the 1800s and 1900s. Burlington currently has 380 acres of protected wetlands.





Core Ecological Areas

Burlington's core ecological lands work together to form a network that supports wildlife, cleans air, and absorbs rainfall. These open spaces vary in size and include a range of landscapes, from forests to fields to semi-natural areas, like the Intervale.



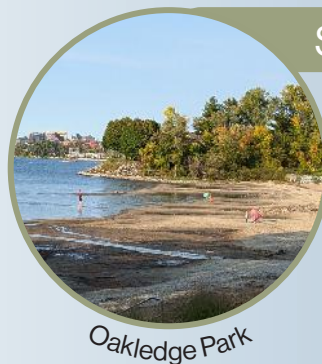
Large Natural Core

Preserve large areas for ecosystem integrity at scale and support regionally uncommon species.



Large Semi-Natural Core

Preserve large mixed natural, semi-natural, and agriculture landscapes for food production and ecosystem integrity.



Small Natural Core

Larger isolated blocks of forest (some wetlands, grassland, brushland) embedded in urban landscape.



Stewardship Zone

Support neighbors of open spaces to take stewardship actions that reduce the edge effects on nearby core areas.



LEGEND

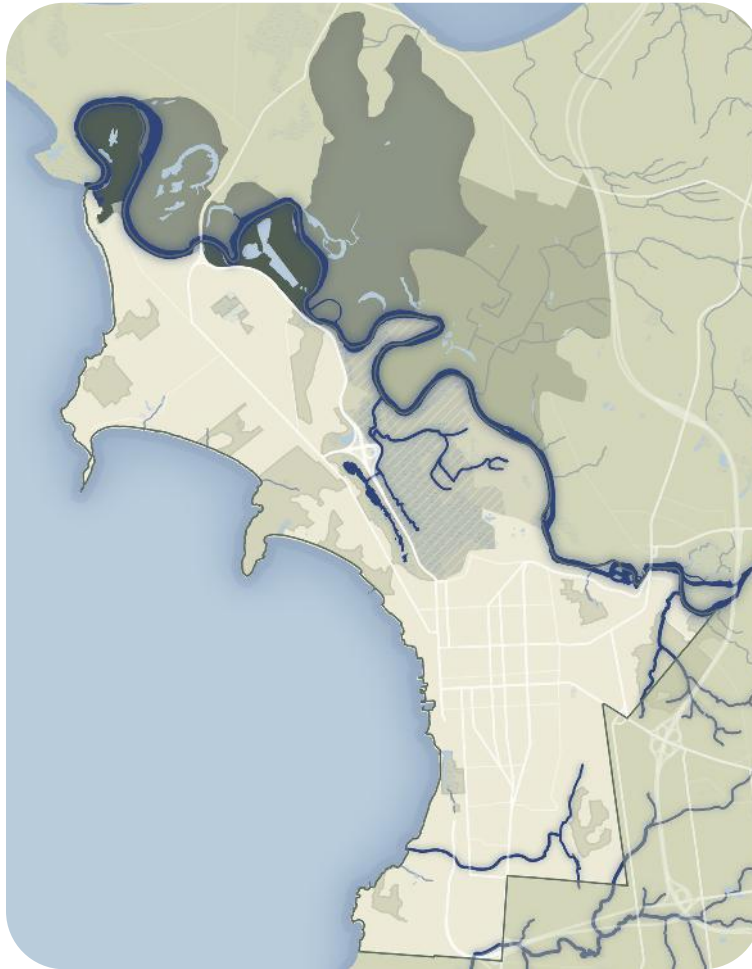
- Large Natural Core
- Large Semi-Natural Core
- Small Natural Core
- Stewardship Zone
- Waterways
- Water
- Floodplains
- Wetlands

0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5 2 Miles



Large Core Areas

Large Natural Core



PURPOSE

Preserve large areas for ecosystem integrity at scale and support regionally uncommon species.

EXISTING PROTECTIONS

Majority of land in large cores is protected public open space (Derway Island, Howe Farm); floodplain, wetland and natural resource ordinances protect most of remainder.

OPPORTUNITIES

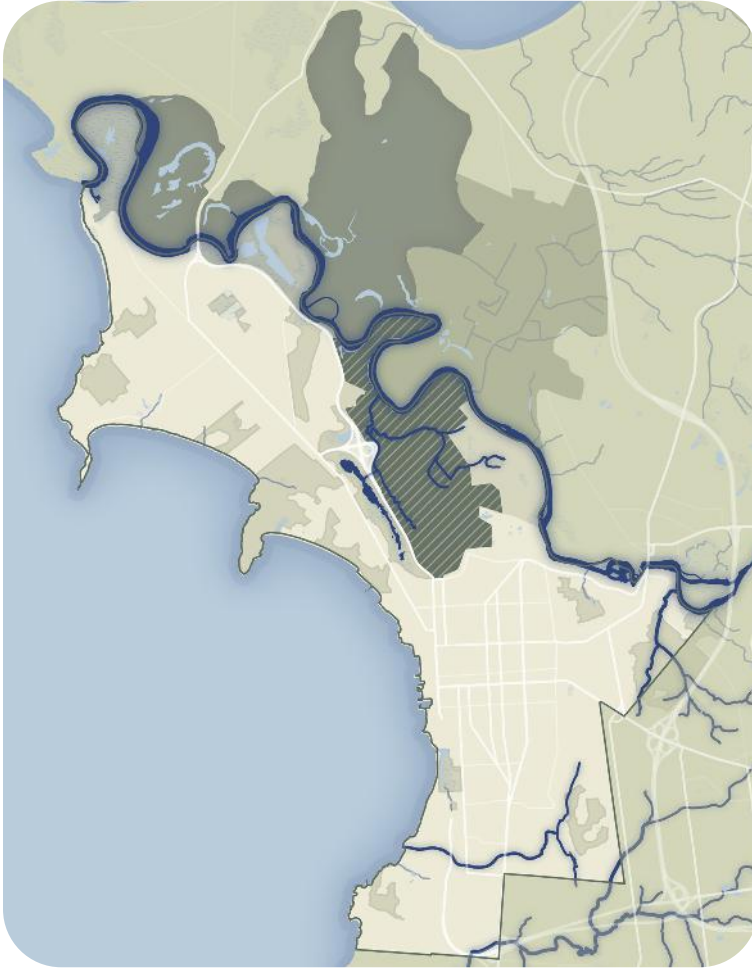
- All combined, over 2000-acre expanse of largely natural land
- Potential habitat for larger or area-sensitive animals (river otter, mink, bobcat)
- Non-public land is largely in regulatorily-protected floodplain

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

- Challenge of cross-river collaboration
- Challenge of river flooding introducing unwanted plant species
- Edge effects where residences abut natural area



Semi-Natural Agricultural Core



PURPOSE

Preserve large mixed natural, semi-natural, and agriculture landscapes for food production and ecosystem integrity.

EXISTING PROTECTIONS

Almost half in Intervale; some in McKenzie Park and McCrae Farm Park. Floodplain, wetland and natural resource ordinances protect much of remainder.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Some 1700 acres of continuous floodplain, wetlands and uplands in a mosaic of natural and agricultural land
- The Intervale Center is integral to City identity and part of core

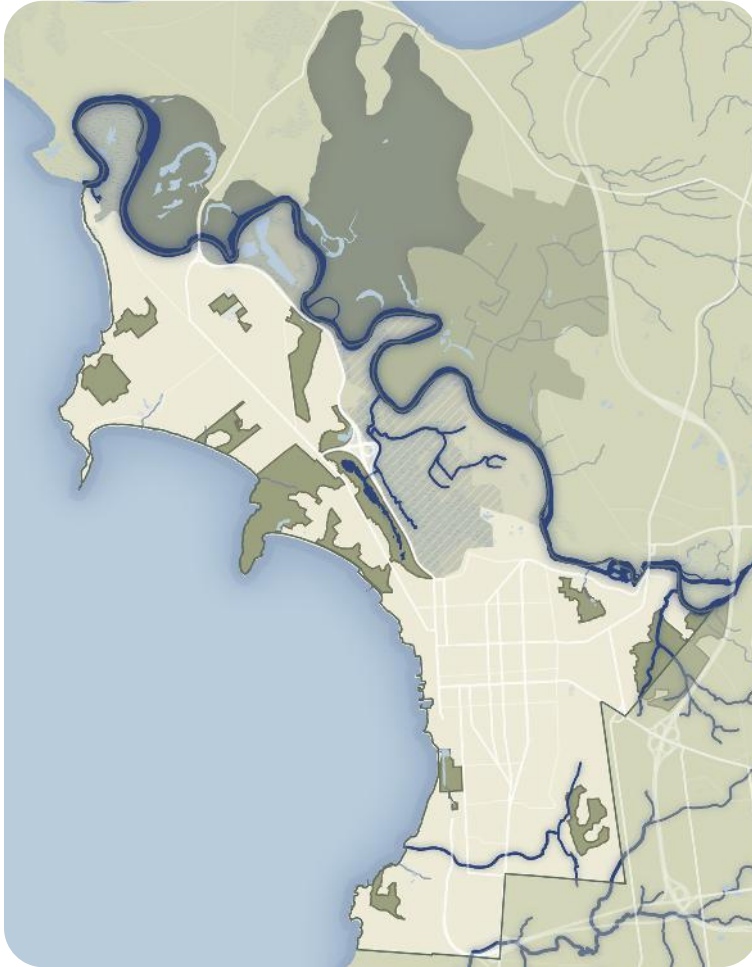
BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

- Challenge of cross-river collaboration
- Challenge of river flooding introducing unwanted plant species
- Edge effects where residences and VT 127 abut natural area
- Reducing fragmentation of floodplain forest requires strategic restoration of agricultural land to forest



Small Core Areas

Small Natural/ Semi-Natural Core



PURPOSE

Larger isolated blocks of forest embedded in urban landscape.

EXISTING PROTECTIONS

Some in parks, or protected by natural resource ordinance, or on institutional land with low prospect for development (e.g., Rock Point).

OPPORTUNITIES

- Continuous forest cover and good tree diversity – less canopy underplanting
- Localized unwanted plant invasions (e.g., knotweed, Norway maple) or light/moderate (e.g., buckthorn, honeysuckle) – forest structure less likely to change if addressed now
- Native groundlayer plants – less need for expensive plantings

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

- Non-targeted interventions expending resources and patience
- Weak program for ecosystem management
- Long-term stewardship weakly integrated in daily operations



Inventory Process

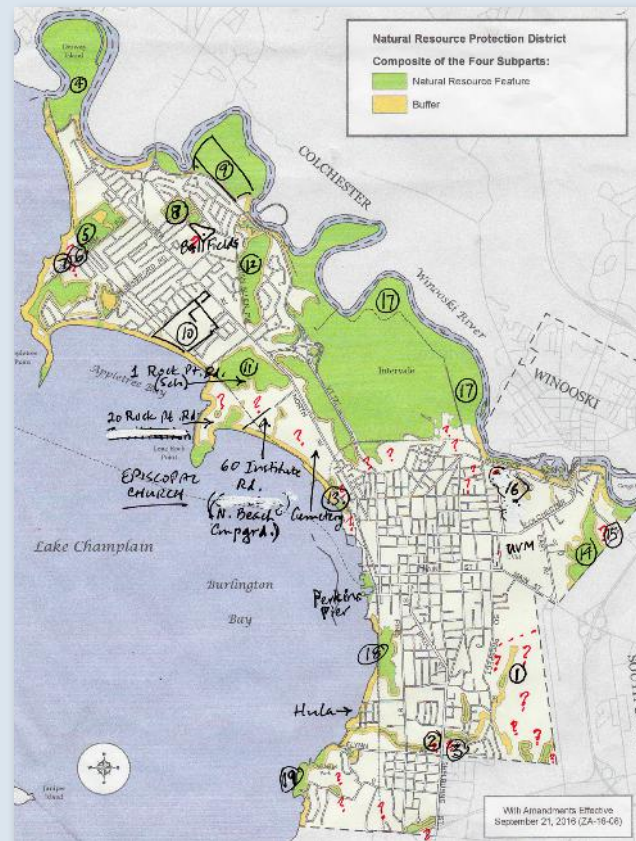
In November 2024, the project team visited 19 sites representing a range of ecosystems in Burlington. The purpose of the site visit was to identify issues affecting ecological integrity, diversity, and resilience in natural and semi-natural lands.

The sites included:

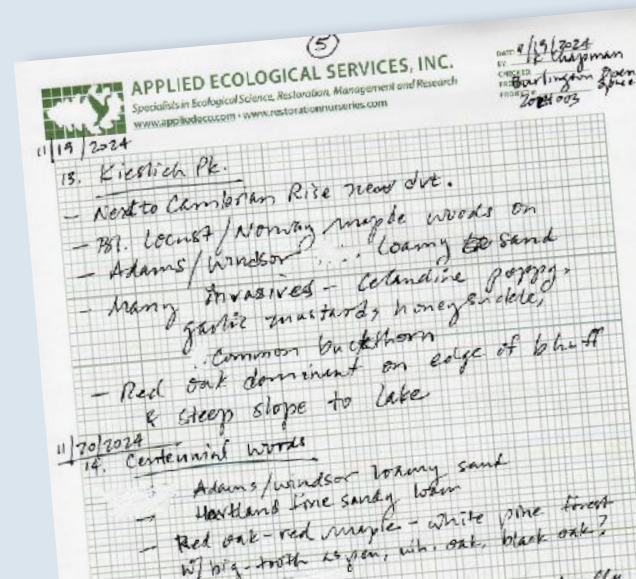
- Large blocks of natural and semi-natural land
- Public parks
- Smaller, interesting natural areas



Sites visited



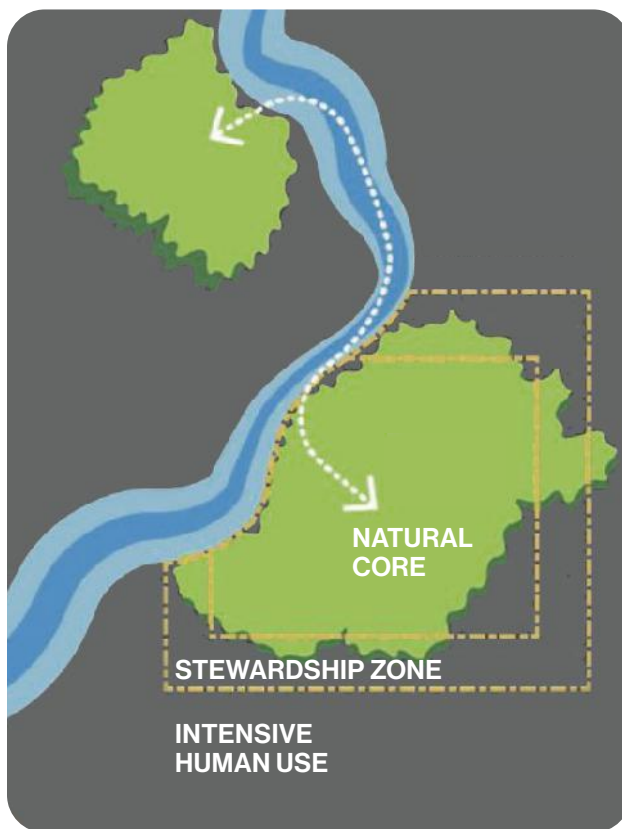
Example of field notes from site visits





Edge Effects and Stewardship Zones

Human development affects nearby natural areas, but we can work together to reduce the negative impacts.



Purpose of Conservation

When thinking of conservation, we take an ecological point of view and envision how to keep the nature we love and avoid damaging it in the future. We think first of the species we'd like our great-grandchildren to see a hundred years from now. These are the common plants, like oaks and pines, and uncommon plants, like orchids and spring wildflowers. Along with these are fungi and soil organisms. Then we turn to generalist wildlife, such as robins, goldfinches, crows, deer, raccoons, foxes, white-footed mice, American toads, garter snakes, bluegills and the fish we usually catch. We also think of habitat specialists and area-sensitive wildlife, like big carnivores and the many warblers and migratory birds that travel thousands of miles to breed here. Lastly, we think of the common and rare insects, many of them pollinators of wildflowers, orchard trees, and crop plants.

The common plants and wildlife can tolerate and even thrive in cities, towns, and rural lands. They are not the focus of conservation because their populations are usually stable or increasing.

Core/Interior Habitats and Edge Habitats
SOURCE: Bentrup, 2008

■ Edge Habitat
■ Interior Habitat

Edge width based on 150 ft



100 acre
27% Edge
73% Interior



10 acre
68% Edge
32% Interior



1 acre
100% Edge
0% Interior

By contrast, uncommon plant and insect species, and wildlife specialists or area-sensitive animals often have declining populations. Many need large and diverse core natural areas to sustain themselves.

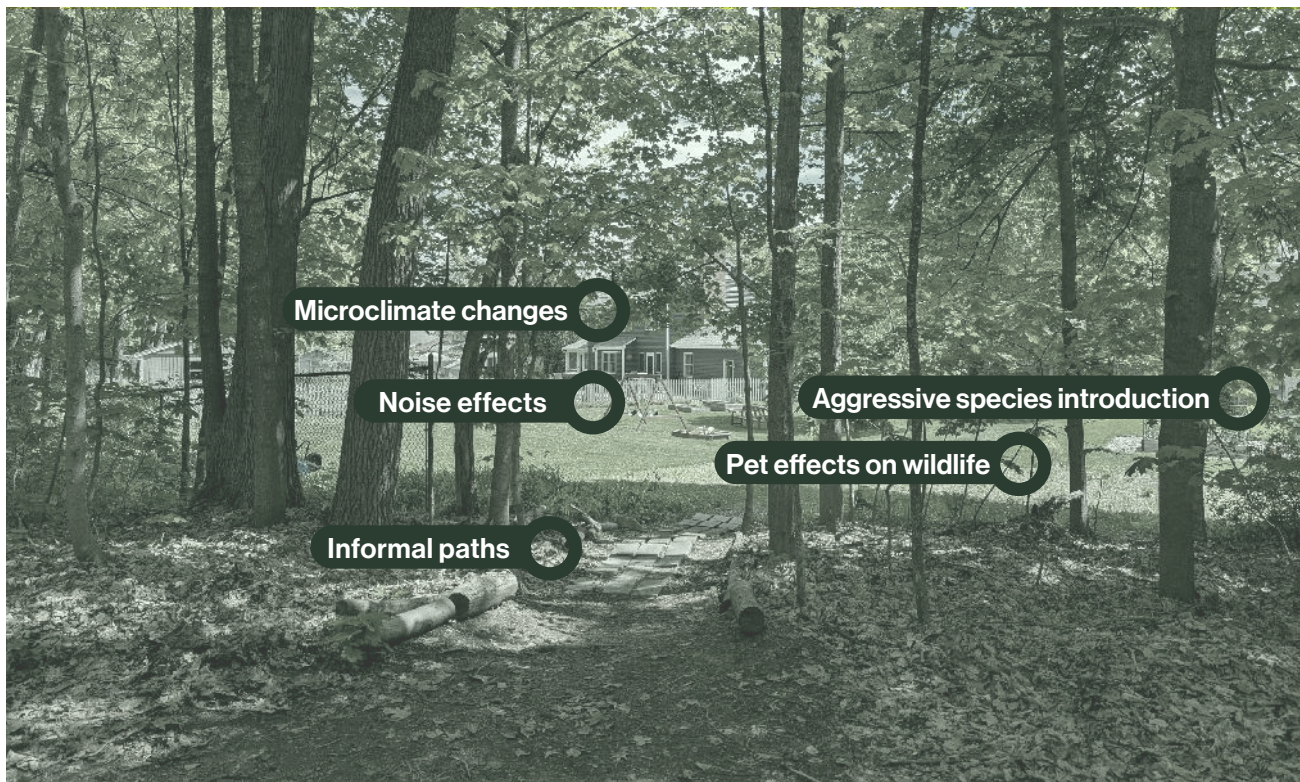
The direct effect on natural areas of conversion to crops and urban or suburban development is well documented. Less obvious are long-term effects from a longer habitat edge compared to the habitat's interior area. Smaller and narrower habitats have more edge than larger, rounder ones.

Edge Effects

Edge effects are damaging influences on core natural areas due to other uses on adjacent lands that penetrate the cores, reducing their suitability for many plant and animal species.

As the length of edge around a natural core grows, interior habitat shrinks. Scientific studies show

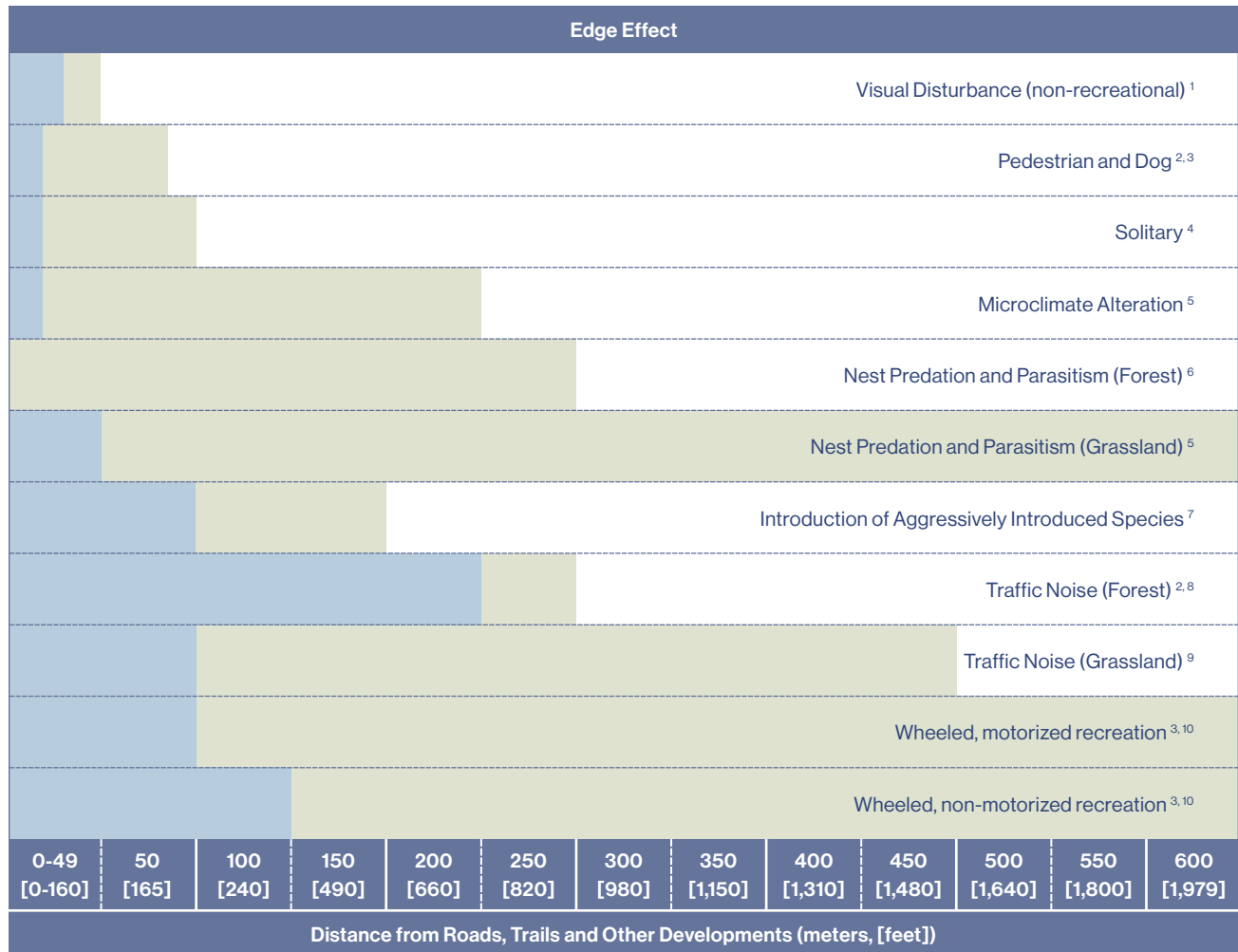
how far edge effects penetrate into adjacent habitat (see table on next page). For instance, birds and other wildlife can be flushed by people walking on trails up to 150 feet away. Predators like raccoon and house cat will travel several hundred feet into forests and grasslands to prey on bird eggs, nestlings, small mammals and other wildlife. Aggressively introduced plants move from edges into natural areas. Traffic noise, warm and dry air, dust from roads, pesticide drift, and other damaging influences affect nearby natural areas. Management can reduce edge effects. In stewardship zones around natural areas, neighbors can act in ways that lessen edge effects. Where room allows, natural areas can be made more round or protected with native vegetation screens.





Edge Effects and Stewardship Zones

Edge Effect Distances



Range of distances at which edge effects decrease

Distances at which edge effects are present in full

Distance of Edge Effect Penetration into Adjacent Natural Areas

SOURCE: ¹Fish and Wildlife Service (2006), ²Miller et al. (2001), ³Snetsinger and White (2009), ⁴Fernandez-Juricic et al. (2005), ⁵Environmental Law Institute (2003), ⁶Soule (1991), ⁷Askins (1995), ⁸Reijnen et al. (1995), ⁹Reijnen and Foppen (1996), ¹⁰Spahr (1990)

*Unless large natural core near a road with speed limit over 35 mph, then 650 feet or sound barrier recommended

Stewardship Zones: Notify, Educate, Negotiate

Improving Stewardship

The purpose of stewardship zones is to recognize that neighbors of core natural areas play important roles in their health. Stewardship zones are priority areas for providing information and other resources to landowners to increase awareness about how their actions affect the natural function of nearby open spaces and support best practices on their property.

Backyard Stewardship Zone: 165 feet

Stewardship in this zone reduces most significant negative impacts on natural areas.

- Reduces visual disturbance
- Reduces impacts of pedestrians and pets
- Reduces microclimate alteration
- Reduces introduction of aggressively introduced species
- Reduces traffic noise

Neighborhood Stewardship Zone: 500 feet

Stewardship in this zone further improves health of core natural area.

- Much greater reduction of microclimate alterations, traffic noise, aggressively introduced species introductions, and nest predation

500 ft
Best Practice
Distance

165 ft
Minimum
Distance

Edge of Core
Natural Area





CONSERVE Strategies



STRATEGY 1

Expand Restoration and Management City-wide

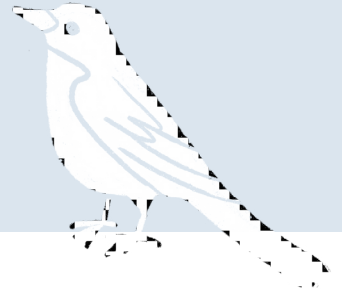
Burlington's natural environment is a chief ingredient in the city's character, making it one of the most attractive and inviting small cities in the country. While Burlington enjoys an abundance of open space, totaling almost 50% of its geographic area, the city has been historically striving to take care of these spaces, from protecting nature to cleaning up polluted areas and maintaining parks. The city realizes that when such spaces are disturbed, natural ecosystems eventually degrade. Now, with climate change creating a noticeable impact, it becomes ever so important to identify, plan, manage, and restore core open spaces, keeping in mind the needs of the ecosystem and the Burlington community.

In order to expand restoration and management throughout the city, Burlington would need to begin with creating inventories of existing natural areas and climate initiatives, followed by the development and continuous evaluation of restoration and management plans with a focus on climate solutions. The city can establish and expand relations with stewards for improving city-wide management, and work towards community values that go beyond basic nature improvements.

ACTIONS

- CS1.1 Develop restoration and management plans for core natural areas. Use existing management plans as templates and work with other organizations to ensure alignment across plans. Prioritize plans for ecological significance.
- CS1.2 Inventory current initiatives and projects that support Nature Based Climate Solutions, identify gaps, and outline future initiatives/projects to close gaps.
- CS1.3 Adjust the City's green infrastructure definition to go beyond stormwater management.
- CS1.4 Establish city- and community-wide values and methods for aggressively introduced species management. Communicate in the communications plan (See EX1.3)
- CS1.5 Update Natural Resource Protection District Map for consistency with Open Space Plan's core natural areas.
- CS1.6 Continue to restore urban waterways like Potash, Centennial, Englesby Brooks (through partnerships, restoration activities, and regulations like buffer zones).
- CS1.7 *See also CN2.3: Support "Friends Of" groups near natural areas (including supporting existing efforts and expanding to new groups) and target outreach within stewardship zones.*





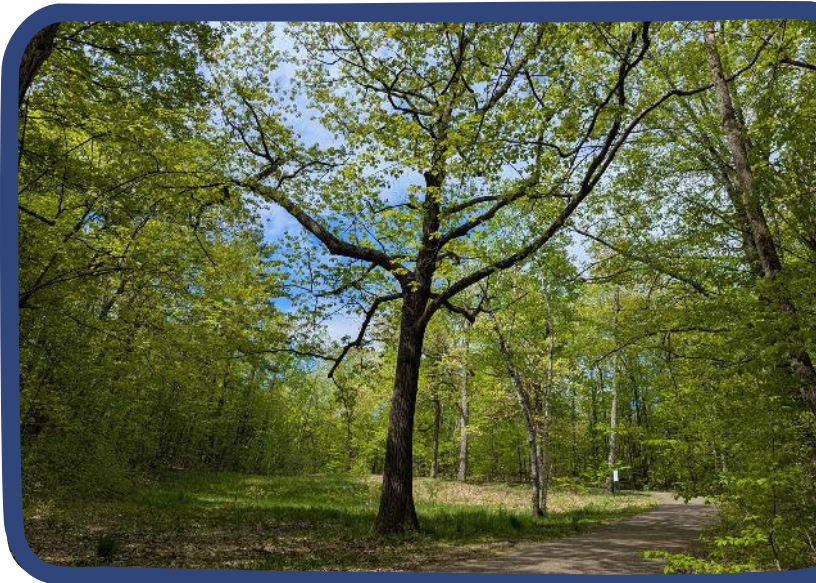
STRATEGY 2

Support Wildlife Movement and Ecological Health

Core natural areas enable wildlife movement and support ecological health. Connecting open spaces and supporting natural systems can be strengthened through stewardship actions, both large and small. This strategy includes actions focused on collecting and sharing data to increase community awareness about ecosystem health. It also includes actions to improve health of ecosystems, especially larger core areas and areas supporting area-sensitive or regionally uncommon plants, animals, and natural communities. The Burlington community showed widespread support for restoration projects to maintain forest health, remove aggressively introduced species, and help sustain the wildlife habitat.

ACTIONS

- CS2.1 Create network of pollinator-friendly and native plant gardens across the city.
- CS2.2 Increase data collection on Burlington's Wildlife Corridors (e.g. species use, frequency of use, key environmental components) to incorporate in other City processes (e.g. zoning, neighborhood codes).
- CS2.3 Continue to identify opportunities to improve large forest areas to improve habitat for songbirds and other indicator species.
- CS2.4 Create an open-access dashboard tracking key indicators related to wildlife, water quality, and restoration with suggested ways to make progress.





CONSERVE Strategies



STRATEGY 3

Evolve the Conservation Fund to be flexible to changing needs

The Conservation Legacy fund has been a critical tool in expanding Burlington's protected open spaces to support community goals. Now, as the pace of new protection slows down, to continue to reflect community values of stewardship, there is a need to broaden the use of the Conservation Fund to include critical maintenance, stewardship, and conservation infrastructure on open space lands.

ACTIONS

- CS3.1 Increase the Conservation Legacy Fund.
- CS3.2 Review the Conservation Legacy Fund and evaluate expanding the definition of potential fund uses to support conservation goals and values expressed in the Fund's inception (e.g. conservation infrastructure, education, GSI, etc.)



STRATEGY 4

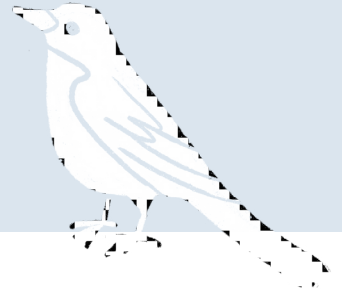
Collaborate to acquire land to protect open space for future generations

Burlington views natural and recreational lands as community assets that support residential quality of life, drinking water quality, food security, and a sense of place and history defined by a unique landscape. With this realization comes the responsibility for nurturing and protecting those assets over the long term. Acquiring land through collaborative strategies for scenic, natural, and recreational purposes is one of the surest ways for any community to secure its most important land assets.

ACTIONS

- CS4.1 Review and update acquisition list and criteria.
- CS4.2 Adapt strategies for land acquisition for conservation for both public and private lands reflecting the priorities of the new open space plan and upcoming comprehensive plan.





Open Space Stories

BEE a Good Steward



Vermont is home to about 350 different species of native bees, making Burlington an important hotspot for bees!

The sandy soils on the lakeshore and elsewhere provide prime nesting grounds for bees and contribute to their high diversity. While the most famous of those bees is the honey bee, bees native to Vermont come in all shapes, colors, and sizes. What they all have in common is that they rely on native plants for nutrients or habitat.

Many of these bees need special native flowers like milkweed to collect pollen from. If those plants disappear, the bees can't survive. That's why Vermont's open spaces and our ability to continue stewarding them, are so important because native plants and habitats are critical for these bees to find the plants they need to grow and thrive.





Implementation Matrix

CS 1 Expand Restoration and Management City-wide			
No.	Action	Lead	Key Partners
CS 1.1	Develop restoration and management plans for core natural areas. Use existing management plans as templates and work with other organizations to ensure alignment across plans. Prioritize plans for ecological significance.	Conservation Board, Parks Conservation Team	Qualified ecologists
CS 1.2	Inventory current initiatives and projects that support Nature Based Climate Solutions, identify gaps, and outline future initiatives/projects to close gaps.	Parks Conservation Team	Wildways, NBCS grantees, Water Resources
CS 1.3	Adjust the City's green infrastructure definition to go beyond stormwater management.	Conservation Board	Water Resources, DPI, City Planning, NRCD, "Friends of" groups
CS 1.4	Establish city- and community-wide values and methods for aggressively introduced species management. Communicate in the communications plan (See EX1.3)	Parks Conservation Team and Wildways	State of Vermont, Parks maintenance team, large landowners (e.g. Intervale)
CS 1.5	Update Natural Resource Protection District Map for consistency with Open Space Plan's core natural areas.	City Planning/DPI	Conservation Board, Planning Commission
CS 1.6	Continue to restore urban waterways like Potash, Centennial, Englesby Brooks (through partnerships, restoration activities, and regulations like buffer zones).	Parks Conservation Team	VT DEC, Water Resources, WVPD, BLUE Stormwater
CS 1.7	<i>See also CN2.3: Support "Friends Of" groups near natural areas (including supporting existing efforts and expanding to new groups) and target outreach within stewardship zones.</i>	-	-



High Priority	Quick Win	Implementation Timeframe	Related Actions
-	-	Mid-term (2-6 years)	-
-	YES	Near-term (0-2 years)	-
-	YES	Near-term (0-2 years)	-
-	-	Mid-term (2-6 years)	EX 1.3
-	-	Mid-term (2-6 years)	-
-	-	Long-term (6+ years)	-
-	-	-	-





Implementation Matrix

CS 2 Support Wildlife Movement and Ecological Health

No.	Action	Lead	Key Partners
CS 2.1	Create network of pollinator-friendly and native plant gardens across the city.	Parks Conservation Team	Wildways, VGN, Grow Wild
CS 2.2	Increase data collection on Burlington's Wildlife Corridors (e.g. species use, frequency of use, key environmental components) to incorporate in other City processes (e.g. zoning, neighborhood codes).	Parks Conservation Team	UVM, VT Fish and Wildlife, City Planning, DPI, Conservation Board
CS 2.3	Continue to identify opportunities to improve large forest areas to improve habitat for songbirds and other indicator species.	Conservation Board	Parks Conservation Team
CS 2.4	Create an open-access dashboard tracking key indicators related to wildlife, water quality, and restoration with suggested ways to make progress.	City Planning (provide data), IT Department (set up dashboard) Parks, Communications (maintain dashboard)	City Planning (Data Analysts), Park Conservation Team, Parks Communications

CS 3 Evolve the Conservation Fund to be flexible to changing needs

No.	Action	Lead	Key Partners
CS 3.1	Increase the Conservation Legacy Fund.	DPI, Parks Conservation Team	Conservation Board, Parks Commission, City Council, Mayors Office, Director of Financial Operations
CS 3.2	Review the Conservation Legacy Fund and evaluate expanding the definition of potential fund uses to support conservation goals and values expressed in the Fund's inception (e.g. conservation infrastructure, education, GSI, etc.)	DPI, Parks Conservation Team	Conservation Board, Parks Commission, City Council, Mayors Office, Director of Financial Operations)

CS 4 Collaborate to acquire land to protect open space for future generations

No.	Action	Lead	Key Partners
CS 4.1	Review and update acquisition list and criteria.	Parks Conservation Team	City Planning, City Assessor
CS 4.2	Adapt strategies for land acquisition for conservation for both public and private lands reflecting the priorities of the new open space plan and upcoming comprehensive plan.	Parks Conservation Team	City Planning, City Assessor, Conservation Board, Parks Commission, DPI



High Priority	Quick Win	Implementation Timeframe	Related Actions
-	-	Mid-term (2-6 years)	-
-	-	Mid-term (2-6 years)	-
-	YES (ongoing)	Long-term (6+ years)	-
-	-	Near-term (0-2 years)	-

High Priority	Quick Win	Implementation Timeframe	Related Actions
-	-	Near-term (0-2 years)	-
YES	YES	Near-term (0-2 years)	-

High Priority	Quick Win	Implementation Timeframe	Related Actions
-	-	Near-term (0-2 years)	-
YES	-	Mid-term (2-6 years)	-



GOAL TWO

CONNECT

**A landscape stitched together by stewardship
and nature-based development**

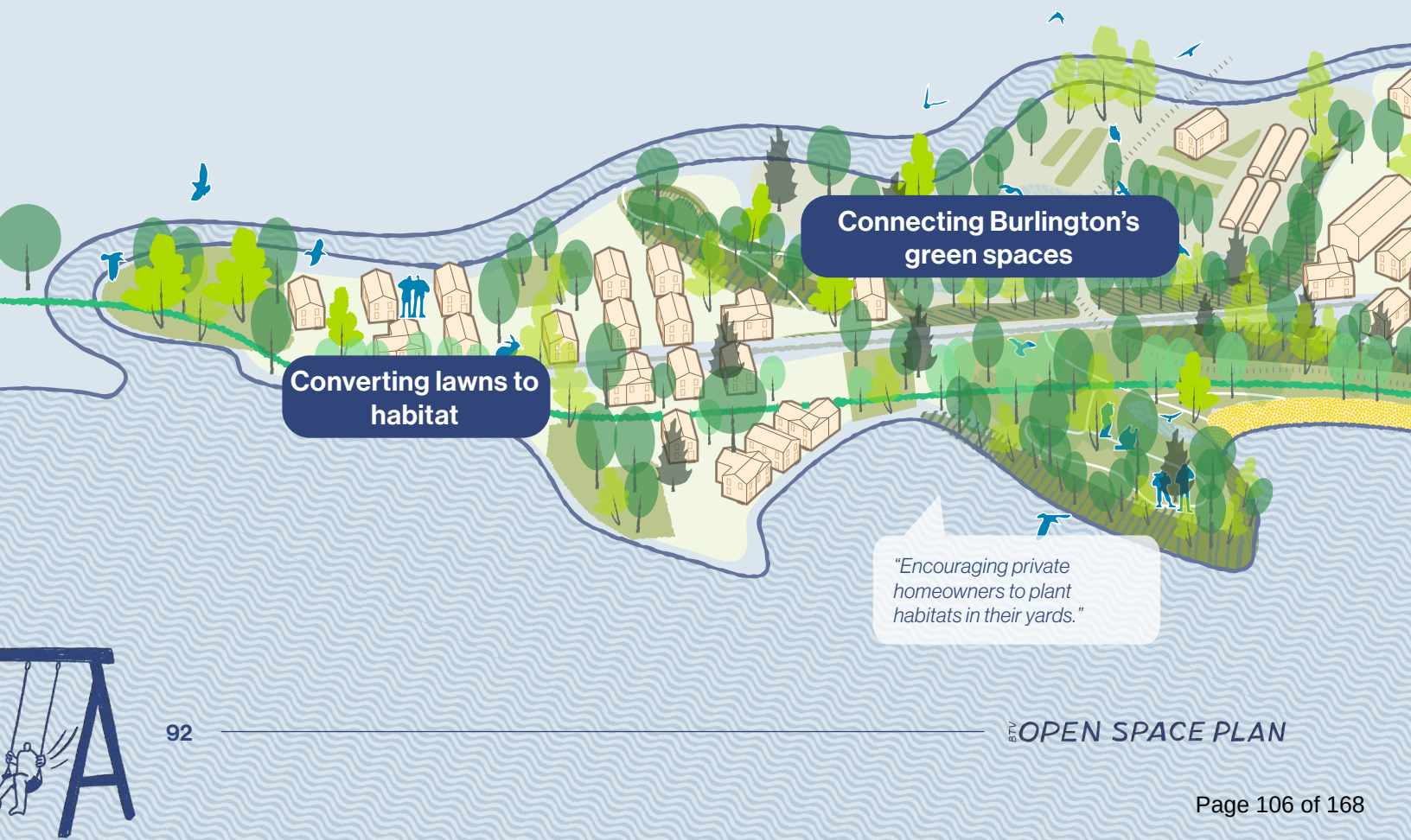




CONNECT Overview

Connections are key to thriving natural spaces.

This goal focuses on increasing connectivity between the city's core natural areas, expanding tree canopy and nature pockets throughout Burlington, and identifying how existing and new development can contribute to healthier ecosystems. The benefits of this approach are a more connected, green network that works better for local wildlife and reduces the urban heat island effect, creating a cooler, more nature-filled city for Burlingtonians to enjoy.



CONNECT Strategies

- CN1** Grow and celebrate nature-based climate solutions across the city
- CN2** Cultivate an ecosystem of stewardship
- CN3** Enhance and protect Burlington's urban forest
- CN4** Encourage new development to incorporate nature-based principles





CONNECT: Overview

The amount of impervious surface is a key driver of ecological health.

The location and density of impervious surfaces imposes a ceiling on protection, restoration, and stewardship of the natural world, and limits the integration of the natural world into the human-built environment. This constrains open space planning and determines the locations of naturalization and restoration efforts in the built environment, and also limits the actions the City can effectively

take to improve the ecological integrity, resilience, and functioning of the City's open spaces. These actions range from removing invasive plants, to creating pollinator habitat, to restoring wetlands and forests, to managing stormwater runoff, to creating space for animals that cannot tolerate human intrusion on their habitats.

At 10% impervious cover, negative ecological effects are already present.

10% Impervious Cover



10%
impervious

Stream water quality begins to deteriorate. 10% impervious cover can exclude larger mammals, raptors, and area-sensitive species from areas.

20% Impervious Cover



20%
impervious

Streams shift to a highly altered urban state. Visible evidence of erosion, algae blooms, and decreased macroinvertebrate diversity.



25% Impervious Cover



25%
impervious

Remnant natural areas are small and have no interior habitat. Greatly decreases biodiversity in birds, small mammals, herptiles, and invertebrates.



Open Space Stories

BLUE BTV

The city program BLUE helps residents protect their waterways from pollution right in their yard.

Burlington wants to reduce the negative impacts of stormwater runoff: when rainwater flows off impervious surfaces like roofs, driveways, and streets, it can carry dirt, oil, and other pollution into the water. This can cause harmful algae blooms that are often unsafe for people and animals.

Any resident can sign up for a free visit from BLUE. They will do a home inspection, look at how rainwater flows around your yard, and give tips on how to keep that water clean. Tips range from small projects like redirecting your gutter to bigger ones like installing rain gardens or permeable driveways. Once you complete the project, you are "BLUE-certified" -- you are helping make Burlington's waters cleaner!





CONNECT: Overview

How dense an area is impacts what strategies are most effective.

Burlington has a wide variety of neighborhoods, from the dense urban core of Downtown to areas with more open space, like the New North End. The amount of impervious surfaces—such as roads, parking lots, and buildings—greatly influences both the ecological health and future potential of each area. Strategies to enhance green spaces, manage stormwater sustainably, and support biodiversity will differ

depending on the density and development of the neighborhood. Across all neighborhoods, these strategies not only connect ecology, but also connect people to green spaces and to each other.

Stewardship Opportunities

- Potential for an activity to protect, restore and steward ecosystems and habitats
- Rating of activities by zone – Feasibility given space, level of effort/cost, and likelihood of success

Strategies marked as **“High”** represent places where improvements can be made successfully with relatively low cost and effort. **“Low”** indicates strategies that will require greater resources and effort for meaningful change.

Impervious Cover	 Ecological Stormwater Management	 Large Natural Areas	 Small Natural Areas	 Biodiversity Enhancements
High Density > 75%	Low	Low	Low	Medium
Medium Density 50 - 75%	Medium	Low	Low	Medium
Light Density 10 - 50%	High	Low	Medium	High
Open Space < 10%	High	High	High	High

Development Intensity

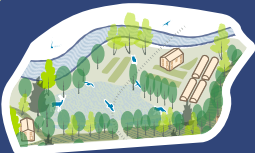
LEGEND

-  Open Space
-  Light Density
-  Medium Density
-  High Density

Less

Impervious Surface Density

More



Open Space
<10% Impervious



Light Density
10-50% Impervious



Medium Density
50-75% Impervious



High Density
>75% Impervious



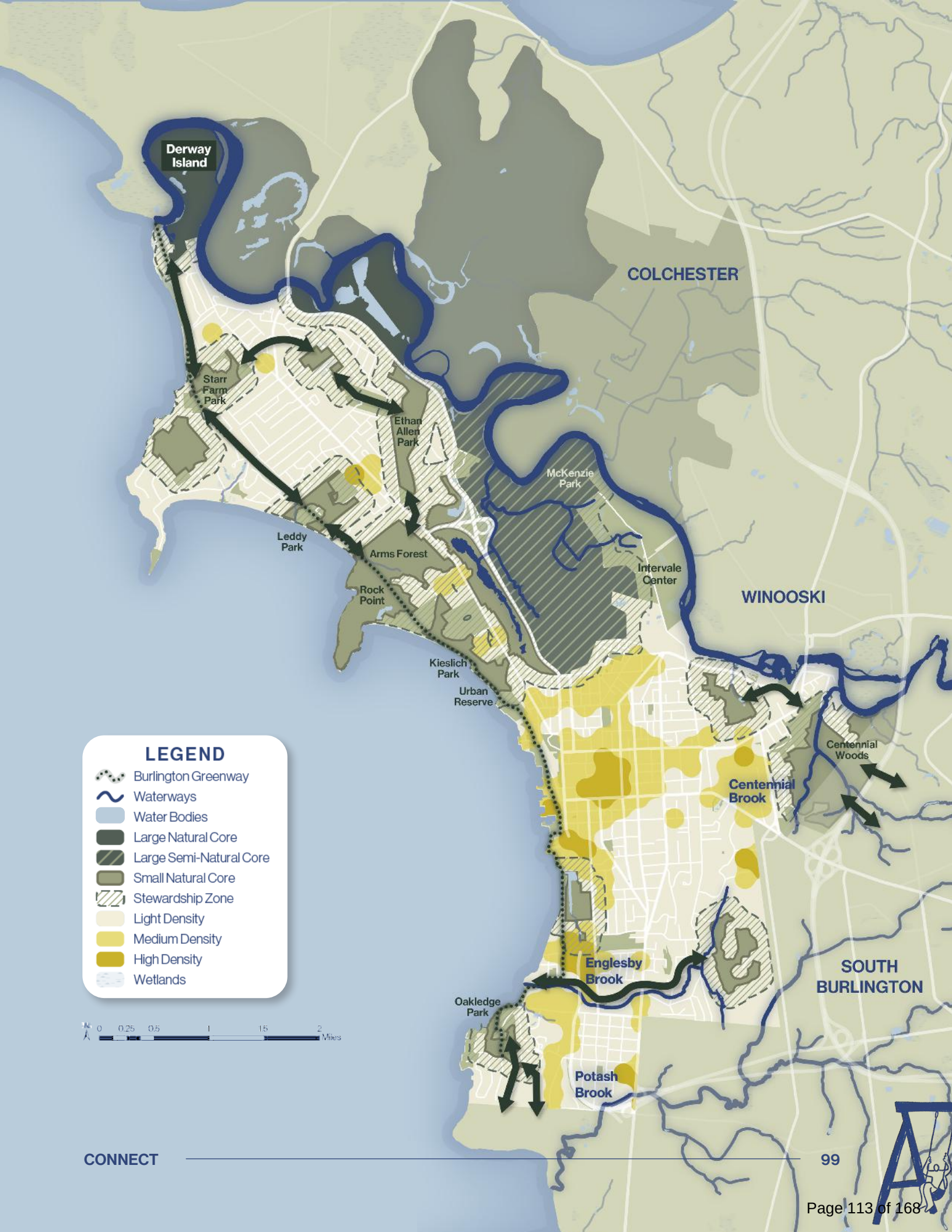


Key Connections

Wildlife finds a refuge in large natural area cores, and even in smaller ones if edge effects are controlled. Only large natural areas support species that need large areas and multiple habitats, but many small mammals, reptiles and amphibians, and insects can survive in smaller ones. Many species can move through inhospitable terrain by flying (birds, bats, insects) or by being carried on the wind (winged or plumed plant seeds), but many cannot. For these, connections are needed.

Connections should be as wide as possible and made of vegetation like that of their natural habitat. Connections, however, can be corridors between natural areas for aggressively introduced plants and predators like cats and raccoons. There are many types of connections with different purposes, opportunities, and barriers.







Types of Connections

Habitat Islands

PURPOSE

Plant small habitat islands across urban landscape to increase plant, insect, bird, and small mammal diversity near people's homes and places of work and play.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Many small areas are available on public and private land
- Public interest in seeing flowering plants, butterflies, birds, pollinators, and other signs of nature living nearby

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

- Too dispersed, small and diverse to facilitate long-term protection and management by any one entity
- Correct siting of habitat islands to avoid conflicts, ensure establishment and persistence, and minimize management costs



Green Stormwater Facility

PURPOSE

Ecologically-inspired and functioning facilities to manage stormwater runoff; e.g., raingarden, tree trench, roadside planter (e.g., St. Paul green streets), downspout redirection to turf, bioswale, bioinfiltration basin, stormwater wetland, green roof, treatment train, etc.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Future road upgrades and major repair jobs are best opportunity to install GSI to manage road and parking lot runoff
- Other opportunities in City's stormwater management plan

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

- Typically high cost
- Usually limited space to manage large catchments
- Usually small catchments are managed – high per-gallon cost for pollutant removal (lbs. removed/dollar spent)



Other Connections

PURPOSE

Manage movement of wild animals and native plants through urban landscape. Risk that connections will also allow unwanted species to move.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Unknown

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

- Feasibility of using non-public lands
- Limited resources for acquisition of fee title, easement, or lease
- No voluntary recognition program exists





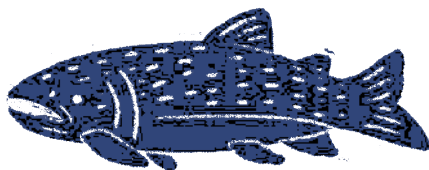
Green Planning Principles

Overall

- A** Develop with native soil, hydrology, and vegetation in mind.
- B** Protect and maintain healthy and resilient natural areas.
- C** Understand past and existing conditions to guide restoration and management.
- D** Create attractive, resilient, and economically feasible plant communities.
- E** Tell an ecological story that inspires people to restore the natural world.
- F** Allow people to visit natural areas while protecting ecosystem resilience.
- G** Document ecological trends by monitoring indicators of health and resilience.

Wildlife

- A** Protect and restore habitat for rare and uncommon animal species.
- B** Create the largest, roundest habitats for area-sensitive wildlife species.
- C** Connect habitat cores to similar nearby habitat.
- D** Design new reserves to minimize edge effects from adjacent properties.
- E** Establish stewardship zones to manage edge effects from adjacent developed land.
- F** Install special habitat features like nest boxes and basking logs.
- G** Manage nuisance wildlife, such as deer and geese, using appropriate methods.



Soil & Hydrology

- A** Preserve stable soils and existing natural hydrology.
- B** Fix eroding lands and deranged hydrology with catchment and watershed management.
- C** Prevent flooding by preserving natural lands and installing green infrastructure.
- D** Use ecological stormwater management tools before highly engineered solutions.
- E** Reduce runoff at its source; use a sequence of natural features to manage runoff.
- F** Solve soil and hydrological problems in the most cost-effective way.

Vegetation

- A** Protect and restore rare and common native ecological land cover types.
- B** Encourage diverse native flowering plants across the growing season.
- C** Control non-native and native plants that disrupt ecosystems and depress biodiversity.
- D** Establish vegetation that can be managed with the least effort.

Human Use

- A** Identify natural areas with sensitive wildlife that tolerate little human interaction.
- B** Define management units and access points.
- C** Detect problems early by monitoring on-trail and off-trail use.
- D** Recruit organizations, experts and volunteers to help maintain and monitor natural areas.
- E** Protect cultural resources, such as Native American artifacts and historical structures.

Nature-Supporting Redevelopment Areas

Development and open space can work in tandem to provide mutual benefits to both natural and people. In this scenario, a commercial building at the edge of a with homestead across the street can be converted to an apartment complex with a new park, ecological stormwater infrastructure, and forest restoration. Opportunities for redevelopment around brownfields and old commercial areas can follow this type of example.



2025

Commercial by a stream with homestead across the street



2035

Apartments with new park, stormwater management, and forest restoration





CONNECT Strategies



STRATEGY 1

Grow and Celebrate Nature-Based Climate Solutions Across the City

The 2022 Addendum to the Open Space Plan highlighted the connection between a thriving environment and a thriving community. Built on a foundational theme of equity, inclusion, and relationships, NBCS are holistic strategies that protect, restore, and steward the world around us through multidisciplinary collaboration.

While NBCS are deeply integrated throughout this Open Space Plan, this strategy focuses on education and awareness—strengthening existing relationships and building new partnerships to educate on, grow, and track NBCS throughout the city and across many initiatives. This involves not just the city government, but also schools, the public, and private property owners.

ACTIONS

- CN1.1** Educate the public on Nature-Based Climate Solutions and their value. (See also EX1.3)
- CN1.2** Create and support existing education, recognition, and incentive programs to encourage private property owners to integrate Nature Based Climate Solutions and implement sound ecological practices (e.g. reducing lawn space), especially within Natural Area Stewardship Zones. Potential programs include adaptation of Green Design Standards, expansion of the BLUE program, and encouragement of “Wild Yards” to convert mowed areas to naturalized open space.
- CN1.3** Continue to partner with schools to grow nature-based climate solutions on school grounds.
- CN1.4** Create a municipal management plan to track and reduce mowed lawns
- CN1.5** Continue to grow nature-based climate solutions on City property, including but not limited to green stormwater infrastructure.
- CN1.6** *See also in CS2.1 CONSERVE: Create network of pollinator-friendly and native plant gardens across the city.*





STRATEGY 2

Cultivate an Ecosystem of Stewardship

From school children to community-based organizations to city leadership, Burlington has a deep sense of care and commitment to stewarding the natural world around them—not just for personal use but for its intrinsic value and environmental health. Burlingtonians across the city are doing meaningful work in many different capacities to educate people to open space, plant pollinator gardens, advocate for resilient waterways, and encourage responsible growing and foraging.

This strategy celebrates the existing communities of care and seeks to support and build on them to facilitate knowledge and resource sharing. Across the community, schools, organizations, and City departments, this strategy streamlines processes and seeks to make valuing open space integral to how everyone operates, particularly through co-education and shared resources.

ACTIONS

- CN2.1 Create a database and listserv of open space organizations to support collaboration, resource sharing, etc.
- CN2.2 Co-host an recurring open space summit for land stewards, community organizations, and others.
- CN2.3 Continue to support “Friends Of” groups near natural areas (including supporting existing efforts and expanding to new groups) and target outreach within stewardship zones.
- CN2.4 Update Urban Wilds definition, including considering expanding beyond city-owned land.
- CN2.5 Distribute educational resources about how personal actions can support water quality health in lake, river, and tributaries. (See also EX1.3 Communications Plan)





CONNECT Strategies



STRATEGY 3

Enhance and Protect Burlington's Urban Forest

The urban forest provides enumerable benefits to the city, from creating shade to providing homes for wildlife to reducing stormwater runoff. Burlington's tree canopy—though still at 40% coverage across the city—has dwindled in the last ten years and needs action to not only protect existing trees but to add new ones.

In order to do so, data on the trees needs to be kept up-to-date and tracked over time. This includes updating the Tree Ordinance and conducting regular tree canopy assessments and setting goals. These can be used to identify areas that need enhanced protection and areas that can be considered for establishing new copses of trees. As 37.5% of Burlington's trees are on private property, bringing the community along and educating about management will also contribute to a well-rounded strategy.

ACTIONS

- CN3.1 Update the Tree Ordinance.
- CN3.2 Update the urban tree canopy goal and mapping/data analysis every 10 years. Consider developing specific goals for different types of canopy based on their ecological value.
- CN3.3 Conduct Pocket Forest Feasibility Study that develops plant lists, identifies potential existing sites, and envisions incentives for establishing pocket forests in new developments, dense neighborhoods, and greenbelts.
- CN3.4 Identify large valuable trees in the city that are on public and private land and consider protection with ideas framed the policy toolkit from Biophilic Cities network.
- CN3.5 Educate the public on benefits of the urban forest and how to manage it on private property. (See also CN1.1, CN1.2, EX1.3)





STRATEGY 4

Encourage New Development to Incorporate Nature-Based Principles

Though conservation and development have historically been pitted against each other, the two can work together in mutually beneficial ways. Cities like Burlington that both deeply value open space and sorely need to expand their housing stock can build dense development that also increases ecologically healthy green areas with practices like Low Impact Design and Conservation Development.

This strategy capitalized on widespread desires throughout the community to incorporate nature-based principles in development. On the new development side, creating green design standards and development review resources will help foster environmentally-beneficial building. On the existing development side, providing educational resources to owners and occupants within Stewardship Zones will help those closest to natural areas support their ecological health.

ACTIONS

- CN4.1 Develop Green Design Standards for new developments and redevelopments.
- CN4.2 Provide educational resources for owners and occupants in Stewardship Zones to support ecological health of nearby natural areas.
- CN4.3 Create development review resources to support review bodies in evaluating sustainable/ecological nature-based approaches to development and open space impacts of new development.





Implementation Matrix

CN 1 Grow and Celebrate Nature-Based Climate Solutions Across the City			
No.	Action	Lead	Key Partners
CN 1.1	Educate the public on Nature-Based Climate Solutions and their value. (See also EX1.3)	Parks Conservation Team	Conservation Board, Parks Commission, Wildways, Parks Communications
CN 1.2	Create and support existing education, recognition, and incentive programs to encourage private property owners to integrate Nature Based Climate Solutions and implement sound ecological practices (e.g. reducing lawn space), especially within Natural Area Stewardship Zones. Potential programs include adaptation of Green Design Standards, expansion of the BLUE program, and encouragement of “Wild Yards” to convert mowed areas to naturalized open space.	Parks Conservation Team	Conservation Board, Wildways, GROW wild, BLUE program, Parks Communications
CN 1.3	Continue to partner with schools to grow nature-based climate solutions on school grounds.	Burlington School District	Burlington Wildways, Parks Conservation Team, Shelburne Farms.
CN 1.4	Create a municipal management plan to track and reduce mowed lawns.	Parks	Parks Ground Maintenance, Parks Conservation Team, Water Resources
CN 1.5	Continue to grow nature-based climate solutions on City property, including but not limited to green stormwater infrastructure.	Parks	Water Resources
CN 1.6	<i>See also in CS2.1 CONSERVE: Create network of pollinator-friendly and native plant gardens across the city.</i>	-	-



High Priority	Quick Win	Implementation Timeframe	Related Actions
-	-	Near-term (0-2 years)	-
YES	-	Mid-term (2-6 years)	-
-	YES (ongoing)	Near-term (0-2 years)	-
-	-	Near-term (0-2 years)	-
-	YES (ongoing)	Near-term (0-2 years)	-
-	-	-	-





Implementation Matrix

CN 2 Cultivate an Ecosystem of Stewardship			
No.	Action	Lead	Key Partners
CN 2.1	Create a database and listserv of open space organizations to support collaboration, resource sharing, etc.	Parks Conservation Team	Wildways, Conservation Board
CN 2.2	Co-host an recurring open space summit for land stewards, community organizations, and others.	Wildways, Mayor	VCGN, Audubon, UVM, Wildways partners (e.g. Intervale, WVPD, Rock Point, Parks)
CN 2.3	Continue to support “Friends Of” groups near natural areas (including supporting existing efforts and expanding to new groups) and target outreach within stewardship zones.	Parks Conservation Team	Parks Communications, WNRCD, Friends of the Winooski, Watersheds United Vermont, etc.
CN 2.4	Update Urban Wilds definition, including considering expanding beyond city-owned land.	Conservation Board	Wildways, Large landowners, Parks Conservation Team, DPI
CN 2.5	Distribute educational resources about how personal actions can support water quality health in lake, river, and tributaries. (See also EX1.3 Communications Plan)	Lake Champlain Sea Grant (BLUE program)	Water Resources, Parks Communications



High Priority	Quick Win	Implementation Timeframe	Related Actions
-	YES	Near-term (0-2 years)	-
-	YES	Near-term (0-2 years)	-
-	-	Mid-term (2-6 years)	-
YES	YES	Near-term (0-2 years)	-
-	-	Near-term (0-2 years)	EX 1.3





Implementation Matrix

CN 3 Enhance and Protect Burlington's Urban Forest			
No.	Action	Lead	Key Partners
CN 3.1	Update the Tree Ordinance.	Parks, City Arborist	Conservation Board, Parks Commission, City Arborist, Parks Conservation Team, DPI, Planning, Planning Commission
CN 3.2	Update the urban tree canopy goal and mapping/ data analysis every 10 years. Consider developing specific goals for different types of canopy based on their ecological value.	Parks, City Planning, Conservation Board	UVM Spatial Analysis, or similar provider
CN 3.3	Conduct Pocket Forest Feasibility Study that develops plant lists, identifies potential existing sites, and envisions incentives for establishing pocket forests in new developments, dense neighborhoods, and greenbelts.	Parks Conservation Team	Parks Planning, City Planning
CN 3.4	Identify large valuable trees in the city that are on public and private land and consider protection with ideas framed the policy toolkit from Biophilic Cities network.	Conservation board	UVM Spatial Analysis Lab, City Arborist, Branch Out Burlington
CN 3.5	Educate the public on benefits of the urban forest and how to manage it on private property. (See also CN1.1, CN1.2, EX1.3)	Parks Conservation Team	Conservation Board, Parks Commission, Wildways, Parks Communications
CN 4 Encourage New Development to Incorporate Nature-Based Principles			
No.	Action	Lead	Key Partners
CN 4.1	Develop Green Design Standards for new developments and redevelopments.	DPI, City Planning	Conservation Board, Planning Commission, Water Resources, land owners, landscape architects (?)
CN 4.2	Provide educational resources for owners and occupants in Stewardship Zones to support ecological health of nearby natural areas.	Parks Conservation Team and Parks Communications	Grow Wild, Parks Planning, Lake Champlain Sea Grant
CN 4.3	Create development review resources to support review bodies in evaluating sustainable/ecological nature-based approaches to development and open space impacts of new development.	DPI	Conservation Board, Parks Conservation Team



High Priority	Quick Win	Implementation Timeframe	Related Actions
YES	-	Near-term (0-2 years)	-
YES	-	Long-term (6+ years)	-
-	-	Mid-term (2-6 years)	-
-	YES	Near-term (0-2 years)	-
-	-	Near-term (0-2 years)	CN1.1, CN1.2, EX1.3

High Priority	Quick Win	Implementation Timeframe	Related Actions
-	-	Mid-term (2-6 years)	-
-	-	Mid-term (2-6 years)	-
-	-	Near-term (0-2 years)	-





GOAL THREE

EXPERIENCE

**Expanding a variety of nature experiences
across Burlington**

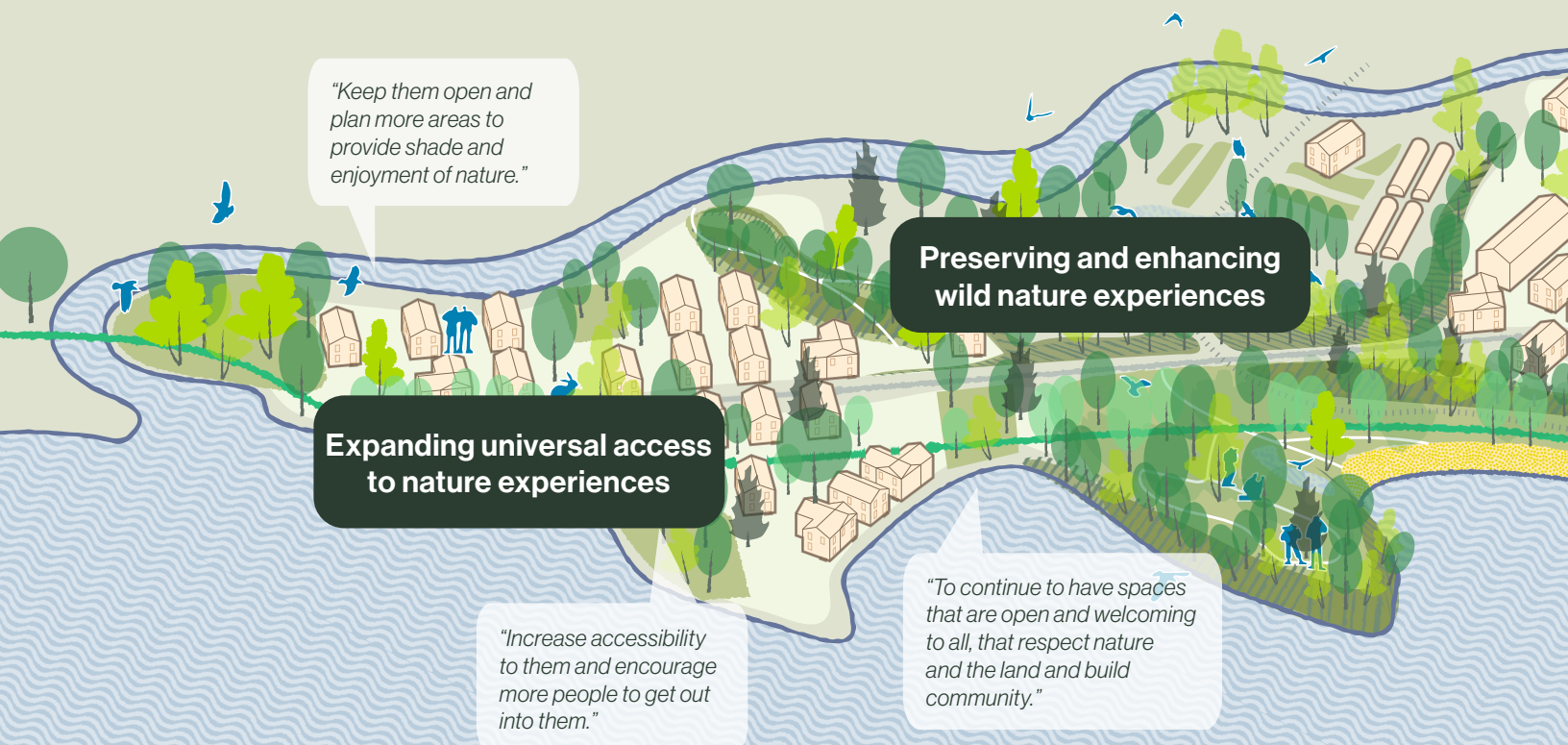




EXPERIENCE Overview

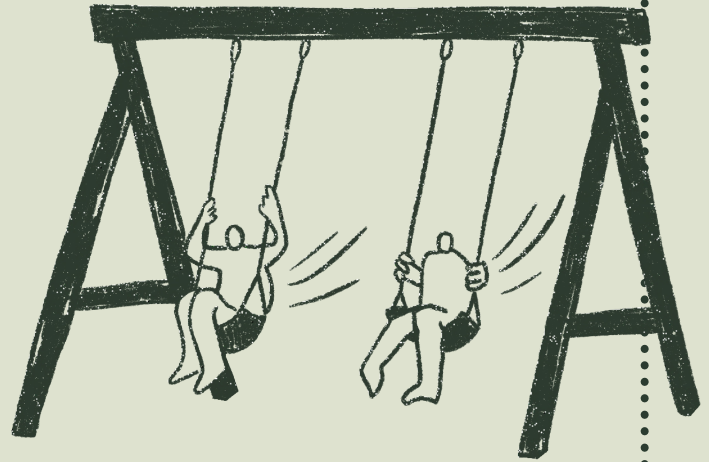
Fostering diverse outdoor experiences for everyone

Burlington's Open Space Plan is not just about land—it's about how people use and enjoy them. As reflected in the first wave of engagement, Burlingtonians' outdoor experiences are as diverse as the open spaces themselves. This goal focuses on preserving and enhancing nature experiences while breaking down barriers to access. It also considers the different types of nature experiences people have—everyday experiences and wild ones—and how to educate people about them while growing opportunities.



EXPERIENCE Strategies

- EX1** Increase awareness about Burlington's open spaces
- EX2** Grow public access to nature-based experiences
- EX3** Break down barriers to open space access



"To preserve and maintain the ones we have, and to add smaller open spaces even in the most urban parts of the city if possible"

Increasing visitor stewardship of open spaces

"Connectivity for animals, climate solutions, youth engagement, educational purposes, community gathering spaces."

Growing everyday nature experiences

Expanding the open space network

"More community spaces to connect with each other and the natural world."



EXPERIENCE: Overview

Connecting with nature can take many forms, from everyday nature moments to big woods experiences.



Standing at the edge of Rock Point and gazing out at Lake Champlain, without a building in site. Pausing along a neighborhood walk to admire a neighbor's pollinator garden and breathe in the evening air. Burlington offers such a range of outdoor experiences, both in everyday life and in close-to-home adventures.

managed heavily by people while others are left more wild. Some spaces lend themselves to passive recreation while others are more active. Some spaces can only be used in certain ways while others have many potential uses. Burlington is lucky to have all these types of open spaces.

These experiences reflect the variety of open space types and their diverse ownership and management practices. Some open spaces are



Access to Nature Experiences

LEGEND

Type of Nature Experience

Everyday nature

↕

Wild nature

Walking Time

5 minutes

10 minutes

Nature Experiences

% area within....

	5 walk	10 walk
Everyday Nature	11%	21%
↕	23%	39%
Big Woods / Wild Nature	13%	25%

This map categorizes open spaces by whether they foster everyday nature or wild nature experiences. It shows the surrounding area that is within a 5-minute or 10-minute walk.



EXPERIENCE Strategies



STRATEGY 1

Increase Awareness About Burlington's Open Spaces

Half of Burlington's land area is covered by open spaces, but not everyone knows about the diversity of spaces and types of experiences afforded by this large network. While many people—residents and visitors alike—frequent Burlington's parks and recreate freely—from hiking to swimming to picnicking to relaxing—there is a wealth of knowledge and events that can be readily shared. Some center on history and learning while others foster connections and shared experiences.

This strategy aims to connect more people to more experiences through education and communication. By increasing awareness of the natural world and ways to engage in it, more people will become part of an ever-growing community of open space champions.

ACTIONS

- EX1.1 Collaborate to create educational tools on Burlington's natural history and stewardship story with associated places to visit.
- EX1.2 Create a central calendar that crowdsources events and volunteer efforts around the City. (See also EX1.3)
- EX1.3 Create a comprehensive open space communications and education plan to share recommendations of the open space plan. (See also EX1.2)





STRATEGY 2

Grow Public Access to Nature-Based Experiences

Burlington offers a wide variety of nature experiences, from a morning walk in the park to a weekend rafting escapade. From an afternoon watching bees and birds in a pollinator garden to a thrilling mountain biking adventure through the woods. It's not everyday that those big experiences happen—and they're not necessarily possible for everyone. Everyone should be able to experience nature everyday—and it's much easier in Burlington, where nearly the entire city is within a 10-minute walk from an open space.

This strategy focuses on making those everyday nature experiences more commonplace and integrated into daily routines. It includes increasing opportunities throughout the city, partially in partnership with private and institutional landowners. Public access to private land is already happening in places like Rock Point and can be expanded to even more areas.

ACTIONS

- EX2.1 Expand “everyday” nature experiences across the city that give community members opportunities to experience green/natural spaces as part of daily routines and without driving.
- EX2.2 Continue to partner with private and institutional landowners to expand public access to nature experiences.

**The upcoming
Comprehensive Plan will
continue to address
these issues.**



EXPERIENCE Strategies



STRATEGY 3 Break Down Barriers to Open Space Access

Everyone in Burlington is within a 10-minute walk from an open space, but not all open spaces are created equal. Not only do they differ in size, nature, and types of experiences offered, they also differ in accessibility. Accessibility can refer to physical accessibility (“How easy is it for me to get to an open space by foot, bike, or car?”) or cultural accessibility (“Once I get to this open space, how welcoming and comfortable of an environment is it for me? For my family?”).

This strategy seeks to tackle both while considering the health of important natural areas. Acknowledging that there are cultural differences in enjoying open spaces, inclusive and accessible strategies need to be employed to engage marginalized communities and accommodate cultural preferences. Physical access is a priority as well, particularly by different modes, and needs to be balanced with ecological sensitivities.

ACTIONS

- EX3.1 Evaluate opportunities for universal access in natural areas where appropriate and considering ecological sensitivity. (See also EX3.3)
- EX3.2 Improve equitable transportation access to natural areas and seek out alternative funding mechanisms.
- EX3.3 Regularly engage marginalized communities who face barriers to accessing or enjoying open space to identify additional actions to increase use and where to prioritize improvements. (See also EX3.1)
- EX3.4 Plan for and accommodate different cultural preferences in the use of public outdoor spaces.
- EX3.5 Incorporate language access in educational campaigns.

The upcoming Comprehensive Plan will include specific strategies for improvements in multi-modal access to the Intervale.

Stakeholder and public feedback included some challenges that are being accomplished outside of the Open Space Plan, including cat and dog regulations, food safety, and border management. This plan acknowledges these challenges and supports related actions in other plans.





Open Space Stories

Wildways

* * * * *

Burlington Wildways is a local organization

that focuses on connecting and stewarding the city's natural areas to promote ecological health and engage the community in understanding and participating in the protection of urban natural spaces. Their mission is to *promote ecological health and improve nature access through stewardship, education, and collaboration.*

The Wildways program includes several parks, forests, wetlands, and trails, working to create a network of wild places that Burlingtonians and visitors can enjoy while also supporting wildlife and ecological restoration. It also has some programs nested within it, like Grow Wild which promotes native plant gardening for local climate resilience.





Implementation Matrix

EX 1 Increase Awareness About Burlington's Open Spaces

No.	Action	Lead	Key Partners
EX 1.1	Collaborate to create educational tools on Burlington's natural history and stewardship story with associated places to visit.	Parks Conservation Team	Crows Path, Master Naturalist, UVM, Shelburne Farms, ECHO, WVPD, Vermont Folklife, UVM Spatial Analysis, Generator
EX 1.2	Create a central calendar that crowdsources events and volunteer efforts around the City. (See also EX1.3)	Parks Communications (with LoveBurlington)	Wildways, Parks Conservation Team
EX 1.3	Create a comprehensive open space communications and education plan to share recommendations of the open space plan. (See also EX1.2)	Parks Communications	City Planning, Park Planning, Wildways

EX 2 Grow Public Access to Nature-Based Experiences

No.	Action	Lead	Key Partners
EX 2.1	Expand "everyday" nature experiences across the city that give community members opportunities to experience green/natural spaces as part of daily routines and without driving.	Parks Conservation Team, Parks Planning	Parks Communications, Neighborhoods/ individual landowners
EX 2.2	Continue to partner with private and institutional landowners to expand public access to nature experiences.	Parks	UVM, Rock Point, Intervale Center other large landowners



High Priority	Quick Win	Implementation Timeframe	Related Actions
-	-	Near-term (0-2 years)	-
-	-	Near-term (0-2 years)	EX 1.3
-	-	Mid-term (2-6 years)	EX 1.2

High Priority	Quick Win	Implementation Timeframe	Related Actions
YES	-	Long-term (6+ years)	-
-	-	Long-term (6+ years)	-





Implementation Matrix

EX 3 Break Down Barriers to Open Space Access			
No.	Action	Lead	Key Partners
EX 3.1	Evaluate opportunities for universal access in natural areas where appropriate and considering ecological sensitivity. (See also EX3.3)	Parks Planning	BACA
EX 3.2	Improve equitable transportation access to natural areas and seek out alternative funding mechanisms.	Parks Planning	DPW, CCRPC
EX 3.3	Regularly engage marginalized communities who face barriers to accessing or enjoying open space to identify additional actions to increase use and where to prioritize improvements. (See also EX3.1)	Parks Planning, City Planning, REIB, BACA	Liberation Ecosystem, BPRW Conservation Team, Wildways
EX 3.4	Plan for and accommodate different cultural preferences in the use of public outdoor spaces.	Parks Planning, City Planning, REIB	Liberation Ecosystem, BPRW Conservation Team, Wildways
EX 3.5	Incorporate language access in educational campaigns.	Parks Communications, REIB	-



High Priority	Quick Win	Implementation Timeframe	Related Actions
-	-	Long-term (6+ years)	EX 3.3
-	-	Long-term (6+ years)	
YES	-	Near-term (0-2 years)	EX 3.1
YES	-	Near-term (0-2 years)	-
-	-	Near-term (0-2 years)	-



GOAL FOUR

CULTIVATE

Growing sustainable and accessible local food systems that meet community needs

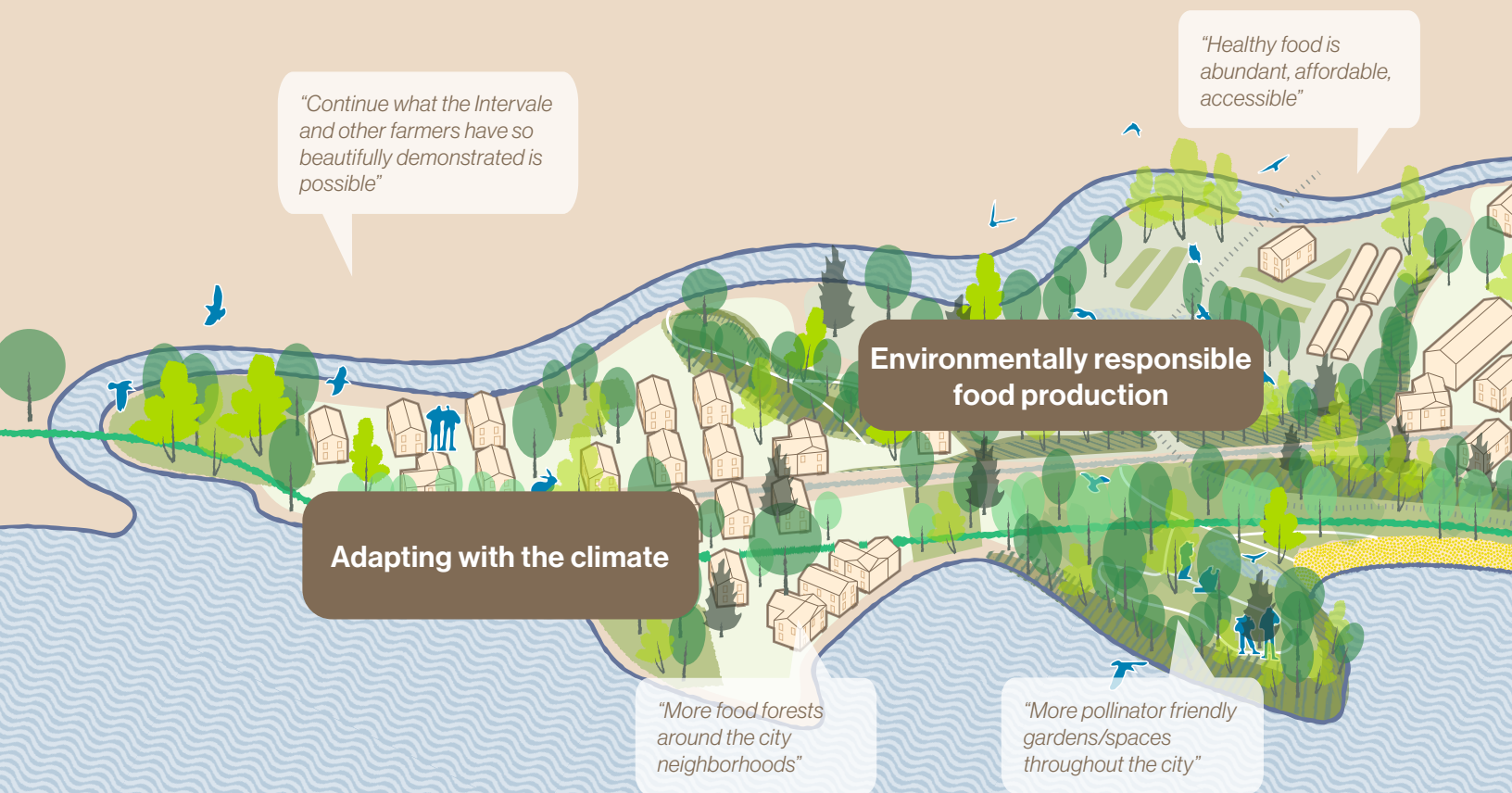




CULTIVATE Overview

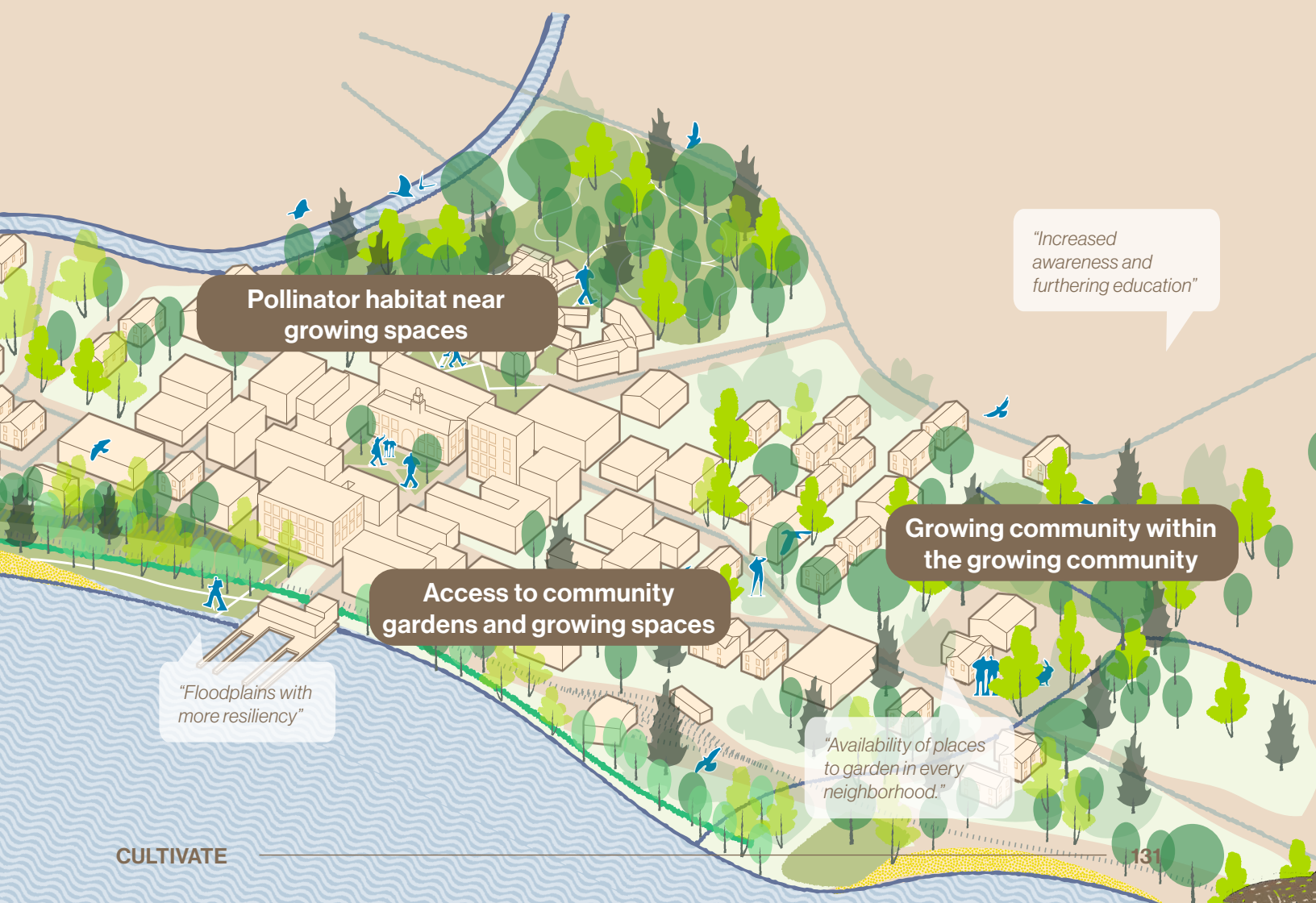
Growing local connects us to our food and can create more sustainable food systems

Local food systems are integral to the fabric of open space and life in Burlington, from the home garden to the community garden to the Intervale Center. More growing space is needed to meet the community's demand, and the system is susceptible to challenges like climate change.



CULTIVATE Strategies

- CL1** Cultivate sustainable and resilient agriculture practices
- CL2** Expand community gardens
- CL3** Support the cultivation of alternate food sources





CULTIVATE: Overview

Exposure to varied food experiences can strengthen local food resilience



In Burlington, food growing spaces also hold deep cultural significance as symbols of community resilience, heritage, and connection to the land. For many of Burlington's immigrant communities, these spaces exemplify traditional agricultural practice, provide space for intergenerational knowledge sharing, and encourage food sovereignty. Similarly, community gardens often reclaim space for marginalized communities, nurturing identity, pride, and care. These spaces connect people closer to nature and collective health, making them vital to cultural continuity and social cohesion.

Exposure Burlingtonians' food growing practices like regenerative agriculture, community gardening, and foraging are just a few of the many ways to increase food experiences and strengthen local food resilience. This includes expanding community gardens, promoting sustainable urban agriculture, and encouraging alternative food sources like food forests and foraging. Together, these efforts diversify how food is grown and accessed locally, reducing reliance on commercial growing methods and improving food security. Take a look at the map to see the many food experiences available to Burlington residents today.



Access to Intervale and Community Gardens

LEGEND

Type of Food Experience

Community (e.g. gardens)

↕

Agriculture (e.g. Intervale)

Walking Time

5 minutes

10 minutes

Food Experiences

% area within....

	5 walk	10 walk
Community	14%	30%
↕	1%	2%
Agriculture	2%	3%

Community gardens are distributed across Burlington, although there are gaps in Downtown and in the New North End. The Intervale Center is located near the mid-point of Burlington, but access largely requires a car.



CULTIVATE: Overview

Steward Ecological Health to Sustain Long-Term Food Production

While providing access to more food experiences is important to increase awareness and encourage future stewardship of food growing spaces, the quality of those food growing and cultivating spaces is also critical. This plan identifies several strategies to ensure that Burlington also considers soil health, climate resilience, and sustainable land stewardship as part of its cultivation goals. This focus will ensure that both traditional and alternative food systems can thrive in the face of environmental challenges, such as flooding and temperature fluctuations, aggressive introduced species, and habitat pressure.







CULTIVATE Strategies



STRATEGY 1

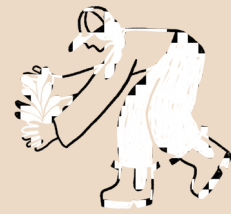
Cultivate Sustainable and Resilient Agriculture Practices

Community-based urban agriculture and stewardship is an integral part of Burlington's open spaces. Since the creation of the first community garden, there has been a thoughtful balance between open space and food production needs throughout the city. This system is under threat, however, from climate change, aggressive introduced species, and deer overpopulation. Flooding especially has been and will continue to be a major issue as weather patterns become more unpredictable.

This strategy endeavors to address these major issues in order to ensure that urban agriculture can continue to thrive for many generations to come. Underlying it is also a focus on soils: as soils are the core resource to farming, understanding them and how to maintain their health is critical to ensuring they remain fertile and retain growing potential.

ACTIONS

- CL1.1 Continue to plan for resilient agriculture strategies in the Intervale as climate and flood risks increase.
- CL1.2 Develop and implement deer management strategies, and track progress.
- CL1.3 Work with other agencies to educate and share resources on soil health information and remediation.



STRATEGY 2

Expand Community Gardens

There are currently 14 community gardens managed by the Burlington Area Community Gardens (BACG) program with plots ranging from 100 square-feet to 750 square-feet. The program not only connects people with plots of land but also encourages community partnerships through community days and knowledge sharing. They foster a close relationship with food and provide food security.

While these gardens are well-loved, demand historically has been and continues to be much higher than supply. There is a great need for more community gardening space, especially as the city continues to grow. This strategy seeks to identify partnerships that can identify where community gardens can be expanded and to set and track goals for expansion.

ACTIONS

- CL1.1 Partner with community and other groups to explore new spaces for community gardens and community agriculture (especially in areas with less vehicle access, higher percentage of low-income residents, and less access to grocery stores).
- CL1.2 Track garden plots per capita to establish baseline conditions and evaluate unmet demand. Set and track mid-term and long-term goals for community garden spaces.





CULTIVATE Strategies



STRATEGY 3

Support the Cultivation of Alternate Food Sources

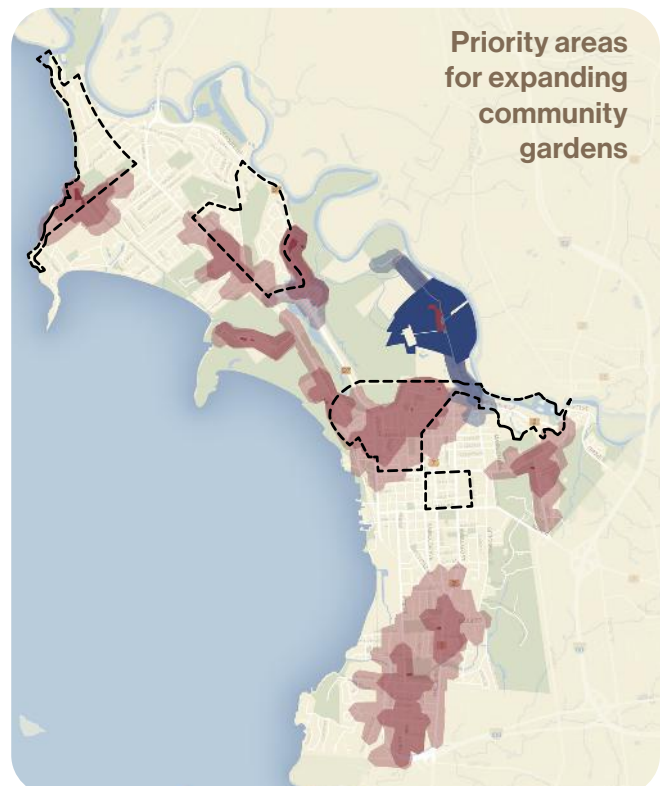
Gardening is not the only method for sourcing food outside of a commercial environment: the natural world is full of native edible plants. Alternative food sources like food forests and the practice of foraging for wild food sources have gradually spread in recent years, partially as a sustainable activity and partially as a safeguard against food insecurity. There sometimes is, however, a conflict between the desire or need for foraging and conservation goals.

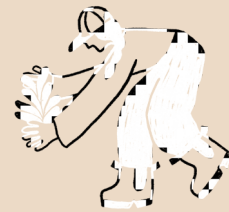
This strategy not only acknowledges foraging as a viable method but also encourages sustainable foraging practices. Food forests can be planned for and educational resources can be shared to ensure responsible cultivation of foraging practices.

ACTIONS

- CL3.1 Plan for food forests, including consideration of tree choices to allow for more community food production. (See also CL3.2)
- CL3.2 Work with the public to facilitate responsible, safe, and sustainable foraging communities. (See also CL3.1)
- CL3.3 See also in CS2.1 CONSERVE: Create network of pollinator-friendly and native plant gardens across the city.

 >15% families below \$25k income.
Potential focus areas for expanding community gardens





Open Space Stories

New Farms for New Americans



What began in 2008 as a workforce development program

under the Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV) has evolved into a community-based gardening and agriculture program for refugees and immigrants.

Each year, NFNA connects around 100 participants with plots of land in the Intervale and Ethan Allen Homestead for subsistence farming—for consumption or for sale—and offers education and training on adapting farming practices to Vermont's climate.

This program not only helps farmers grow culturally significant crops like snake gourd, African eggplants, and daikon but also increases food security and fosters cross-cultural communities, climate resilience.





Implementation Matrix

CL 1 Cultivate Sustainable and Resilient Agriculture Practices			
No.	Action	Lead	Key Partners
CL 1.1	Continue to plan for resilient agriculture strategies in the Intervale as climate and flood risks increase.	Intervale Center	Farmers, UVM AgroEcology, Parks Conservation Team, VT Garden Network, CEDO (with NRCS)
CL 1.2	Develop and implement deer management strategies, and track progress.	Conservation Board	Parks Conservation Team, Intervale Center
CL 1.3	Work with other agencies to educate and share resources on soil health information and remediation.	NRCS, CEDO	NRCS, Conservation Districts, UVM Extension Service
CL 2 Expand Community Gardens			
No.	Action	Lead	Key Partners
CL 2.1	Partner with community and other groups to explore new spaces for community gardens and community agriculture (especially in areas with less vehicle access, higher percentage of low-income residents, and less access to grocery stores).	City Planning, Parks Conservation Team	Vermont Garden Network
CL 2.2	Track garden plots per capita to establish baseline conditions and evaluate unmet demand. Set and track mid-term and long-term goals for community garden spaces.	Parks Conservation Team	Community gardeners, Vermont Garden Network
CL 3 Support the Cultivation of Alternate Food Sources			
No.	Action	Lead	Key Partners
CL 3.1	Plan for food forests, including consideration of tree choices to allow for more community food production. (See also CL3.2)	Park Planning or Conservation Team	Parks Conservation Team
CL 3.2	Work with the public to facilitate responsible, safe, and sustainable foraging communities. (See also CL3.1)	Intervale Center	WVPD, Parks Communications and Conservation Teams, Rock Point, UVM
CL 3.3	<i>See also in CS2.1 CONSERVE: Create network of pollinator-friendly and native plant gardens across the city.</i>	-	-



High Priority	Quick Win	Implementation Timeframe	Related Actions
YES	-	Mid-term (2-6 years)	-
-	-	Near-term (0-2 years)	-
-	-	Long-term (6+ years)	-
High Priority	Quick Win	Implementation Timeframe	Related Actions
-	-	Long-term (6+ years)	-
YES	YES	Near-term (0-2 years)	-
High Priority	Quick Win	Implementation Timeframe	Related Actions
YES	-	Long-term (6+ years)	CL3.2
-	-	Mid-term (2-6 years)	CL3.1
-	-	-	-







4

Way Ahead

Implementing the Open Space Plan will be a team effort. This chapter looks at opportunities to work together—and dream big!—for the future of our open spaces.

How can I contribute?

The Open Space Plan is a roadmap to guide the City of Burlington and its many partners and collaborators as they work together to invest in a thriving open space system for future generations.

While the City is the primary author of this document, and many of the actions will be led by the City, the City cannot implement this plan alone. It will require the investment of everyone in Burlington to make this plan a success. Below are Burlington's open space stewards and key actions that each group will need to champion.

Large Land Stewards

- Contribute to **monitoring of important restoration and wildlife indicators** including aggressive, introduced species, and water quality - See *Strategies CS 1.3, CS 1.4, CS 2.2, and CU 1.2*
- Help **expand public access to nature experiences** - See *Strategy EX 2.2*
- **Alleviate the impacts of climate change** by managing stormwater on-site, expanding tree canopy, and reducing impervious surfaces - See *Strategies CN 1.5 and CN 3.2*



Community Organizations

- **Expand access to food cultivation and pollinator-friendly and native gardens** throughout the city through advocacy and City partnerships - See *Strategies CU 3.1 and CS 2.1*
- **Join a consortium of like-minded organizations** and share resources and best practices - See *Strategy CN 2.1*



Development Community

- Lean into **sustainable/ ecological nature-based approaches to development** - See *Strategy CN 4.3*
- CN 4.1 Contribute to the development of Green Design Standards for new developments and redevelopments to ensure standards balance fiscal realities with aspirations for sustainable building - See *Strategy CN 4.1*



Governmental Partners

- Collaborate across agencies to **identify opportunities for nature-based solutions** in all city, county, and state projects - See *Strategy CN 1.2*
- **Engage seniors and youth** in expanding awareness of nature-based climate solutions - See *Strategy CN 1.3*



Homeowners with Yards

- Consult with the BLUE program about **adding a rain garden or other green infrastructure** to absorb rainfall - See *Strategy CU 3.3*
- Consider converting part of your yard to a **low mow or no mow zone** with native plants - See *Strategies CN 1.2 and CN 1.4*



Everybody!

- **Get out into your open spaces, trails, and forests** - See *Strategy CU 3.3*
- Learn how to **responsibly forage for food** in forests and other open spaces - See *Strategy CU 3.2*



Wild Ideas

Throughout the Open Space Plan process, Burlington residents, land stewards, and other stakeholders shared some out-of-the-box ideas to help guide future investment in and enjoyment of Burlington's open space network and urban wildlife.

Below are a few of Burlington's big ideas! Many of these are tactics or projects that align with the goals and strategies of the plan, and if the funding opportunities and community visions align - these ideas will go a long way in transforming Burlington into a nature-filled city.

Create Continuous Habitats

Tunnel under North Avenue
to the Intervale

Create a wildlife bridge
over Colchester Avenue

Bridge over (or under)
Interstate 89

Become a Foodie City

Encourage food production
everywhere

Street trees should be fruit
producing trees

Go big with "Go Wild"

Need add'l
item

Rewild the Champlain
Connector

Celebrate "no-mow"
May

Create community
toolsheds



* * * * *

Comprehensive Plan Corner

As the City prepares to embark on a new comprehensive plan, there are a few recommendations within the Open Space Plan that will be important to carry forward into the future comprehensive planning.

EX 2.1 Adapt strategies for land acquisition for conservation for both public and private lands reflecting the priorities of the new open space plan and upcoming comprehensive plan.

EX 2.1 Expand “everyday” nature experiences across the city that give community members opportunities to experience green/natural spaces as part of daily routines and without driving.

Additional Considerations Improve multi-modal access to the Intervale in conjunction with existing plans; include adequate funding to ensure creation of critical access





From: Sharon Bushor [REDACTED] >
Sent: Saturday, September 6, 2025 9:57 PM
To: Charles Dillard <[REDACTED]>; Sarah Morgan <[REDACTED]>; Andrew Montroll <[REDACTED]>; Dan Cahill <[REDACTED]>; Scott Gustin <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Open Space Plan, Draft

[WARNING]: This email was sent from someone outside of the City of Burlington.

Good rainy Saturday, Please send these comments to all Planning Commissioners and to Conservation Board Members. Thank you. Quite a well organized comprehensive plan. This is the first time I have seen this draft. My comments follow the organization of the draft.

1. Large open spaces... Centennial Woods is listed and the plan states there is protection from surrounding developed areas. I wish that was true. UVM uses it as their nature lab and seeks to significantly widen trails within to make them more accessible. (I attended one of their informational tours this past Spring). The necessary buffers for habitat you reference are barely maintained now and will be significantly decreased internally with the path modifications. Having UVM address this is key and hopefully reconsider the impact of their proposed changes. If not, sadly this treasure will need to be removed from this inventory because it will no longer meet the criteria.

Under this topic is the Edge Effect. (pg78 and pg 81). The draft contains a Distance graph entitled Edge Effect and Stewardship Zones which I had difficulty interpreting. It also presented a development map where the best backyard edge protection for all non human and vegetative species is 165 feet. This is especially true for animals that cannot tolerate human interaction. Seems next to impossible for most existing development. We have already eroded that buffer. HOWEVER, going forward the Planning Commission could create greater buffers between natural areas and new development or redevelopment projects similar to the buffers we have in place between development and wetlands and the lake.

2. Loss of trees canopy (109 acres in the last 10 years) pg 55

Understand the City Arborist will create a revised Ordinance to better protect trees. An Ordinance he wants to see in place.

Two years ago at the kick off meeting for Neighborhood Code, I requested that development Ordinances include protection for mature healthy trees. I was told this would happen. To date we have no criteria to apply to reinforce our commitment to the environmental importance of trees from cleaner air to heat reduction.

3. Amount of Impervious Surface (pg 94)

Plan states the amount is a key driver in ecological health. Page 96 speaks of density and the amount of Impervious Surface and page 97 shows development patterns and the percentages of Impervious space associated with them.

No surprise here. Having read this, it made me want to restate to the Planning Commission, my position that the need continues to exist to include the language stricken that referenced "managing stormwater runoff". I understood there was no need to include this since it is in the DPW review process. My point was and continues to be when criteria is important, it needs to be

emphasized and stated in all places developers look for guidance. It also reflects the necessary collaboration required between the DRB, DPW and developers.

The plan also references the BLUE program (pg 95) that helps residents reduce runoff into waterways etc being generated by their own yard. Shame on me, I never recall knowing about this program. PLANNING COMMISSION, you might want to consider incorporating a BLUE report and compliance with their recommendations as one of the standard development criteria. Environmentally this seems most appropriate. See page 107 for other recommended actions.

4. Community Garden expansion (pg 137). Agree with this finding. I am a Community Gardener and have been one since 1972. Myrtle Street is atypical but shows the importance of having a Conservation Fund for land acquisition. Having been part of the Open Space beginnings, my goal was to level the playing field between developers and undeveloped land. Acquiring just a small building lot and providing garden space and breathability in a congested area of Burlington was key. It was important then and even more important now after the passage of the Neighborhood Code. Acquisition or a long term lease (an example is the 25 year lease with UVMCC for garden space) all matter in our goal for food security and sustainability. I must note the past missed opportunities to expand garden options include not incorporating rooftop gardens at CityPlace and the new hotel. Creativity is key and the vegetation would have helped provide much needed cooling from more and more concrete. Once again amenities that would benefit the environment, our City and residents who reside in these buildings. I hope the Planning Commission will add this to the list of items for discussion as you rethink the impacts of increased density from the adoption of the Neighborhood Code.

5. New Farms for New Americans (pg 139)...Just amazing and hope our City is able to continue and expand this program for those desiring to participate.

6. Use of the Conservation Fund.

As expanded uses are considered, I have voiced my concern for seeking financial advise. In the recommended actions, I see this referenced. I hope the Conservation Board will consider going outside of the City for this evaluation and advise. Individuals whose primary focus is Conservation funds may benefit Burlington and help guide the desire to alter the percent dedicated for acquisition as demands for other key uses surface.

I realize my comments are a mix of feedback to the Conservation Board and suggestions for the Planning Commission. I tried to identify those specifically for Planning.

Thank you.

Sharon Bushor

77, 85, 91 North Winooski Avenue - Dolores

Sketch Plan Review Narrative

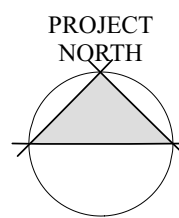
Burlington, VT
August 2025

Sketch Plan Review Narrative

The proposed project is located at the existing 77, 85 and 91 North Winooski Avenue properties. The project will construct an approximately 50-bed Memory Care Facility in the rear of the 3 existing properties. The first floor of 91 North Winooski Avenue will be converted to a daycare facility with approximately 19 children plus staff. The 3 existing buildings will remain with a portion of the existing building located at 85 North Winooski to be demolished. The project is served by municipal water and sewer. The proposed project will utilize the existing curb cuts with some improvements needed for emergency vehicle access.

The breakdown of project uses is as follows:

- Existing Site
 - 77 North Winooski Avenue = 7 apartments
 - 85 North Winooski Avenue – 2 apartments
 - 91 North Winooski Avenue = 4 apartments
 - 3-unit apartment Primary Dwelling
 - 1-unit apartment ADU
- Proposed Site
 - 77 North Winooski Avenue = 7 apartments
 - 85 North Winooski Avenue = 2 apartments
 - 91 North Winooski Avenue = 2 apartments plus daycare with 19 students plus staff
 - The ADU building will be removed from the property
 - New 50-bed Memory Care Facility



CONCEPT SITE PLAN STUDIES @ FIRST FLOOR
1:150

LOT COVERAGE (55% MAX): 51%	
TOTAL SITE SQUARE FEET: 54,658sf	
GREENSPACE: 14,223sf	27%
IMPERMEABLE PAVEMENT & BUILDINGS:	47%
OPTIONS FOR PERMEABLE PAVEMENT	
PERMEABLE PAVEMENT:	17%
RESIDENTIAL PARKING:	6%
SITE STAIR & WALKWAYS (ALL NEW):	3%
PARKING: 27 TOTAL	
12	STAFF
1	ACTIVITY VAN
6	VISITOR PARKING
8	RESIDENTIAL OVERNIGHT PARKING
USE/ CONDITIONAL USE:	
91 NORTH WINOOSKI: PROPOSED DAYCARE AT MAIN LEVEL: 19 KIDS @ 75sf EACH IN FENCED IN PLAY YARD: 1,450sf EXISTING APARTMENTS: 2	
85 NORTH WINOOSKI: EXISTING APARTMENTS: 2	
77 NORTH WINOOSKI: EXISTING APARTMENTS: 7	
MEMORY CARE: 50+/- BEDS	
PROPOSED DEMOLITION:	
85 NORTH WINOOSKI WEST SIDE: 1963sf	
91 NORTH WINOOSKI AIR BNB: 3615sf	
77 SHED	
TOTAL: 3000SF +/-	

- (RO) RESIDENT OVERNIGHT
- (SM) SMALL
- (ST) SHORT TERM
- (V) VISITOR

LADDER TRUCK TURNING
RADIUS REVISIONS FOR
REVIEW AND COMMENT

IN PROGRESS

SMITH
ALVAREZ
SIENKIEWYCZ
ARCHITECTS
117 St. Paul Street
3rd Floor
Burlington, VT
05401

P: 802 • 863 • 2227
F: 802 • 863 • 0093

CONSULTANTS

PROJECT
NORTH
WINOOSKI
•
MEMORY CARE CENTER
•
85 NORTH WINOOSKI AVE.
BURLINGTON, VT
DATE: 07/21/2025
SCALE: AS NOTED
CHECKED: BA
DRAWN BY: MW
REVISIONS

IN PROGRESS

SMITH
ALVAREZ
SIENKIEWYCZ
ARCHITECTS

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3rd Floor
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05401

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CONSULTANTS

SAS PROJECT NUMBER: 1525

PROJECT

NORTH WINOOSKI

•

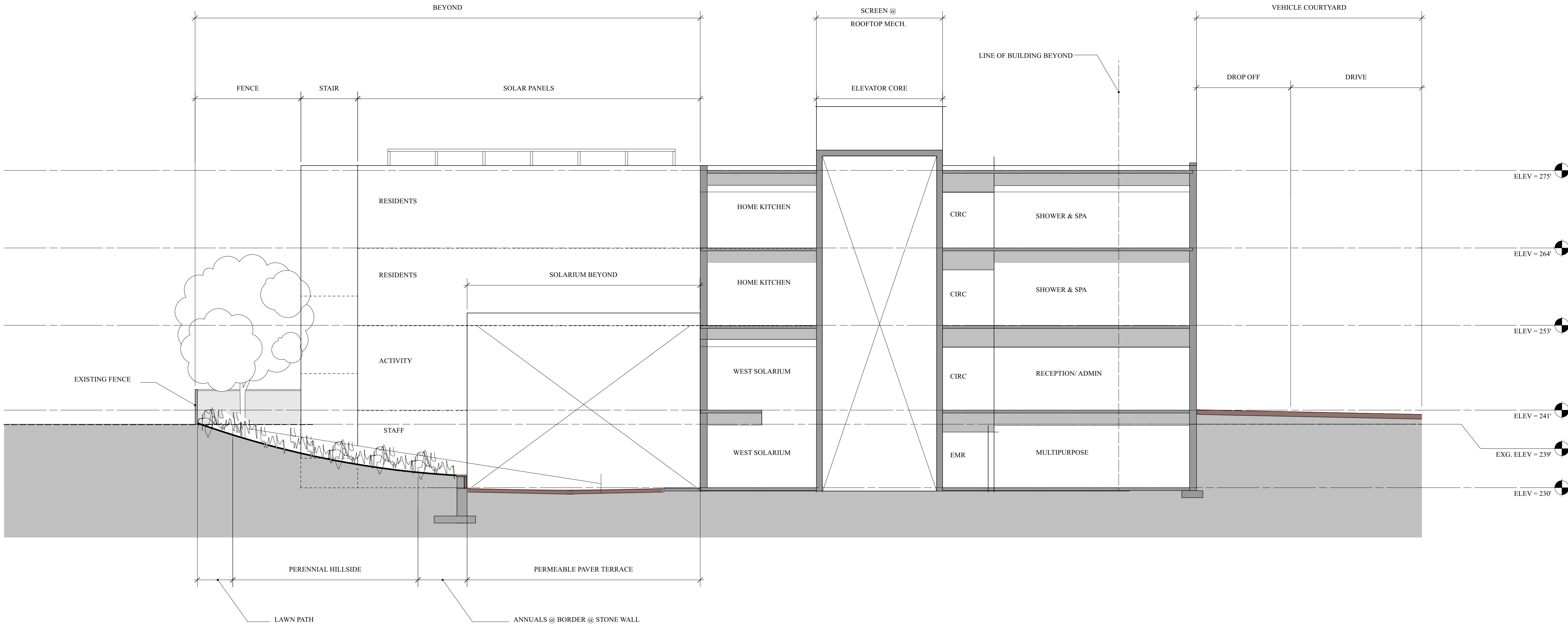
MEMORY CARE CENTER

•

85 NORTH WINOOSKI AVE.
BURLINGTON, VT

DATE: 07/21/2025
SCALE: AS NOTED
CHECKED: BA
DRAWN BY: MW

REVISIONS



CONCEPT SECTION A



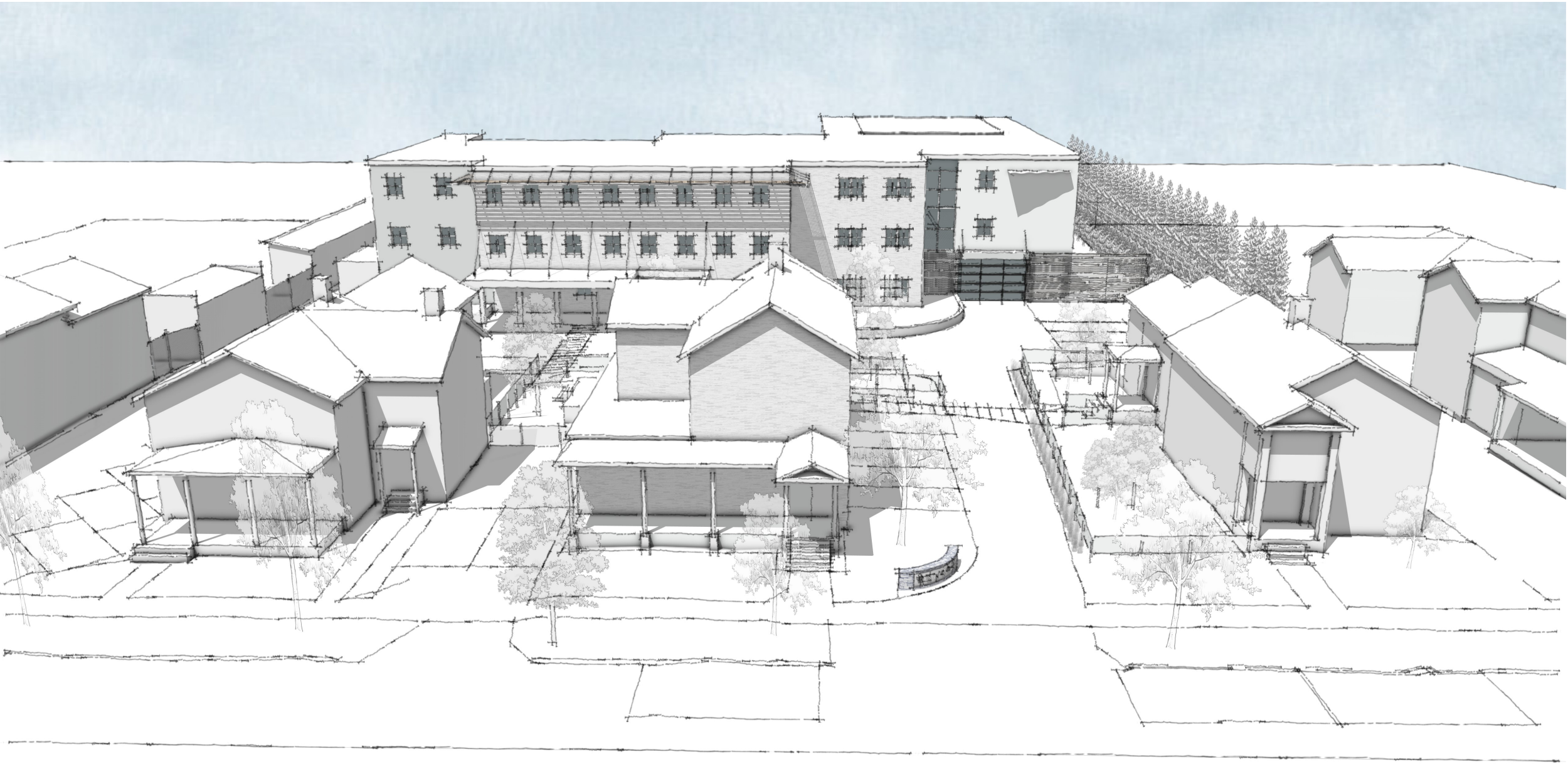
PEDESTRIAN VIEW FROM NORTH WINOOSKI



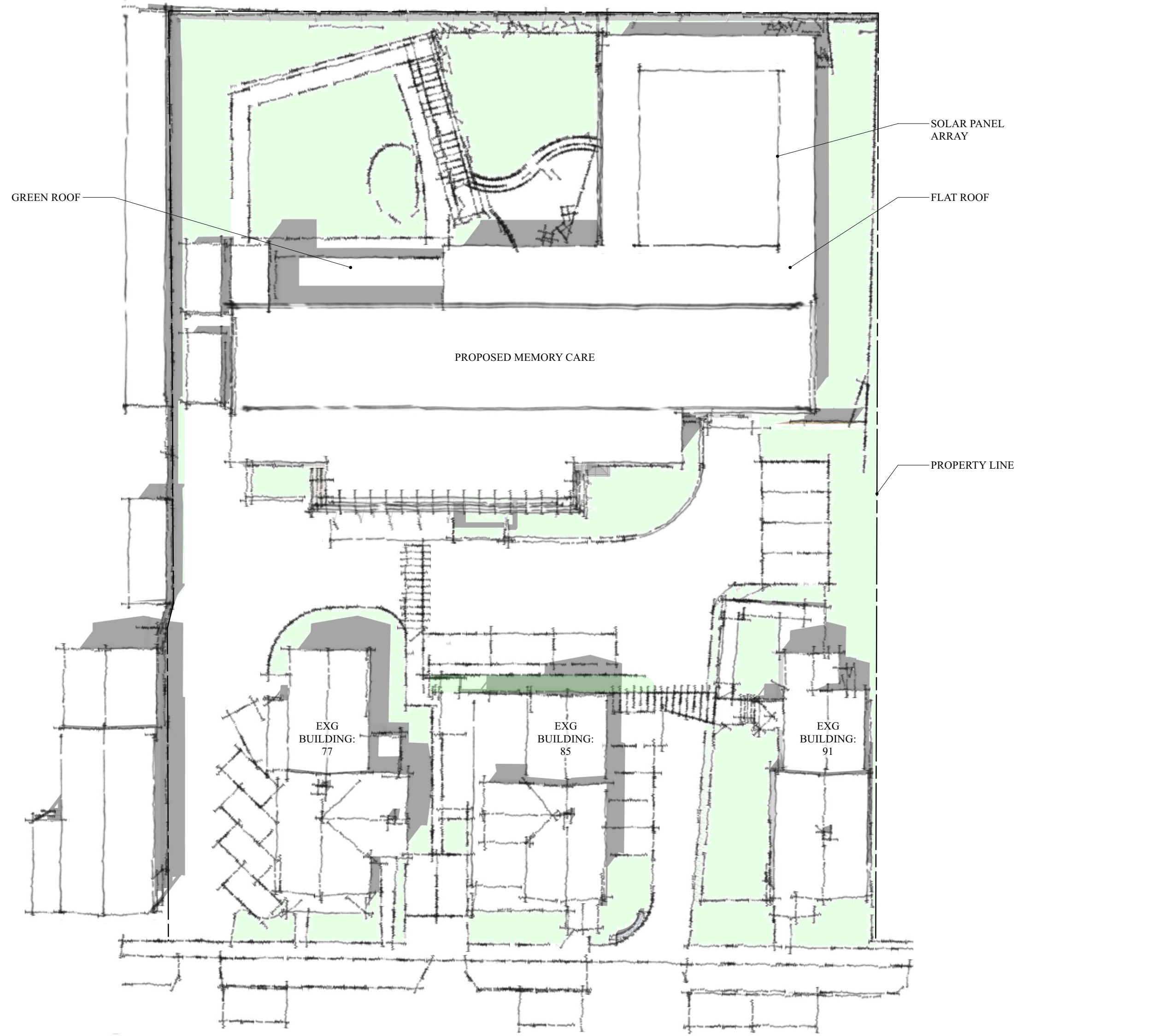
VIEW AT SITE ENTRANCE



VIEW FROM SOUTH COURTYARD AT DROP OFF



BIRD'S EYE VIEW FROM NORTH WINOOSKI



ROOF PLAN

IN PROGRESS

SMITH
ALVAREZ
SIENKIEWYCZ
ARCHITECTS

117 St. Paul Street
3rd Floor
Burlington, VT
05401

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F: 802 • 863 • 0093

CONSULTANTS

SAS PROJECT NUMBER: 1525

PROJECT
NORTH
WINOOSKI
•
MEMORY CARE CENTER
•
85 NORTH WINOOSKI AVE.
BURLINGTON, VT
DATE: 07/21/2025
SCALE: AS NOTED
CHECKED: BA
DRAWN BY: MW
REVISIONS

