



4. FERRISBURGH FUTURE

4.1. NATURAL RESOURCES POLICIES

The following policies are recommended based on the past history and present inventory of town resources, and the town planning desires articulated by town residents.

A. Earth Resources

1. Condition the removal of topsoil, sub-soil, sand, gravel or stone through a permit to prevent soils loss, erosion and environmental damage.

B. Steep Slopes & Shallow Soils

1. Discourage removal of all existing vegetative cover on all areas with slopes over 15 percent or where soils are shallow to bedrock.
2. Ensure that grading, cutting or filling does not result in a finished grade over 50 percent.

C. Wastewater

1. Issue town permits for development contingent upon applicants receiving all required state and federal permits, including a state water and wastewater permit.
2. Maintain accurate town records of approved septic systems.
3. Encourage upgrading of old or inadequate septic systems, especially near shorelines, rivers and wetlands.

D. Floodplains, High Water Table and Stormwater Runoff

1. Avoid development in flood hazard or flood prone

areas, or those with regularly high water tables or hydric soils.

2. Ensure that all development permitted in floodplains, areas of high water table or hydric soils complies with all state and federal laws.

3. Continue Ferrisburgh's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program and maintain flood insurance maps.

4. Require adequate management of stormwater runoff from developed lands, parking areas, roads and driveways so that surface waters will not be negatively impacted by stormwater discharge.

5. Require that subdivisions provide an adequate stormwater drainage plan for the entire subdivision parcel.

E. Watershed, Wellhead Protection and Well Isolation Zones

1. Ensure that development on lands within recharge areas or protection areas for municipal or private water supplies does not diminish the potential quantity or quality of ground and surface water by disrupting the flow, or polluting the water supply as a result of failed septic systems, storage of hazardous waste materials, runoff or other cause.

2. Require private well isolation zones to be delineated on final plats and, as far as is feasible, contained on the property where the well is located.

F. Streams, Headwaters and Shorelines

1. Require a minimum 50-foot buffer of natural vegetation from the top of the banks of all streams, rivers and creeks.
2. Require larger riparian buffers, up to 100 feet or more from water bodies warranting greater protection.
3. Set all development along the Lake Champlain shore back at least 100 feet where feasible and require a buffer of natural vegetation be maintained along the shoreline.
4. Undertake a formal assessment of the effectiveness of buffers and develop further policies for riparian buffers.
5. Encourage further conservation of lands adjacent to surface waters.
6. Undertake road and bridge construction or repair in a manner that protects stream flow, reduces pollution from salt, herbicide and petroleum runoff and protects stream banks from erosion.
7. Work with environmental agencies and organizations to maintain an inventory of stream sampling data and needs for riparian buffers.
8. Ensure that the Shoreland District is visually, functionally and physically related to the lake.
9. Recognize that bank stabilization is critical to preserve lakeshore character and reduce sedimentation and runoff carrying nutrients like phosphorus and pollutants into the lake; require

development setbacks to prevent increased bank erosion and pollution; and consider use of site plan review for lakeshore district development proposals.

10. Support the continuation of and the participation by Ferrisburgh's landowners in programs sponsored by the Natural Resource Conservation Service to implement soil conservation and ecologically sound farm management practices.

11. Explore the need for a program to identify inadequate or failing septic systems and prepare remediation plans in the near future; ensure that new construction and renovation projects along the lakeshore trigger site and septic system review; and require, through zoning, adherence to accepted or adopted standards for aesthetic and environmental quality.

G. Wetlands

1. Follow all federal and state laws regarding development in or near wetlands and wetland buffers.
2. Condition all filling of land, whether wetland or not, through a permit to prevent environmental damage.
3. Maintain a minimum 50-foot buffer of natural vegetation around all Class Two wetlands.
4. Require that a formal assessment be conducted of all wetlands, both Class Two and Class Three, on a parcel intended to be developed, including field delineation by a qualified wetland ecologist, with the costs borne by the applicant.

5. Ensure that recreational use in or near a wetland will not interfere with necessary wildlife habitat or significant wetland function.

H. Natural Areas and Critical Habitat

1. Work with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Nongame and Natural Heritage Program to ensure development does not endanger critical habitats or state rare, threatened or endangered species.

2. Maintain a natural buffer from and require screening of any development adjacent to Natural Areas and Critical Habitat.

3. Require greater buffer distances if warranted due to site-specific evaluation or state or federal guidelines.

4. Prohibit any unreasonable, out-of-the-ordinary, or unexpected noise, odors or artificial lighting.

5. Require lighting in adjacent developments to be down-directed and shielded to minimize light directed upward or outward, to the greatest extent possible.

6. Maintain a 300-foot undisturbed buffer at deer wintering yards and identified bobcat or bear denning sites.

7. Encourage landowners to improve wildlife habitat, such as by applying for funding to improve wildlife habitat through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS - www.vt.nrcs.usda.gov).

8. Encourage landowners, hunters, wildlife viewers and the Ferrisburgh Conservation Commission to map wildlife trails and corridors.

I. Forestlands

1. Direct the Ferrisburgh Conservation Commission to maintain and implement an updated Town Forest Management Plan.

2. Encourage landowners to inventory their forestlands and manage them sustainably, through mechanisms such as third-party certification and value-added products.

3. Prohibit timber cutting within 300 feet of deer wintering yards, or identified bear or bobcat denning sites.

J. Agricultural and Forest Soils

1. Discourage development on soils classified as Prime, Statewide and Local by requiring clustering, minimal soil loss to development, and/or mitigation on- or off-site.

2. Encourage permanent easements to conserve agricultural soils and productive forest soils.

K. Scenic Areas, Roads and Views

1. Establish a town taskforce to inventory scenic roads, views and areas so that scenic overlays could be developed.

2. Protect and minimize the impact on scenic views where possible, such as along Four Winds Road, the access road to Kingsland State Park, Shellhouse

Mountain Road, and Old Hollow Road.

3. Encourage landowners in scenic areas to bury power lines where feasible.
4. Require adequate landscaping and setback from scenic roads to maintain the character of the area.
5. Undertake a study to determine whether the town should ask the state to designate some sections of roads as Scenic Highways or Byways.
6. Protect scenic views from Route 7 by mechanisms such as varied development densities, overlay districts and scenic parking areas or overlooks.
7. Enforce state shade tree laws on all town roads and other town lands, under the direction of the Town Tree Warden.

4.2. HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES

The following policies are recommended based on the history and data presented in the foregoing sections and the vision articulated by town residents.

A. Population

1. Maintain and create public facilities and spaces that encourage social interaction among town residents.
2. Foster greater cooperation and mutual respect among persons with different views and opinions.
3. Increase residents' understanding of how town government works.
4. Publicize town news and information to residents through media such as a newsletter, website or periodic reports to press and broadcast media.
5. Support elderly residents and their assisting organizations in efforts to maintain independence.

B. Housing

1. Encourage all Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) to include affordable housing units.
2. Encourage multi-family and manufactured housing that can provide affordable places for people to live.
3. Prioritize affordable housing building to first renovate, second to infill with new construction on vacant lots in densely settled areas, and third to build new homes.

4. Allow for density bonuses for creation of affordable housing units in PUDs.
5. Support the provision of housing that will allow elderly residents to continue to live in the community.
6. Support the provision of housing that will allow young people to buy homes and raise their families in the community.
7. Work to ensure that Ferrisburgh is an attractive community with affordable housing options for younger residents.
8. Work with land trusts and developers to encourage development of small-scale affordable housing PUDs.
9. Promote affordable housing and an increase in availability of rental housing by allowing for apartments associated with existing houses or conversion of large single-family homes into multi-family homes, consistent with rural Ferrisburgh.
10. Encourage accessory dwellings by adding rental units to existing homes or accessory structures.
11. Maintain a mix of housing types and values by discouraging 'cookie cutter' housing developments that contain homes of a single style, size or sale price.
12. Encourage any new residential development to be energy efficient and promote use of the Vermont Energy-Star Program.

B. Home Occupations and Businesses

1. Encourage and support home occupations.
2. Define home occupations as activities that utilize no more than 30 percent of a residence and generate income to no more than three individuals including at least one of whom is a permanent resident of the house in which the occupation takes place.
3. Require home businesses, which take up more than 30 percent of the residence, or which use the major part of an accessory building, be treated as a conditional use of the property.
4. Ensure that home businesses are 'low key' and neither have an undue adverse effect nor alter in any substantial way the local rural residential nature of the house, the character of the neighborhood, or access roads by excessive noise, traffic, odors, lights or hours of operation.
5. Encourage and support tourism businesses.
6. Encourage improved availability of high-speed, broadband internet connections.

C. Economic Development

1. Encourage and support development of small-scale and value added commercial development.
2. Discourage development on primary agricultural and forest soils.
3. Uphold farmers' right to farm using generally accepted agricultural practices.

4. Encourage commercial and industrial development in the areas of town traditionally designated for commercial growth, namely the Highway Commercial areas and Industrial areas.
5. Allow commercial or industrial development in other areas of town only in accordance with policies developed under Home Occupations and Businesses, and with design review consistent with the character of the area.
6. Encourage businesses that produce value-added products and engage in sustainable business practices, especially as they enhance and support the traditional agriculture and forestry and rural character of the town.
7. Encourage the use of local grown food products, farm stands and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in all parts of town.

E. Education and Childcare

1. Work with the Ferrisburgh Central School on a regular basis to support the school in its mandated requirements and enhancements that support rural education.
2. Encourage the school students to take an active role in their town through working with the Planning Commission, Conservation Commission and related activities.
3. Work in partnership with appropriate state agencies and the school to improve and maintain the school recreation area.

4. Promote and encourage volunteering in school programs and activities.
5. Ensure safe access to the elementary school and plan for future connections that would allow pedestrian or bike access.
6. Support the development of programs that incorporate an appreciation of local history, community participation and the democratic process into the learning environment.
7. Encourage citizen participation in the school policy-setting process.
8. Support the development of programs in Ferrisburgh's elementary school to promote an increased understanding of natural systems and to use the town's natural areas as a resource for engaging children in their local environment.
9. Support the provision of early education and after-school programs.
10. Encourage high quality childcare services that meet the needs of the town's working parents.
11. Ensure excellent and diverse educational opportunities in order to facilitate a tradition of lifelong learning by town residents and work to engage residents of all ages the town's education system.
12. Ensure that the town has planning in place to provide adequate municipal facilities to meet current and future growth.

F. Historical and Cultural Resources

1. Work with public and private sources of funding to reconstruct the historic Grange Hall as new Town Offices, Community Center and Grange Hall.
2. Identify and establish a building for the Ferrisburgh Historical Society, such as School Number 17, built in 1862 (presently the Town Clerk's Office).
3. Identify and maintain the town's historical records, and install a new, larger Town Vault in the reconstructed Grange Hall, working with the State Division of Historic Preservation.
4. Protect all archeological sites or potential sites, notably along all riverbanks and conservation areas, working with the appropriate state and federal agencies.
5. Establish design control policies for the Historic District in North Ferrisburgh.
6. Determine how best to identify by metal or wooden plaques the 156 historic buildings in town and gather current addresses for all the structures.
7. Encourage the adaptive re-use of historic buildings, which retain authentic features.
8. Use landscaping as an integral aspect of all development in town such that protective groundcover is established and shade trees, screening trees and shrubs are planted in a manner that reflects a rural landscape.
9. Encourage use of native species for landscaping plants.

G. Community Facilities and Services

1. Build new Town Offices with a community meeting space on the site of the historic Grange Hall.
2. Achieve a rate and pattern of development that is consistent with the town's ability to assimilate new residents without overburdening community facilities and services and negatively impacting the town's fiscal condition.
3. Establish a taskforce to identify childcare needs in town and make recommendations to address needs.
4. Encourage development of a five and ten-year capital budget program that would allow the town to require phasing of developments and the assessment of impact fees on large developments, over ten residential units, that may lead to need for increased local services and facilities.
5. Continue to actively plan for the town's solid waste disposal needs by participating in the Addison County Solid Waste Management District.
6. Continue to support the local volunteer fire and rescue services in town and ensure that there is adequate road access for emergency responders to be able to reach buildings.
7. Work with the Volunteer fire Department and Rescue Services to maintain safety in town, including implementation of the 911 Emergency numbers.
8. Work with the state and county sheriff as needed for police services.

9. Develop a comprehensive town disaster plan in cooperation with appropriate state agencies, which include recommendations for town and homeowner preparedness and coordination of disaster management.

H. Utilities and Energy

1. Encourage the Planning Commission to undertake energy audits.
2. Support high-speed internet access by actively encouraging service providers into the areas.
3. Encourage alternative sources of energy such as solar and low impact wind power and ensure that the town's regulations do not unduly restrict installation of small-scale wind generators or solar panels.
4. Ensure that new housing or housing additions are in accordance with Act 20 energy standards.
5. Monitor new construction to ensure Act 20 certificates are filed with the town.
6. Encourage new housing to be Energy Star rated.
7. Encourage winterization and efficiency measures for structures being renovated.
8. Provide for commuter ride-share programs
9. Enact a program to acquaint potential town carpool partners.
10. Discourage the use of 'always on' street and other outdoor lighting.
11. Require any company seeking permits for

telecommunications infrastructure to prove that no existing structure in town meets their needs before being allowed to construct a tower; and encourage use of existing structures by making such projects much easier to permit than construction of a new structure

12. Remain involved in the VELCO transmission line upgrade project *to ensure that Ferrisburgh receives its fair share of required mitigation measure including putting either the transmission line or roadside distribution lines underground so that extremely tall poles will not be required where the new line crosses roads.*

I. Transportation

1. Maintain an up-to-date inventory of roads, highway structures, bridges, buildings and maintenance equipment to ensure that residents have a properly maintained highway system.
2. Limit the number of curb cuts when developing new roads or drives.
3. Support development of the Route 7 Corridor Management Plan by incorporating compatible access management provisions into the town's land use regulations.
4. Limit and control the number and location of access points onto state highways to ensure safety and the road's ability to serve projected increases in traffic.
5. Maintain safe sight distances for access to US Route 7 and other major intersections.

6. Work with the Agency of Transportation (AOT) to implement changes to US Route 7 in Ferrisburgh Center that will enhance the civic center of town and its associated school including: traffic calming, signalization of the Little Chicago Road intersection, road realignment of the four way crossroads, turning lanes, crosswalks and other appropriate techniques such as a roundabout on Route 7.

7. Work with AOT to implement changes to Route 7 at the intersections of Stage Road and Old Hollow Roads including: eliminating the large truck parking area associated with the Mobil Gas station that limits sight distance for traffic turning left onto Route 7 from Old Stage Road and from the Mobil station; signalization; and reduction of the speed limit in North Ferrisburgh.

8. Ask the Town Road Foreman, working with the AOT, to clearly identify intersections in town that are becoming potentially hazardous and begin to develop a long-term plan to maintain safety.

9. Monitor town roads for damage by heavy vehicles.

10. Consider the weight and size of delivery vehicles, milk trucks and agricultural equipment as new connecting roads are built and older ones are reconstructed.

11. Work with farmers, commuters, local residents, pedestrians, bicyclists and other interested parties to develop a plan to share the town's roads that would include specific recommendations to address safety and maintenance issues.

12. Undertake a study of town roads to determine the feasibility of creating separate bicycle or walking paths as part of the public highway system and develop a town-wide plan for bicycle and pedestrian routes.

13. Determine the feasibility of putting in place a sidewalk on the public right of way land along the south side of Old Hollow Road.

14. Construct and maintain a pedestrian walkway from the school to the old and the new Town Offices.

15. Enter into substantive talks with AOT when the next round of re-paving of any of the state highways is planned for purposes of establishing paved shoulders wide enough to accommodate bicycles, joggers and pedestrians.

16. Prepare an inventory of all Class 4 roads and maintain them so that they are available for public access for trails or other public uses.

17. Work to improve pedestrian and bike safety on bridges.

18. Encourage alternative transportation policies that reduce traffic on state highways by promoting increased use of public transit, freight, rail, carpooling, bicycling and walking.

19. Set up a taskforce to determine the feasibility of establishing adequate park-and-ride locations for Ferrisburgh residents who commute on Route 7.

20. Monitor age structure of resident population and determine needs for transportation, especially in times of emergency.
21. Prohibit the construction of new paved sections of town road unless safety, traffic demand and maintenance considerations dictate that a paved road section is appropriate.
22. Require that all new lots have a legally enforceable permanent right-of-way at least 60 feet in width.
23. Ensure that private roads and drives are constructed in a manner that causes minimal erosion, are not overly engineered, or not in keeping with the rural character of the town.
24. Use the minimum amount of salt necessary to keep roads clear of snow and ice in order to reduce ecological damage, and consider use of non-salt de-icing agents where appropriate.
25. Promote awareness of key animal crossings in town.
26. Maintain the town's roads and bridges, and make needed improvements in a manner that protects Ferrisburgh's special features.
27. Continue ongoing review and revision of speeds limits on all town roads.

J. Recreation

1. Revitalize the Town Recreation Committee and encourage its members to coordinate with the Planning Commission, Conservation Commission and schools.

2. Maintain the Town Beach and facilities.
3. Protect, clearly mark and maintain all public access points to the town's creeks and Lake Champlain.
4. Monitor and enforce wastewater disposal in all camp areas, including locations where campers and RVs are parked as vacation homes.
5. Encourage the local snowmobile club to maintain and clearly mark places where VAST trails cross roads.
6. Encourage private landowners to allow hiking and cross-country ski trails across their lands.
7. Limit ATV use to private property.
8. Encourage lakeshore landowners to support the Lake Champlain Paddlers' Trail.
9. Encourage developers of major subdivisions or landowners to donate land or facilities for public access or trails.
10. Permit development that is designed and situated in such a ways as to minimize any adverse effects on recreation resources.
11. Maintain public access to traditional recreation areas and encourage the common rural practice of allowing for hunting, fishing and other low-impact recreational activities on private lands.
12. The town should add to the recreation facilities at the Town Civic Center to include a park and community center.
13. Encourage all recreationists to respect private property by removing litter, avoiding trails in mud season, using care crossing fences and not discharging firearms near homes.

Land Use Planning Areas Map

Route 7 Corridor Map

4.3. LAND USE AREAS AND POLICIES

These areas are not zoning districts, but merely areas with common characteristics and development trends. The legally enforceable zoning districts are described in the Ferrisburgh Zoning Regulations. Ferrisburgh's land use plan is intended to guide future growth and development, and protect the town's unique resources. Based on the foregoing history, data, and inventories, several areas have been roughly delineated and are described below.

A. Agricultural and Forestry Areas

These areas have soil characteristics best suited for agricultural and forestry uses, including areas with Prime agricultural soils, soils of Statewide significance and soils of Local significance (see glossary for definitions). These lands are currently in agricultural or forest use and a significant percentage of them have been conserved, ensuring that they can remain in productive use in perpetuity.

It is the town's policy to protect these areas and maintain the town's rural, agricultural and forestry character, which is largely created by its open, working agricultural and forestry landscapes. This plan's policies aim to protect agricultural businesses of all sorts, including home occupations. The goal for these areas of town is to maintain an open, working rural landscape with scattered housing.

Low-density residential uses and other compatible uses such as open space, conservation, low-intensity outdoor recreation, commercial forestry and maple syrup production, should be permitted. Other uses, including residential and small-scale commercial activities that support agriculture, should be permitted as conditional uses.

While densities should remain low, efforts should be made to encourage clustering of development in a manner that will preserve larger tracts of land for productive use (see discussion of rural development patterns below). Town residents have expressed a desire not to have land use patterns in Ferrisburgh that look like suburban America, preferring patterns which are rural in their look and feel.

B. West Ferrisburgh Agricultural Conservation Area

This area lies west of Otter Creek. It has long been a rich and productive farming area. Town residents have clearly expressed a desire to retain an agricultural working landscape and agricultural soil conservation is strongly supported in town. This area has high-quality, productive soils and a relatively pristine farming landscape. Agriculture and forestry should be the permitted uses in this area and development densities for other uses should be allowed only at very low levels, measured against a test of undue adverse effect

C. Conservation Areas

These areas include upland areas in east Ferrisburgh, including Shellhouse Mountain; and wetlands, rivers and the central lakeshore.

Ferrisburgh is renowned for its vast acres of wetlands, critical habitat for wildlife, and natural areas with rare plant and animal species. As illustrated on the resource maps included in this plan, the town has significant areas with characteristics that seriously constrain development.

Ferrisburgh's zoning should continue to protect the town's wetlands, flood hazard areas, steep slopes, deer wintering yards, areas with shallow soil, rare, threatened or endangered species and other natural areas. Regulations should also continue to discourage development in remote, unserved areas that are unsuitable for development. Many of these areas have limited road access and it is the town's policy not to provide such service.

There are only a few clusters of pre-existing development located directly on the major streams. Most of the land is in agricultural use or is part of one of the state-owned Wildlife Management Areas. The riparian areas along streams should be considered for protection with 100-foot buffers from bank top on both sides of the stream.

Lands in this planning area should be kept in their natural state to the greatest extent feasible. Land uses permitted in these areas must be compatible with the limitations of these areas, such as agriculture, forestry and non-commercial

low-impact outdoor recreation. Uses allowed in these areas should be severely limited in order to conserve critical ecological habitats.

Camps and single-family residences should be reviewed to determine potential impact on critical ecological habitats, soils, sewage, water, access, frontage and scenic considerations. Buffers of land must be conserved to minimize the impacts of any development. The town should continue to allow development only at very low densities within these areas.

D. Lakeshore, North and South

This planning area includes two areas of Ferrisburgh's Lake Champlain shorelands. Along the lake, current development has been primarily intensive renovation of the older seasonal housing stock with some very high value new construction. Generally, this area includes concentrations of existing residential, vacation and commercial uses in a unique setting requiring high levels of environmental and natural resource protection. The character of the area is summer vacation homes. Compared with other areas of town, development in these areas is historically dense.

The shorelands of Lake Champlain in Ferrisburgh have been relatively well protected through the presently designated 'Shoreline' zoning district and associated bylaws.

New development of or significant renovation to existing camps and single-family residences should be reviewed to determine potential impacts of sewage, water, access, frontage and scenic considerations. Bylaws should be amended to reflect that year-round town services such as road maintenance and fire/rescue protection are not provided in some of these areas, which historically have had narrow winding dirt roads often little wider than a pick-up truck.

Development in these areas should be reviewed as conditional uses based on detailed standards and clear conditions that address issues such as riparian setbacks, soil erosion, possibility of wastewater pollution of surface water or surrounding wetlands, vegetation and wildlife corridors, scenic vistas, view corridors. Development densities should be maintained at current levels or reduced where necessary to prevent impairment of adjacent, sensitive resources.

E. Rural Residential Areas

The character of these areas is rural with relatively low to medium densities (for Ferrisburgh) or clustered development, typically close to town roads. Only a limited number of soil types in Ferrisburgh lend themselves to conventional on-site septic systems.

Year-round family dwellings are the intended use for this district. A minimum lot size of two acres has traditionally been required for these areas to encourage their utilization and thereby reduce site development costs, increase public health, restrain public service capital and unit costs and preserve the remaining agricultural soils.

The town should explore incentives and bonuses to promote a compact development pattern in areas deemed most appropriate for additional residential construction (see discussion of rural development patterns below).

F. North Ferrisburgh Historic Village

North Ferrisburgh along Old Hollow Road stands out as a village center within the town. This is a compact historic village, well documented in the town records as an area of mixed residential and commercial uses and is listed by the state as a Historic District. Traditionally, this village has lot sizes of various dimensions, large and small, some close to the road, others set back, some with large lots and some small, giving a diverse scale of settlement pattern and the character of a 19th-century village.

It is recommended that a new zoning district be considered in that part of town, from Route 7 east along both sides of Old Hollow Road, north up Mount Philo Road to the boundary with Charlotte, east along Old Hollow Road, including Champlin Hill, over the Lewis Creek Bridge, a short way up the hill on Old Hollow Road to include the historic houses located there, and south a short distance to include the historic houses and old schoolhouse along Four Winds Road.

Historically appropriate design control criteria should be considered for new or replacement construction within a designated historic district.

The historically partially-built pedestrian sidewalk along the south side of Old Hollow Road should be completed given the higher density of settlement and relatively limited historic setback distances from the traveled portion of the highway.

There is a limited amount of land within these areas that is available for additional residential development. The town's regulations should provide for a development pattern that will match with the current character and settlement pattern of this historic village center. There is limited infrastructure and services in this area and thus densities of more than two units per acre is not recommended.

G. Highway Commercial Areas

a) North Ferrisburgh: Land around the historically busy intersection of Stage Road and Old Hollow Road with Route 7 is largely commercial in character, with a landscaping business, motel, large modern gas station, the North Ferrisburgh Post Office and state highway depot, a used car business and other commercial and residential lots. This area has historically served those who use the main road corridor north/south as well as those coming from the western part of town, and from Monkton to the east.

This section of Route 7 is the 'gateway' into historic Ferrisburgh and the farmlands of Addison County from the north.

b) Area south of the Civic Center running to Little Otter Creek: Most of these areas are currently zoned for development at a two-acre density. Access on the state highway and the visual character of this entrance to the town are issues of concern that should be addressed by the town's regulations to maintain historic character.

All uses in this area should be conditional, and include only small-scale commercial enterprises and mixed uses typical of a 19th century highway crossroads area, with varied lot sizes, landscaping and setbacks such that views of open lands behind may be obtained. Infrastructure is limited in these areas.

H. Civic Center

The southern boundary of Ferrisburgh on Route 7 wraps around northern Vergennes, and much of West Ferrisburgh is reached only by driving through Vergennes. It is thus logical that Vergennes is the service center for Ferrisburgh and other surrounding communities. Civic center functions of Ferrisburgh are however clearly located in the roughly geographical center of town around the intersection of Little Chicago Road and Middlebrook Road with Route 7. In this area today there are several public and community facilities: the old Union Hall and Town Green on Route 7; a Methodist Church; the Town Clerk's Office; one of the two Ferrisburgh post offices; town properties for road equipment and storage; and the Ferrisburgh Central School. Until recently there was the historic Grange Hall with its large community meeting room. In addition, there are residential lots mixed in with a range of commercial uses including a new bake shop with good parking adjacent Route 7. Lots vary in size and setbacks. This area is surrounded by open space and farmland, some of which is conserved.

There is a limited amount of land available for development in this area, and the soils are not as conducive to conventional on-site septic development as in North Ferrisburgh. Conserving some open space for future expansion of the school or the Civic Center on the west side of Route 7 should be considered, especially given the fact that Route 7 bisects this area which will make it difficult to develop a Civic Center around the traditional Town Green and Union Meeting Hall. The historic reconstruction of the Grange Hall should further enhance the character and functions of this area, and increase its community gathering functions.

Route 7 is largely commercial in this area and efforts should be made to slow traffic and improve pedestrian connections between commercial and public buildings. Designating a Civic Center could also serve as an impetus for much needed improvements in the safety of the intersection especially for school busses.

This crossroads area has historically served as a medium density (for Ferrisburgh) civic center of the town and should continue in that role

with conditional uses that support the historic character of the center. There is currently limited infrastructure in this area and thus lot sizes less than two acres is not recommended unless it is part of a carefully planned and approved PUD.

I. Industrial Areas

Two areas have been identified as appropriate for industrial uses in Ferrisburgh due to their location along the railroad and access to the state highway. In reviewing industrial uses, the town should consider the impacts of the proposed use including traffic, noise, light and pollution, and require adequate buffers between industrial and non-industrial uses. Town residents have expressed a desire to encourage light industry, and small-scale commercial development and efforts should continue to encourage use of these industrial areas. More than one use can be considered on the two-acre lot density if the infrastructure is adequate, especially water, wastewater and road access.

J. Route 7 Corridor

Route 7 does not have a continuous stretch of development along both sides throughout the whole length of town. There are still some open areas with farmland and forestland, such as from Dakin Road to the Round Barn development. Because townspeople have clearly expressed a desire to see a mix of open land and highway commercial and residential along Route 7 in Ferrisburgh, this land use plan recommends an overlay planning district with varying development densities based on the character of the surrounding land.

Protecting the Route 7 corridor is critical to maintaining the rural character and quality of life Ferrisburgh residents currently enjoy. People's sense of a place is often largely based on the 'view from the road' that they see while traveling on their daily commute or while touring on vacation. Preventing the highway corridor from becoming a fully developed commercial strip should be a principal purpose of the town's regulations.

There are three sections of the Route 7 corridor in Ferrisburgh that have

been zoned to support highway-oriented businesses and highway uses as conditional uses. One area lies in the northern edge of the town, one in the center around the crossroads at Middlebrook and Little Chicago roads, and the third lies in the southern end of the town, adjacent to Vergennes. The limits of these areas should be delineated and further commercial development outside these permitted areas should be strictly limited.

Lower density areas of land use separate these three higher density areas. These areas should be maintained as low-density residential or open space/agricultural land. This will ensure that the town's commercial zones remain distinct areas and that highway commercial development does not slowly spread out along the entire highway.

The size, scope and impact of commercial uses along the state highway should be subject to site plan review to protect neighboring residences, the visual character and transportation function of the highway and to further the goals in the town plan for economic development to serve the needs of the townspeople and those who travel through town on the busy highway corridor.

It is recommended that access to all highway commercial areas be limited in number, if necessary by use of multi-lot access roads, to promote safety and to ease traffic flow on public roads. The town's regulations should require that commercial property be of a size that allows ample room to set the development footprint back from the traveled road and put landscaping in place to reduce the impact of the higher density of development.

There is now the opportunity through new legislation to allow for overlay districts in zoning bylaws and the concept of scenic overlays for Ferrisburgh appears to have some merit based on an analysis of the town's present resources and trends in land use, market demands and economic diversification. A scenic overlay would allow for some creative bylaws that would enhance the rural nature of the landscape through this area. These could include strict limitation on commercial development and scenic overlooks and signs.

K. Rural Development Patterns

Maintaining Ferrisburgh's rural character, agricultural economy, its long and rich history, and small-scale commercial businesses, are the central themes of this plan. The use of innovative planning techniques can provide for development while preserving agricultural land, open space, and the scenic and cultural resources that define the town's rural character and enhance residents' quality of life and attract seasonal residents and visitors. These techniques can also be used to provide opportunities for the affordable homes needed to maintain a diverse population in Ferrisburgh, as well as vibrant small businesses that can provide jobs within town.

Traditional zoning and subdivision regulations mandate a consistent, regular pattern of development and result in a suburban landscape, which Ferrisburgh residents have expressly described as not desirable. Conventional zoning determines the number of residential units allowed on a parcel largely by setting minimum lot sizes and road frontages. In Ferrisburgh, much of the developable land has been zoned for two- or five-acre lots for many years, and until they were recently amended, state septic regulations had promoted development on lots larger than 10 acres.

There is an inherent conflict in zoning rural land because it is difficult to write regulations that would result in a development pattern typical of the desired rural landscapes. Traditional rural development patterns are diverse, not simple. There are essentially no straight lines in nature. The landscapes in Ferrisburgh include places of relatively clustered development separated by large areas of productive farmland, forests, wetlands, rivers and rugged hills. There are dense concentrations of settlement along the shores of Lake Champlain and along many of the rivers.

The traditional tools provide two basic options, require large or small lots. Large lots maintain low densities, but consume more farmland than necessary and promote sprawl. Small lots can result in development that is too dense resulting in loss of rural character and a suburban landscape.

There are, however, techniques that can allow for development while maintaining rural character. These tools are commonly called 'cluster development', 'conservation design', and 'planned unit development' (PUDs). The underlying principle of all these systems is to encourage the allowable development to be grouped together on smaller lots with a significant amount (usually at least 50%) of the original parcel set aside as open space or productive land. In cluster developments, homes are typically built on lots less than two acres in size, but the overall density of the development is usually greater than five acres per unit.

Conservation subdivisions are a more environmentally friendly form of clustering that protects resources the community has identified as important, such as prime agricultural soils, wetlands, wildlife habitat, scenic views or forestlands. The first step in conservation subdivision design is to identify the resources that are to be preserved and those portions of the site that are not constrained by these features become potential development areas.

Communities can also plan and regulate in a manner that allows for revitalization and growth in existing centers. This also preserves rural character by guiding development into designated higher-density areas. The lack of wastewater infrastructure continues to be a limiting factor on more dense development around the town's traditional centers. Innovative options should be explored that could support 'village-scale' development within and adjacent to the town's traditional centers.

Ferrisburgh should revise the planned unit development (PUD) provisions in its land use regulations to provide appropriate standards and incentives to achieve development patterns appropriate to their surroundings in conformance with the goals of this plan. The town needs standards that respond to the unique character and special concerns of the areas described in this land use plan. Using bonuses and other incentives should be considered to ensure that the town's PUD provisions are regularly used.

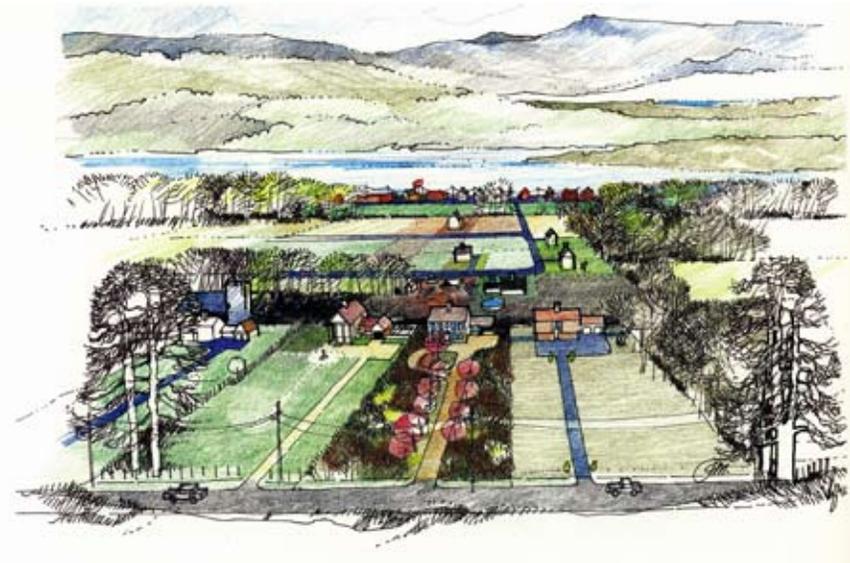
Design Considerations in Ferrisburgh's Rural Landscape

The character of Ferrisburgh's rural lands are captured in Illustration A and can be described as a broad valley with sweeping views to Lake Champlain and the distant Adirondack and Green Mountains visible from roads throughout town. Farm buildings are large and the open space around them is relatively flat and open.

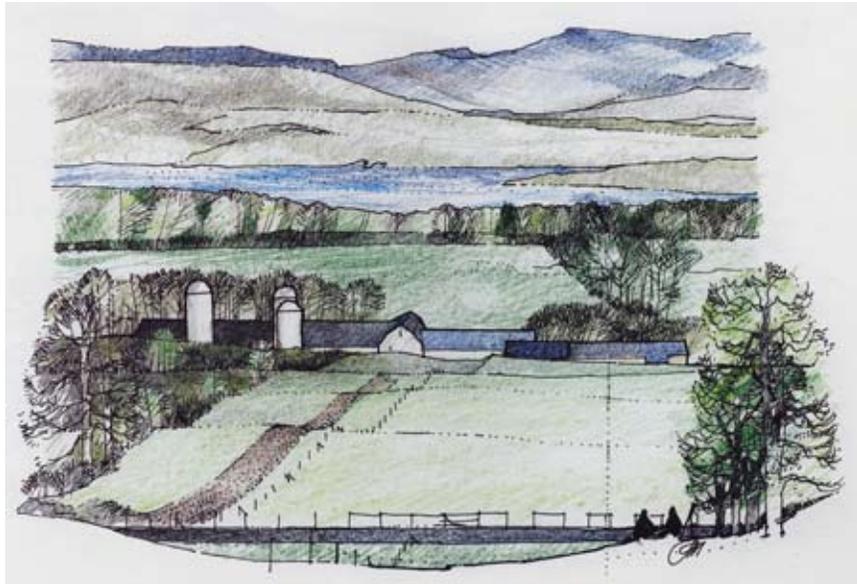
Illustration B shows how poorly guided growth has destroyed the historic farm complex and has allowed sprawling residential development to obscure the sweeping view and consume all the open land.

Illustration C shows a PUD that has been carefully located to maintain a maximum amount of open space, reuse the farmstead and reinforce the traditional agrarian settlement pattern.

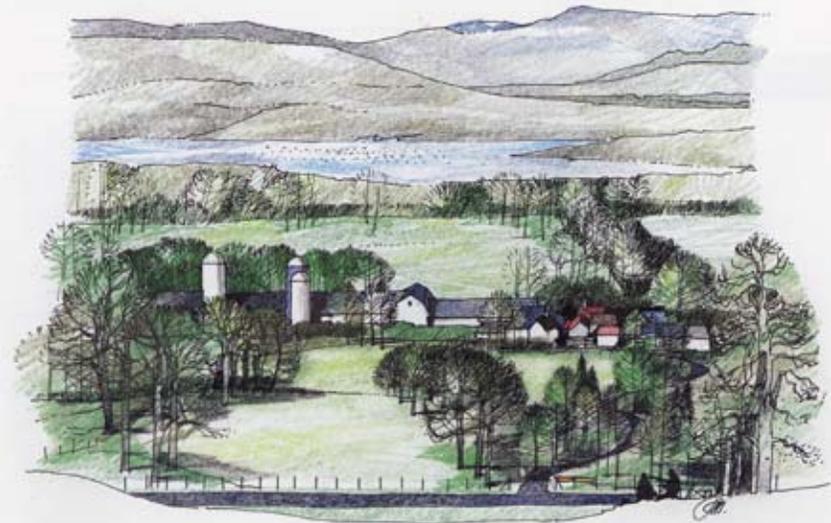
Source: *Vermont's Scenic Landscapes: A Guide for Growth and Protection*



B. Conventional Rural Subdivision



A. Existing Conditions

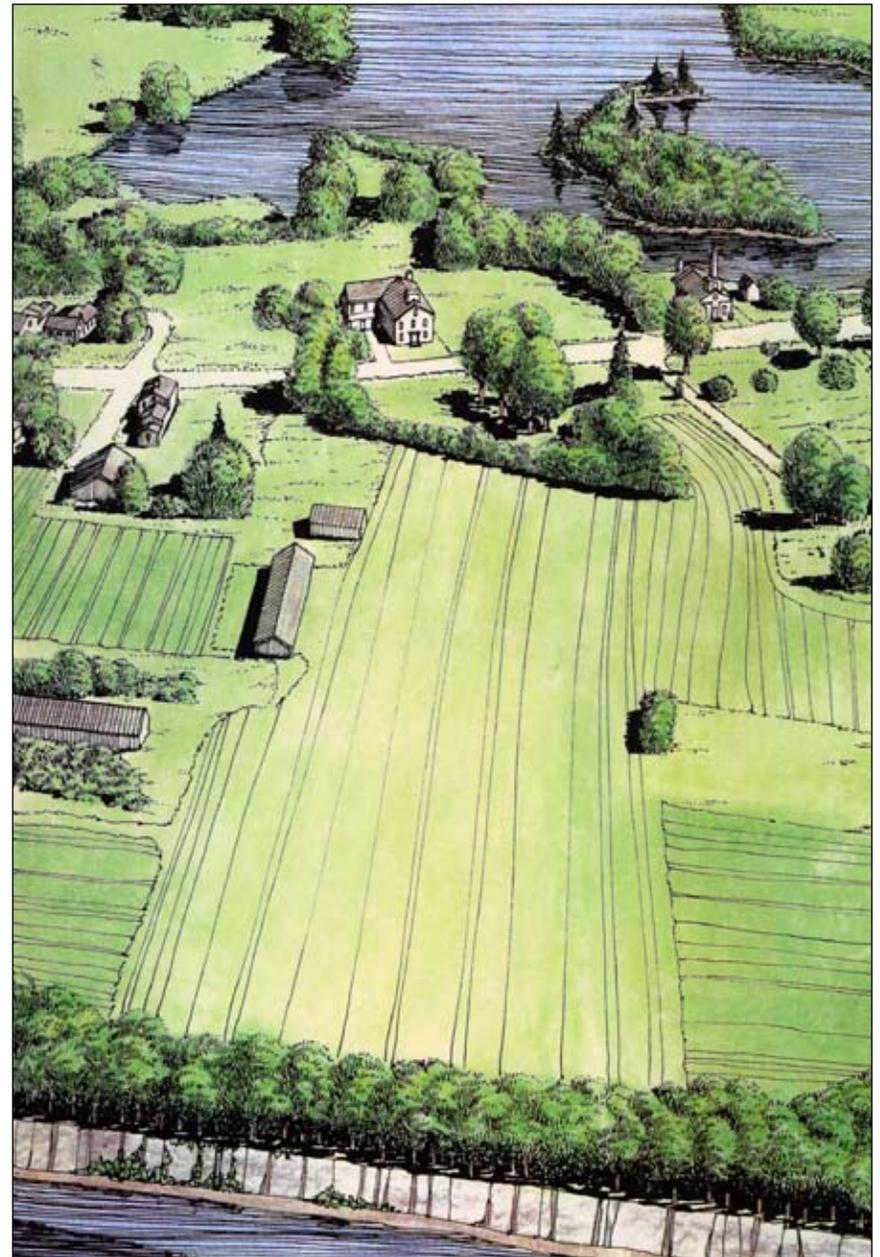


C. Sensitive Designed Planned Unit Development (PUD)

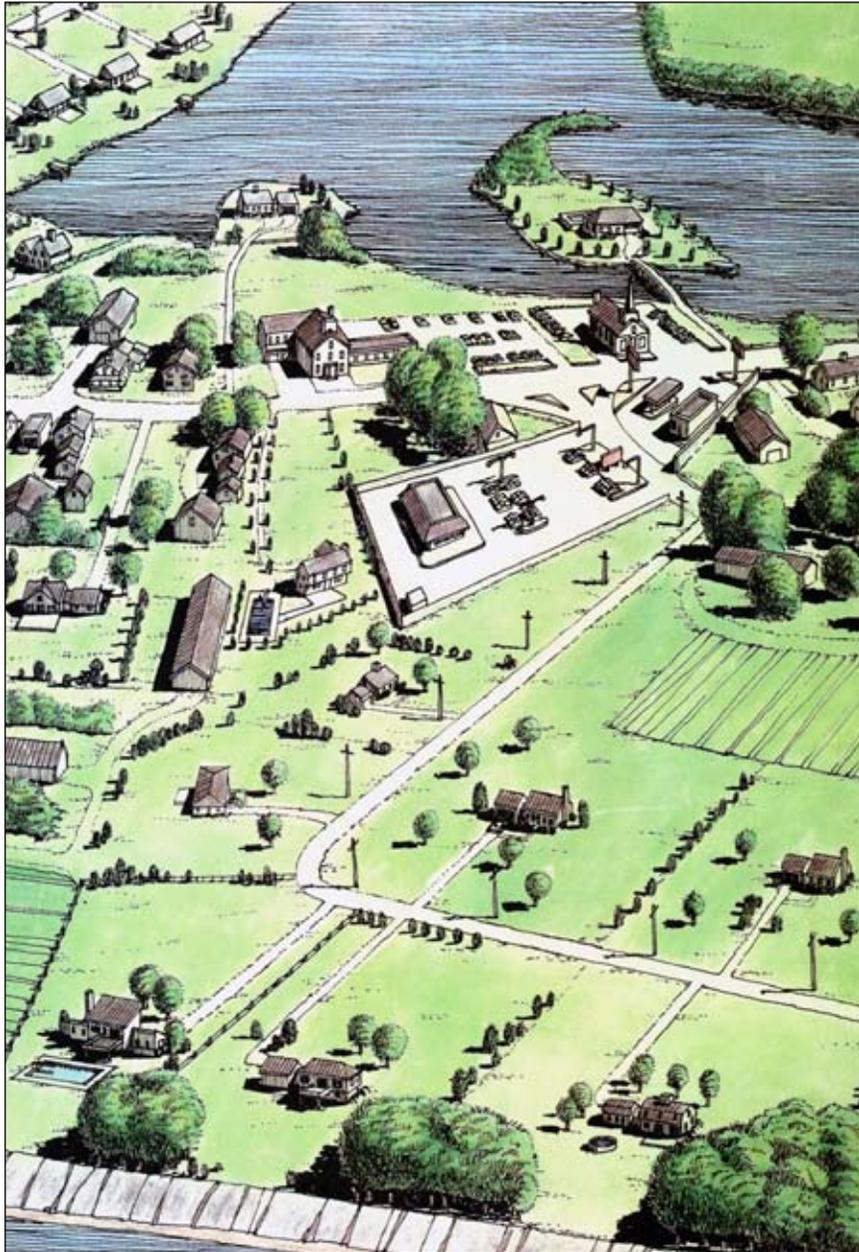
Design Considerations in Ferrisburgh's Rural Landscape (con't)

The open, agricultural character of Ferrisburgh's rural lands are also represented in Illustration D. Illustration E shows how a suburban pattern of development can be imposed on the rural landscape. Illustration F shows the result of a development pattern similar to a small, traditional New England village.

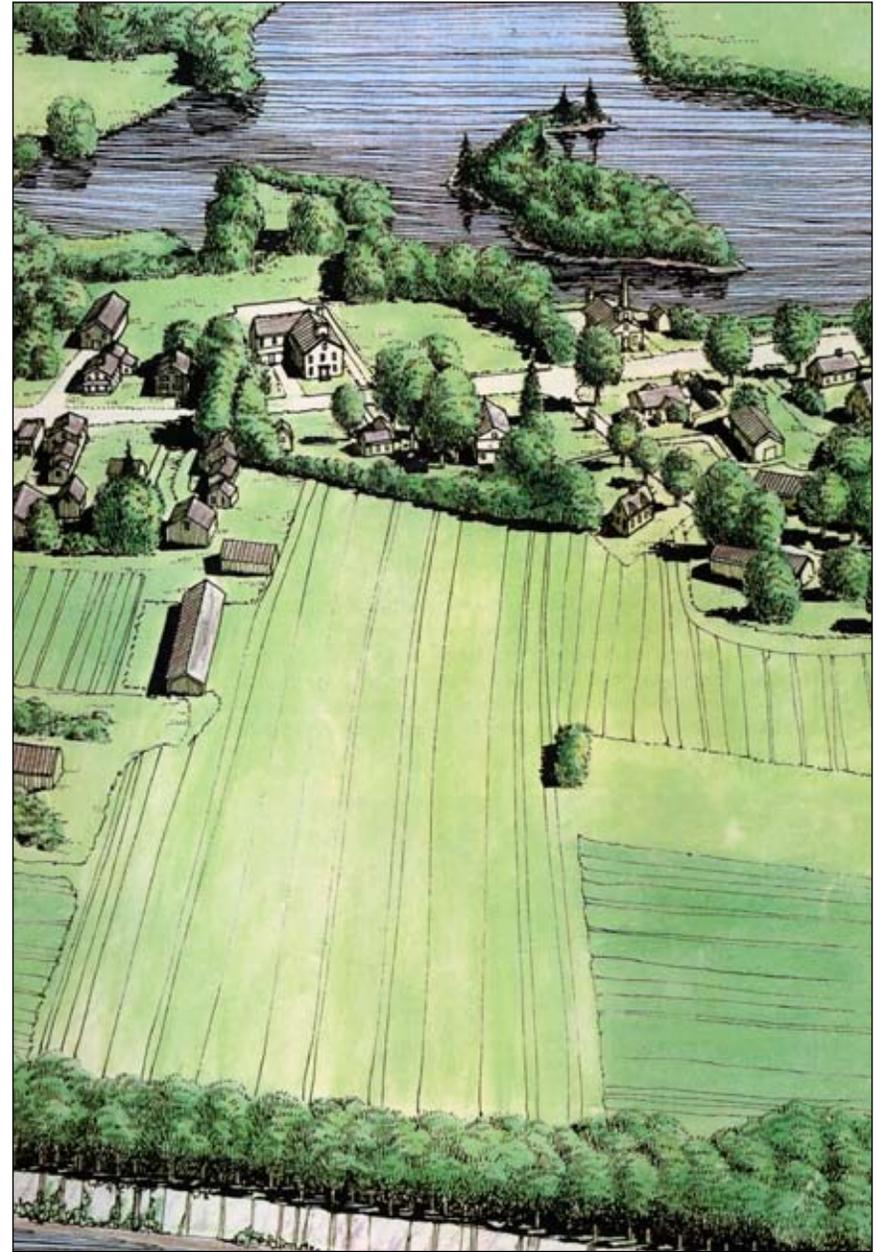
Source: Dealing with Change in the Connecticut River Valley. Yaro, Arendt, et al, 1993.



D. Existing Conditions



E. Suburban Pattern of Development



F. Small New England Village Pattern of Development