

State of Vermont  
Agency of Natural Resources  
**Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation**

**West Street Parcel**  
Essex District Office  
**Long-Range Management Plan**

*JULY 2009*



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8/26/09  
Date

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## Executive Summary

The West Street Parcel is located in the Village of Essex Junction and is held by the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) for use by all Vermonters and visitors to the state. The parcel provides open space for public outdoor recreation and for demonstrating examples of natural resources management techniques in an emerging urban environment.

The public participation process for developing this plan was conducted in accordance with Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) policies and procedures. Various ways of obtaining input included two public meetings (one on 10/8/08 and another on \_\_\_\_\_), posting information on the website, receiving comments via email and mail, conversations with residents and staff of the Village of Essex Junction, and publishing articles and meeting notices in the local newspaper.

The parcel offers potential for public access and open space connections between the Champlain Valley Exposition site, a nearby park, and agricultural land which connects with the floodplain of the Winooski River, as well as other open spaces beyond these in the village and adjacent towns.

The parcel will continue to be held and managed by FPR for the following primary purposes:

- Office, storage, workshop, public meeting, and parking space for employees of ANR and Act 250;
- Community gardens, as administered by the Village of Essex Junction Recreation and Parks Department;
- Forestry and other natural resource demonstration areas; and
- Opportunities for year-round, non-motorized outdoor recreation.

The following process will be used when any entity or organization outside ANR proposes new uses for the parcel. Input from any and all interested parties will be considered.

- Describe the proposed use, reasons why it is needed, and potential users and benefits.
- Explain how the use is compatible with ANR and FPR land uses and policies.
- Describe any significant natural resources on the parcel that could be affected by the proposed use, such as sandplain soils and rare species, and how impacts will be avoided or minimized.
- Describe potential conflicts with other users and how these conflicts will be minimized or resolved.



- Describe any permits for the use that may be required and how and by whom they will be obtained. These may include Act 250, local, and stormwater permits.
- Explain who will be responsible for construction, maintenance, signage, parking, enforcement, etc. and how long-term management and monitoring will be done. A stable funding source for long-term management should be secured.

ANR will make the decision regarding proposed new uses based on the above criteria as well as compatibility with mission, management principles and goals, and financial considerations.



## INTRODUCTION

Periodically ANR staff members, interested stakeholders, and the public review changes in ownership goals and objectives, resource base, public sentiment, and scientific understanding relative to ANR holdings. This process is referred to as long-range management planning (LRMP) and results in the update of management practices for these public lands.

The West Street Parcel served as the State Tree Nursery for decades. Since its closing in 1995, many people have used the parcel for a variety of recreational activities. Due to these changes, it is important that a management plan be developed for the parcel at this time.

Similar to some other lands held by FPR, this parcel is located within a town or village setting, in this case the Village of Essex Junction, for the benefit of all Vermonters and visitors to the state. Through this planning process, FPR is continuing its commitment to cooperate with local towns in determining the best management practices for the parcel that are compatible with the ANR mission.

This plan was developed through a thoughtful, deliberate process and involves the blending of resource data, department and agency missions, and input and participation from the public. Two public meetings were held by the Planning Team during the course of this effort. ANR staff members have tried to incorporate suggestions and comments that will create opportunities compatible with ANR and its department missions, ANR management principles, and stewardship goals for the property.

Thank you to the many people who came to public meetings, offered opinions, and made comments during this period. The plan is better as a result of that input. We hope there will be broad support for this plan and look forward to receiving your comments with regard to further clarifications and improvements. Thank you in advance for your continuing interest in the West Street Parcel.



## Organization of the Plan

**Section I** of this plan, the “*Introduction*,” provides an overview of the missions of the ANR and its member departments: FPR, Fish and Wildlife, and Environmental Conservation as well as purposes of land ownership.

**Section II**, “*Parcel Description*,” orients the reader by providing background and location information as well as providing introductory information about the parcel. Included are brief histories of acquisition and land uses and an overview of the resource highlights. This section describes how the parcel fits into the local and regional contexts by presenting the connections between the parcel and other planning efforts.

**Section III**, the “*Public Involvement*,” section provides a brief summary of public involvement activities and processes that were used in the development of this plan.

**Section IV**, the actual “*Management Plan*”, includes descriptions of the appropriate uses allowed, their locations on the parcel, and management tasks to be completed.

**Section V**, the *Appendix*, contains supporting background information including department authorizations for managing lands, pertinent ANR policies, more details regarding public involvement, responses to public comments, and management strategies being followed in the development of these plans.



## **Mission Statements that have Guided the Development of this Plan**

### ***Vermont Agency of Natural Resources***

The mission of the ANR is "to protect, sustain, and enhance Vermont's natural resources, for the benefit of this and future generations." (Agency Strategic Plan)

Four agency goals address the following:

- To promote the sustainable use of Vermont's natural resources;
- To protect and improve the health of Vermont's people and ecosystems;
- To promote sustainable outdoor recreation; and
- To operate efficiently and effectively to fulfill our mission.

### ***Departments***

#### **Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation Mission Statement**

To preserve, enhance, restore, and conserve Vermont's natural resources,  
and protect human health, for the benefit of this and future generations.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife Mission Statement**

The mission of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is the conservation of all species of fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the people of Vermont. To accomplish this mission, the integrity, diversity, and vitality of their natural systems must be protected.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation Mission Statement**

The mission of FPR is to practice and encourage high quality stewardship of Vermont's environment by monitoring and maintaining the health, integrity, and diversity of important species, natural communities, and ecological processes;  
managing forests for sustainable use;  
providing and promoting opportunities for compatible outdoor recreation;  
and furnishing related information, education, and services.



## **Overview of Lands Management by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources**

### ***Purposes of Land Ownership***

On behalf of the State of Vermont, the ANR manages state-owned land for a variety of purposes, ranging from the protection of important natural resources to public uses of the land in appropriate places.

*Natural resources* include, but are not limited to, the following: biodiversity, wildlife habitat, natural communities, water bodies, wetlands, undeveloped land, scenery, and aesthetic values.

*Public uses* include, but are not limited to, the following: recreation, access to state lands or waters, environment-related businesses, flood control, education, research, and sustainable use of renewable resources such as hunting, fishing, trapping, and forest management.

### ***Outcome of Long-Range Management Plans***

The ANR manages state lands in a sustainable manner by considering all aspects of the ecosystem and all uses of the natural resources. (Agency Strategic Plan 2001-2005)

The ANR has a mandate to serve as the principal land steward for properties owned or managed by its three departments--Environmental Conservation; Fish and Wildlife; and FPR.

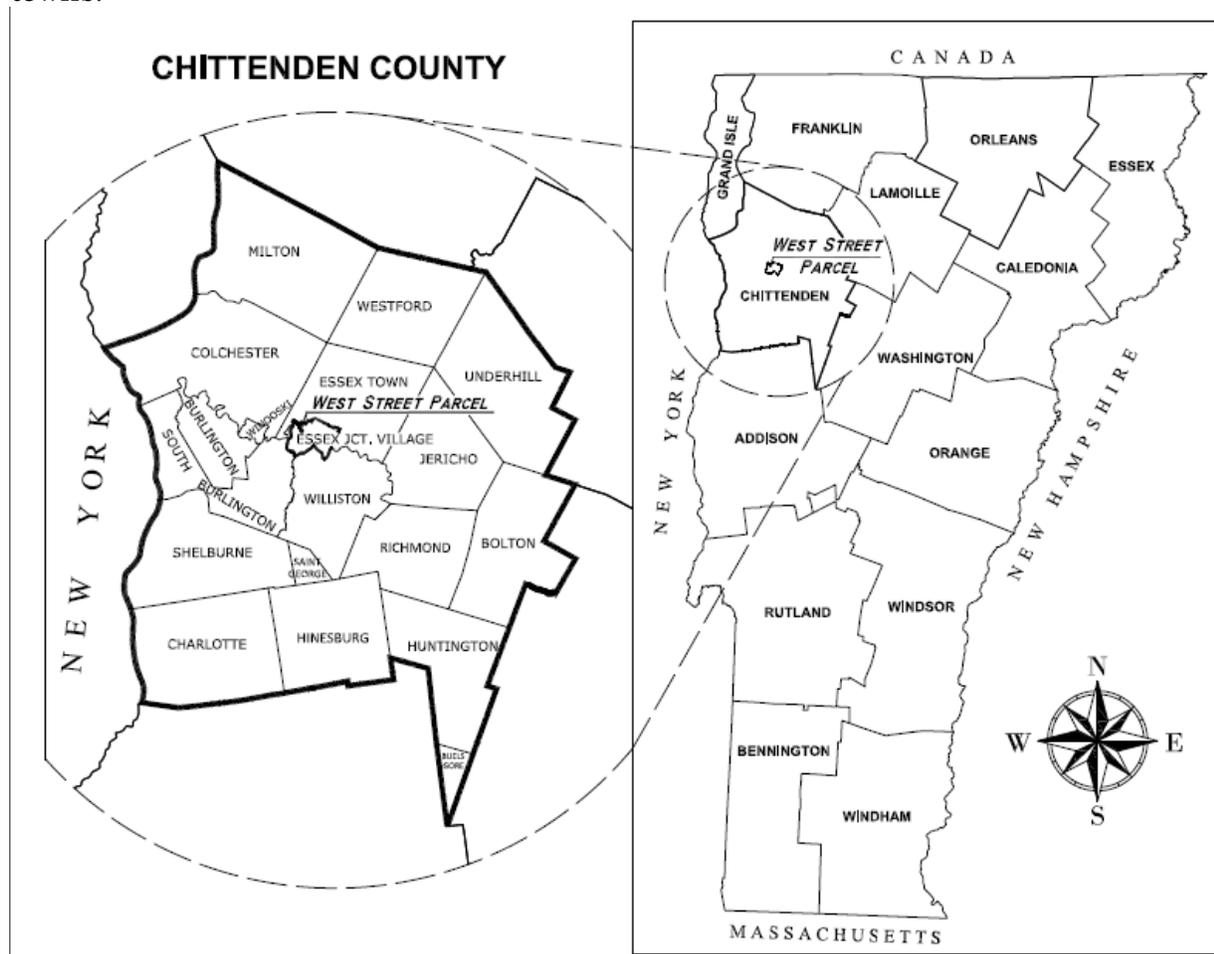
The development of LRMP for ANR lands represents a key step in providing responsible stewardship of these valued public assets. Each LRMP identifies areas where different uses are to be allowed and describes how these uses will be managed to ensure protection of natural resources.

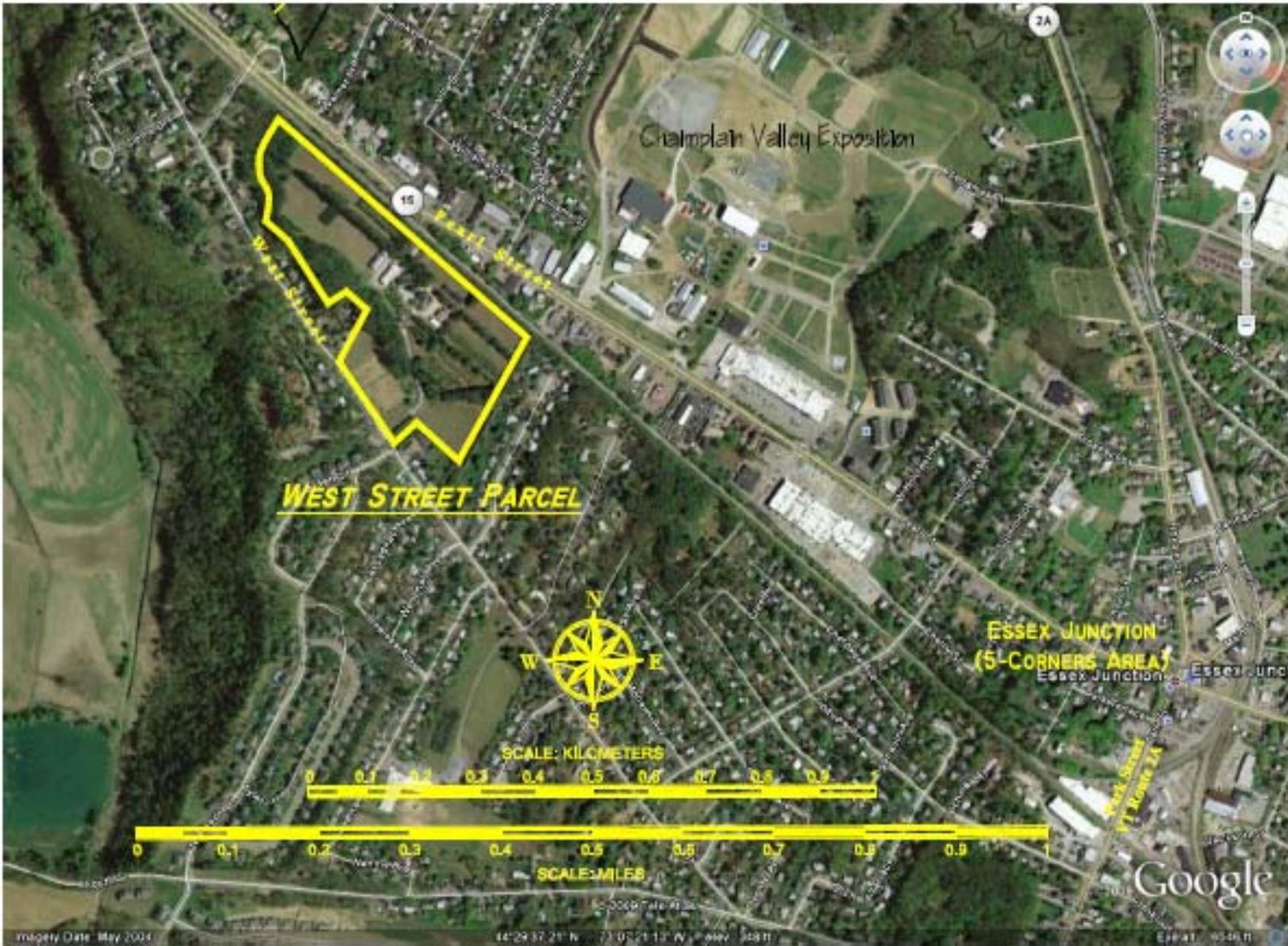


## II. PARCEL DESCRIPTION

### A. Location Information

FPR's West Street Parcel is located in the Village of Essex Junction in Chittenden County, Vermont, as shown on the maps below and following page. The parcel has approximately 29 acres of land zoned as open space, surrounded by residences on three of its borders. The New England Central Railroad operates along a single track adjacent to the northeastern border of the parcel. Route 15 runs parallel to those tracks. Part of the southern border of the parcel follows West Street. The parcel offers potential for public access and open space connections between the Champlain Valley Exposition site, a nearby park, and agricultural land which connects with the floodplain of the Winooski River, as well as other open spaces beyond these in the village and adjacent towns.





## **B. Land Use History**

This section of the long-range management plan describes the parcel's historical function within the context of the village landscape. The West Street Parcel and associated office complex are presently held by FPR in the ANR.

### **State Tree Nursery**

The parcel was acquired by FPR in the early 1920s and designated as a State Tree Nursery for the production of forest tree seedlings. The parcel offered soils conducive to the production of nursery stock, a rural landscape surrounded by forest and farm land, and easy access to the railroad for transportation of nursery stock to Vermont landowners.

*Note of interest: in 1922 the nursery was relocated to the Essex Junction site from the University of Vermont (UVM), Burlington. During the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the present athletic field known as "Centennial Field" hosted the State Tree Nursery.*

During the 1920s the Vermont Forest Service developed the West Street parcel into its primary production facility for reforestation tree seedlings. Once a working farm, the parcel evolved over time into a tree seedling production facility with irrigated fields, a nursery manager's residence, and numerous outbuildings supporting nursery operations. Several of the present day structures were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) during the 1930s.

Nursery stock production peaked in the 1950s and 1960s as abandoned farm land throughout Vermont was planted to trees under the Federal Soil Bank Act. The West Street site in conjunction with a related facility on Old Colchester Road in Essex Junction produced over 82 million tree seedlings throughout its 75-year history, reaching a peak production in 1960 of 6,637,000 seedlings.

Post Soil Bank era, 1970s through the 1980s, much of the tree seedling production was transferred to the Old Colchester Road location. During this period, the West Street nursery production areas were used by UVM and U.S. Forest Service researchers evaluating tree production methodology and genetic tree improvement. Concurrent with this change from tree production to research, FPR was folded into the newly formed ANR.

As a result of forming the ANR, the state was divided into districts with each district requiring office and workspace. The West Street site with its established buildings and infrastructure was selected as a district or regional office site for FPR, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Environmental Conservation, and Act 250.

Nursery stock production ceased in 1995 with the closure of the State Tree Nursery, and most research efforts terminated or were abandoned. Since 1995 the 29-acre parcel continues to provide office, storage, and workspace for more than 40 state employees in the ANR, and serves the Village of Essex Junction by offering garden space and low impact recreational opportunities.



## Development of Adjacent Lands

Aerial photographs shown on the following pages illustrate land use changes in this area of the village from 1962 to 2006.

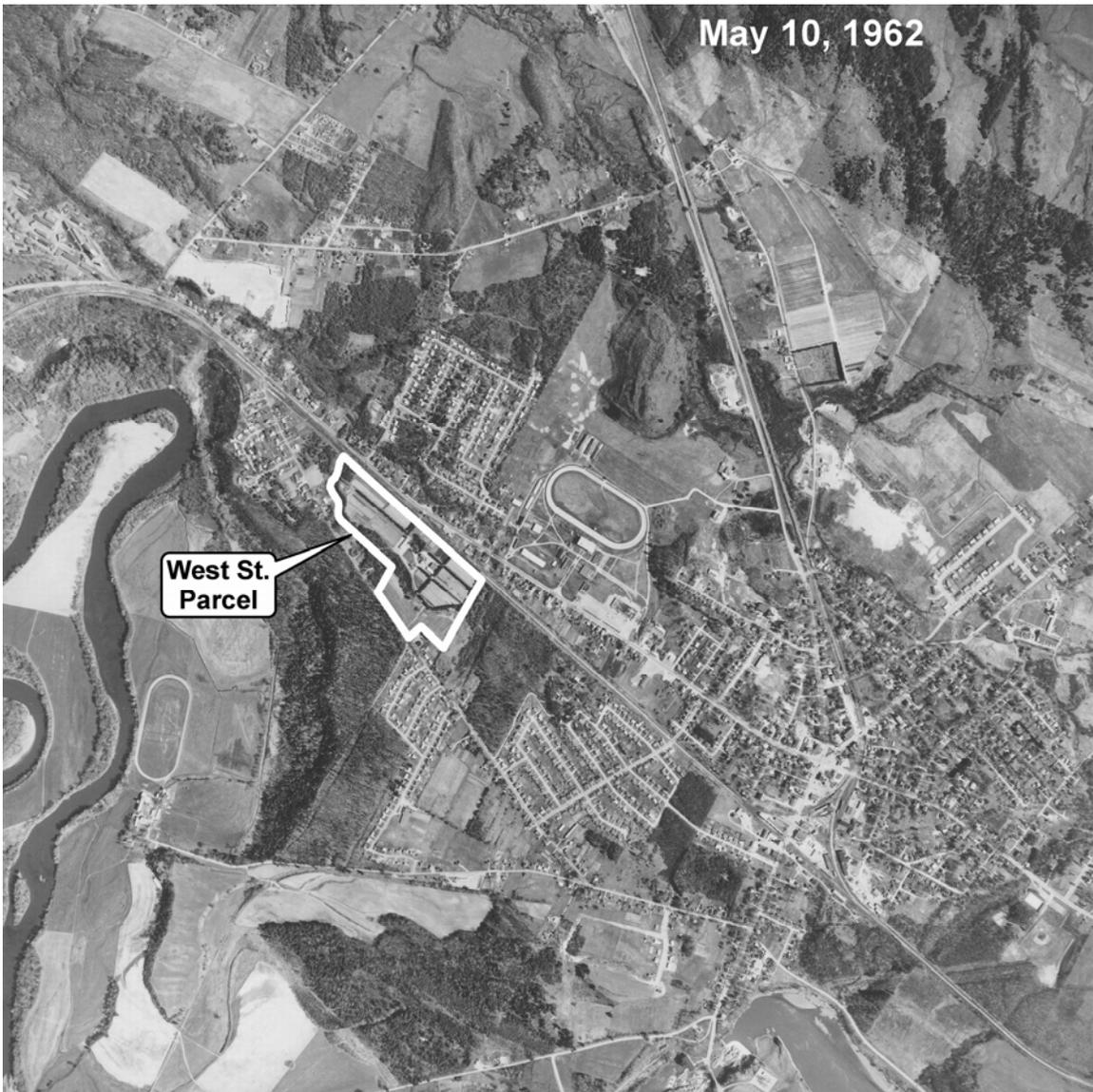
Prior to the opening of the IBM Corporation operation in the village in the mid-1950s, the lands to the south of the parcel to the Winooski River were primarily open fields and woods. As shown in the table below, increases in population of the village over the years contributed to the need for zoning regulations beginning in 1963.

### Village of Essex Junction Population Growth

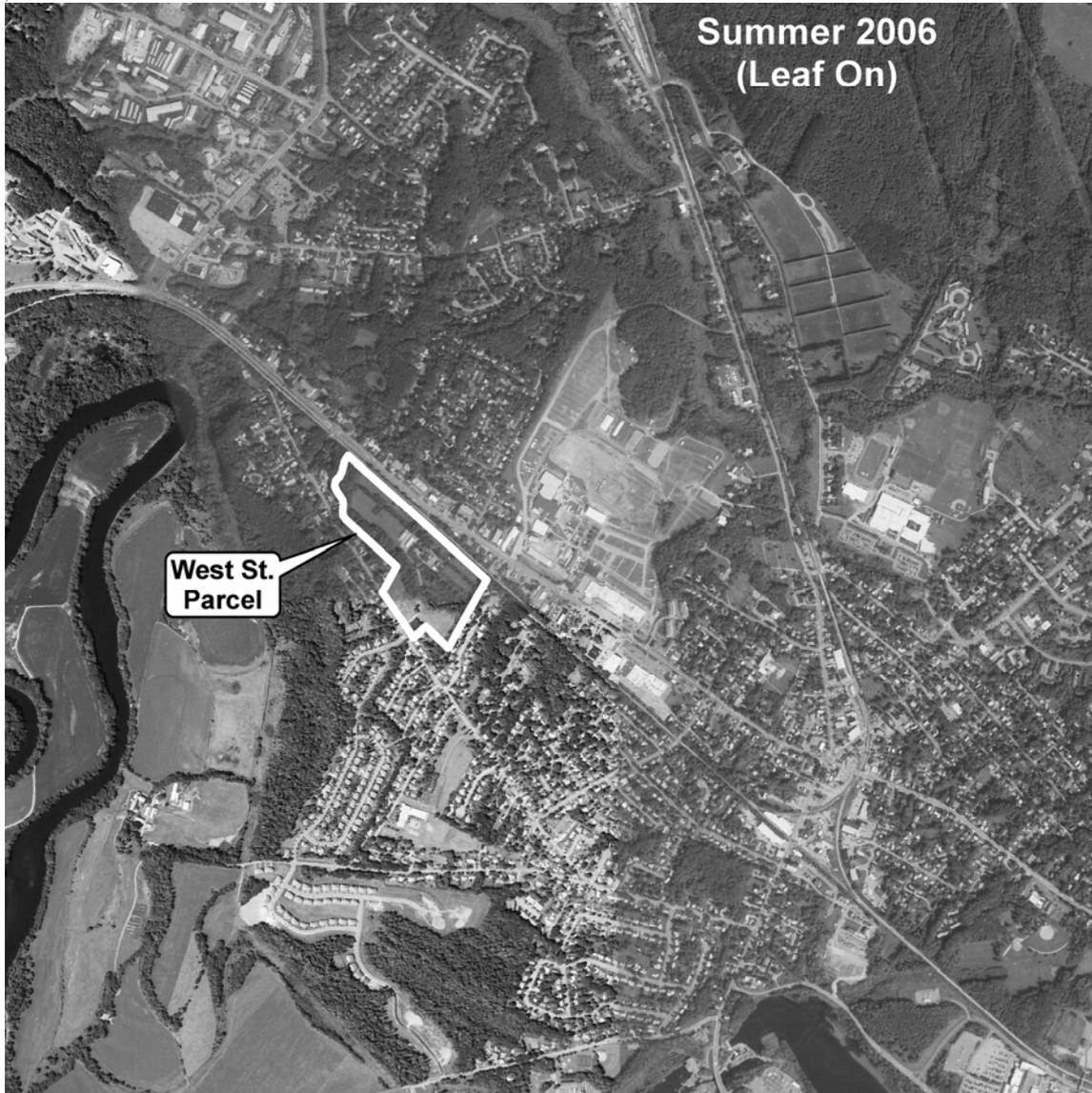
Year	% Increase	# of Residents
1890		1141
1910	9.1	1245
1920	13.2	1410
1930	14.9	1621
1940	17.3	1901
1950	44.2	2741
1960	94.8	5350
1970	21.9	6511
1980	8.0	7033
1990	19.4	8396
2000	2.3	8591

- In 1963 the village adopted zoning for residential, commercial and industrial districts. There was no separate open space designation at that time.
- In the spring of 1969, Phase I Storm Sewers were approved south of the West Street Parcel. South of the area approved for storm sewers there was a medium density residential zone and an open recreation zone closest to the Winooski River.
- By 1980, the West Street Parcel was zoned as an open land district. Surrounding it was a medium density residential zone, and south of that was a low density residential zone. The wording encouraged the use of techniques for preserving rural character and open space preservation in these two areas.
- The 1985 Village of Essex Junction Master Plan called for the area adjacent to the Whitcomb Farm's 619 acres and south of the parcel to be zoned as medium density family housing on 15,000 square-foot lots. Designation of the Whitcomb Farms acres were as follows: 180 floodplain; 189 largely wooded; 157 pasture; and 83 largely waste.





Aerial photograph of the West Street Parcel in the Village of Essex Junction, showing level of development surrounding the parcel at that time.



Aerial photograph of the West Street Parcel in the Village of Essex Junction, showing increased development surrounding the parcel since 1962. Note different season of year in this photograph compared with 1962.

## **Current Uses**

The parcel currently provides a number of functions including the following:

- The developed area of about five acres currently serves as offices, storage, workshop site, and parking for about 40 employees of the ANR and the regional Act 250 office.
- The site provides a conference room and grounds for other organizations to use, including Youth Hunter Education classes.
- Approximately two acres provide 60 community garden plots.
- One private commercial nursery enterprise grows willows for streambank stabilization on a small area of the parcel.
- The remainder of the grounds provides open space for a variety of year-round, dispersed recreational activities, including walking, bicycling, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, sledding, and “pick up” ball games, including Frisbee.

## **C. Resource Highlights**

### **Community Gardens**

The community gardens site currently provides 60 plots on about two acres where area residents have the opportunity to grow vegetables and flowers. The gardens were established in the early 1980s at the request of the Burlington Community Gardens, which was looking to expand at that time. Essex Junction Recreation and Parks Department manages the 60 existing plots through permits to users for a fee. Nearly all the existing plots are occupied.

### **Sandplain Soils**

The soils at the site are of the Adams-Windsor A&B types. These were formed by glacial outwash and consist primarily of coarse sands. Prior to the State Tree Nursery, a pine-oak-heath-sandplain forest natural community was present at the site. This is considered to be a significant natural community type in the state.

### **Rare Plant Species**

A rare sandplain plant species, a grass, was identified on the parcel a few years ago. Its location needs to be re-verified. However its specific location will not be published due to the Vermont statutes protecting threatened and endangered species.

### **Office Complex**

Currently the office complex provides 50,000 square feet of office, workshop, and storage space in the 10 buildings. The footprint of the developed area is about five acres. The Essex District Offices of the ANR, which includes staff from the departments of FPR, Environmental Conservation, and Fish and Wildlife, as well as the regional Act 250 office are located there. A recent addition to the complex is the Department of Fish and Wildlife’s office building, which contains a sizable conference room managed by the Act 250 office.



## **Historic Buildings**

As most of the structures on the parcel are at least 50 years old, they may have some historic significance. The small building where the Vermont Monitoring Cooperative is now located and the building where the FPR offices are located, formerly a barn, are of particular interest. The barn was used for storage for the nursery and now is the district office of the FPR. It was constructed by the CCC in the 1930s.

## **D. Regional Context and Other Planning Efforts**

The management strategies proposed for the parcel are compatible with plans for the village and region per the following descriptions and excerpts.

### **Village of Essex Junction Comprehensive Plan 2008**

#### **Open Space/Recreation**

The natural resources within the village contribute to the quality of life within the community and provide opportunities to preserve important environmental areas and recreational opportunities for residents. According to the village's comprehensive plan, these natural resources are important factors to consider which may limit, or direct the type of development which will occur and the overall quality of life within the community and its residents.

Open space/recreation/environmental goals in the plan include the following:

- *Preserve the natural beauty indigenous to Vermont within the Village of Essex Junction.*
- *Support the Essex Junction Recreation Department in providing a wide range of recreation and leisure opportunities for all residents of the Village.*

The land use section in the Comprehensive Plan provides a summary of existing land use and a "vision" for future development or redevelopment within the Village. In section 9.3: Land Use Goals, goal 2 highlights the importance of open space: *To promote responsible residential growth and encourage the growth and maintenance of quality residential areas.* The objective under this goal is to *conserve open space and agricultural land for future generations.*

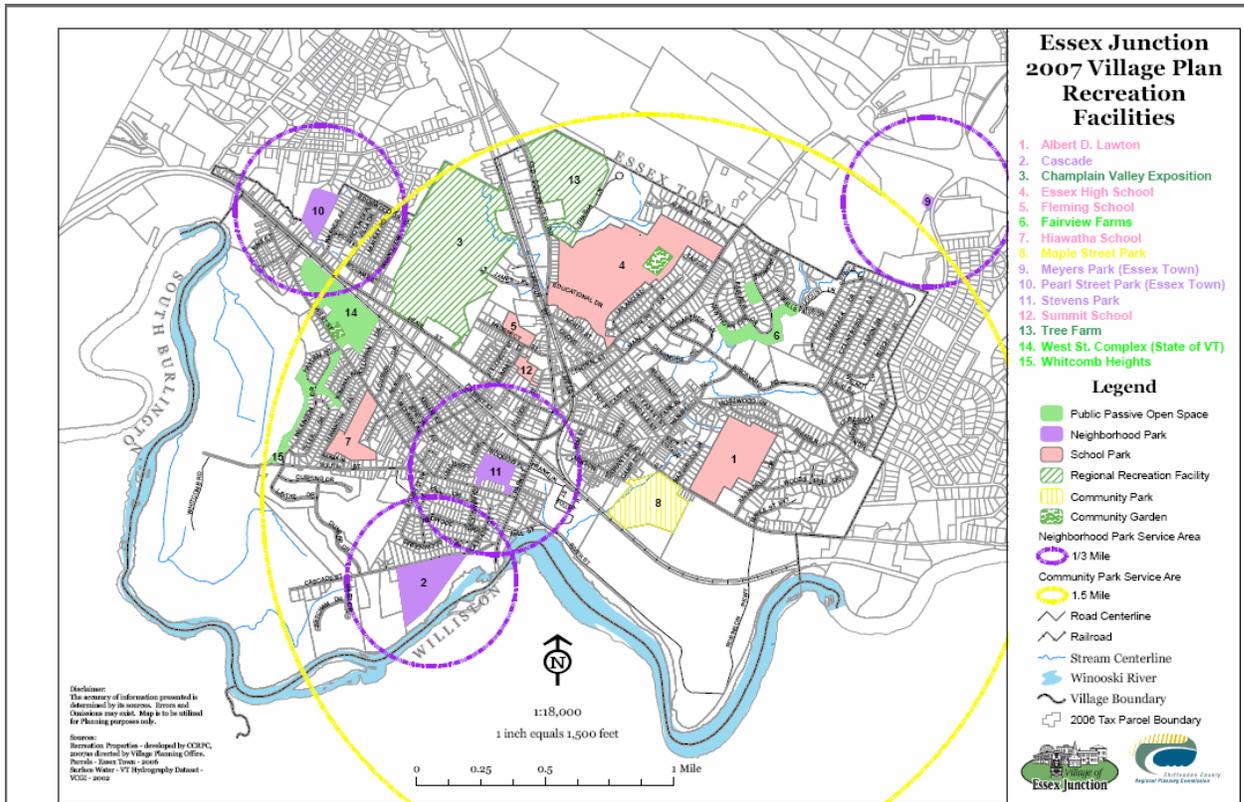
The Village's economic development goals include preserving and enhancing the appearance and historical character of the Village of Essex Junction.

### **Recreation and Park Master Plan, Essex Junction, Vermont 2007-2016**

Recreational opportunities at the West Street Parcel may be able to help Essex Junction residents with their top two interests in new recreation facilities. According to the results of a survey of village citizens in 2006, nearly 40 percent said they would be willing to support more walking, hiking, and cross-country ski trails as well as more bicycle and pedestrian paths with new Essex Junction tax dollars.



Very similar to a map produced for the Recreation and Park Master Plan, the Recreation Facilities map produced by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) below indicates the position of the West Street Parcel in the context of other recreation and open spaces in the village.



The West Street Parcel is shown as #14 above, along with other recreational facilities in the village.

## Town of Essex Open Space Plan 2008

The Essex Open Space Plan (OSP) is intended to guide local conservation and resource protection efforts for the next five to ten years in both the Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction. It was created with the expectation that it can be formally adopted as an amendment to the town plan. Some of the benefits of open space, according to the OSP, include the following:

- *Open spaces serve critical environmental functions for maintaining air and water quality and ecological diversity, at no cost to the community. They moderate climate, filter pollutants, and provide habitat for a variety of native plant and animal species.*
- *Parks, trail networks and other opportunities for outdoor recreation provide for a healthier community and a better quality of life.*

- *Open spaces make the community a more desirable place to live – increasing property values and attracting new homebuyers.*
- *Open space provides important economic benefits – agriculture, tourism and outdoor recreation are big business. Land conservation is often less expensive than land development – open land requires few municipal services. “Cost of service” studies consistently show that open land generates more in taxes than it costs in services, especially when compared to residential and commercial development.*
- *Open space conservation also promotes more land- and energy-efficient patterns of development.*
- *Open space is an integral component of long-term, sustainable community development that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.*

### **Forestland**

Forestland is also mentioned as important in the OSP. Forested areas help limit stormwater runoff, soil erosion, and may serve as “carbon sinks” that trap and reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Although the parcel is not forested overall, wooded areas are present and the plan indicates that some re-forestation of the site could be an important management technique to be demonstrated.

### **Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission Open Space Plan**

The CCRPC’s OSP Phase I inventory classifies open space areas in one of three major types: Working Landscapes, Natural Areas, and Outdoor Recreational Areas. The West Street Parcel was classified as a Natural Area in the OSP. However, the community gardens on the parcel offer active management for cultivation or harvest as aspects of Working Landscapes. Since the closing of the State Tree Nursery, some areas of the parcel are being used to promote the physical, social, and spiritual well-being of people as aspects of Outdoor Recreational Areas.

In Phase III of the OSP, the CCRPC is developing a Natural Areas Strategic Plan, and connectivity of open lands across the landscape is an important element of that plan.

### **Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission Regional Plan**

The West Street Parcel’s compatibility with policies of the CCRPC’s regional plan is illustrated as follows:

- *Municipalities, regional entities and the state should preserve and protect existing designated open-space areas providing natural areas functions and be guided by open space plans and strategies;*
- *Public and private open space stewards should cooperatively and periodically inventory and evaluate their existing conservation priorities and management practices to assess the need for actions to enhance the natural area system in the county;*



- *Public and private open-space stewards should work cooperatively to promote greater connectivity between conserved lands to establish and enhance an interconnected, natural area system in the county;*
- *Chittenden County residents and visitors should be served by facilities and programs that are planned and designed to provide opportunities for recreational activities that are in demand by people of all ages and physical abilities, accessible, and affordable;*
- *When appropriate, recreation facilities and areas in Chittenden County should be connected by a network of pedestrian/bicycle paths and be within walking distance of residential areas and employment centers.*



## III. PUBLIC INPUT

### Introduction

The public participation process for the West Street Parcel's LRMP was conducted in accordance with ANR policies, procedures, and guidelines. Public involvement is a broad term for a variety of methods through which the general public has input into public land management decisions.

The ANR is committed to a planning process which offers the opportunity for all residents and stakeholders to participate. These include letters, surveys, personal comments, telephone calls, e-mails and more formal methods such as public meetings and workshops.

All public comments concerning the future stewardship of the West Street Parcel were considered by the Planning Team in developing this long-range management plan and will continue to be considered by the Essex Stewardship Team as management activities occur. There will be future opportunities for the public to stay involved with other planning efforts that take place and if major amendments to the plan are proposed.

### Public Involvement Activities

- **Informal Advisory Group**

This group met in August, 2008 to discuss ideas for how to involve the public in the process of developing a plan. Besides ANR staff, the village recreation director, a planning commission member, and a representative of a proposed dog park group participated.

- **Initial Public Meeting**

On October 8, 2008 a public meeting was held at the Hiawatha School in the Village of Essex Junction to solicit public comments about future management of the parcel. These comments are shown in the appendix.

- **Solicitation of Public Comments in Local Papers and Media**

Newspaper articles were published regarding the meetings. The questions posed at the public meeting were asked of readers of the *Essex Reporter* and the Front Porch Forum, and these comments are included with others in the appendix.

- **Website**

Information was posted on the FPR website which detailed the proposed planning process, public comments, and the draft plan.

- **Public Meeting to Introduce the Draft Plan**

A meeting for the purpose of presenting the draft LRMP for the West Street Parcel was held on \_\_\_\_\_. In advance of the meeting, copies of the full draft were made available at the village and town offices and on the ANR Lands website. People who had actively participated in the process were notified of the availability



of the draft. A 30-day public comment period followed the meeting. A summary of public comments received is included in Appendix A.

### **Future Opportunities for Public Input**

Future opportunities may be announced in a number of ways, including the ANR Lands website, notification of towns and regional commissions, and in local media. Also, the Annual Stewardship Plan (ASP) prepared for the West Street Parcel is available for review by July 1 of each year at the Essex Regional ANR office. The ASP outlines major activities to be carried out by the stewardship staff each year.



## **IV. MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

### ***Vision***

The West Street Parcel provides open space for public outdoor recreation and for demonstrating examples of natural resources management techniques in an emerging urban environment.

### **Management Actions**

The use areas described below are shown on the map on the next page. FPR will work cooperatively with the village and other partners to help bring the vision to reality in various sites on the parcel.

### **Forestry and Other Natural Resources Demonstration Areas**

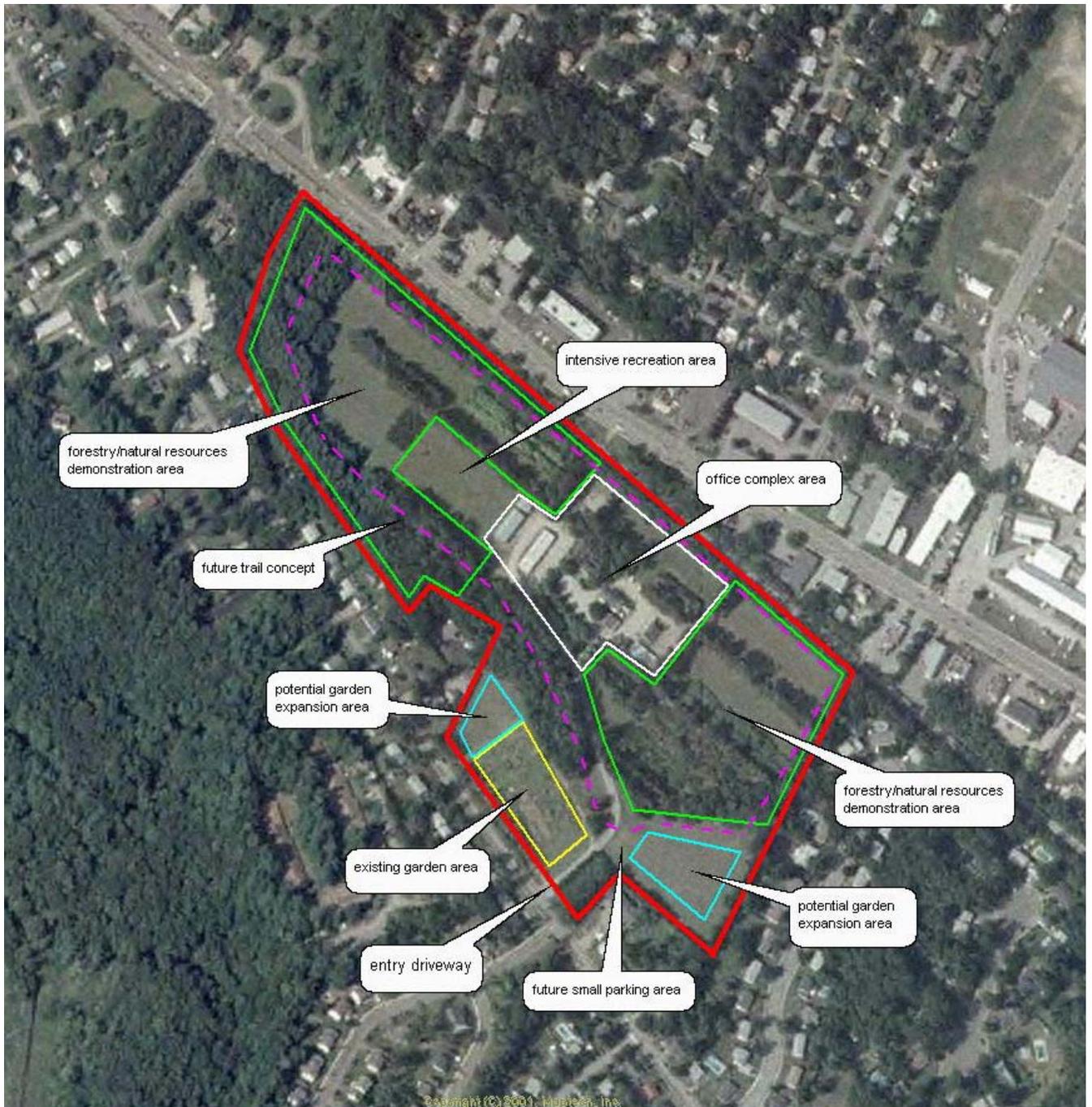
#### Discussion

A variety of issues of urban environments can be solved through the use of forestry and natural resource related practices. The parcel is optimally suited to provide places where people can learn about a variety of natural resource management strategies on the parcel.

#### Management actions:

- Using both proven and new techniques, reduce or discourage further growth of the many invasive exotic plants growing throughout the parcel.
- Stormwater management, such as rain gardens and rain barrels.
- Restoration of tree and plant species in a small remnant sandplain forest area.
- Limited area for growth of tree and plant species that may be needed, such as hemlock if the hemlock wooly adelgid jeopardizes the species in Vermont.
- Limited area for growth of plants such as alder or willow for a biomass heating plant on the site or streambank stabilization projects off-site.





Map of Proposed Management Actions for the West Street Parcel

## **Opportunities for Recreation**

### Discussion

The size of the parcel could allow it to accommodate a variety of recreational opportunities.

Many people who use the West Street Parcel for recreation appreciate the unstructured and peaceful experience that it provides, while others use the parcel for a variety of recreational experiences.

A recent change in mowing patterns has limited the options for “pick-up” field sports such as soccer. The areas used for this in the past have been allowed to fill in with vegetation.

Some residents have voiced the need for a dog park in the village—a one to two-acre fenced-in area where dogs can socialize with each other off leash. Some say the West Street Parcel offers suitable characteristics for a dog park.

Any connection between a proposed trail along the northern border of the parcel will need to be coordinated with the New England Central Railroad Company.

### Management actions:

- Continue allowing non-motorized, dispersed year-round recreational uses of the parcel, with monitoring for increased usage and potential user conflicts, dog behavior, and need for bathrooms, for example.
- Create a formal, mixed use, non-motorized trail around the perimeter of the parcel and coordinate this effort with the Route 15 Corridor transit plans by the village. The portion along the northeastern boundary of the parcel may be wheelchair accessible. The Land and Water Conservation Fund or Vermont Recreation Trails grants may be helpful in establishing the trail.
- Investigate the feasibility of siting a dog park on the parcel, which is a high priority for the village in its Recreation and Park Master Plan. Such a park could be considered for the Intensive Recreation Area shown on the map in coordination with the village and oversight by Essex Junction Recreation and Parks Department or other organization.
- The parcel could provide unstructured play areas for children. The importance of this type of play is demonstrated through programs such as the Vermont sponsored initiative “No Child Left Inside.” The parcel is fairly close to a local school which has a developed playground.

## **Community Gardens**

The sandy soils found on the parcel limit the extent of gardens due to the need for irrigation. The village installed a stand pipe for this purpose. Management actions include the following:



- Continue licensing the 60 existing garden plots to Essex Junction Recreation and Parks to administer.
- Respond to community interest to expand the garden plots in the future onto suitable places on the parcel.

## **Office Complex**

### Discussion

Currently the parcel provides office, workshop, and storage space for the regional offices of the ANR and Act 250. Staff members at the Essex Office have been meeting to discuss and propose ways to manage the parcel and their lives in a more energy efficient manner. Through the efforts of their “Going Green at Essex” Committee, they have documented many opportunities to manage the facilities and grounds in more environmentally sound ways.

### Management actions:

- Evaluate the potential for energy savings in the buildings, including solar panels, programmable thermostats, low-flow toilets, and planting of shade trees, as well as other forestry demonstration projects listed above.
- Conduct a feasibility study and find funding options for a single woodchip-burning furnace for all the buildings.
- Change how staff travels to and from work.
- Continue to inventory, map and document historic features.
- Monitor and document condition of historic buildings using standardized forms and photo documentation.
- Support efforts to conduct further research on the history of the area.

## **Ongoing Management Activities**

Many additional management actions will need to be done to keep the parcel in safe and usable condition, including the following:

- Mow grasses and shrubs in rotation to decrease potential for erosion and to maintain informal grassy trails.
- Remove hazardous trees as needed.



## **Process for Proposing New Uses for the West Street Parcel**

The following process will be used when any entity or organization outside ANR proposes new uses for the parcel. Input from any and all interested parties will be considered.

- Describe the proposed use, reasons why it is needed, and potential users and benefits.
- Explain how the use is compatible with ANR and FPR land uses and policies.
- Describe any significant natural resources on the parcel that could be affected by the proposed use, such as sandplain soils and rare species, and how impacts will be avoided or minimized.
- Describe potential conflicts with other users and how these conflicts will be minimized or resolved.
- Describe any permits for the use that may be required and how and by whom they will be obtained. These may include Act 250, local, and stormwater permits.
- Explain who will be responsible for construction, maintenance, signage, parking, enforcement, etc. and how long-term management and monitoring will be done. A stable funding source for long-term management should be secured.

ANR will make the decision regarding proposed new uses based on the above criteria as well as compatibility with mission, management principles and goals, and financial considerations.



## V. References

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## **VI. APPENDICES**

- A. Public Involvement Materials, Comments, and Responses**
- B. Authorization to Plan and Manage**
- C. Summary of Policies and Guidelines**
- D. Overarching Management Standards**
- E. Acronyms**



## Appendix A.

### Public Involvement Materials, Comments, and Responses

The ANR offered a series of public involvement opportunities with respect to the long-range management planning process for the West Street Parcel. Hundreds of comments were received through emails, letters and personal contacts after an initial public meeting. All comments were typed up and then summarized in this section of the appendix. Another comment period followed the presentation of the draft plan.

The following is a copy of the handout provided at the public meeting held at the Hiawatha School, a neighborhood school, on October 8, 2008. The questions were also published in the local paper the *Essex Reporter* and on a local on-line discussion room the Front Porch Forum.

#### Welcome to the West Street Parcel Planning Meeting!

Staff members from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) thank you for coming to this meeting tonight. We appreciate your taking the time to share your thoughts about this parcel. This meeting provides the opportunity for you to tell us your vision of how the 29-acre West Street Parcel should be managed and the values you feel should be protected and promoted. We expect to hear from many citizens and interest groups and anticipate that some interests will conflict. The district staff will engage in discussions with all parties in pursuit of management strategies which support reasonable levels of resource use and enjoyment.

Your comments will be taken as advice by ANR staff members who must make decisions about the public good which span this and future generations. As a result, our public involvement process was not designed to institute "majority-rule" management of public land. However, every effort will be made to include in the plan suggestions which are compatible with the ANR mission statement and management principles, along with those that are fiscally realistic. We encourage your comments and offer a number of ways in which you can make them:

- \* Tonight, on a flipchart individually or within a small group;
- \* Tonight, turn in a comments sheet; and/or
- \* Via mail or email over the next 45 days—until November 24.

As a plan is developed, supporting information will be available at the following website address:

**<http://www.vtfpr.org/lands/WestStreetComplex.cfm>**

Thank you again for attending. We anticipate that your feedback will help us do a better job of managing these lands for the people of Vermont and our visitors.



## **West Street Parcel, Village of Essex Junction Plan Scoping Questions, October 2008**

The questions posed on these two pages are designed to prompt your thinking about the 29-acre West Street Parcel in the Village of Essex Junction. You are welcome to turn in any comments you have to us tonight or keep this handout for reference. We offer an additional 45 days for you to make formal comments about this parcel and the process for developing a plan for managing it. Please send comments to:

Linda Henzel  
[linda.henzel@state.vt.us](mailto:linda.henzel@state.vt.us)  
802-241-3688  
Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation  
103 South Main Street, Waterbury, VT 05671-0601

*Thank you!*

As a plan is developed, supporting information will be available at the following website address: <http://www.vtfpr.org/lands/WestStreetComplex.cfm>

- **What is the single most important value you place on the West Street Parcel?**
- **How do you use the West Street Parcel and its lands?**
- **In which town do you live?**
- **How might you see this parcel bring used in the future to meet an important need in the community?**
- **Please share any suggestions you have for improving public involvement for land held by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.**
- **Please offer any other comments you have here or attach additional pages.**

**To be included in future announcements about this planning process, please give your name, address or email address.**



## **West Street Parcel Long-Range Management Plan Comments Received at the Public Meeting, October 8, 2008**

The following comments were generated via a brainstorming exercise at the October 8, 2008 meeting by people in four breakout groups facilitated by ANR staff.

### **Single Most Important Value**

- Low impact recreation area (e.g. cross-country skiing, exercise, snow sliding/shoeing etc.)
- Noise buffer (concerns with increased traffic if developed)
- Path connections (West St. to Pearl St.)
- Place for peace and quiet (sit, read, etc.)
- Wildlife (endangered species)
- Open/green space (unmaintained + undeveloped land)
  - o Open undeveloped space in dense development
- Community gardens (easy access by elderly – increased demand due to economy)
- Best use for entire community
- Dog walking
- Nature appreciation (scenic)
- Safety (don't have to worry about traffic and it is clean)
- What a forestry district office should look like
- Inviting environment for public doing state business
- Increased property value for abutters (higher tax base for town)
- Non-specific/directed (e.g. baseball fields)
- "Island" of free space
- Balloon landing area
- Office space
- Passive/pedestrian recreation
- User friendliness (not the same as other state parks)
- Unrestricted access (paths changing where people walk)
- Health values – physical, spiritual

### **Current Uses**

- Gardening
- Easily accessible open space/green space/undeveloped area for Whitcomb woods residents
- Remote-control airplanes
- Kites
- Children & adults
- Walking dogs (off-leash)
- Meeting community members
- Jogging/exercise/walking/running
- State office use & storage
- Pearl St. path/shortcut
- Cross country skiing/snow shoeing/sledding
- Bird/wildlife watching
- Picking raspberries
- Hot air balloon launch
- Bag pipes practice
- Frisbee (people/dogs)
- Golf practice
- Biking
- Soccer/baseball



- Safe play area for kids
- Photography
- Transient camp site
- Habitat for deer, birds & other animals (leave it alone, as is)
- Drivers Ed.
- Elderly housing nearby
- West St. park is unique because pets aren't allowed at other parks

### **Potential Future Uses**

- Develop tax base (residential/business)
- Keeping open land & green space
  - o Raised garden beds
- Expansion of community gardens
- Lease or turn over to municipal government
- Outdoor skating rink
- Composting
- Municipal uses (fire, police, etc.)
- Storm water use/drainage
- No housing/business development on any part of the land
- Athletic/recreation fields (organized)
- Fenced dog park ( a need in the village)
- Maintain state presence
  - o Like having staff on site (related to safety)
- Non-profit uses (club, girl scouts)
- Rail stop/commuter rail/bus
- Site for community events
- Increased public awareness about site availability + opportunity
- Continue increase in rec. use especially walking (low impact)
- School-based research/education site for schools (ecology, biology, botany wildlife)
- Public education
- Community volunteers to help
- Value of property greater than sum of its money worth
- Commercial value of trees (portion of property)
- Small play structure for children (creative playground – Waterbury example)
- Gazebo structure (off to the side, not in the middle)
- Change nothing
- Wind turbine
- Alternative/clean energies
- Community cost share to assist with upkeep
- State office space
- Rope course
- Frisbee/golf
- Safe recreation space (Central Park example)
- Noise buffer (cedar pines hedge) for West St. neighborhood
- Non-specific recreation space (not Maple St. park)
- Historical value
- Don't over-organize the space
- Don't want more traffic from development on West St.

**Issues** - Nomenclature for how to characterize the ownership



## Summary of Public Comments

### Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation West Street Parcel Long-Range Management Plan

#### Edited Comments Received after the October 2008 Public Meeting and Organized by Topic

The following are excerpts from comments submitted as a result of the planning process after the October meeting. Comments that pertain to similar subjects were grouped together. The original, unedited comments were posted on the website for two months and are now available upon request.

#### **Community Gardens**

As I say in the philosophy statement for the gardens, “First and foremost, the community gardens help us build community, and great friendships have grown up along with the vegetables. Many gardeners give their extra vegetables to the food shelf or Meals on Wheels, as well as to friends and family.”

Many of the community gardeners have annually added many cubic yards of compost, leaves, or manure to the gardens. I'm confident that the quality of the soil is improving under our stewardship. We are committed to an ongoing program of education in soil improvement through the addition of organic materials.

As we work to combat global warming, the increase in local gardens will be an important part of the effort to reduce transport costs for food, and to increase flexibility in our overall energy expenditure.

Since we have no area to garden at our home and along with the companionship of fellow gardeners, this area is really great. Gardening there not only provides pleasure and outside connections, but it also is a significant source of food in our household and for many other people.

I have had a garden there for at least the last 10 years. I help coordinate the gardens and write a garden blog for the Essex Junction Parks and Recreation Department.

It has served as a garden spot for many gardeners who otherwise would be unable to garden.

I am a member of the Blue Spruce Grange and we maintain two plots at the Community Gardens. The produce from these plots is used to supplement the Chittenden County Emergency Food Shelf and the Essex Area Meals on Wheels with fresh vegetables.

We also like that it is a community garden. What about raising food and passing it to the Heavenly Food Pantry...a great opportunity for the high school and families to impact the garden.



School gardens could be a possibility here also.

There could be a Community Green House and a Community Canning Center to go along with the gardens. It would be great to be able to start your plants in the green house, grow them in your plot, and then can your produce all at the same location. Maybe the garage could be turned into the Canning Center and a green house could be built close to the gardens.

I have a friend with a garden and I am allowed to get vegetables from it. Other people also share their produce with our elderly residents.

I like seeing families at the community gardens.

We could have a community composting area.

Continue to use as community gardens, perhaps even expand this use to accommodate tough economic times so that people can have access to healthy fresh produce.

The community garden should be expanded and allow the public to practice organic gardening.

### **Other Partnership Opportunities**

The Village of Essex Junction would like to be involved with management of the parcel no matter whose ownership it's in.

The village is pursuing control of the Route 15 corridor—taking it from VTrans' oversight.

Looking ahead to the days of peak oil, it would be nice to know that we have sufficient lands in reserve for growing food for those who live in the village and town and perhaps a farmers' market.

I use the services of ANR, in particular the Forestry Division.

We use the buildings for meetings with the public, governmental agencies, and nongovernmental organizations.

Storage of trees, shrubs, and other plants for restoration projects. These plants are in cold storage, but some are temporarily planted on the grounds also for future planting elsewhere.

I would like to see the green fields planted with some type of crop or garden vegetable crop that could utilize the open areas here.

I visit the Fish and Wildlife Department. It's handy having them so close.



I would like to see the former maintenance shop and its staff restored which helped keep state vehicles maintained at a cost savings to the ANR.

Improve the functions and condition of the pitch pine habitat to provide an example for the public and a demonstration site for future restoration projects.

It would be great if the organization can turn it into a learning environment for school (Elem., Middle, HS, colleges: St. Mike's and UVM) to learn and appreciate our natural resources.

Demonstration area for energy conservation and wise land use/management

Provides meeting space for the public, government, and NGOs.

## **Housing**

The state should consider providing some housing units for lower and moderate income Vermonters for this parcel. Also consider the following: 1) longer-range needs of the state, and its residents. Young families who are too busy working multiple jobs to afford their homes may not have the time to detail their needs for more housing; 2) Vermont's and Chittenden County's exceptionally low vacancy rate due to too few housing units on the market, which is keeping the costs of housing high; and 3) the economic benefits to Essex Junction, and to the state, if this land were partially developed.

This site—near schools and public transportation, retail and pharmacies, places of worship and doctors—in the heart of a neighborhood-friendly area of the village, is an ideal place for some in-fill development.

Consider this land for some reasonable amount of housing development that includes a mix of housing types (rental and homeownership) as well as prices affordable to a range of households.

The need for more housing units in Essex Junction is great. The regional plan called for an additional 504 units of housing to be built in Essex Junction between 2000 and 2010, 50 of which should be affordable to moderate income households, and 50 of which should be affordable to lower-income households. This parcel of land could help Essex reach that goal.

We, as residents of Whitcomb Woods across the street, do not want to see any housing development. There is already enough traffic and our local school is full.

This piece of property is beautiful, but under utilized. I am in favor of the community gardens. I think the property should be divided with the entrance road as the dividing point. The western half would remain with the ANR and the community gardens. I would like to see the eastern half given to Essex Junction and then Essex Junction put in more senior housing much like that located off Lime Kiln Road. With our population aging, there will be a great need for more senior style housing. This site is good because it is within walking distance to many amenities.



I know there are advocates for developing all or some of the site into housing. I believe the community would be better served, again with a long term perspective, in maintaining the open space and perhaps encourage recreational and/or agricultural use of the property. I was raised in Essex Junction and have witnessed the expansive growth of housing in areas adjacent to West Street. It appears most of the privately held open or wooded land in close proximity to West Street is being developed for housing. This state-owned open space is a valuable resource both now and in the future.

It is an oasis in a sea of houses.

If you put in housing, it would change our whole outlook on living here. West Street is already full of traffic going to IBM. If we put in another housing development (there are so many that are vacant right now), we just add to the traffic and become like a busy city.

### **Development**

One idea under consideration by the village trustees and staff is to place commuter parking on the property (park and ride) for those walking along the proposed walkway by the railroad; also to construct a road through the property to connect Rte. 15 and West Street with access to a park and ride from either direction.

Development is not the only thing important to this community.

Open space is regarded by the village as underutilization of the parcel's potential in its downtown core.

I think it's fine the way it is. Maybe it can remain as is. I definitely don't want to see it developed.

It has been said by our politicians we should develop it to raise our tax base. I disagree. In raising our tax base they will just find new ways to spend the money. In the meantime we will have lost a valuable natural area to this community that we can never recover.

I have been a resident of Essex Junction since 1990. Since then, the area between South Street and Cascade Street, as well as the Whitcomb Woods area across from the state offices, was a mixture of farmland and woodland. It has now pretty much been developed. One last patch of undeveloped private land, off West Street, is slated for development and is being portrayed as a shining example of growth in a planned residential area. The West Street Parcel is about the only green space left in this part of the village. Its importance to locals is quite obvious by the steady parade of people and their dogs that go past our office windows every day.

To allow the development of this last patch of green space to housing development, parking areas, soccer fields (as was done with the Grove Street Tree Nursery), etc, would be a mistake and a disservice to the people in this neighborhood. I see how



much this property is used and how increasingly important it has become over the past 18 years as public green space.

The village would prefer to own the land so they have more control over uses allowed there and the experience of residents and visitors. Also want to know the process by which the state would give the parcel to the village.

I would not like to see the land at 111 West Street sold for future development. If we come up with a plan for a “going green” we could set an example to the public that others may follow.

The most essential uses from my standpoint are that the property continues to be state land that effectively functions as a park, and that the many benefits of community gardens remain a part of the overall use. There are a number of activities and changes that could be compatible with that use. Selling the land for any other use would be an irreversible decision that would add congestion to an already congested area, and deprive the community and the state of any other uses in the future. The most important community need that this parcel meets is for a relaxing, refreshing, restorative natural area that can be shared by many.

We have so many tight developments and so little open land. I would hate to see this land be built on.

If you must develop, please do it where the current state offices are behind the trees so that so many of our neighbors can afford to garden and spend time with our community. There is no other avenue for all of us to get to know each other these days and it would also be a detriment to our senior housing behind us who make our community more beautiful and our environment clean.

Essex Junction is a great community but has a great deal of untaxable property either owned by the state or by non-profit groups (i.e. churches, Champlain Valley Exposition, etc.). Using a portion of the West Street property for development would not have a negative impact on the open space that is available within Essex Junction’s 4.6 square miles.

I’d like to see it go on as open land, maybe even used in conjunction with a private entity interested in ecological issues. I like the diversity edge, a forest, and open land in the village. There’s a need for places like this these days.

This property could be the perfect location for a new fire department, connecting West Street and Rte. 15, as the present location is too congested.

The parcel could be used in expanding the village offices, especially if the merger takes place someday.

The town has sewer and water capacity, proper infrastructure, and zoning to support smart growth.



## **Open Space**

It's a centrally located park in a densely populated village. It has diverse tree and shrub species and a series of large open fields that provide different habitats and edges for a wide variety of animals. It's an oasis that can't be replaced or duplicated.

It's the last area in the village that projects the natural beauty of Vermont.

Open space in the close quarters of Essex Junction is a luxury, and I think it's important to keep it open for the public to enjoy. It would be a shame to be forced to travel to another town in order to enjoy a walk in nature.

While we are in a busy village, the open space at the tree farm reminds us that we are still in Vermont where the preservation of open space has been highly valued.

We walk through there in the evenings and are happy that there is animal habitat close by. We saw nesting hawks on one occasion.

It is a relief to my eyes to see some open space and the community gardens there. I enjoy it every day as I drive past.

I see birds zipping in and out of the trees and feasting on sunflowers; foxes and their babies watching me walk or drive by; a Cooper's hawk coming to drink at the old fountain; and the brilliant maples and tamarack trees in the fall. I hear cardinals and pine siskins singing away. There is always a quiet place to be found. It is a jewel.

The most important value is that the property is vastly different than all surrounding properties, and in reality at least a ½ mile or mile radius.

We enjoy the quiet solitude in the midst of suburbia. It's a large piece of open public space in a fairly population dense area and an ever increasing urban environment. The U.S. Forest Service predicts Vermont's urban landscape will increase from 2% of the land base to 8% within 50 years. More and more of Vermont will begin to look like the metro Burlington area. The West Street Parcel and its associated open space will continue to be a very precious resource.

There's an irreplaceable value of a green area like this parcel that is utilized freely, wisely, and well by people in the community, contributing to their overall health and well-being.

This is the only place in this end of the village where people have access to such a natural area. Over the years I've seen foxes and wild turkeys as well as woodchucks, squirrels, chipmunks, skunks, crows, swallows, hawks, and more.

So many open spaces in Essex Junction have been changed to condos or houses. This changes the whole community. The land has always been a good neighbor.

I have used the open space to forage for seeds and plant life to use for the E.L.F. program at Hiawatha.



I very much enjoy the “quietness” we have.

There are too few open areas in the entire community. We need to help keep what we have.

I love to see the foliage change there as the diverse tree species make it spectacular. It is large enough of an area that you can feel like you’re far away from concrete and asphalt. The trees buffer the traffic sounds and you can still smell the pine needles and maple leaves so it is a multisensory experience. It is also a community area.

Conservation – The property provides open space and has a state record tree, a pitch pine. It is one of the few remaining examples of a pitch pine habitat left in Essex Junction.

When I was a child the area to the east of me was wild, and now Killoran Drive is there. There was a small farm on West Street, now occupied by a driveway for the Hiawatha School. The Whitcomb Woods on West Street were woods, and are now filled with developments and senior housing. Similar development has closed off open space all over Essex Junction. This is the last open area in this area of the village, with meadows and woods, wildlife, and the smell of leaf mold

I enjoy the open space and solitude offered by being somewhat isolated from the more urban areas of Essex Junction.

Enjoy open space and grounds to walk in to relieve stress.

I love this parcel and would hate to see it change. In fact I can’t think of a better combination of uses – gardens, open fields, tree areas, ANR buildings/staff, etc. and in the middle of dense neighborhoods and commercial area to boot.

I think it is very important that this remain as public open space in an area so heavily developed. I think the public should be welcomed to use the facilities for public meetings, hiking, dog-walking, and community organic gardening. This is public land and the public should be welcomed to use it (appropriately, of course).

We need the community space for our children to continue to enjoy, for our well-being, for our safety.

I would sure hate to see the character of this area radically changed. If it can’t be left alone, then I’d prefer to see some use of it made in the natural resource area, (i.e., more garden space, growing trees again) or public recreation.

I love to walk the fields (great mosses there) and the woods all the way back to the western boundary. I take pictures around the property and others do too.

We have become close to the seniors and other folks who grow their gardens there and play there and ski and walk there. It is the only place I feel that my children will get to know "wilderness" any more. The wildlife is beautifully serene and quiet. It is the home of many hawks, birds, fox and other animals.



I think this property is being used in an ideal way, where everyone has access to it, there are few restrictions on its use, and the natural areas are not overly managed. This seems to me to be meeting the high ideals of the mission statements of the governing agencies, and the LRMP principles of the FPR.

I think the parcel is meeting a huge community need exactly as it is. I can't imagine a different use which would serve the community better, or in a way that some other property or organization isn't doing in our community already, e.g. formal parks, Whitcomb Farm, Colchester Road Tree Farm, Champlain Valley Expo, the schools, and Indian Brook Park.

We hope that you deem this property as an example for the village to reduce the use of fossil fuels, the Fit and Healthy Vermonters program, and the beautiful, natural and conserved area owned by the state located in our village setting. Natural resources land is best used to support community agricultural, recreational and open lands needs.

I don't think it needs improvement. And sometimes, even with the best intentions, improvements end up meaning lots of rules, park hours, garbage cans and costs being associated with its removal, and more pavements. It's perfect the way it is.

## **Recreation**

Make a better trail around the property with parking and bulletin boards so the public can continue to explore the space.

Use as a playground for children to play.

I see senior citizens walking through daily; families with young children playing and wrestling in the fields; grandparents with grandkids chasing balls; dogs romping and catching balls and Frisbees; people stopping to talk, smiling, and waving; kids on bicycles practicing their stunts on the little hills and ravines; cross-country skiers and people snowshoeing around the perimeter. It reminds me of why I love Vermont.

It's an easily accessible green space where I can walk and enjoy nature in the company of my dogs. It's the only "space" in the area where my dogs are safe off-leash.

I bring my children there to play hide and seek in the trees and collect pine cones. Sometimes we just walk through the tree groves.

We walk the property for fresh air, low noise level and enjoy seeing other people use it for health reasons as well.

I use the West Street Parcel to run, walk, bike, ski, and enjoy nature. Our kids love to go there to play games like tag.



Work and recreation, such as walking, biking, dog exercising, and wildlife viewing. I sometimes go for walks during my lunch time and have tried to snowshoe occasionally.

Gardening at one time was number one for recreation.

Green spaces reduce childhood obesity and improve overall health for children and adults.

I like watching the pee-wee soccer teams practice on some of the fields and the regular walkers greeting each other.

I've cross-country skied and jogged through the area for years. It is a beautiful spot!!!

Kids practice kicking a soccer ball, playing golf, and playing catch (usually with their dads), riding their bikes.

A lot of residents of Whitcomb Woods, the senior housing complex across the street, make use of the West Street area to walk through here to get to the market. It means a lot to me to see others enjoying the property this way, and to feel a part of the community with them.

Keep it as it is now: gardening, dog walking, exercising, bird watching and other relaxing activities.

This is the last walkable area in the Junction that brings everyone together.

The bonus is less gas usage. This would work greatly into the State of Vermont's "Fit and Healthy Program."

I understand there is some talk of a dog park, so that people can let their dogs run free. Many people feel free to let their dogs run free now while they are in the nursery. I sympathize with those who want an enclosed area to ensure the safety of their pets, but I wouldn't like to see any use that restricted access for others.

We have dogs but would prefer not to see a dog park here or for that matter yet another park that would draw playground equipment.

We could consider making a portion of the property into a "sports complex" of athletic fields

Leave it as an informal open area for recreation, including picnic areas.

To manage and conserve the property so it is available for a wide variety of uses and by all types and ages of people. It primarily needs to just be there for all the uses it has now. What is special about the parcel is that it is a former farmstead, and was used as a tree nursery. It has remained with open and forested areas, and it is ideal for quick trips to back to nature. It is surrounded by lots of development including commercial and residential, so it is easily accessible.



The local playground is at the other side of town and too far for small kids to walk to.

I think Hiawatha School may use the property for soccer fields, but there's enough space to keep the soccer fields on school property. There are other school lands in the Village of Essex Junction which could be used for this purpose.



## Appendix B.

### Authorization to Plan and Manage

#### Statutory Authority

The Vermont General Assembly has authorized the ANR and its departments to acquire lands, hold interests in lands, and conduct land management activities. Authority is vested in several statutes that collectively empower the Agency, upon approval of the Governor or General Assembly, to acquire lands, accept donations of lands or interests in lands, exchange or sell lands or interests in lands for public benefit, and to manage those lands for a variety of public purposes.

Specific authorizing statutes are:

- **Title 3, Chapter 51, Section 2825:**  
The primary duties of the secretary are to coordinate the activities of the various departments and divisions of the agency for the proper development, management and preservation of Vermont's natural resources, to develop policies for the proper and beneficial development, management, and preservation of resources in harmony with the state comprehensive planning program and to promote the effective application of these policies by the departments and divisions affected.
- **Title 10, Chapter 83, Section 2601:** Establishes the general purposes and policies to acquire and manage state lands and authorizes the Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation to undertake such activities.
- **Title 10, Chapter 83, Section 2603:** Establishes the general powers and duties of the commissioner of the Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation to manage state lands.
- **Title 10, Chapter 103, Section 4144:** Authorizes the Department of Fish & Wildlife to acquire state lands.
- **Title 10, Chapter 103, Section 4147:** Authorizes the Department of Fish & Wildlife to exchange, sell, or lease lands.
- **Title 10, Chapter 37, Section 905b:** Authorizes the Department of Environmental Conservation to acquire and manage lands and the rights to protect the state's water resources.
- **Title 10, Chapter 155, Section 6301-5:** Authorizes acquisition of rights less than fee of real property.



## **Appendix C.**

### **Summary of Policies and Guidelines**

Some of the highlights of the many policies and guidelines used in managing ANR lands are listed below. In general, these were in effect at the start of this long range management planning process. If more information is needed, refer to current policies and guidelines which can be made available upon request. The information is grouped into some general categories to make this document easier to use.

#### **Acquisition of Land**

*Lands Conservation Plan: A Land Acquisition Strategy for the Agency of Natural Resources*, October, 1999 – Standards and procedures for the ANR to acquire lands.

#### **Fish and Wildlife**

Vermont hunting, fishing and trapping regulations.

Wildlife Management Areas Operational Procedures Manual, Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife – Standards for management of wildlife management areas.

*Management Guide for Deer Wintering Areas in Vermont*, Fish and Wildlife, 1990 – Standards for managing deer wintering areas.

*Landowner's Guide to Wildlife Habitat Management, Fish and Wildlife*, Fish and Wildlife, 1995 – Standards for managing a variety of wildlife species on state and private land.

*Native Vegetation for Lakeshores, Streamsides, and Wetland Buffers*, Environmental Conservation, 1994 – Standards for buffer strips along lakes, streams and wetlands in Vermont.

Rare and Endangered Species – Listing of species protected under state regulations.

#### **Gravel Pits**

Forests, Parks and Recreation Policy #3, 1991 – Standards for use of gravel pits on Forests, Parks and Recreation lands.

#### **Historic and Archeological Resources**

State of Vermont laws, rules and guidelines applicable to historic and archeological resources, especially 22 V.S.A. 14 and Division for Historic Preservation's *Guidelines for Conducting Archeology in Vermont*, as well as federal laws that apply.

#### **Land Use Development**

Act 250 – Law governing plans for land use and development in Vermont.

#### **Natural Area Designation**

Natural Areas Law and Forests, Parks and Recreation Policy #7 – Standards and guidelines for designation of Natural Areas on state forest and park lands.



**Pesticide Use**

Forests, Parks and Recreation Policy #9 – Regulations on the use of pesticides on state forest and park lands.

**Prescribed Fire**

Prescribed Burn Directive, Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, 1989 – Procedures for planning and execution of prescribed burns.

**Recreation**

Use of State Lands, Agency of Natural Resources Policy, 1999 – Criteria for appropriate uses when permits and licenses are not required.

Forests, Parks and Recreation Policies and Procedures Manual, 1990-1999 – Procedures and standards for administering recreational activities on state forests and parks lands.

State Park Ranger's Manual, Forests, Parks and Recreation, 1999- Operating procedures, rules, regulations, and standards for recreational activity on state forest and parks lands.

**Scientific Research**

Forests, Parks and Recreation policy #8 – Standards and guidelines for research on state lands.

**Silviculture**

Silvicultural References Manual, Forests, Parks and Recreation, 1997 – Guidelines for the Intent to Heavy Cut notification process.

Acceptable Management Practices (AM) Guidelines, 1987 – Practices for maintaining water quality on logging jobs.

Wetlands Regulations, 1990 – Regulations which outline practices for logging around wetlands in Vermont.

*Native Vegetation for Lakeshores, Streamsides and Wetland Buffers*, Environmental Conservation, 1994 – Standards for buffer strips along lakes, streams and wetlands in Vermont.

*Vermont Handbook for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control on Construction Sites*, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, revised September, 1983.

*Vermont Streambank Conservation Manual*, Agency of Natural Resources, 1982 – Guidelines for construction around streams.



## **Water Resources**

Acceptable Management Practices (AMP) Guidelines, 1987 – Practices for maintaining water quality on logging jobs in Vermont.

Long Trail Construction and Maintenance Standards, Green Mountain Club, 1995 – Trail construction standards for public and private land.

*Native Vegetation for Lakeshores, Streamsides, and Wetland Buffers*, Environmental Conservation, 1994 – Standards for buffer strips along lakes, streams and wetlands.

*Vermont Streambank Conservation Manual*, Agency of Natural Resources, 1982 – Guidelines for construction around streams.

*Vermont Water Quality Standards*, Vermont Water Resources Board, 7/2/00.

*Vermont Wetland Rules*, Vermont Water Resources Board, 1/1/02.



## Appendix D.

### Overarching Management Standards

These overarching management standards further both agency and department missions and are applied to the development of long-range management plans for all ANR lands:

**Biological Diversity:** ANR lands are managed to both maintain and enhance the variety and abundance of plants, animals and other life forms at scales ranging from local to regional.

**Ecosystem Health:** ANR lands are managed to ensure ecosystem functions, health, and sustainability. Threats and stresses are monitored, evaluated, and reported regularly.

**Legal Constraints:** ANR lands are managed in accordance with the purposes for which they were acquired. Many agency lands were purchased with federal funds that require management to be directed for specific purposes. These requirements and other legal restrictions, such as conservation easements, are supported in all planning and management activities.

**Natural Resource Science:** The foundation for management decisions on ANR lands consists of comprehensive ecological assessments as developed and documented in long-range management plans.

**Wildlife Management:** Wildlife management activities on ANR lands are directed at protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat for species needing to be conserved as well as those of public interest and utilization.

**Recreational Uses and Needs:** ANR lands are managed to create, maintain, and enhance sustainable recreational uses. Permitted or allowed activities are dependent upon site capabilities and public need. Wildlife management areas continue to give priority to wildlife dependent activities.

**Sustainable Forestry:** ANR lands are managed to ensure forest health and sustainability. Vegetation management and utilization strategies based on natural communities and appropriate silvicultural guidelines ensure that trees, forests, and forest ecosystems remain healthy.

**Public Involvement:** ANR lands are a public resource. The public is involved in all aspects of decision-making on state lands, including acquisition, policy development, management planning, and the implementation of policies, plans, and regulations. In developing long-range plans, the agency considers interests outlined in local, regional, and state plans, including town plans, regional plans, watershed plans, and species recovery and management plans, and works to resolve conflicts between plans as may be appropriate or necessary.

**Historical/Cultural and Scenic Values:** ANR lands are managed to be sensitive to historical, cultural, and scenic values. Due to protection under state law and federal



regulations, sites of archaeological or historical significance are equal in status to any other legal constraints applicable to the lands.

**Best Management Practices:** Lands under ANR management serve as exemplary stewardship models for the public and private sectors in Vermont. Whenever possible, best management practices that are utilized are visible and easy to understand.

**Regional Availability of Resources and Activities:** Because every parcel of ANR land cannot accommodate all the uses that the public might want, the agency works to ensure that the following uses are made available on a regional basis: sustainable forest harvest; sustainable recreational activities; wildlife-oriented activities; protection of biodiversity and natural communities; and activities that reflect historical and cultural values.



## **Appendix E.**

### **Acronyms**

ANR	Agency of Natural Resources
ASP	Annual Stewardship Plan
CCRPC	Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
CCC	Civilian Conservation Corps
FPR	Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation
LRMP	Long Range Management Plan/Planning
OSP	Open Space Plan
UVM	University of Vermont

