



November 26, 2025

Vermont Land Use Review Board
10 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-3201

RE: Letter of Support – CCRPC Draft 2026 ECOS Plan and Future Land Use Map

Dear Members of the Land Use Review Board,

On behalf of the City of South Burlington, I am writing to express our strong support for the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission’s (CCRPC) draft 2026 ECOS Plan and accompanying Future Land Use Map. The ECOS Plan reflects a thoughtful, data-driven, and collaborative approach to regional planning, aligning land use, housing, transportation, and climate goals.

The preparation of the Plan was expansive in its breadth and inclusive across communities and community groups. CCRPC staff worked with each member community to customize the outreach plan and to complement prior and ongoing municipal efforts.

The draft Plan aligns with the requirements and intent of Acts 47 and 181 and sets our entire region up for success in the coming decades. South Burlington has been an active participant in the development of the Regional Plan and the housing target allocations.

Future Land Use and Housing Targets

The draft Future Land Use Plan/Map and allocation of Housing Targets are fully intertwined in the draft ECOS Plan. The Plan allocates 60% of the region’s housing target to the four cities – Burlington, South Burlington, Winooski, and Essex Junction – where over half of the existing housing and the vast majority of infrastructure and services are already in place. Nearly all of the remainder is assigned to communities with existing/planned Village Centers and Planned Growth Areas, with only a small fraction assigned to more rural parts of the region. The Future Land Use Plan, in turn, aims for 90% of development to be

within Downtown Centers, Village Centers, Planned Growth Areas, Village Areas, and Transition Areas- 11.6% of the County's land area.

The Plan directs investment in infrastructure and services into centers and neighborhoods while supporting the working land and rural/natural areas that are integral to long term fiscal and environmental sustainability. The map and housing targets were developed in a highly collaborative manner with communities.

Support for Land Use Designations and Housing Targets in South Burlington

The Draft Regional Plan includes a target of 7,583 additional homes in the city by 2050 (Middle target). This is paired with the identification of a downtown center, three village centers, planned growth areas connected to each, as well as an enterprise area, a transition area, a special use area, and rural areas, all of which are consistent with our own [City Plan 2024](#).

In May 2025, the City became the first community in the county to formally request Tier 1B status upon presentation of the draft Future Land Use Map and Housing Targets to the City Council. In the weeks that followed the City Council formally included taking each of the necessary steps in their FY '26 Work Plan to apply for Tier 1A status. Work is active and ongoing to prepare for this submission in the summer of 2026.

The draft Future Land Use designations align to the Statutory definitions of each, represent good land use planning, and are critical to meeting the ambitious 2050 Housing Targets.

Downtown Center – City Center South Burlington

Planning Alignment: This area has been a primary focus of the City since the 1980s for establishing our first true downtown. The area matches the present Neighborhood Development Area designation and includes the New Town Center & Tax Increment Finance District designations.

Existing & Ongoing Development: Historically a commercial area including the University Mall, San Remo Drive, and intensive strip developments along Williston Road. In the past 10 years, nearly 850 homes have been constructed, alongside first-story commercial, a new city hall & library, a hotel, daycare, parks, and the Rick Marcotte Central School.

*Planned Development:*The City is preparing for substantial ongoing investment in this area, aligned to our TIF Plan and to the City Plan. In September 2025, the City Council adopted amendments allowing 12-14 story buildings throughout the neighborhood development area. Staff is actively working with area property owners to support and advance infill development;

Existing and Planned Infrastructure: In addition to recently completed roadways, city hall/library, and park improvements, several additional infrastructure projects are funded and in construction or design, including signal upgrades, streetscape improvements, and share use path connections.

Village Centers:

Three village centers are proposed in South Burlington (one of which would be shared with Burlington). Each is a existing mixed use settlement area, us physically connected to its surrounding developed and developing areas by multi-modal transportation networks, is served by public sewer and water, and has significant infill potential and intent to serve as civic centers for their respective areas.

Village Center: Shelburne Road / Fayette Road

Planning Alignment: Future activity hub serving the central Shelburne Road corridor. Identified in the City Plan and 2025 Economic Development Strategic Plan as providing opportunity to connect several disparate neighborhoods along the corridor.

Existing & Ongoing Development: Historically a commercial area including auto dealerships, large-format retailers, with isolated pockets of multi-unit housing. Recent activity has included construction of 60 new homes in a mixed-use building.

Planned Future Development. A primary property owner in the area recently received Master Plan approval for over 200 additional homes, hotel space, and commercial development. The City's Regulations have removed minimum lot size, eliminated residential density caps, and allowed up to seven-story buildings in this area.

*Existing and Planned Infrastructure:*This area is home to the Orchard Elementary School and Eldridge Cemetery. This area is well served by Green Mountain Transit, water, sewer, and electricity. A \$35 million generational

upgrade to nearby the Bartlett Bay Wastewater Treatment Facility is underway, as is a Shelburne Road crossing study.

Village Center: Kimball Ave / Kennedy Drive

Planning Alignment: This area will serve as the focal point for South Burlington's northeastern neighborhoods and for existing / planned commercial activity to the east and south, at Technology Park, Tilley Drive, and south along Hinesburg Road / Vermont 116. This area is one of the key areas identified to meet our future economic development and housing needs.

Existing & Ongoing Development: Kennedy Drive is home to several long-standing multi-unit neighborhoods. Beginning in 2017, new phases of neighborhoods east of Kennedy Drive and along Kimball Ave / Old Farm Road have already added over 250 new homes, with existing approvals for over 400 more. Recent investment on the north side of Kimball Ave includes a medical office under construction in 2025 and a recent office-to-housing conversion.

Planned Development: Future planned phases of mixed use, commercial, and light-industrial development have received preliminary approval. Preliminary estimates for this area consider approximately 400 additions residential units, hotel space, and over 100,000 s.f. of commercial / medical space, plus substantial investment across multi larger parcels immediately to the east of the village center presently designed for commercial/industrial use.

Existing and Planned Infrastructure: Existing neighborhoods are served by sidewalks and shared use paths. Mayfair Park, a natural area west of the village area, includes a walking trail connecting the neighborhoods to one of the most forested parts of the Potash Brook. Development activity east of Kennedy Drive is adding substantial additional sidewalk, shared use path, and park infrastructure to the city's already interconnected network.

Village Center: Shelburne Road / Farrell Street / Home Ave

Planning Alignment: Home to a Smart Growth award-winning neighborhood, this area serves as a gateway to Burlington and South Burlington north of I-189 and to adjacent neighborhoods. The mixed use center has substantial infill potential to continue to support local and regional needs.

Existing Development: Mixed-Use development along Farrell Street in South Burlington includes a significant presence of affordable housing for people of all ages. The area is home to several hundred homes as well as major

employers and retailers on both the South Burlington and Burlington sides, centered on a pedestrian-oriented street network.

Planned Future Development. The City has recently eliminated minimum lot size, removed residential density caps, and allowed buildings of up to seven stories in height. There is substantial opportunity for infill amongst in the large-format retailers on site.

Existing and Planned Infrastructure: Sidewalks and shared use paths exist along all primary roads in this area, and connections between the two cities along Home Ave / Farrell Street is a present scoping study. The South Burlington shared use path and bicycle / pedestrian network extends from this area to Spear Street and to Farrell Park along Swift Street. In addition, the imminent completion of the Champlain Parkway project will shift the transportation patterns in this area, affording new opportunities for both access and more pedestrian-scale infrastructure investment.

Planned Growth Areas

The Regional Plan includes planned growth areas connected to each of the centers in South Burlington, as well as to a center in Colchester. These were mapped in close coordination with the City. Local policies, through our City Plan, recently-amended Land Development Regulations, and supporting water/sewer ordinances align with and reinforce the Regional Future Land Use Map and policies of the ECOS Plan. These areas are connected to their respective centers via the City's extensive sidewalks and shared use path network. This connectivity is an important factor in the City's Climate Action Plan, which sets an ambitious target of 2% annual reduction in vehicle miles travelled.

The City's plans and regulations for future development in these areas directly align to implement the statutory definition for this category. These areas are included in the City's Tier 1B request and our intent to apply for Tier 1A status.

Recent amendments to our Land Development Regulations enable and encourage scale-appropriate infill housing development in existing neighborhoods and newly allow neighborhood-scale retail and service establishments. This is complemented by thoughtful standards for each of the zoning districts within the Planned Growth Areas, with various emphasis on residential & commercial activity, including the provision of civic space.

To further support these Planned Growth Areas, the City has recently completed an Active Transportation Plan (2024), an Economic Development Strategic Plan (2025), and is in the process of developing Parks and Open Space Master Plans.

Rural Areas:

Rural areas in South Burlington align to the City's own physical conditions, planning, and regulatory environment, following extensive research, outreach, and investment concerning working lands and wildlife corridors. The Regional Plan opted to include more isolated habitat areas that are in the more intensely developed parts of the city within Planned Growth Areas, while showing larger, connected corridors as Rural in less developed parts of the City. We concur with this determination.

Transition, Enterprise, and Special Use Areas

We support the designation of one area as transition, an enterprise area, and a special use are (the airport) in the Plan; they are accurate representations of the Statutory definitions. We see tremendous potential for investment at the Airport and in the Enterprise Areas, and concur that there is planning to be done to determine how best to connect the neighborhood to the north of the Airport.

Commitment to Housing, Climate, and Resiliency Goals

South Burlington is committed to achieving our municipal housing targets while advancing other critical planning goals. Our Climate Action Plan, adopted in 2022 and updated in 2025, sets ambitious targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, electrifying buildings and vehicles, and promoting compact, high-density development near transit. Over 89% of new homes approved in the past decade have been within ¼ mile of transit.

Recent Local Zoning Amendments:

Following adoption of our 2024 City Plan and the passage of Acts 47 and 181, the City has adopted significant changes to our Land Development Regulations to set ourselves up to meet the housing and economic development needs of the coming generation, all the while supporting conservation of key natural resources. Specifically:

- Eliminated "density-based" zoning in all areas served by (and planned to be served by) public water & sewer

- Reduced minimum lot size in lower-scale neighborhoods¹ to 5,000 s.f. and allowed up to a 4-plex on all lots
- Eliminated minimum lot sizes in higher-scale mixed-use areas
- Increased heights along the Shelburne Road corridor to seven stories
- Increase maximum heights in the City Center Form Based Code district to 12-14 stories and eliminated identified “pain points” learned from the first 20 buildings constructed in City Center.

Capital Investment

The City’s ongoing investments are spelled out in our [Capital Improvement Program](#). Among the present investments:

- Construction of a second water tower to serve City Center and the High Service Area (2025-26)
- \$35 million upgrade to the Bartlett Bay Wastewater Treatment Facility and collection system serving the Shelburne Road corridor (2026)
- City Center park connections, shared use path & water pipe installation, new traffic signal, and adaptive signal control system (2025)

Conclusion

For all of the reasons discussed above, we believe that the draft ECOS Plan and Future Land Use Map provide a strong foundation for coordinated regional growth that is equitable, sustainable, and resilient. We urge the Land Use Review Board to support the plan and map as proposed.

Sincerely,

Paul Conner, AICP
Director of Planning & Zoning
City of South Burlington

cc: Charlie Baker, Executive Director, CCRPC; Jessie Baker, City Manager; Tim Barritt, City Council Chair

¹ Lower scale and higher scale are terms used to describe a relative size of buildings in their context; the city is moving away from the term “density” as similar numbers of dwelling units can exist in substantially different physical contexts, from compact single units buildings and small multi-plexes to much larger footprint buildings with 30, 50, or 100+ homes in them