

Title 10: Conservation and Development

Chapter 15: VERMONT HOUSING AND CONSERVATION TRUST FUND

§ 302. Policy, findings, and purpose

(a) The dual goals of creating affordable housing for Vermonters, and conserving and protecting Vermont's agricultural land, forestland, historic properties, important natural areas, and recreational lands are of primary importance to the **economic vitality and quality of life** of the State.

(b) In the best interests of all of its citizens and in order to improve the quality of life for Vermonters and to **maintain for the benefit of future generations the essential characteristics of the Vermont countryside, and to support farm, forest, and related enterprises**, Vermont should encourage and assist in creating affordable housing and in preserving the State's agricultural land, forestland, historic properties, important natural areas and recreational lands, and in keeping conserved agricultural land in production and affordable for future generations of farmers.

The Vermont Statutes Online

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§ 303. Definitions

(3) “Eligible activity” means any activity which will carry out either or both of the dual purposes of creating affordable housing and conserving and protecting important Vermont lands, including activities which will encourage or assist:

(A) the preservation, rehabilitation, or development of residential dwelling units which are affordable to lower income Vermonters;

(B) the retention of agricultural land for agricultural use, **and of forestland for forestry use;**

(C) the protection of important wildlife habitat and important natural areas;

(D) the preservation of historic properties or resources;

(E) the protection of areas suited for outdoor public recreational activity;

(F) **the protection of lands for multiple conservation purposes, including the protection of surface waters and associated natural resources;**

(G) the development of capacity on the part of an eligible applicant to engage in an eligible activity.

Vermont Housing & Conservation Board: 27 Years of Partnership Investing in Vermont

\$264 million in state funds invested by VHCB have allowed project sponsors (non-profit organizations, towns, municipalities and state agencies) to leverage an additional \$1 billion from federal programs, foundations, private capital and other charitable donations.

Invested in:

- More than 11,000 homes & apartments;
- 644 farms; 154,000 acres of agricultural land conserved;
- 258,000 acres conserved for public recreation and natural areas;
- 59 historic buildings restored for community use

Housing Investment includes:

- 1000 homes for homeowners including 107 homes with Habitat for Humanity
- Preserved 1,897 units of federally subsidized at-risk housing
- 46 mobile home parks for over 1,900 families
- 1,401 homes for individuals with special needs including frail elders, battered women, youth-at-risk, ex-offenders, persons with chronic mental illness and individuals with mobility impairments.
- 1,633 homes made accessible in partnership with the Vermont Center for Independent Living.

Results: FY 2014 and FY 2015

2014

280 affordable housing units

25 farms; 2,808 acres

12 natural area projects;

3,432 acres

2 historic projects

State Investment:

\$9.9M; \$55M leverage

2015

296 affordable housing units

24 farms; 3,639 acres

9 natural area projects;

2,330 acres

2 historic projects

State Investment:

\$10.4M; \$70M leverage

Economic Impact of VHCB Investments:

Total Project Costs; Jobs Created On-site and Off-site; Projected Ripple Effect

Housing Vermont Projects Completed in 2012-2014

Project	Location	Number of Units	VHCB State Funds Only	Hard Construction Costs (Excludes A & E)	Additional Economic Impact	Total Economic Impact	Jobs
City Neighborhoods	Burlington & Winooski	40	\$1,086,972	\$3,909,719	\$7,702,146	\$11,611,865	137
Wharf Lane	Burlington	37	725,000	3,610,550	7,112,784	10,723,334	127
Roaring Branch Apartments	Bennington	26	508,536	4,261,418	8,394,993	12,656,411	150
Canal & Main Apartments	Brattleboro	24	485,000	3,799,677	7,485,364	11,285,041	133
Windsor Village	Windsor	77	5,000	4,770,446	9,397,779	14,168,225	167
Avenue Apartments	Burlington	33	600,000	5,391,512	10,621,278	16,012,789	189
Vergennes Senior Housing	Vergennes	25	216,000	4,426,177	8,719,569	13,145,746	155
Lakebridge Apartments	Newport	21	706,267	3,675,248	7,240,239	10,915,487	129
2012 Subtotal		283	4,332,775	33,844,747	66,674,151	100,518,897	1,188
Algiers Family Housing	Guilford	17	425,000	\$3,322,353	\$6,545,035	\$9,867,388	117
Hickory Street Apartments, Phase 2	Rutland	23	100,000	5,013,121	9,875,848	14,888,969	176
Lamoille View Housing	Morrisville	25	490,000	1,453,641	2,863,673	4,317,314	51
West River Valley Assisted Living, Phase 2	Townshend	12	100,000	1,908,065	3,758,888	5,666,953	67
2013 Subtotal		77	1,115,000	11,697,180	23,043,445	34,740,624	411
Harrington Village	Shelburne	42	500,000	7,645,760	15,062,147	22,707,907.2	268
Bobbin Mill	Burlington	51	1,275,000	5,311,879	10,464,402	15,776,280.63	186
Arthur's Main Street Housing	Morrisville	18	150,000	3,179,919	6,264,440	9,444,359.43	112
Maple Street	Hardwick	16	310,000	1,368,651	2,696,242	4,064,893.47	48
Rail City	St. Albans	31	395,000	1,139,415	2,244,648	3,384,063	40
2014 Subtotal		158	2,630,000	18,645,624	36,731,879	55,377,503	654
TOTAL		518	\$8,077,775	\$45,541,926	\$89,717,595	\$135,259,522	1,599

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, every \$1 million invested in housing rehabilitation creates 14.1 on-site jobs, 21.1 off-site jobs and 25.4 in ripple effect jobs

Impact of FY14 & FY15 VHCB Farm Conservation Investments

- \$5.11 million in VHCB funding leveraged \$6.67 million in NRCS/FRPP and \$2.67 million in private and local fundraising and bargain sales
- 49 projects conserved 6,426 acres
- 28 projects facilitated transfers (over half)
 - 11 of the transfers are to new farmers (buying their first farm)
 - 6 of the transfers are intergenerational within the family (including gradual transfers over time)
- 32 out of 49 include other protections in the easement (public access, historic, special ecological protection, etc.)
- 64% of the soils conserved are prime or statewide
- 31 out of 49 protect river frontage and/or floodplain
 - 23 of these include water quality protections in the easement (almost 1/2 of total and 3/4 of those with surface water

Economic impact of 25 farms conserved in 2014:

- together the farms generate \$7.5 million in total gross income
- 135 jobs (including owner/operators);
 - 83 are part-time or seasonal
 - Range of 1 part-time to 60 (10 full-time and 50 seasonal) jobs



Dismas House, Hartford

The Twin Pines Housing Trust rehabilitated this home and increased energy efficiency. Dismas operates transitional housing with support services for ex-offenders provided in a setting with other residents. The organization operates three other houses under the same model, located in Burlington, Rutland, and Winooski.

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Mandala House in Rutland, developed by the Vermont Achievement Center: safe, stable housing for women transitioning from prison.



Phoenix House

Phoenix House in Barre provides a sober living program for men in early recovery from substance abuse. The housing was developed by the Central Vermont Community Land Trust. Phoenix House runs six sites in Vermont. There is another VHCB-funded Phoenix House in Burlington, developed by the Burlington Housing Authority.



After Mike lost one of his part time jobs and his wife Julie lost her job, the Sweeney family was homeless until CHT was able to place them at a new emergency housing facility, Harbor Place. With the help of a case-worker and CHT's credit counseling, they were able to move into a CHT apartment in Winooski they can afford.



Wright House, senior housing opened last year at Harrington Village in Shelburne - a new neighborhood with 82 homes for seniors, individuals and families. Includes conserved land along the LaPlatte River. Site for SASH services.



The Marble Museum in Proctor, purchased this year by the Preservation Trust of Vermont. Historic collections, artifacts of the marble industry and programming for educational and industrial heritage.



The Boydens raise beef, and make syrup and wine on their diversified farm in Cambridge, with a retail market stand and a wedding facility. Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program participants.



“The Uries have successfully utilized a business planning process to layout their expansion strategy and justify the investment that it will require. The proposed creamery expansion will create new jobs within the business, support a higher quality agri-tourism experience for visitors, and produce more high quality Vermont cheese for the marketplace.”

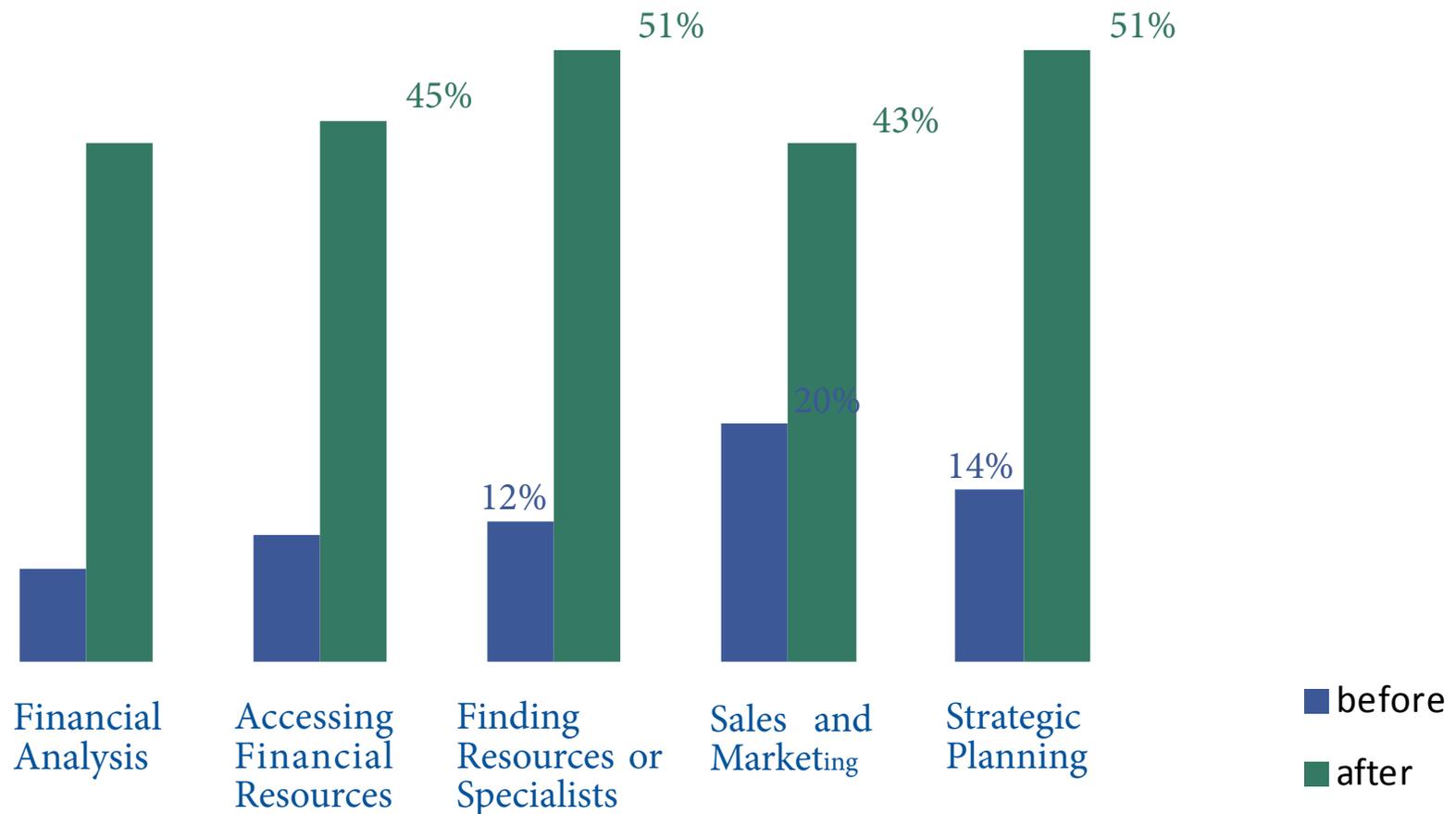
— Mark Cannella, UVM Extension
Farm Management Specialist

Neil Urie in a new barn at Bonnieview Farm in Craftsbury Common. Neil and Kristin conserved the family farm in 1994 and have worked with the Farm Viability Program to expand and diversify their business, producing 8,000 pounds of award-winning sheep and cow milk cheeses annually.

Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program

Change in Participants' Business Management Skills

% of participants reporting they were highly skilled in:

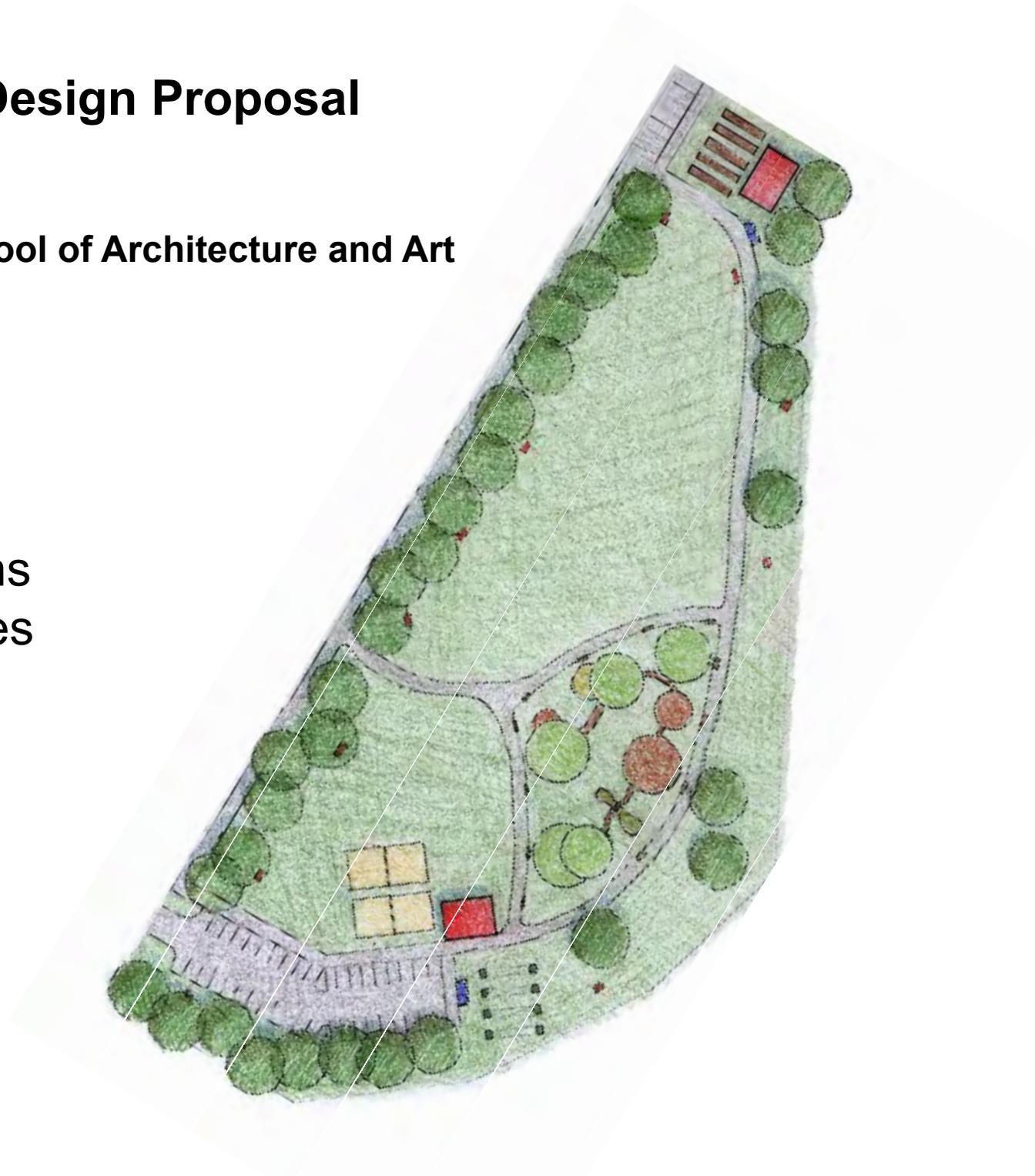


River Bend Park Design Proposal Northfield

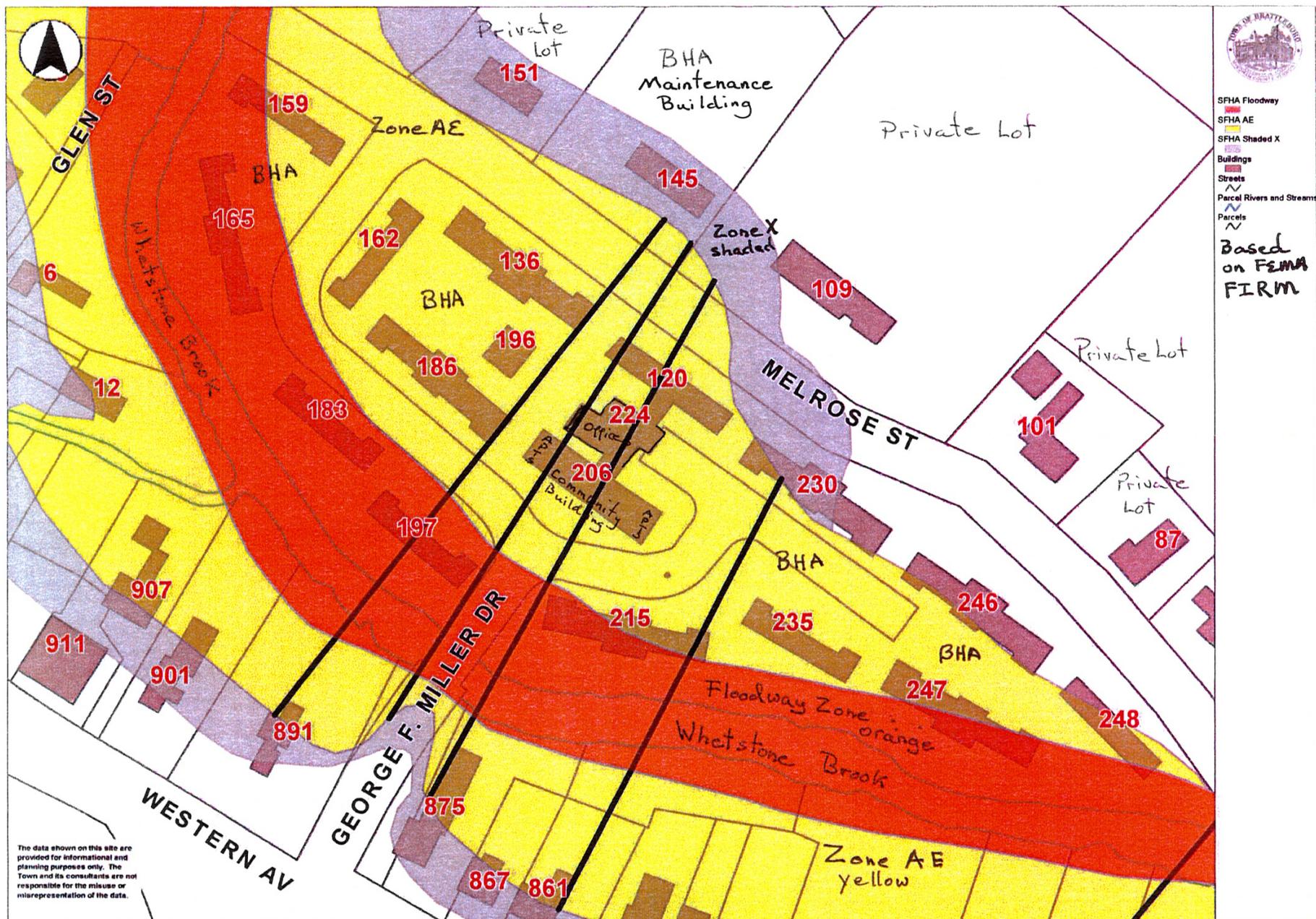
Norwich University School of Architecture and Art
Design/Build Studio
Design Charette

Features:

- Organic Playscape
- Community Gardens
- Recreational Spaces
- Ample Park



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Brattleboro Housing Authority at Melrose Terrace Brattleboro, VT
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Map showing location of Melrose Terrace senior housing in the floodplain in Brattleboro.



Architect's rendering of Red Clover Commons in Brattleboro, a new housing development to replace Melrose Terrace, which was damaged by flooding during Tropical Storm Irene.

Working with the Brattleboro Co-op, the Windham & Windsor Housing Trust developed new downtown housing: (24) 1-bedroom and studio apartments for seniors, individuals and persons with disabilities. EPA Award for Smart Growth.





In Richford, Housing Vermont worked with Richford Renaissance to create housing and commercial space in former factory buildings located downtown that were abandoned and blighted.

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Cedars Edge in Essex, developed by the Champlain Housing Trust



Lake Street in St. Albans, housing on the upper stories developed by the Champlain Housing Trust in partnership with Northwestern Counseling and Support Services



Knight Island in Lake Champlain, 180 acres protected by The Nature Conservancy in 1989 and donated to the state to create a new state park. Seven primitive campsites, six of them with rustic log lean-tos, are situated approximately equidistant around the 2.5-mile shoreline, and are connected by a trail system. Knight Island is accessible by boat or ferry.



Celebrating the conservation of the Robillard Farm in Irasburg, 1989.

The Agency of Agriculture worked with the Lake family to conserve their Randolph farm in 1993. The farm has since sold to Brent and Regina Beidler, who converted to organic production and sell their milk through Organic Valley, the largest organic cooperative in the U.S.



Cathedral Square developed Monroe Place in Burlington in 1997, a service-supported home for 16 residents with psychiatric disabilities. A half-time service coordinator staffed by the HowardCenter organizes activities designed to foster a sense of community and peer support.





This home at Star Lake in Norwich is part of a 14-unit development created when farmland was conserved in 1990. In 2014 the average price of a home sold in Norwich was \$531,000; current median listing is \$645,000. A home at Starlake is for sale for \$141,600.



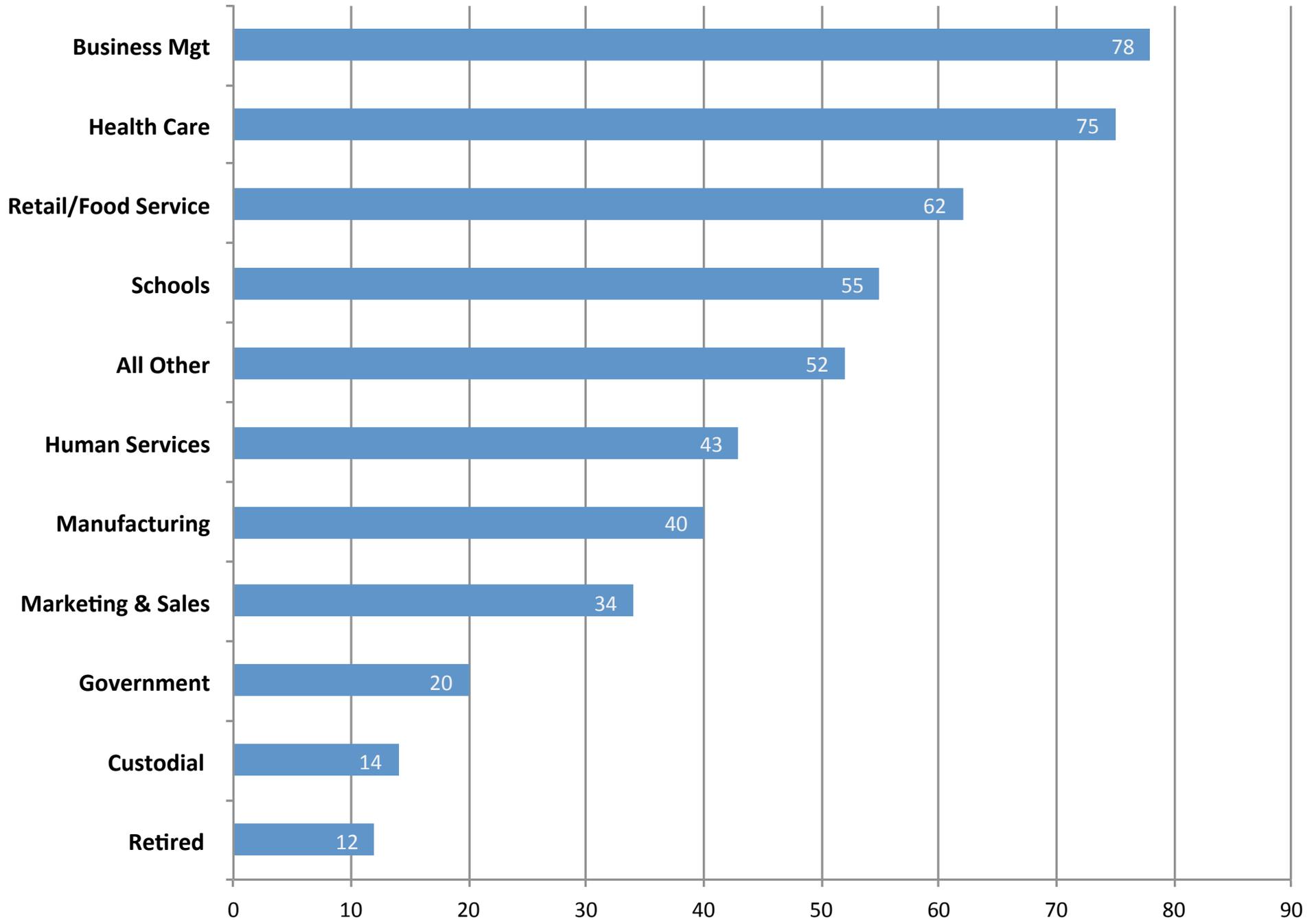
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City's Edge, South Burlington - 31 homeownership condominiums developed by the Champlain Housing Trust

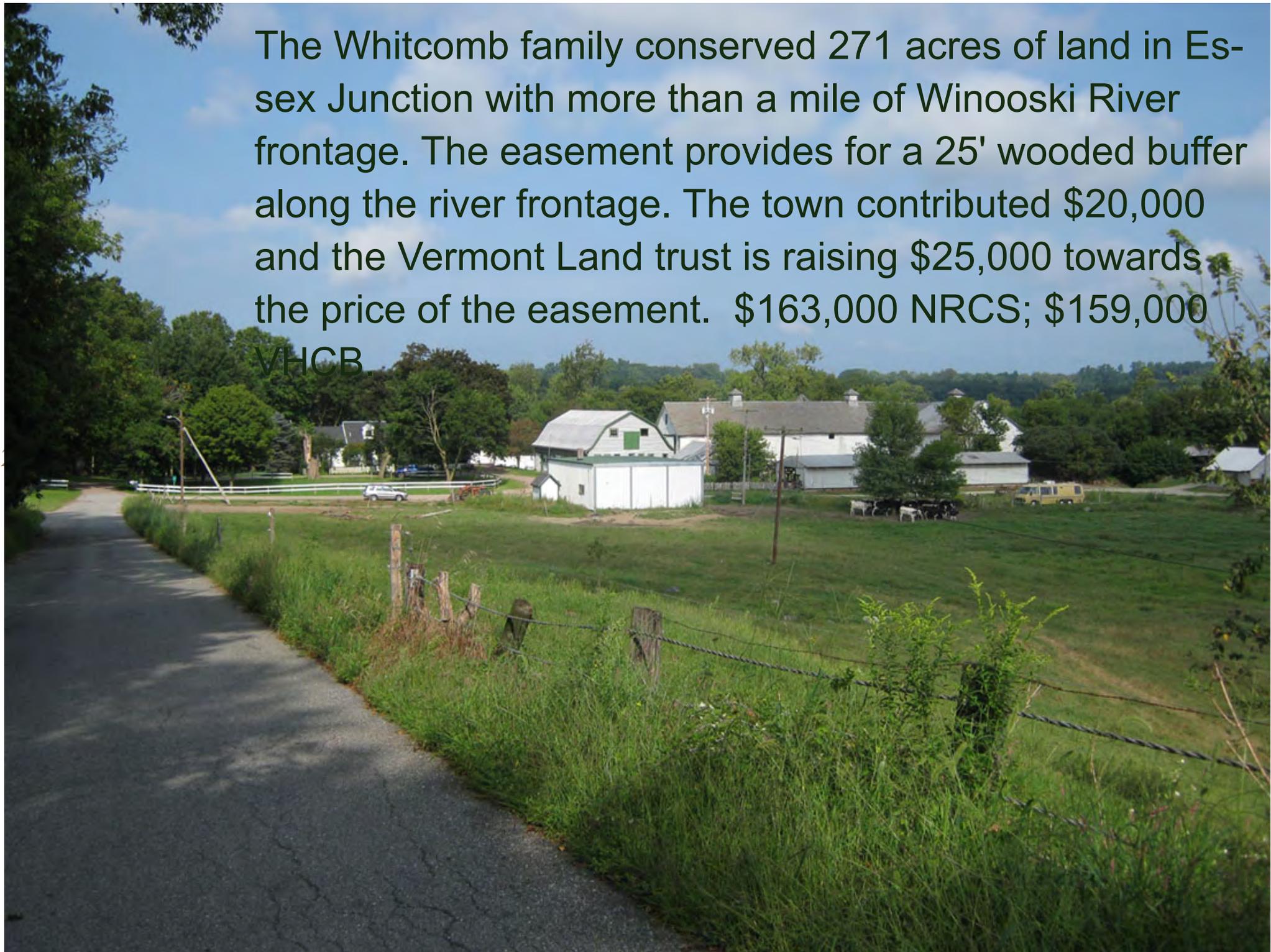


River Station Condominiums on Barre Street in Montpelier, 18 affordable homes developed by the Central Vermont Community Land Trust.

Top Occupations of CHT Homeowners



The Whitcomb family conserved 271 acres of land in Essex Junction with more than a mile of Winooski River frontage. The easement provides for a 25' wooded buffer along the river frontage. The town contributed \$20,000 and the Vermont Land trust is raising \$25,000 towards the price of the easement. \$163,000 NRCS; \$159,000 VHCB.



In addition to the farmland conserved this year in Essex Junction, where they raise crops and young stock, the Whitcomb Family operates a 300-cow dairy in Williston.





Guy Choiniere and daughter on his farm in Highgate. Guy converted the conserved dairy farm he took over from this parents to organic and has implemented many conservation practices on his farm, which has 9,000 feet of frontage on the Rock River.

Water Quality: Policy and Practice

- VHCB policies elevate the conservation of properties that enhance water quality and flood resiliency and that demonstrate affirmative action taken to improve water quality.
- VHCB has pledged \$6.5 M of conservation funding over the next 5 years to match the RCPP federal funds. \$2.5 M of that amount is privately leveraged funds from Commonwealth Dairy administered by the Farm Viability Program.
- 80% of the farms in the VHCB pipeline have surface waters that will be protected with special easement provisions and/or through enrollment in other state or federal buffer programs
- Farmland conservation projects with federal NRCS funding require NRCS-prepared management plans with both soil conservation and water quality components
- 75% of the farmland conservation projects funded in FY 14 and FY 15 that contained surface waters included water quality protections in the easement.