

CHAPTER 9

Land Use

EXISTING LAND USE

Land in Highgate is used primarily for agriculture or is considered forestland. The Town covers 59.8 square miles (38,279 acres), 11.5 square miles (7,291 acres or 19 percent) of which are covered by water. Of the 38,279 total acres, the number of acres in agricultural use is 16,057 acres, or 42 percent of the total. The number of acres of forested land is approximately 9,559 acres, or 18 percent of the total. Wetlands, shorelines and other non-buildable locations account for 14 percent of the land area in Highgate. The remaining 7 percent of the acreage in the Town is used for residential purposes, as either available for residential development, or for transportation purposes.

Land Use	Acres	Percent
Residential	1,633.87	4.27%
Transportation/Utilities	965.97	2.52%
Commercial	22.99	0.06%
Industrial	8.21	0.02%
Other Urban	2.15	0.01%
Row Crop	10,790.41	28.19%
Hay/Pasture	4,947.52	12.92%
Other Agricultural	319.56	0.83%
Deciduous Forest	2,665.51	6.96%
Coniferous Forest	1,526.65	3.99%
Mixed Forest	2,706.71	7.07%
Forested Wetland	2,660.60	6.95%
Non-Forested Wetland	2,718.06	7.10%
Barren Lands	20.26	0.05%
Water	7,291.01	19.05%
Total	38,279.47	100%

The Town of Highgate has three areas of State owned land covering a total of 340 acres. These areas include Highgate State Park (which is within the Highgate Cliffs Natural Area) covering 37 acres, the Rock River Access Area covering 7 acres, and the Rock River Wildlife Management Area covering 296 acres. The boundaries and locations for all of these can be found through the Survey Section of the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation and are identified on the Facilities and Utilities Map.

Settlement in the Town is typically spread out either along the existing roadways or along the shoreline. The overwhelming majority of development since 1980 has followed this pattern. Commercial and industrial development is primarily located along VT 78 and within the village areas. A small number of individual enterprises are scattered throughout the Town, and many home occupations are operating as well, although the exact number is unknown. Commercial "strip" forms of development have been occurring along State Road 78 west of Highgate Center, particularly near the Franklin County State Airport. The Missisquoi Valley Union High School is also in the area, and combined with adjacent commercial development, has created serious traffic conflicts along this stretch of roadway.

Residential development is by far the greatest growth industry in Highgate, making it somewhat of a "bedroom" community in many respects. The great majority of residential