

# State Designation 101

Downtowns, Villages, New Town Centers, Neighborhood Development Areas and Growth Centers



**Community Planning + Revitalization**

VT Department of Housing and Community Development

April 19, 2023

photo credit: NPS National Register of Historic Places Nomination



# Bristol



# State Designations = 275

## Core Designations:



Village Centers: 230



Downtowns: 24



New Town Centers: 3

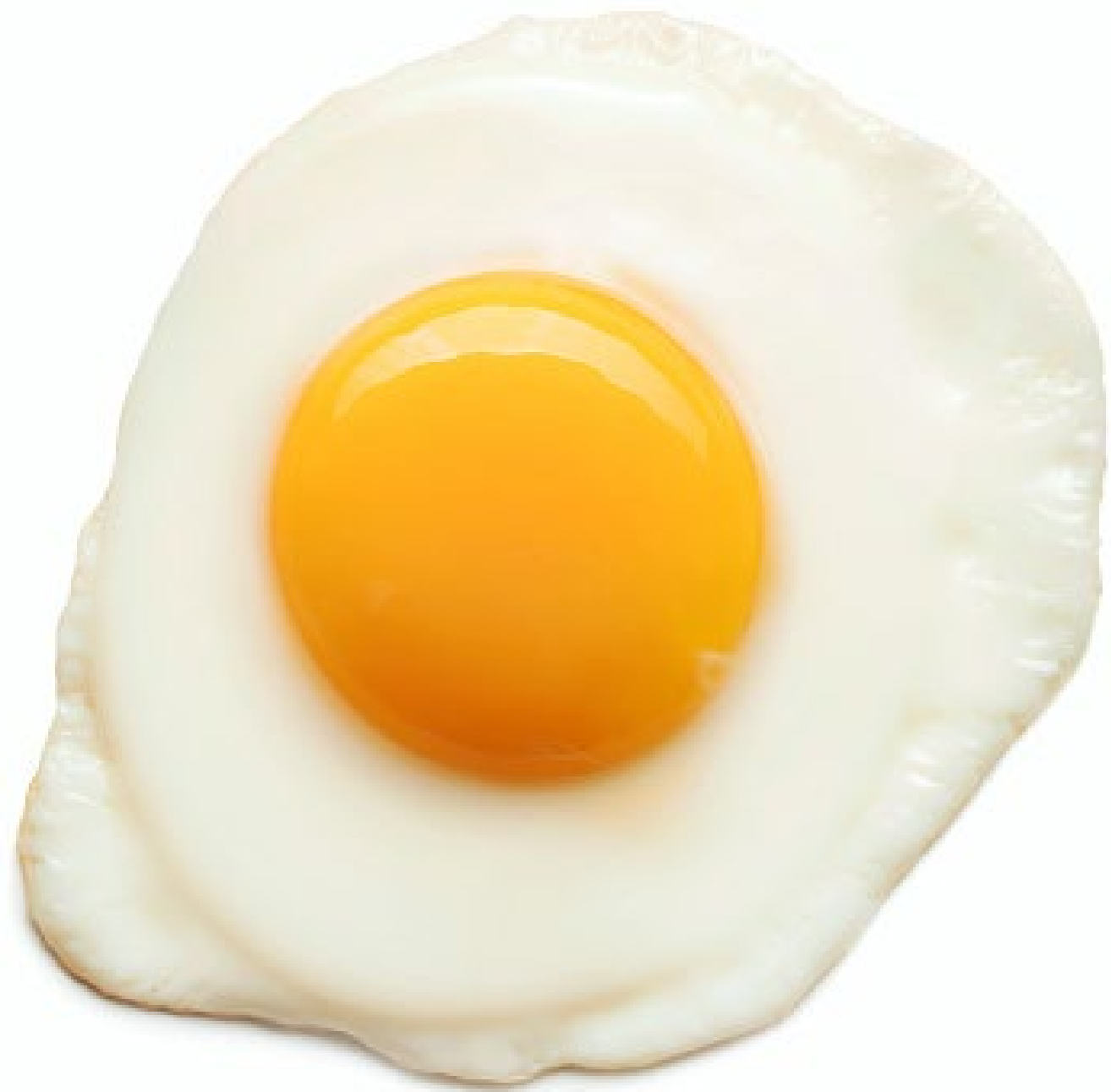
## Add-On Designations (must have a core designation to qualify):



Neighborhood Development Areas: 12



Growth Centers: 6



# Vermont Planning Atlas

<https://maps.vermont.gov/ACCD/Html5Viewer/index.html?viewer=PlanningAtlas>

## PLANNING ATLAS

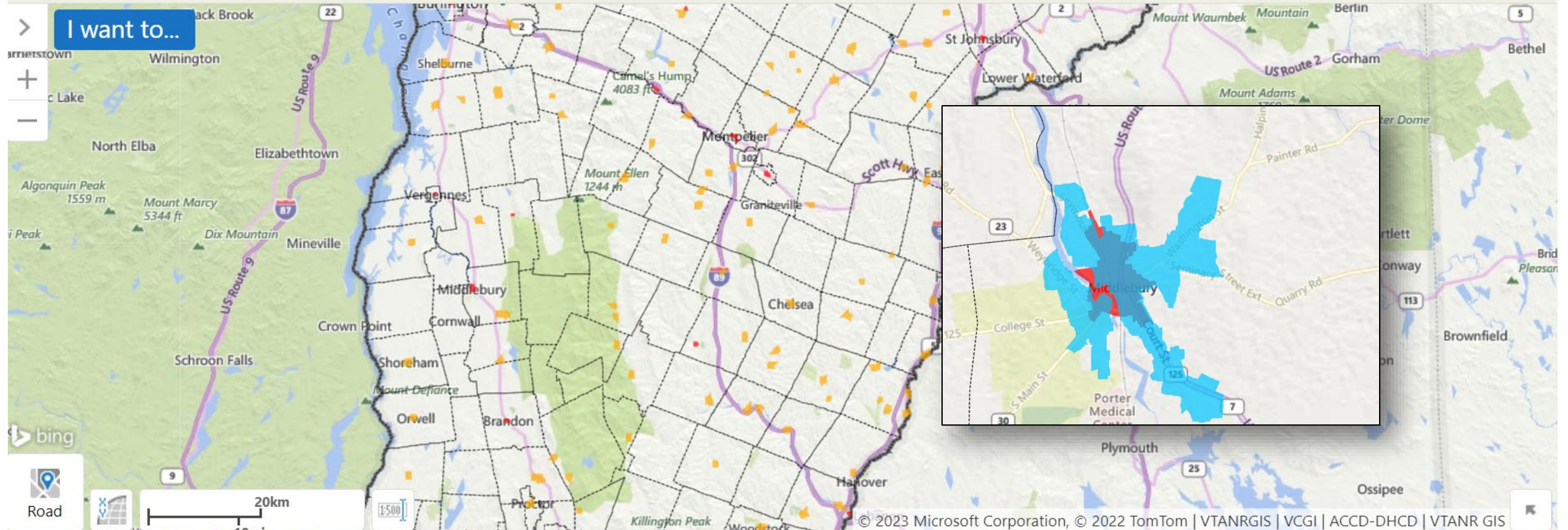
Department of Housing and Community Development



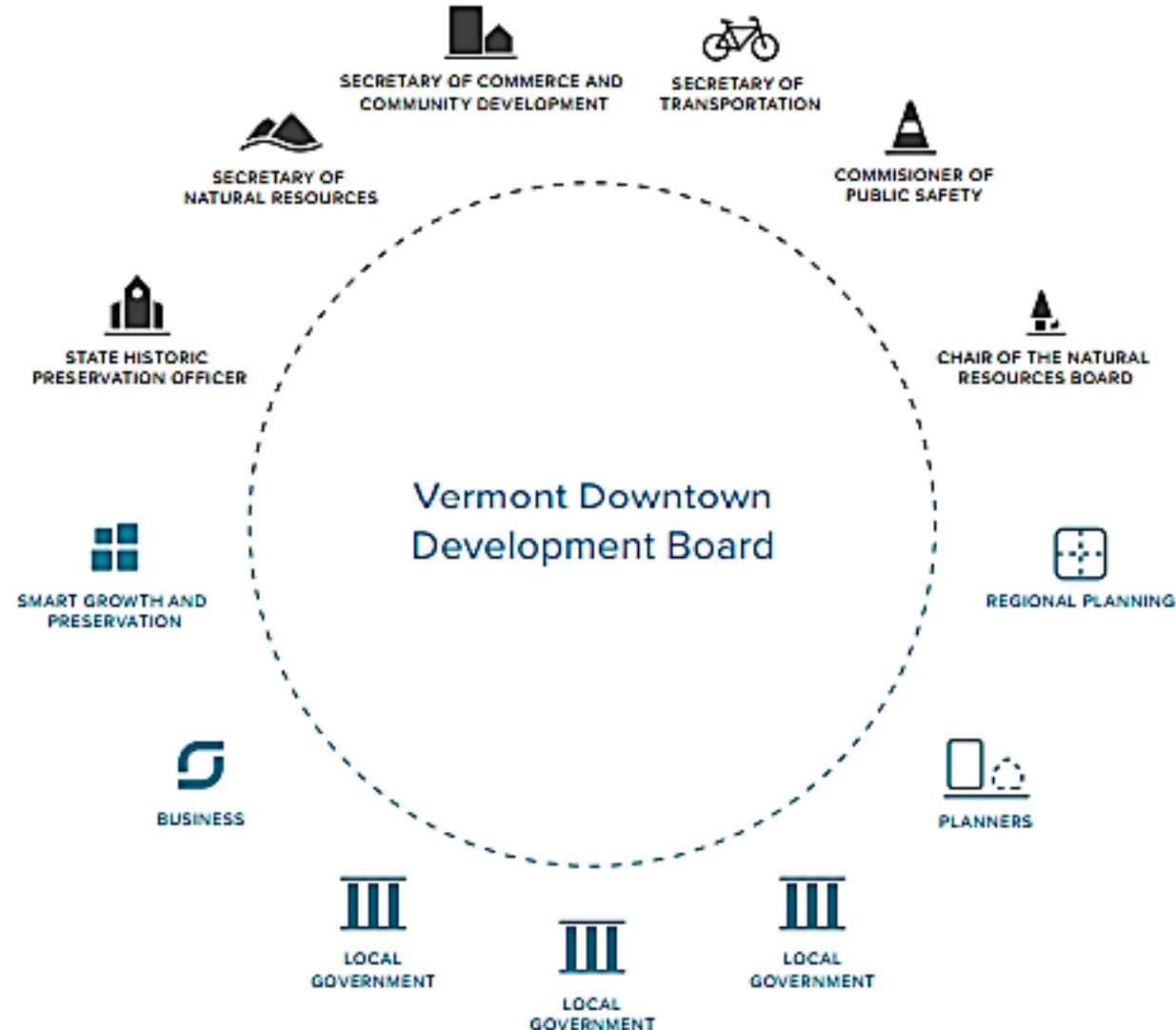
Theme Tools Measure Draw Links

Planning Atlas Act174 - Planning Resources

Search...

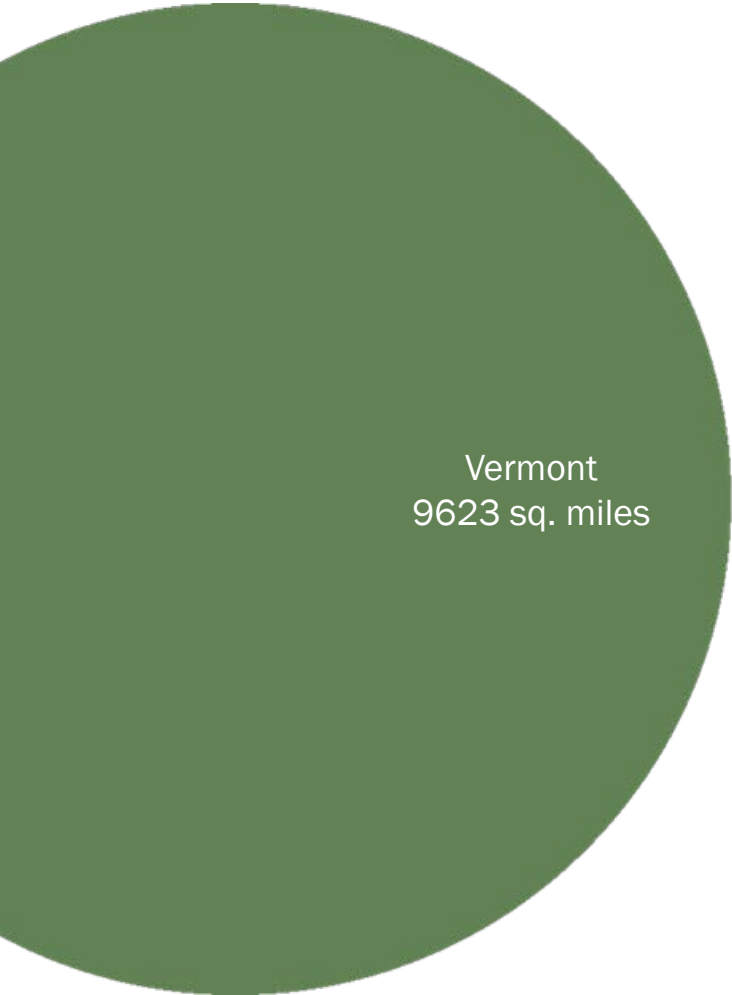


# Vermont Downtown Development Board




# Relative Size of Land Areas

Area of Designated Centers  
is 1/350 total area of Vermont



Vermont  
9623 sq. miles



Growth Centers  
12 sq. miles

Villages  
12.6 sq. miles

Downtowns  
3 sq. miles

Neighborhoods  
5.3 sq. miles

New Town Cent.  
0.4 sq. miles



# Designation Benefits

- Downtown and Village Center Tax Credits
- Downtown Transportation Fund
- State Grant Priority
- Sales Tax Reallocation
- Reduction of Fees
- Exemption of Land Gains Tax
- Act 250 Exemptions for Priority Housing Projects



# Designated Centers + Act 250

## Act 250 Benefits

- Exemption for 'Priority Housing Projects' (DC, NTC, GC & NDA)
- Presumption of Compliance of Compliance for Criterion 9L (ALL)
- Agricultural Soil Mitigation Fee Reduction (DC, NTC, GC & NDA)
- 50% Fee Reduction (NDA)

# Priority Housing Projects

- Exemption to Act 250 created in 2013
- Mixed-income housing projects
- For rent or owner-occupancy
- At least 20% affordable
- May be mixed-use (40% residential)
- Eligibility limited to projects with less than
  - 75 dwellings in towns with <10k pop.
  - 50 dwellings in towns with <6,000 pop.

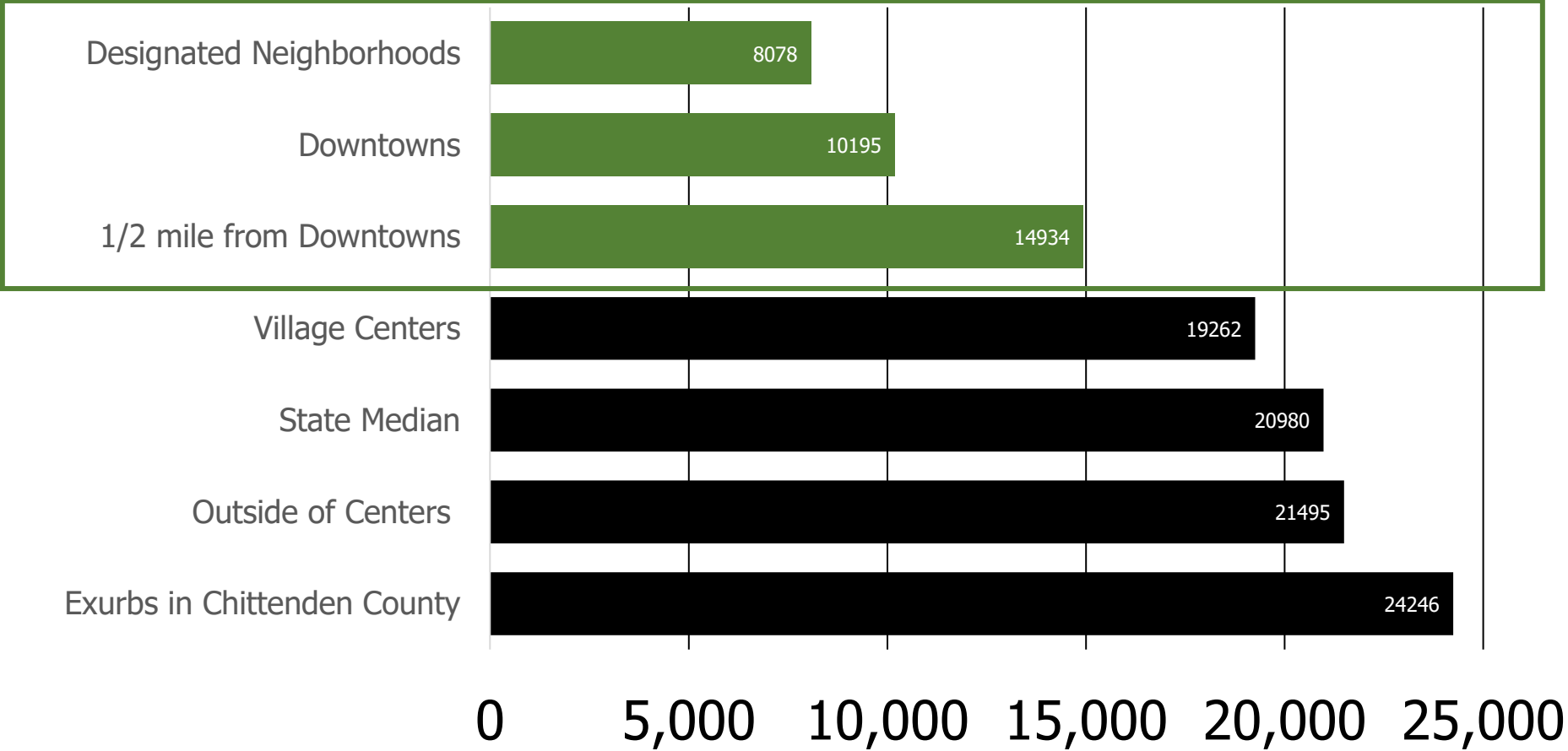
## IMPACT | 2017-2022

- Approximately 2,700 dwelling units exempted as priority housing projects
- Approximately 3,000 dwelling units jurisdictional to Act 250

- Natural Resources Board

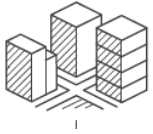


# Median Household Annual Vehicle Miles Traveled by Area





**91% of  
Vermonters would  
walk to work,  
school, shopping  
or other  
activities if they  
were close  
enough...**

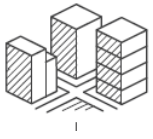


# Downtowns

## 24 designated downtowns

This community revitalization program is designed to preserve the character and enhance the future of medium to large sized historic centers by incentivizing public and private investments, improving quality of life and encouraging economic development. Municipalities that receive designation collaborate with local non-profit downtown organizations supporting efforts through funding, staff, partnerships and volunteers.





# Downtowns



Burlington



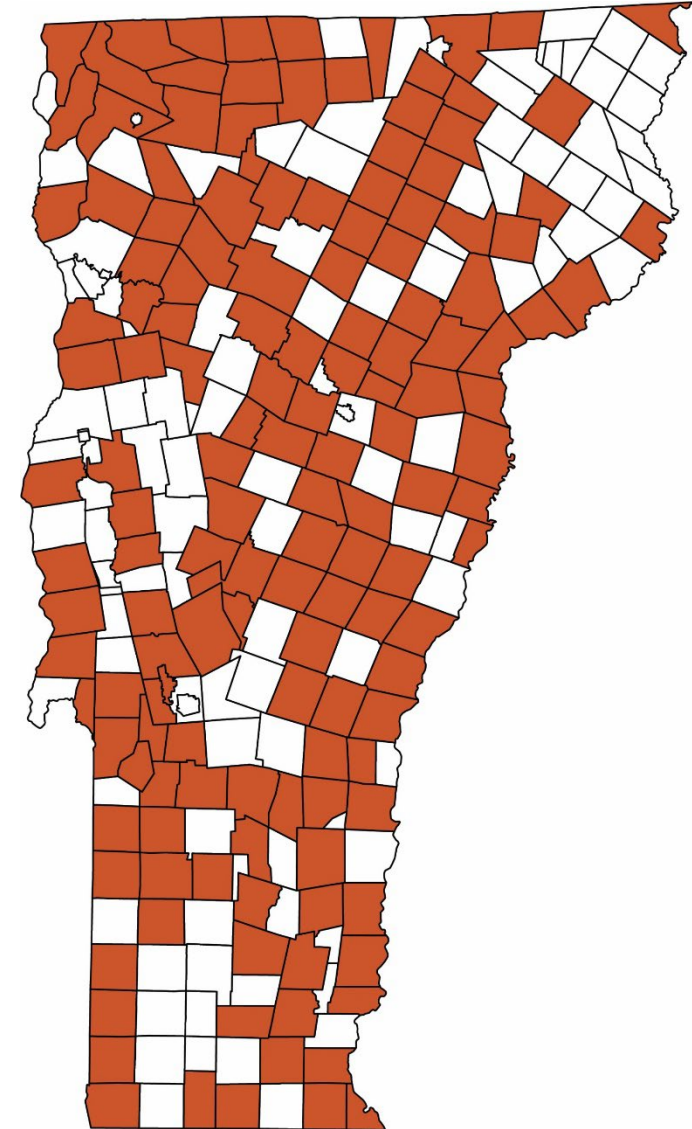
Bristol



# Village Centers

## 230 designated village centers

This community revitalization program is aimed at small to medium-sized historic centers with existing civic and commercial buildings. The designation supports the historic center and targets training and financial incentives to bring additional public and private investment to spark village revitalization.







# Village Centers



Richmond



Maple Corner



# New Town Centers

## 3 designated new town centers

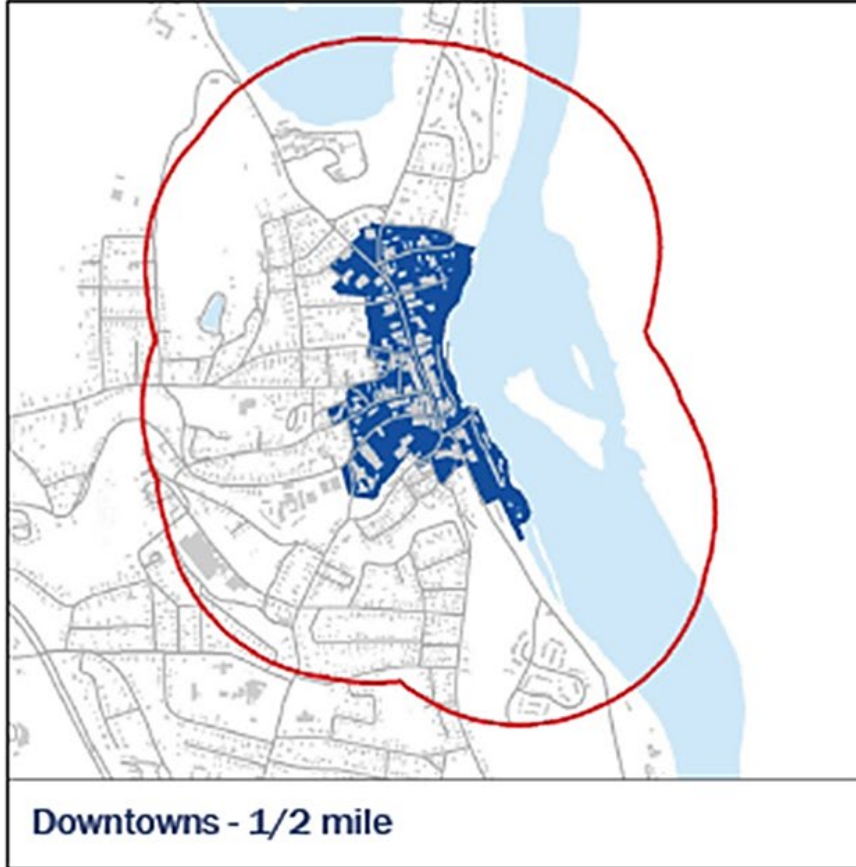
The New Town Center program provides a framework for creating compact, walkable, mixed-use centers for municipalities that have no designated Downtown or Village Center. Public buildings serve to anchor Town Centers with town halls, schools or libraries, attracting people and stimulating the kind of activity and mixed-use development that bring character and vitality to a community. By creating a compact, walkable civic and commercial core area, New Town Centers provide a nucleus for future smart growth.



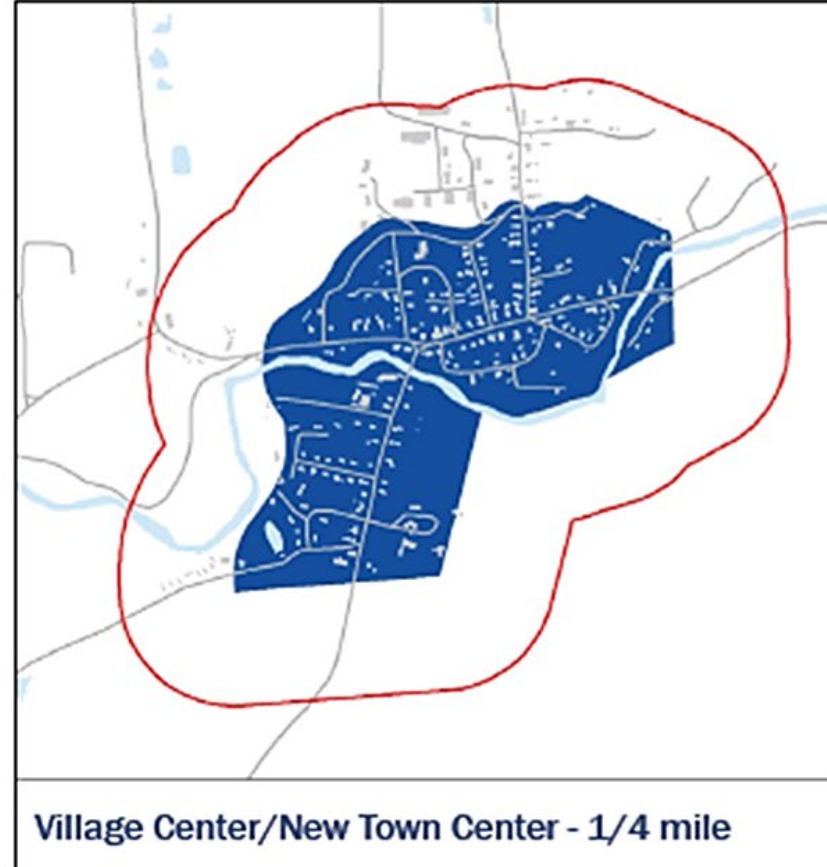
South Burlington



# Neighborhood Development Areas



15 min walk



5-10 min walk



# Neighborhood Development Areas

1

## Density

Minimum 4 DU/Acre

2

## Building Design

Pedestrian Oriented

3

## Transportation Network

Complete Streets

4

## Natural Resources

No floodplains, avoid others

**Neighborhood  
Development Area  
Designation  
Program**

**Application  
Guidelines**

State Designation Programs  
Community Planning + Revitalization  
December 2022

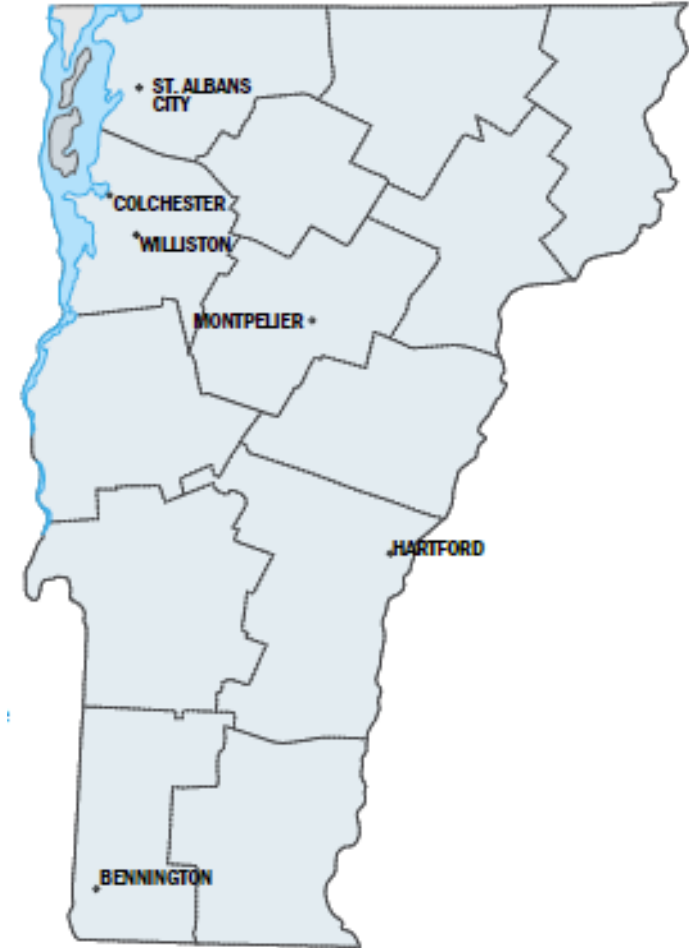
**VERMONT**  
AGENCY OF COMMERCE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



# Growth Centers

## 6 designated growth centers

Designated Growth Centers encompass areas beyond the commercial center to shape the way a community develops over time. Once designated, infrastructure and building investments, both public and private, combined with a local framework of policies and regulations, ensure that 20 years of future development will enhance the vitality of the designated commercial center, while protecting farm and forest land outside the Growth Center.



● **Designated Growth Centers**  
6 designated growth centers:  
Bennington, Colchester, Hartford,  
Montpelier, St. Albans, and Williston



# Growth Centers



St. Albans



Bennington



# Smart Growth America

Improving lives by improving communities

# COMMUNITY WORKSHOP