

The Scenic Roadside Project: Protecting Essex Town's Scenic Views



This Evening

- Introductions
 - Smart Growth Vermont
 - Project Overview
- Scenic Assessment Report
- Matrix of Options:
Identification of Preferred Strategies
- Next Steps



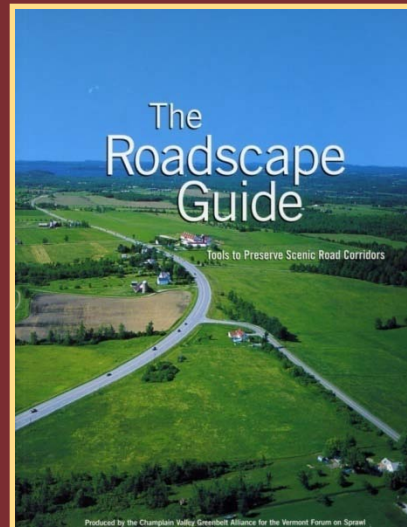
Our Mission

Forging growth and conservation solutions for Vermont's communities and rural countryside



The Roadscape Guide

Tools to Preserve Scenic Road Corridors



Process to Date

- Phase 1: Assessment of Scenic Resources
 - Process developed for evaluating scenic views
 - Base maps and segment maps for assessment
 - Volunteer training
 - Data collection for various points on roads throughout both towns
 - Data analyzed, weighted, and mapped
- Phase 2: Identification of Strategies
 - Town Plans and zoning regulations reviewed
 - Draft Matrix of Options developed

Scenic Assessment Report



Scenic Assessment



Key Characteristics Evaluated

- Relationship to previous point
- Overall landscape assessment
 - Extent of view
 - Sense of depth
 - Traditional landscape pattern
 - Focal points
 - Quality of natural landscape elements
 - Quality of built landscape

Scenic Assessment Form

ESSEX

ESSEX SCENIC ASSESSMENT PROJECT **SEGMENT BH-01**

Volunteer #1: Martha Kent Date collected: 10/10/07

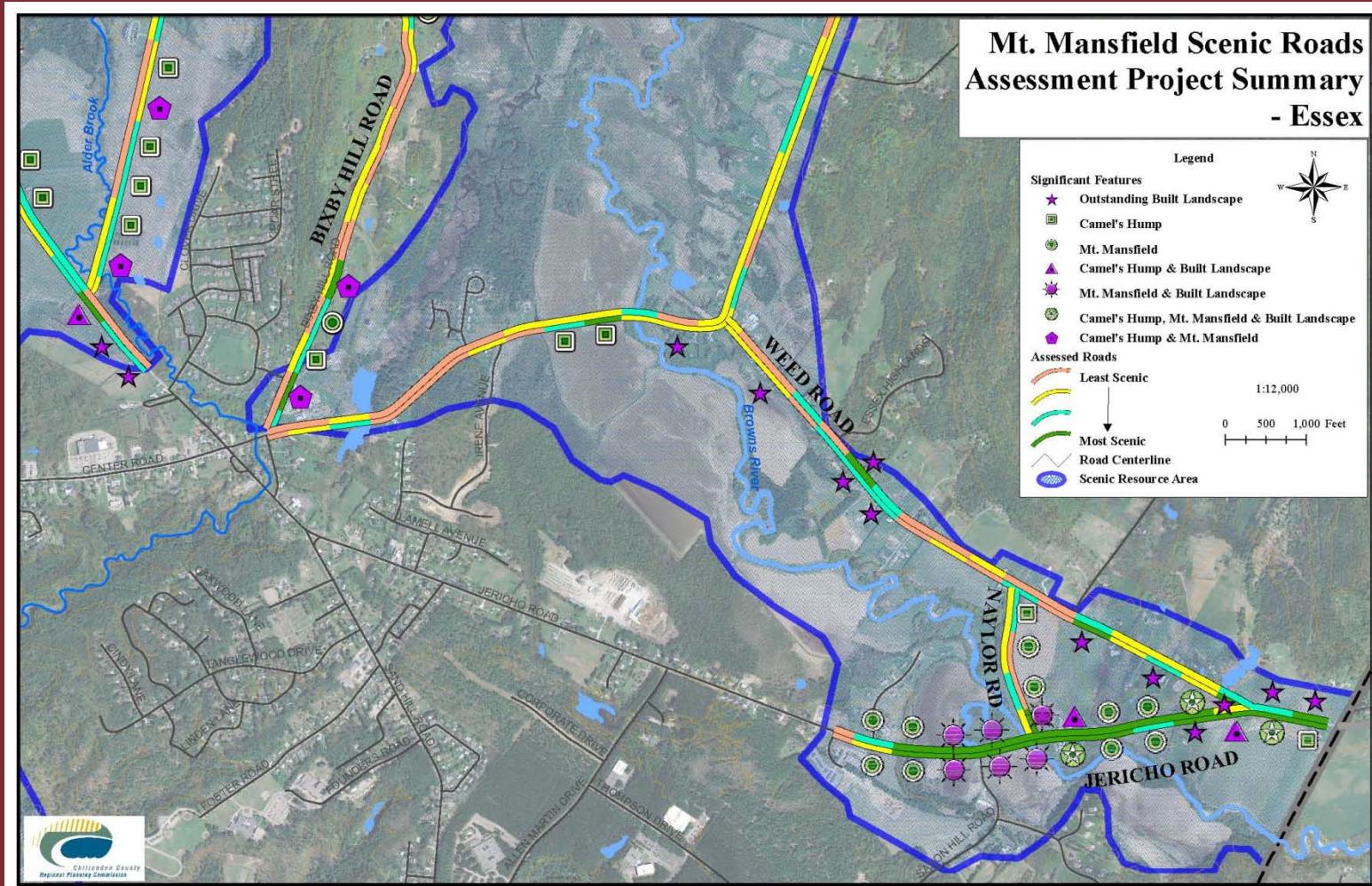
Volunteer #2: Don Kent **QUESTIONS? CALL YOUR VOLUNTEER LEADER:**
Hugh Sweeney, 879-7556

Point Code	Same View as Previous Point? (Y/N)	Criterion 1: Extent of View (1-3)	Criterion 2: Sense of Depth (1-3)	Criterion 3: Traditional Landscape Patterns (1-3)	Criterion 4: Focal Points (1-3)	Criterion 5: Quality of NATURAL Elements (1-3)	Criterion 6: Quality of BUILT Elements (1-3)	Criterion 7: View of Mt. Mansfield (Y/N)	Criterion 8: View of Canal's Hump (Y/N)	Criterion 9: Other NATURAL Features (Y/N)	Criterion 10: Significant BUILT Features (Y/N)	Notes
A	N	1	1	2	2	2	2	N	N	Y	Y	School Colon on road with view
B	N	3	2	2	2	2	3	N	N	N	N	residential
C	N	1	1	2	2	2	2	Y	Y	Y	Y	Essex Elm. Sub.
D	N	3	3	2	3	3	3	N	N	N	N	Trees close to road
E	N	2	3	2	2	2	2	N	Y	N	N	winter snow Canal's Hump
F	N	2	2	2	2	2	3	N	N	N	N	pleasant landscape of road
G	N	1	1	2	2	2	2	Y	N	Y	N	Great view of road by gravel
H	N	3	3	1	3	2	3	N	N	N	N	Woods close to road
I	Y	1	1	2	1	1	2	Y	Y	Y	N	Hampton view of road
J	Y	2	2	1	1	2	3	N	N	N	N	View of Woodbury Sagamore
K	N	3	3	1	3	3	3	N	N	N	N	Woods to road
L	N	3	3	1	3	3	3	N	N	N	N	Woods up to road
M	N	2	2	1	2	2	3	N	N	Y	N	Pleasant field + woods
N	Y	2	2	1	2	2	3	N	N	Y	N	View of Sagamore winter snow of ridge
O	N	3	3	2	3	3	3	N	N	N	N	House near road
P	Y	2	3	1	3	2	3	N	N	N	N	Driving road up hill
Q	Y	3	3	1	3	2	3	N	N	N	N	Woods to road
R	Y	2	2	2	2	2	2	N	N	Y	N	Woods, ridge and of road
S	Y	3	3	1	3	2	3	N	N	N	N	Woods to road (mountain view)
T	Y	3	3	1	3	2	3	N	N	N	N	Slope up from road - woods

WHEN YOU'RE DONE: Go to <http://tinyurl.com/scenic-roads-data> and enter your data in our online form.

NOTE: Don't throw away this sheet — we need to keep it for backup! Give it to your volunteer leader.

GIS Mapping



Segment Summaries

Title: BX-02 Bixby Hill Road, Essex, Vermont

Summary: At the top of Bixby Hill Road, there is a new residence under construction directly in front of a spectacular view of Mount Mansfield. Intermittent views down east side of the hill are partially obstructed by brush and homes and out buildings.

Description: Segment BX-02 is the northern portion of Bixby Hill Road, which runs up Bixby Hill north from Browns River Road just east of its intersection with Vermont Route 15 in the northwest quadrant of Essex.

Most homes on this segment are rural on large lots. At the very northern end of Bixby Hill Road, a large new residence is under construction which will likely completely obstruct a spectacular panoramic view of at least Mount Mansfield. Much of this segment is wooded hill to the road and thus has a lower scenic rating.

Photo: BX01-2.jpg



Overview

- ❑ Overall, appears to be a degradation of quality of the views on the roads that were assessed.
- ❑ Many instances of “outstanding built landscape”
- ❑ Many views of Mt. Mansfield
- ❑ Need to evaluate barriers to higher scores on each road segment

Strategies to Protect Scenic Roadscapes



Regulatory

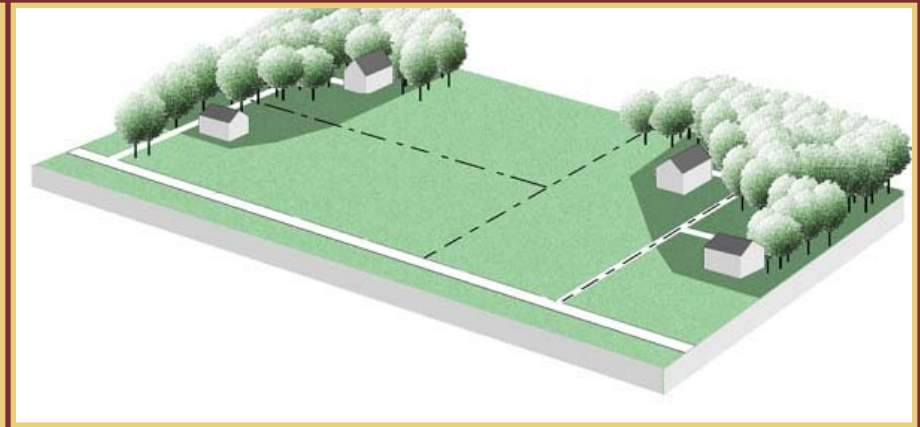
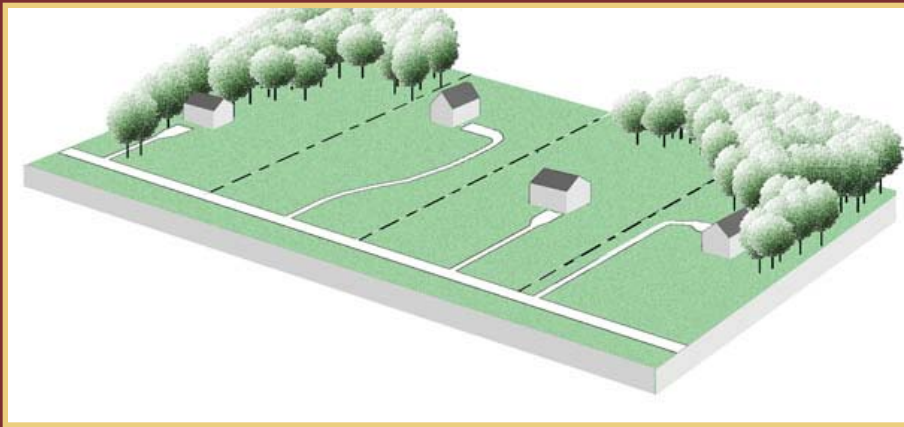
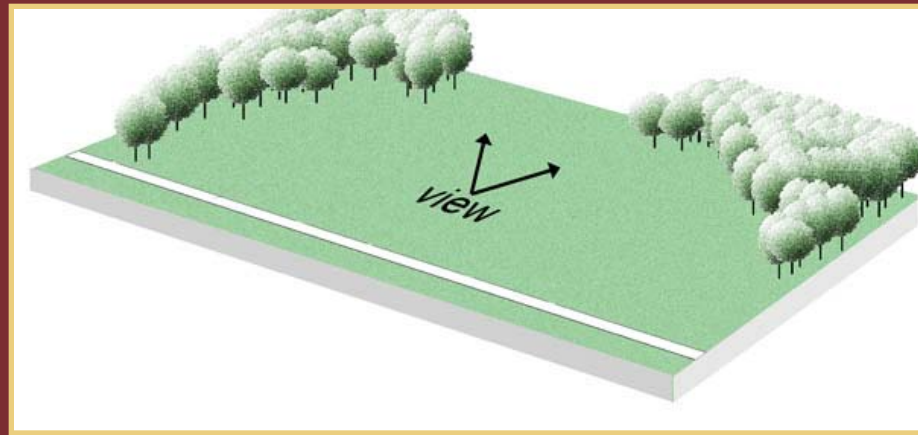
Non-Regulatory

Land Conservation

Regulatory Options

- Add scenic overlay district
- Update Town Plan language
- Reinforce traditional settlement patterns
- Update subdivision siting standards
- Add context sensitive design standards
- Consider offering density bonuses

Scenic Overlay District



Scenic Overlay District

Option: Create Scenic Overlay District

Purposes: Provides additional development review criteria for scenic area protection

Benefits: Allows retention of key scenic views, does not disturb underlying zoning, can be regionalized

Limitations: Must be clearly defined or can be difficult to administer, adds some burden to applicants

Type: Regulatory

Town Plan – Integrate Scenic Protection

Option: Integrate language in Town Plan

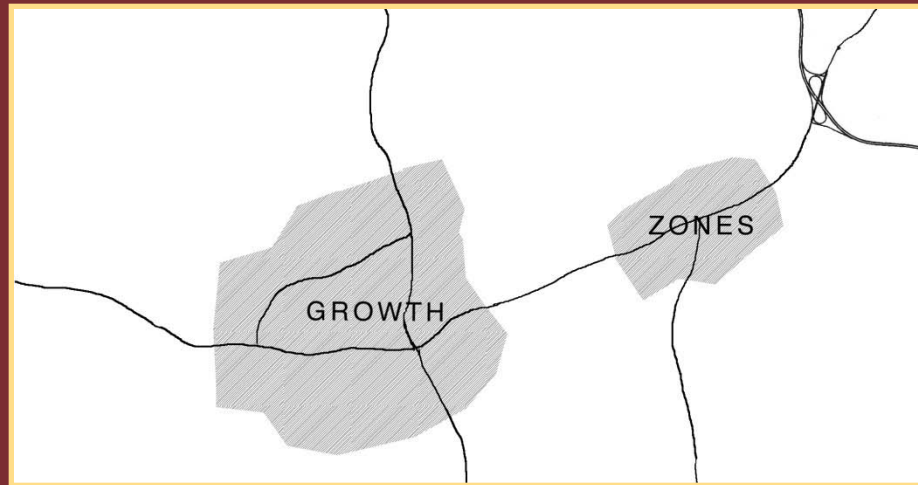
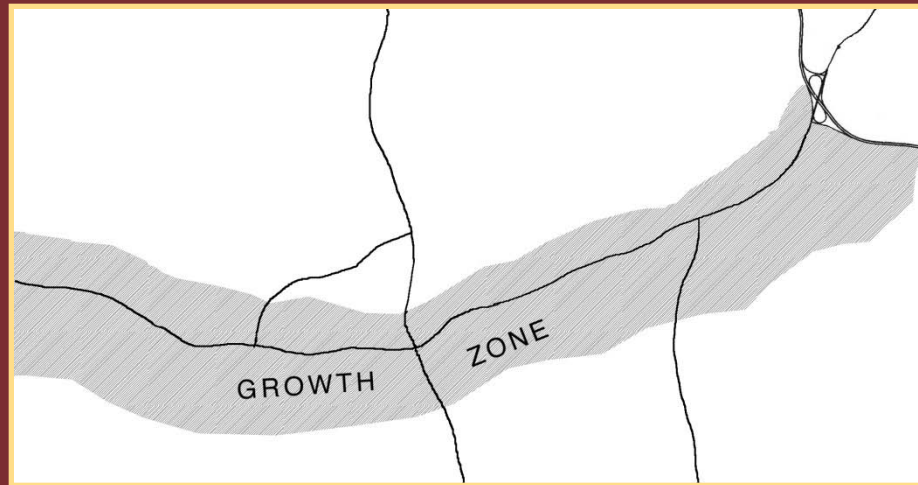
Purposes: Articulates community vision, provides guidance, establishes basis for legal defense

Benefits: Basis for prioritizing, legal protection, documentation of analysis and priorities

Limitations: No specific protection offered, may raise controversy

Type: Regulatory

Traditional Patterns – Nodes not Strips



Traditional Patterns – Nodes not Strips

Option: Ensure that zoning is creating nodes of development around historic centers and villages

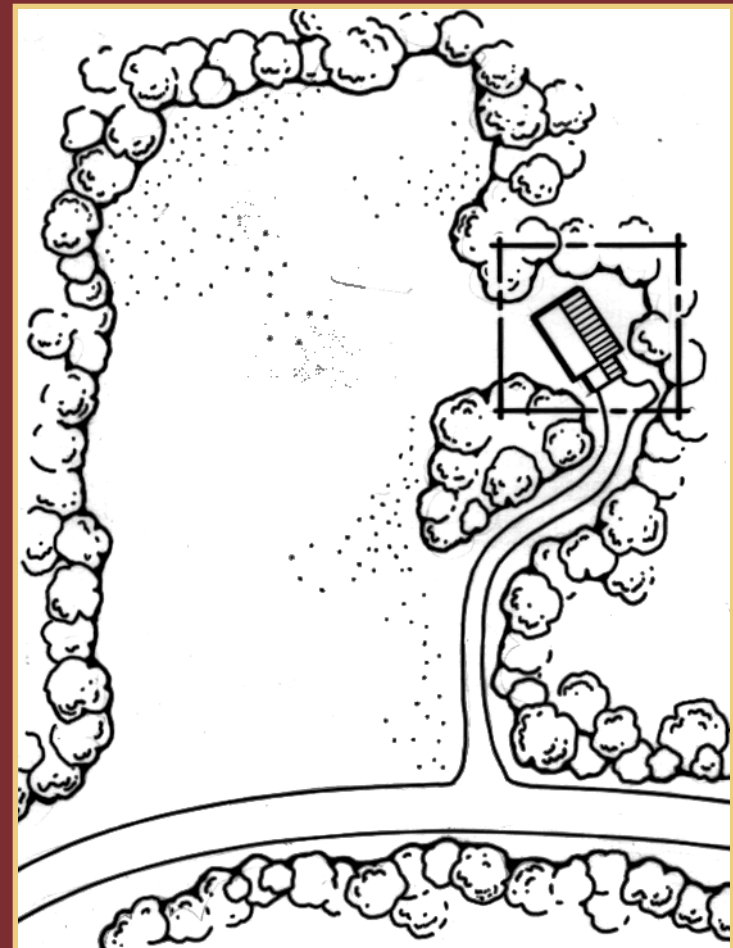
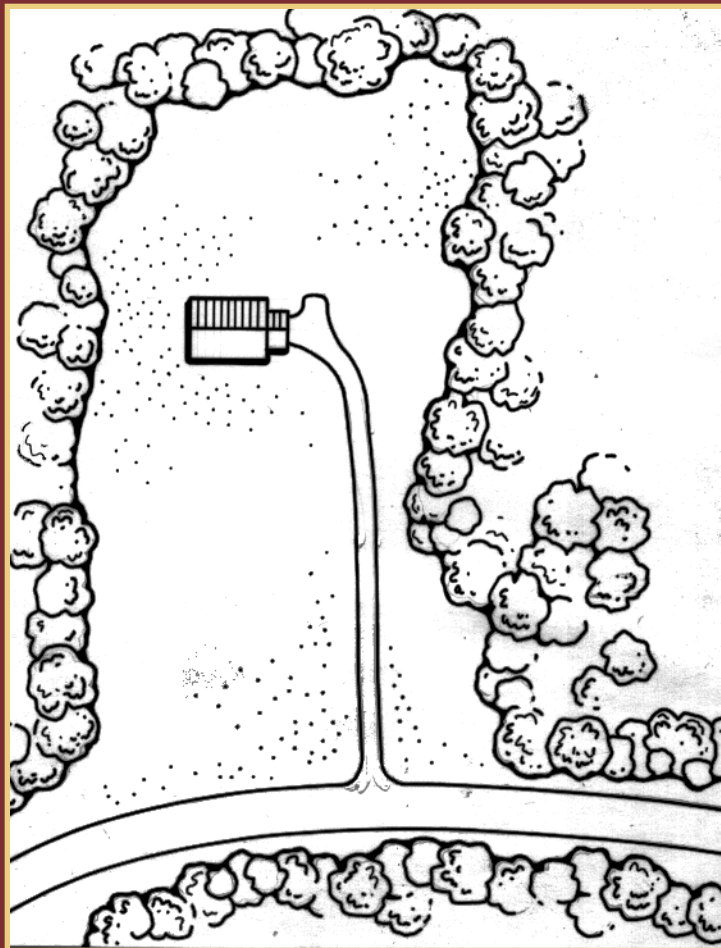
Purposes: Discourage strip development, develop clear boundaries for settlements and rural areas

Benefits: Maintains historic settlement patterns, saves on infrastructure, transportation etc.

Limitation: Impact on landowners needs careful evaluation

Type: Regulatory

Subdivision Siting Standards



Source: Warren VT Development Regulations/Burnt Rock Inc.

Subdivision Siting Standards

Option: Review and Update Subdivision Siting Standards

Purposes: Specific standards are developed for where and how lots should be clustered and/or sited for subdivisions

Benefits: Key community assets such as scenic views, ridgeline protection or open spaces can be protected, ensures consistent standards

Limitation: Specific standards may reduce flexibility with a given for a particular site

Type: Regulatory

Context Sensitive Design



Context Sensitive Design

Option: context sensitive designs ensures that buildings, signage, lighting, etc. preserve scenic assets

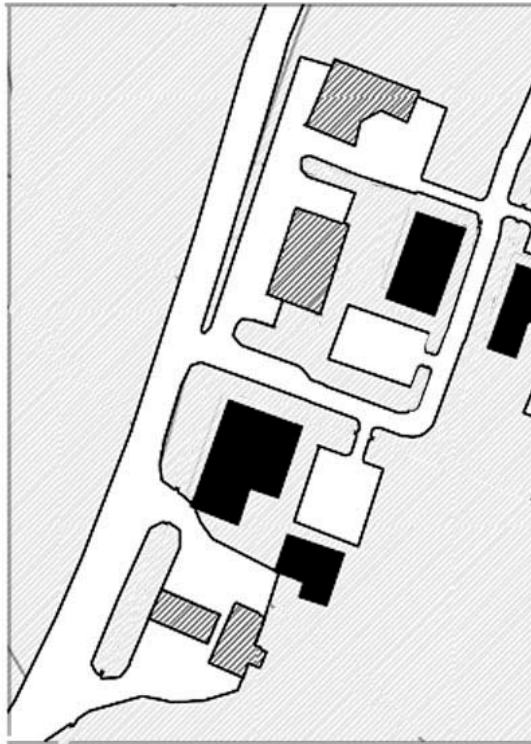
Purpose: Integrate new development with natural features, historic development patterns, traditional architecture

Benefits: Can be tailored to protect specific, targeted assets

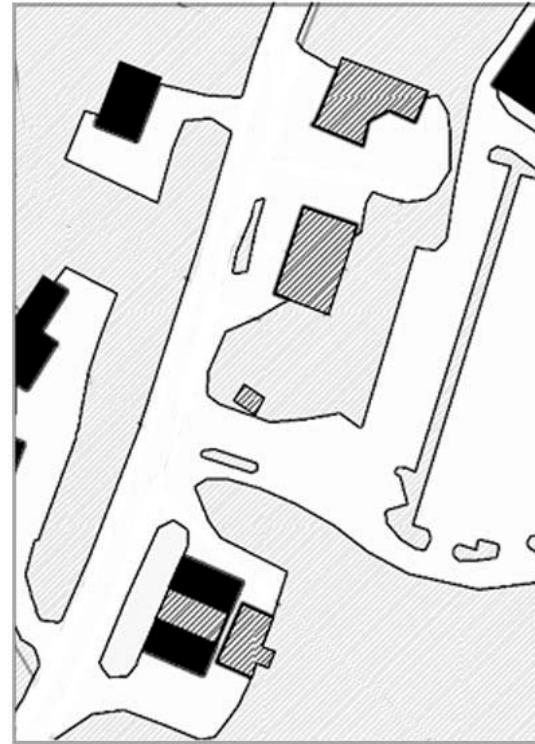
Limitations: Must be clearly defined or can be difficult to administer, adds some burden to applicants

Type: Regulatory

Access Management



THIS



NOT THIS

Access Management

Option: Set of strategies designed to prevent traffic congestion, increase safety and preserve scenic views

Purpose: Access management has a strong influence on the character of a road corridor

Benefits: Limits pavement viewable from road, improves traffic flow, limits scenic obstruction by vehicles, limits views of parking lots

Limitations: Does not deal with overall scenic protection, building and other structures

Type: Regulatory

Density Bonuses

Option: Allows development at a higher density in exchange for protection of scenic resources

Purposes: Incentivizes developers that protect scenic resources

Benefits: Preserves views with limited regulatory action, incentive rather than regulatory, creates nodes of density with surrounding open lands

Limitation: Developer can choose not to protect scenic resources

Type: Regulatory

Non-Regulatory Options

- Use screening landscaping
- Market Scenic Jericho

Landscaping

Option: Landscaping program to encourage landscaping to screen less desirable aspects of development

Purpose: Creates or maintains a view or rural character

Benefit: Preserves views with limited regulatory action

Limitations: May actually obscure viewsheds, limited to development near roadways, may add cost to a project

Type: Non-regulatory

Marketing

Option: Develop a marketing program that focuses attention on the town's scenic assets

Purposes: Develop the economic potential and create community support for the town's scenic assets

Benefits: Brings residents together around a shared value, increases the economic value of scenic assets

Limitation: No direct protection of assets, may rely on volunteers

Type: Non-regulatory

Land Conservation



Land Conservation

Option: Public/private conservation of specific prioritized parcels

Purpose: Integrates scenic protection into conservation priorities

Benefit: Conserved land may be the best means to secure top priority views

Limitations: Expensive and town resource intensive

Type: Conservation

Summary and Next Steps



Next Steps

Phase 2 (February – May):

- ❑ Finalize matrix of options
- ❑ Identification of Preferred Strategies
- ❑ Scenic Protection Goals

Phase 3 (May – June):

- ❑ Draft Scenic Roadscape Protection Manual

Phase 4 (July – December):

- ❑ Draft Town Plan and Bylaw Language
- ❑ Finalize all deliverables

Thank You

noelle@smartgrowthvermont.org
suzanne@smartgrowthvermont.org

