

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The core services provided by the City of South Burlington represent the long-term priorities of our residents to meet the needs of our community, its inhabitants, its businesses, its visitors, and its natural resources. The City invests in services that are professional, customer-oriented, innovative, and in partnership with our surrounding municipalities and partner service providers. These services support social connection, resiliency, and neighborhood-level community.

Services, and the processes used to identify and meet changing needs of the community, must be accessible, inclusive, and equitably provided to all members of our community.

This Plan also centers the climate-mitigation goals in the Climate Action Plan in our municipal decision-making and sets the goal to ensure that our services, policy, facilities, and equipment limit the impacts of climate change and increase our community's climate resilience.

Providing an environment of safety, welfare, and basic needs that the City can address through its departments, outside partnerships, and with the school district are core functions of the City.

OBJECTIVES:

- Rigorously invite engagement for all in the governance of the City
- Provide City Services accessible to and equitably serving the needs all residents and users of the City
- Orient Public Safety services to providing just and equitable first response
- Provide quality indoor and outdoor public facilities and services, identified through collaborative strategic planning, that meet present-day needs and are anticipated to meet needs at least twenty years into the future

STRATEGIES

- Fully integrate the Community Justice Center into municipal operations
- Promote community through increasing usage of the Library circulation, public space reservation, and provision of varied and inclusive programming
- Integrate cemeteries into greater community planning as facility, open space, and recreational asset
- Account for both the long-term and accurate impacts of climate change in the development and implementation of the City's All-Hazards Mitigation Plan
- Lead and collaborate with our partner municipalities on providing shared municipal services
- Be an active and equal participant in mutual aid partnerships for first response
- Seek opportunities to improve response and services for mental health and social service needs, and access to shelter and food
- Seek opportunities to increase engagement and participation in governance, committees, and programming offered by the City
- Identify long-term, stable funding to ensure that the Community Justice Center and the City's commitment to inclusivity, fairness, and justice are able to be realized
- Review and adjust fire/life safety ordinances and resources to meet the evolving needs of the community

- Coordinate closely with the South Burlington School District to identify and track changes in student populations and engage in planning for school capital needs.

INVENTORY, ANALYSIS, & CHALLENGES

Public Safety, Community Justice, & Social Services

The City recognizes that the community is stronger when our community members feel safe and are safe in the community and in their homes. Law enforcement and emergency response can strengthen our community through fair and impartial response, transparency, and building relationships. We can also strengthen our community by orienting ourselves to community-justice outside (or in addition to) traditional court proceedings. Community safety is further bolstered by robust fire prevention

Our community has seen an increasing need, or increasing visibility of the need, for mental health, substance misuse, and other social services. This includes acute mental health crises, non-acute social services support, connection to other partner programs and services, and support for community members struggling with meeting their basic needs. These issues may be exacerbated by climate change, with changing weather events, changing stability in the food system, and changing temperatures over time. They may also be exacerbated by an increasing wealth divide that is taking place at a national scale and is reflected in our community to some extent. The City is exploring new and creative approaches to meeting these increasing needs and possibly providing additional or different types of support for our community members.

Historically, law enforcement and emergency response has been the primary responsibility of the South Burlington Police Department and South Burlington Fire Department, with collateral support between mutual aid partners. More recently, the Community Justice Center has been established to meet some of the community justice needs of our community. South Burlington has also established a partnership with five neighboring municipalities and the Howard Center for a Community Outreach Team and the City will continue the commitment to this partnership. We continue to look for flexible solutions to support public safety in our community.

Police. The primary role of the Police Department in the City is for law enforcement and emergency response. The Police Department provides primary law enforcement services (except at Burlington International Airport, served by the Burlington Police Department), participates in mutual aid and collaboration with other agencies, and operates community outreach programs.

The Police Department has the potential to provide community outreach, education, and non-patrol activities, which can improve public safety and the perception of policing in the community. The Police Department values community partnerships and collaboration and plans to enrich these partnerships as operationally possible.

Community Justice Center. The South Burlington Community Justice Center (“CJC”) hosts reparative panels, provides mediation services, and assists with offender re-entry through Circles of Support and

Accountability. The CJC is currently funded by grants from the State Department of Corrections, which leaves the program in a tenuous position with financial stability lying outside of South Burlington.

Fire and Rescue. The South Burlington Fire Department (“SBFD”) provides primary fire, medical and specialized rescue response. It serves the civilian buildings at the Burlington International Airport. SBFD supports and is supported by surrounding communities and the Air National Guard Fire Department as part of mutual aid agreements. The SBFD is staffed with full-time professional personnel. Two fire engines and one ambulance are staffed 24 hours per day, with support from additional call-outs.

SBFD operates from two fire stations:

- ◆ Station #1 is located on Dorset Street. This is the primary fire station for the City.
- ◆ Station #2 is located on Holmes Road, west of Shelburne Road. This station reduces response times to the southwestern end of the City, an area with a significant volume of emergency incidents.

The Air National Guard Fire Department’s primary mission is to serve the airfield and non-civilian portions of the Airport; in recent years and in close partnership with the City it has expanded its mission to provide first response to the northern portion of the City. The City continues to strive for a more diverse firefighting and civilian staff, which will require some renovations to both stations to provide for additional bunkhouse space for non-male firefighters, additional shower and bathroom space, and overall updates. Physical changes are a step toward a goal of being a welcoming and supportive department.

Fire safety relies on response, but it begins with planning and protection. Currently, building inspections, new construction, electrical inspection, and fire code enforcement are provided by the South Burlington Fire Marshal’s Office and the State of Vermont Division of Fire Safety, using the Vermont fire safety standards. The SBFD also annually inspects all businesses that apply for a liquor license and assists residents with safety equipment and information. As the City population continues to grow, City Center continues to be built out more densely, and commercial businesses continue to develop commercial areas, we recognize that the needs for this kind of fire protection will continue to increase and safety in our multi-family and rental housing will continue to be a City priority.

Emergency Preparedness and Response

Preparation for and response to emergencies is a core government service provided by the City of South Burlington. The City actively embraces a four-phase strategy of emergency preparedness and response: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

Mitigation. Mitigation links emergency management, infrastructure maintenance, and land use planning. The City approaches mitigation as a multi-faceted issue. True mitigation starts with the development or redevelopment of land, design of buildings, location of emergency services, and collaboration with other agencies. It is also affected by climate change and increasing storm frequency and severity. The City has a current All-Hazards Mitigation Plan (“AHMP”) that identifies potential risks with likelihood and scale of damage. The AHMP presents actions for the City, its residents, and its

businesses to lessen the risk of future incidents. The AHMP identifies severe winter storms, gas and/or electric service loss, and flooding as hazards that warrant the greatest attention.

The Department of Planning & Zoning, the Planning commission, and the Development Review Board are all involved in writing and assuring compliance with regulations that mitigate risk. The South Burlington Fire and Rescue Department and Department of Public Works regularly provide input regarding the location and access of buildings, roadways, and other safety-related issues in local development review through participation at the Development Review Board.

Preparedness. Emergency preparedness and response in South Burlington are coordinated through the Fire Department and Police Department. In addition to ongoing training, the City regularly works with the School District, senior housing groups, and local organizations such as the Red Cross to enhance public preparedness. South Burlington has also been an active participant in the Chittenden County Local Emergency Planning Committee, a regional organization responsible for coordinating emergency preparedness.

The City maintains an Emergency Operations Plan with public emergency alert strategies and responsibility of various departments. It identifies several potential shelter locations, including schools, churches, and other large community buildings, approved by the American Red Cross to use in the event of an emergency. The City also maintains an Emergency Operations Center at the Public Works facility.

Response. The Police Department and Fire Department are primarily responsible for emergency response in South Burlington, supported by the Department of Public Works, the Vermont Agency of Transportation, and mutual aid response partners and other support partners. Emergency dispatch is managed through the Police Department, and systems are redundant to Burlington.

Recovery. Recoveries from large-scale incidents in the City have generally been related to flooding. South Burlington has worked diligently, through its Stormwater Division, to address the causes of wide-scale flooding incidents.

Flood resiliency. Improving flood resilience reduces the community vulnerability to flooding and to support recovery, especially in the face of climate change. Due to its geography and elevation, South Burlington doesn't face the same level of flood risk as many Vermont communities. The City has and shall continue to work to improve flood resiliency. The City has restricted development to natural land uses within wetlands, habitat blocks, river and stream corridor buffers and setbacks, and mapped flood plains. The City has Low Impact Development stormwater standards and the state's first Stormwater Utility, a watershed approach to surface water and stormwater management, landscaping requirements and cyclical assessments of tree canopy, smart growth approaches including a designated New Town Center, coordination with neighboring communities, and active participation in the regional All Hazards Mitigation Plan.

Municipal Governance

The role of municipal government in South Burlington is broad and is based on principles of good governance and decision-making. It supports both the basic needs of the community and the quality of life and work in the City. The City is committed to providing services to the community professionally, equitably, and customer-focused, while maintaining an efficient government that spends our tax dollars effectively. This leads to community trust in the City government, more participation in City governance processes, and hopefully for a greater sense of community and civic pride. We recognize that the City has a way to go in appropriately interacting with and communicating with members of different groups in our community and we will continue to strive for better outreach and participation for all community members.

The City of South Burlington has established a government that provides core municipal services including running elections, maintaining land and vital records, tax assessment and collection, City employee management and benefits, legal support, and financial accounting and budgeting. The City recognizes both the need to provide core government services as required by State statute, but also the value of professional staffing in all of these areas for the vitality and future of South Burlington. We are committed to staffing and developing our capacity as a City to have robust municipal departments in all of these areas. Our staffing must also be nimble to changing and evolving community priorities. We are committed to providing adequate and appropriate compensation and benefits, a welcoming work environment and culture, and support to retain quality employees.

City Hall. Municipal government is headquartered at the new City Hall building at 180 Market Street, which opened in 2021. This includes City Clerk, City Manager, City Attorney, Community Development, IT, HR, Planning & Zoning, Recreation & Parks, and Tax & Assessor. There is no current need for upgrading this facility.

City Clerk. The City's Clerk's Office is located in City Hall at 180 Market Street. The Clerk's Office manages City elections, maintains land records, and provides vital records services. Changes in technology and access to online records have changed the number of in-person visitors, but members of the public use the Clerk's Office for notary public services, vital records services, and for general City information. South Burlington's ongoing population growth continues to require additional resources around elections and with day-to-day service.

Public Works and Maintenance

The South Burlington community relies on well-maintained transportation routes through the City for community movement and community safety. We value providing for these basic needs of community members and to continue to support our municipal services that meet these needs. Maintenance of our transportation network (including roads and paths), our water distribution system, stormwater system, sewer collection system, and our park systems provides safe transportation, safe drinking water and sewer services, and safe recreation opportunities to members of our community.

The Department of Public Works ("DPW") maintains City streets (including signs, lighting, and traffic signals), parks and shared use paths, stormwater systems, two water treatment plants and associated collection systems, water distribution systems, water storage tanks, and 32 wastewater pump stations. It maintains City and school district vehicles. DPW operates from a City facility and

garage at 104 Landfill Road, constructed in 2001, which also leases space to the South Burlington School District.

The City's infrastructure needs are planned through both the DPW annual budget and the Capital Improvement Program. Fees for DPW services (including water and wastewater allocation fees) are enterprise funds of the City and must mirror the costs of maintenance, improvement, and expansion of the water and wastewater facilities and infrastructure. It is expected that revenues will cover expenses. DPW is currently undertaking a rate study to right-size fees with planned and necessary costs.

Community Quality of Life

Living in South Burlington is greater than the sum of a person's basic needs or of the city's individual services, programs, or infrastructure. A robust, welcoming, inclusive, and strong community is built on the foundation of strong community facilities and resources. The City of South Burlington is committed to supporting community development and community building amongst residents through support of our community facilities.

Library. The City's community library is located in City Hall at 180 Market Street. The Library is a community hub for information, entertainment and social connection – in FY 2022, over 75,000 people visited the library (this number may be underestimated for large group programs), with 10,027 cardholders. The library provides community programming for all ages and stages of life, interest groups, media access, and technology access and education. Formal library programs served 8,068 attendees, up 24% from the prior year. The new Library contains rooms for meetings, performances, quiet reading space, collaborative learning areas, audio recording, telehealth, teen space, baby/toddler play space, and a community auditorium. The Library is open six days a week and has 18 staffpeople, including 9 full-time employees. There are over 70,000 items in the collection and in FY 2022 the Library circulated over 158,000 items. It will remain a primary goal of the library to promote a love of reading.

The Library is a community asset on many levels. It provides equitable access to printed materials, technology resources, and media. It also serves as open meeting space and rest space available for members of the public during open hours. It is a welcoming and available space for learning, collaboration, and growth for community members. It is an ongoing goal of the Library to become a more equitable and inclusive community resource. This will continue to include outreach to people of all ages, people living in different neighborhoods, New Americans, people with disabilities, and other varied groups. The Library, alongside the Senior Center and the rest of the City Hall building, may be able to be utilized in the future as a warming or cooling center as we face more varied and extreme weather events due to climate change.

Senior Center. In pursuit of being more inclusive, fair, and just, the City continues to seek ways to engage with underserved populations in our community. One underserved population in South Burlington has historically been our senior population. City Hall, completed in 2021, includes the Kevin Dorn Senior Center, which provides space and programming geared toward our seniors. The Senior Center, alongside the Library and the rest of the City Hall building, may be able to be utilized in the future as a warming or cooling center as we face more varied and extreme weather events due to climate change.

Community Open Space. The City of South Burlington values open space, conservation, and recreational access for all members of the community. Our need for intentional open space will continue to increase with increasing housing densities in our development areas and to provide some mitigation of the effects of climate change. Having an publicly accessible open space within walking distance (approximately ¼ mile) from residential development is a goal of the City for both human-scale focus and climate-resilience needs.

In the pursuit of varied, accessible, and community-building open space, the City pursues several avenues for conservation and public access to land, including outright City ownership, partnering in conservation easement projects, and entering into public-private partnerships, as appropriate. The City owns several properties utilized for one or more of these public purposes, ranging from small neighborhood park spaces to large open spaces that are regional attractions. Please see **XXX** for tables of the current South Burlington community open space assets.

Development and maintenance of usable, accessible, and practical open space areas is a critical piece of the City’s climate resilience, human-focused, and inclusive, fair, & just vision statements. Having green space is a key element for improved quality of life and being able to access green space without traveling by vehicle is critical for development of climate-resilient neighborhoods.

The City of South Burlington’s Recreation & Parks Department runs programming on several of the City-owned properties. For more details of the Recreation & Parks programming, please see the Recreational Resources section.

Cemeteries. The City of South Burlington owns and operates two cemeteries: on Airport Drive and on Shelburne Road. Both are significant community assets for their intended purpose of providing publicly-managed burial grounds and will continue to serve that purpose into the future. Both do have some site constraints with wet areas and adjacent development that will guide how they are used. Future investment into appropriate mapping of sites, inventory of plot sales, and maintenance will be needed. In addition, both are located in highly-trafficked areas with significant need for quiet contemplation spaces. As the City looks at community assets holistically and examines how to better provide for high quality of life in our higher-density communities, putting these public green spaces to additional intentional use for quiet, reflective space will integrate them better into the community.

Education

The City of South Burlington values high-quality, just and equitable education for all children in the community. Our schools, especially the elementary schools, provide community gathering opportunities for the different areas of our city and build community amongst school-age families. The South Burlington School District actively plans for its future with a current Strategic Plan. The strong tradition of close cooperation and communication between the School Board and the various municipal boards and commissions should be maintained.

Primary and Secondary Schools. The South Burlington School District (“SBSD”) currently operates five schools that serve approximately 2,500 students in grades K-12: Rick Marcotte Central School, Orchard School, Gertrude Chamberlin School, Frederick H. Tuttle Middle School, and the South Burlington High School. Unlike many districts in Vermont, South Burlington has almost steady or increasing school populations. The SBSB hired McKibben Demographic Research, LLC, to produce a report, the South

Burlington School District Demographic Study – November 2022 (the “Demographic Report”) projecting school populations into the future. The Demographic Report states that in-migration in the 25-34 age group and the 0-9 age group into South Burlington, among other factors, leads to a projection of a school population of 2893 district-wide by 2032-33. The Demographic Report also projects that by 2032-33, the population will have increased at all three school levels: PK-5, 6-8 and 9-12.

The school population may also shift location, with the continuing growth of the City Center area, additional housing in the Shelburne Road corridor, and the completion of already-permitted housing in the Southeast. The Demographic Report projects that population will grow in the areas served by all three elementary schools, with larger growth in the areas currently served by Central and Orchards Schools than the Chamberlin School. However, construction of additional housing in different areas of the city may change that projection into the future.

SBSD is facing changes in utilization of school spaces, needed facilities, and opportunities for alternative uses. Currently, the South Burlington School District is considering plans for updating and upgrading school facilities, including the South Burlington High School, Frederick H. Tuttle Middle School, and the three elementary schools. Many school facilities are aging and have varying levels of flexibility in changing uses of spaces and full utilization of the schools.

It is anticipated that significant investments across all facilities to meet current and future needs of the community will be needed in the coming years.

In addition to the SBSBD school system, several independent primary and secondary schools operate in the community, including Rice High School, Vermont Commons School, and the Schoolhouse. The City coordinates efforts, services, and programming in various manners with each of these schools and supports policies and programs to enhance the experience of each student attending these schools.

University of Vermont. The University of Vermont owns 571 acres of land in South Burlington, which is part of its South Campus area. The South Campus is currently utilized primarily for instruction and research focused on bioresearch, agricultural, horticultural and natural areas management. UVM has recently updated its Campus Master Plan for 2022-32, including the designation of land bank areas in South Burlington, looking forward to growth and reservation of lands for future needs. UVM also owns several areas of open space or agricultural space, including Centennial Woods Natural Area and East Woods Natural Area, that provide benefits to South Burlington and the region. The City will continue to work with UVM on both the City and the University’s long-term planning goals.

Childcare. Childcare is an underserved need in South Burlington, Chittenden County, and Vermont as a whole. Thousands of children require daycare or after school care in the region and the number of available spots is limited. Private licensed child care centers, registered family child care homes, licensed family child care homes, licensed after-school programs, and licensed preschool programs provide care of children of varying ages. The provision of safe, local, and accessible childcare and pre-school is a vital element in attracting families to South Burlington. The City endeavors to ensure that high-quality, affordable, and equitable childcare is available within its borders, as a possible partner with private and non-profit childcare providers.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & EXISTING PLANS

- UVM Campus Plan 2022-2032
- South Burlington School District Demographic Report (2022)
- Feasibility Study for Residential Solid Waste Collection Contracts (2020)
- Chittenden County Regional Dispatch: Feasibility Study (1016), Public Safety Authority (2018-2023)
- Chittenden County All Hazards Multi-Jurisdictional Mitigation Plan (and South Burlington Annex) 2022
- South Burlington Emergency Operations Plan
- School + Community Master Planning Task Force Report (2015)
- South Burlington Open Space Report (2014)

FUTURE PLAN NEEDS

- Fire Department Strategic Plan