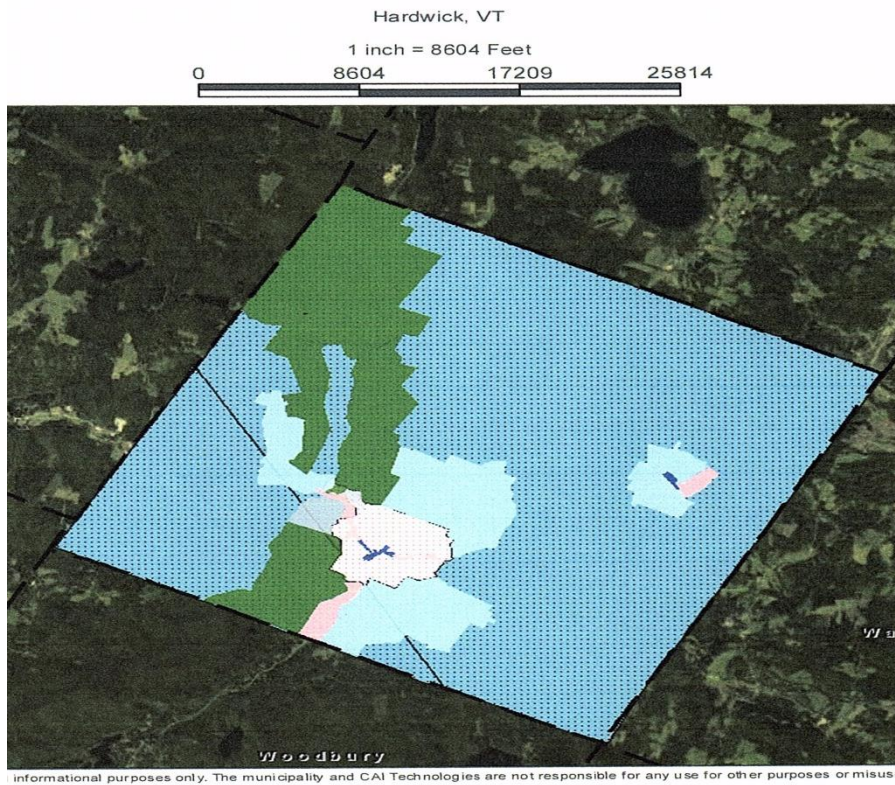


Review of Potential Zoning Boundary Adjustment on Route 15 West

At the last Hardwick Planning Commission meeting, the suggestion was made that the originally proposed zoning boundary adjustment (from the corner of Route 15 and 14 to the Gates Salvage parcel – moving from Compact Residential to Highway Mixed Use) be altered to include a shift along the residual lands on Route 15 West to the intersection with Wolcott’s boundary. The following is a review of this proposal.



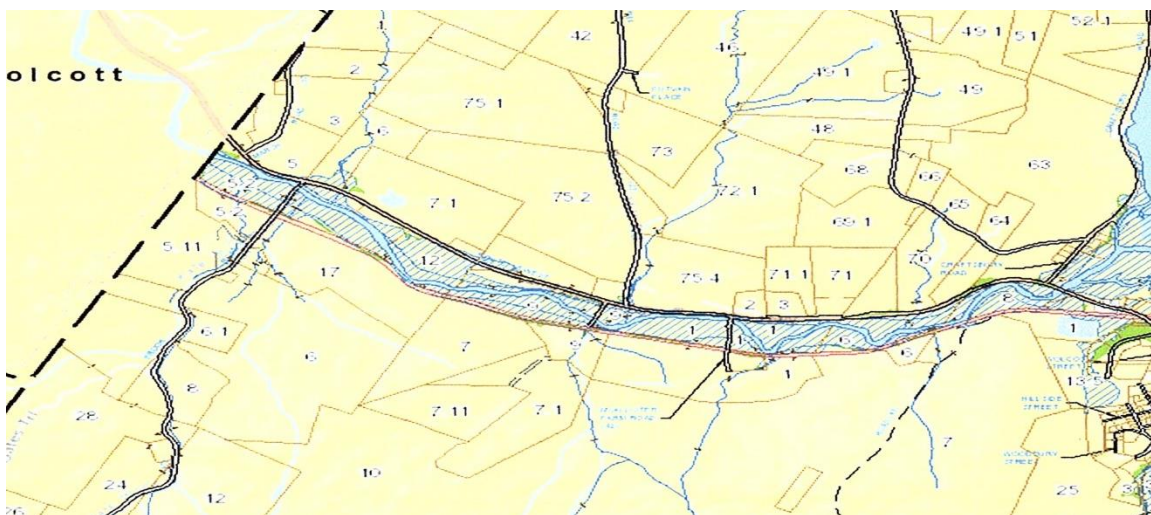
The map at left shows the current zoning districts in Hardwick.

Please note that the Highway Mixed Use zoning district (the darker pink) is used sparingly adjacent to the two Village Centers. This usage matches the stated purpose of the HMU zoning district. “The purpose of the Highway Mixed-Use District is to allow automobile-oriented businesses and other compatible uses along major travel corridors **contiguous to the historic village centers**, while maintaining safe and efficient traffic flow (emphasis added).” Page 11.

The original proposal contains approximately 11 acres near the already existing Highway Mixed Use zoning area. The parcels affected currently include residential and home

business use, as well as a portion of the existing Gates Salvage parcel.

A shift of the Route 15 West corridor would alter the zoning district of approximately 400 acres of land. The lower or Southern side of Route 15 West has a significant presence of Flood Hazard Overlay lands and even Floodway lands.



From a planning approach, this section should not be where industry and commercial enterprises are encouraged to exist. The remaining 200 acres on the northern side of Route 15 West have

approximately 106 acres which are not currently accessible from Route 15 West due to steep slopes, wetlands, and general land contours. This section is the initial lands contiguous to the Hardwick Village – between the intersection of Routes 14 and 15 and Bunker Hill Road. This section is currently being utilized as solely residential with multiple steep driveways departing from the main road.

Another 35 acres are in agricultural usage. This section is from Bunker Hill Road and continues to the West of the village. The southern side of Route 15 West is also utilized as agricultural lands – this is a common usage in the Flood Hazard Overlay.

The remaining 59 acres (or so) are utilized for earth extraction, salvage yard and other commercial entities which are allowed with a conditional use in this zoning district (Rural Residential).

The comparison of the Rural Residential and the Highway Mixed Use zoning districts, as well as a comparison of the Compact Residential and the Highway Mixed Use zoning districts are attached. The Compact Residential and the Highway Mixed Use zoning districts are more closely aligned with conditional uses allowed, setback distances, and lot sizes. The Rural Residential and the Highway Mixed Use zoning districts are more divergent and are tailored for their specific locations in the town of Hardwick. Rural Residential is typically located in the areas without access to municipal water and sewer and the conditional uses allowed reflect this siting aspect.

The suggested section of Route 15 West does have access to a state-maintained road. A possible approach would be to create a new stand-alone zoning district which more accurately reflects the needs of that section of town (the approximately 59 acres near the Wolcott Town line).

Another possibility would be to include “Mixed Use” in the Rural Residential conditional use list. Mixed Use is currently on the list for Central Business, Village Neighborhood, Highway Mixed Use, and Compact Residential. Mixed Use is not currently on the conditional use list for the Industrial District, Rural Residential, and Forest Reserve. The zoning definition is as follows:

Section 4.12 Mixed Use

- A.) In designated zoning districts, more than one principal use may be allowed within a single building, or on a single lot, subject to the following provisions:
- 1.) Each of the proposed uses is allowed as a permitted or conditional use within the zoning district in which the mixed use is located.
 - 2.) The uses in combination meet all applicable standards for the district in which the mixed use is proposed, including minimum lot, frontage and setback requirements; or the mixed use is part of a planned unit development (PUD) reviewed in accordance with Section 5.4.
 - 3.) The mixed use shall meet all applicable general regulations under Article 3, including but not limited to sign and parking requirements.

The addition of that category might allow more flexibility to the property owners in the Rural Residential zoning district.

In conclusion, I would not recommend extending the Highway Mixed Use zoning district the entire length of Route 15 West. This area of town should be examined more thoroughly in the future and should, perhaps, have a new zoning district designation.

Created on January 3, 2019