

Hardwick Unified Development Bylaws – 2025 Update

Hardwick Select Board Public Hearing

March 19, 2026

This hearing is an opportunity for the public to ask questions and provide comments before the Select Board considers adoption of the bylaw updates.

Overview of the 2025 Zoning Bylaws Update

This update builds on the 2024 zoning changes that brought Hardwick into compliance with:

- * The Vermont HOME Act
- * FEMA floodplain regulations

The 2025 update focuses on a few targeted improvements:

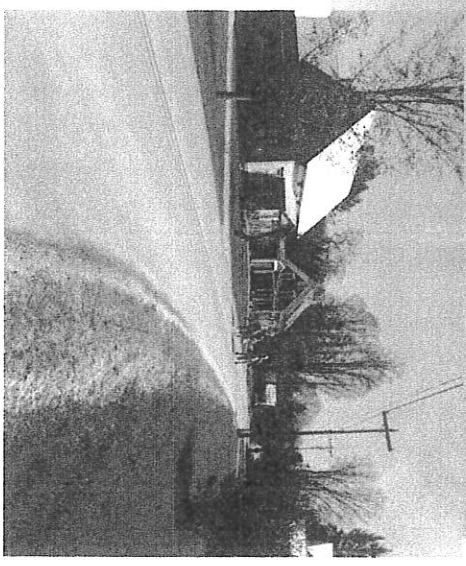
- * Creating a Village Center district for East Hardwick
- * Establishing a River Corridor Overlay
- * Removing outdated Act 250 references
- * Improving definitions and internal references

East Hardwick Village Center District

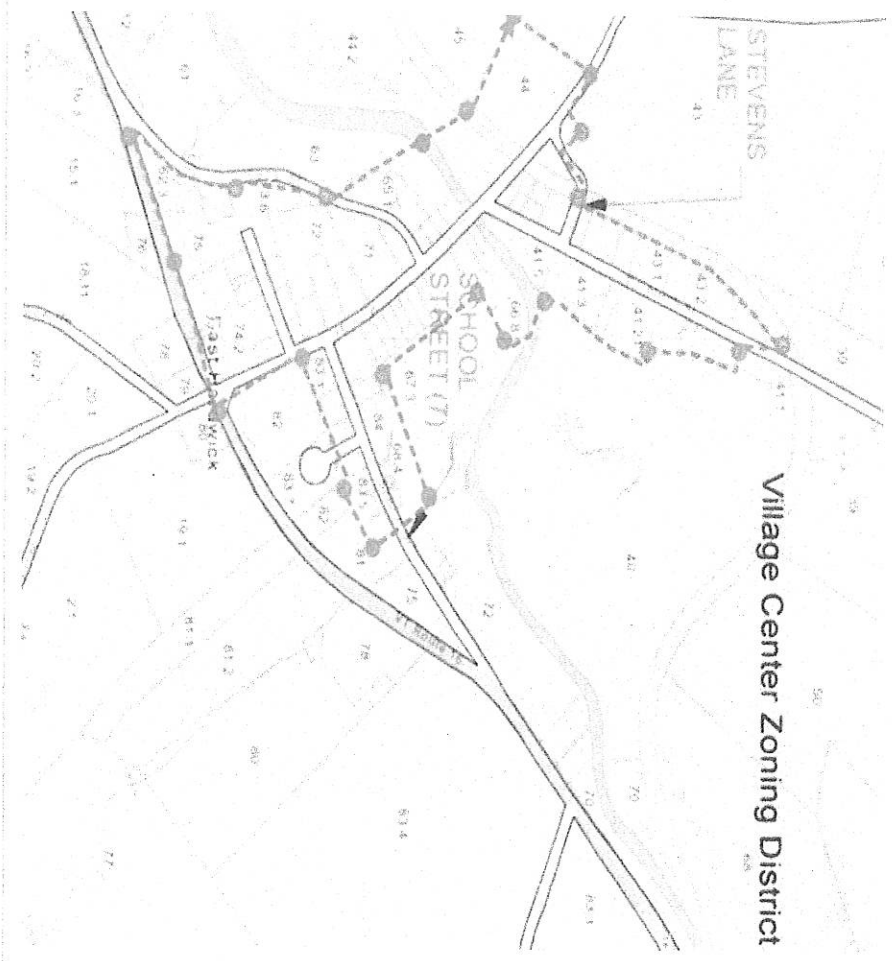
Creates a zoning district designed specifically for East Hardwick.

Purpose:

- * Support a traditional mixed-use village center
- * Encourage housing and small-scale commercial activity
- * Align zoning standards with existing lot sizes and buildings
- * Support reinvestment in the village



Village Center Proposed Map



River Corridor Overlay – What is a River Corridor?

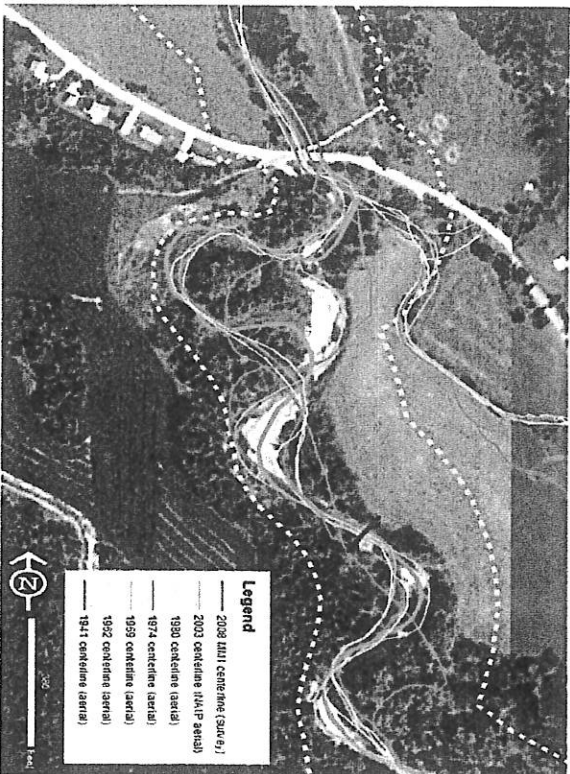
River Corridor

While floodplains and floodways show where water inundates land, the river corridor shows where the river itself may move or erode the landscape over time.

Rivers are dynamic, they shift, meander, and carve new channels, especially during major storms.

A river corridor includes the river channel and the surrounding land where this natural movement is likely to occur.

Protecting river corridors helps reduce long-term flood risk by giving rivers space to move and adapt.



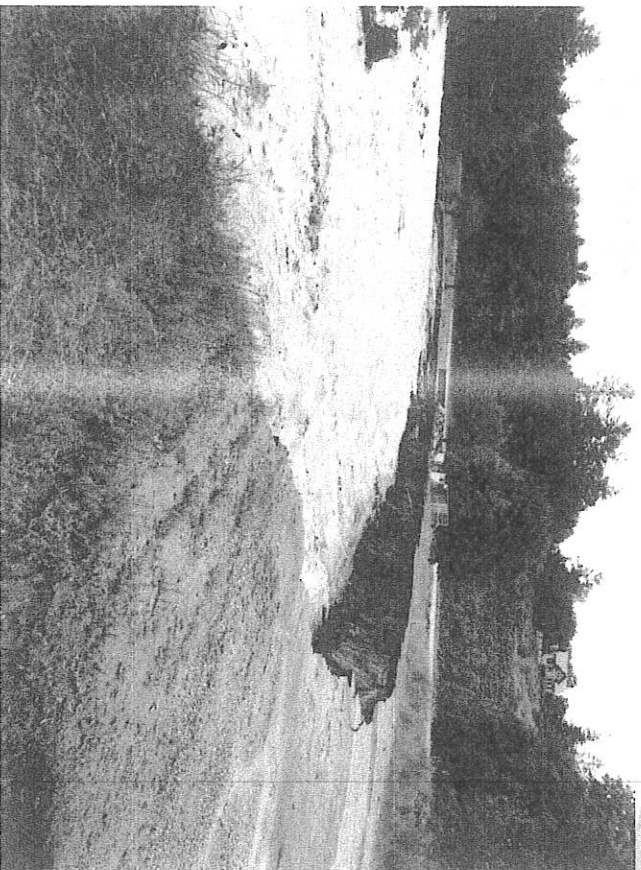
Meandering channels in a river corridor

TRORC
Two Rivers-Ottawa-Quebec
REGIONAL COMMISSION

 **VERMONT**
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

This work is made possible through support from TRORC and DEC.

State Requirements & Timing



- * The State of Vermont recently passed Act 121, The Flood Safety Act – this act requires the State to regulate development within the River Corridor Overlay throughout the entire State within 3-4 years.
- * By adopting River Corridor rules now, Hardwick may be able to request local control over the permitting process.
- * Early adoption may give residents time to understand & work with proposed changes.
- * Higher level of State Reimbursement from the Emergency Relief & Assistance Fund after federally declared disasters (if adopted).

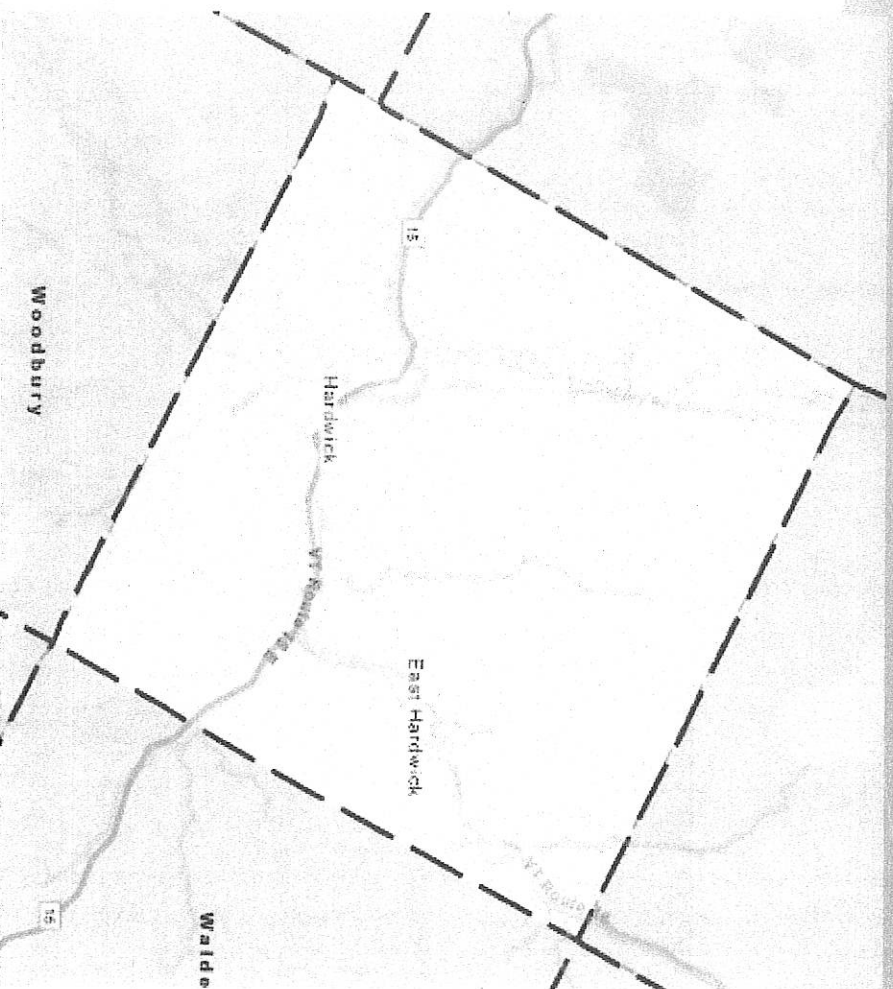
River Corridor Overlay – Why it Matters

River Corridors are areas where rivers naturally move over time.

The overlay helps:

- * Reduce future flood and erosion damage
- * Protect water quality
- * Help guide major new construction away from areas most likely to erode.

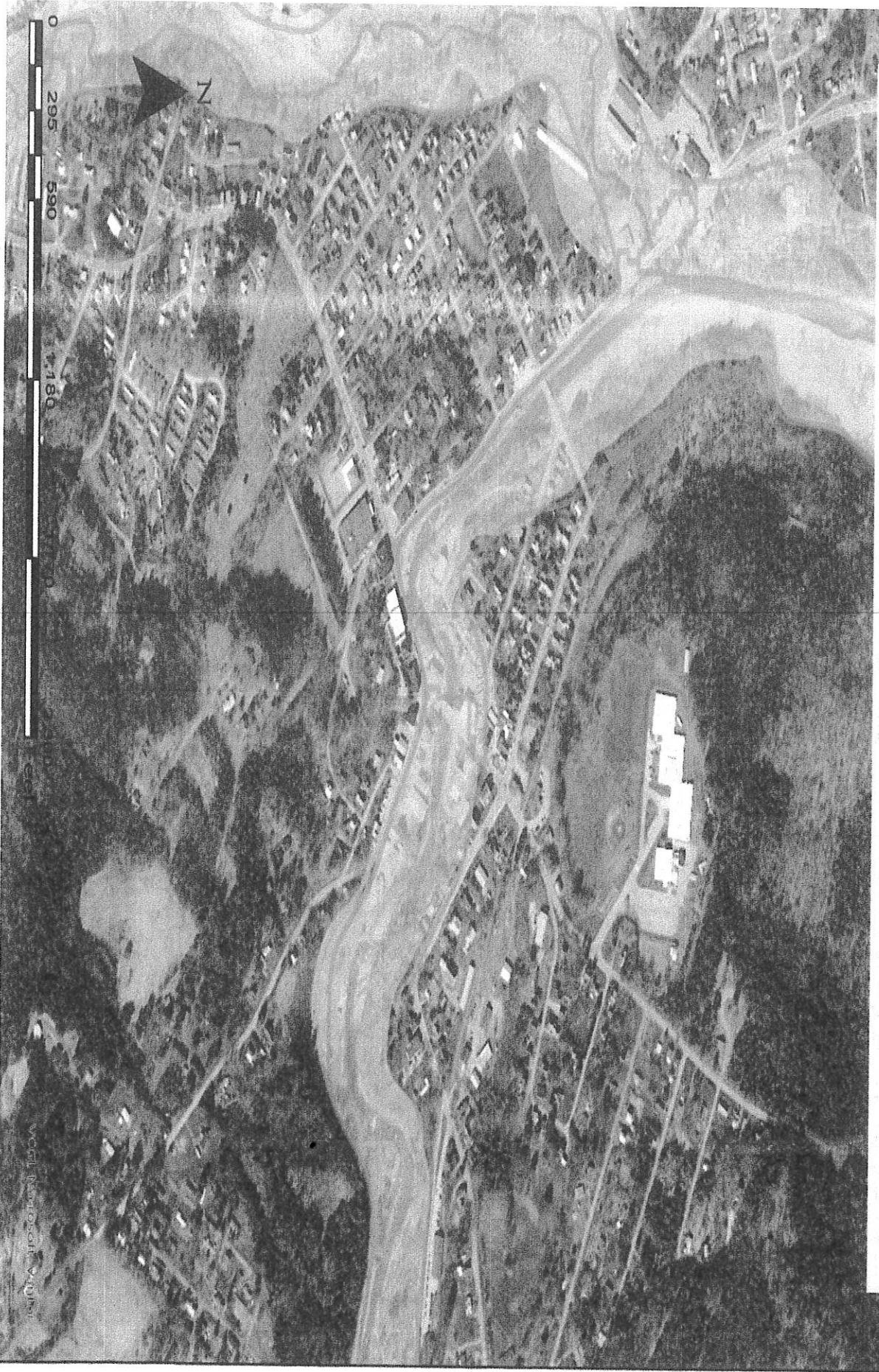
Agriculture, forestry and routine property maintenance are not affected.



Updated State River Corridor Mapping (2026)

- * The Town recently received updated river corridor mapping from the Department of Environmental Conservation.
- * Changes in downtown Hardwick are limited to the meander near the former Inn by the River, the bedrock near the pedestrian bridge, and the narrowing of the mapped corridor from 3 channel widths to 2 channel widths.

Hardwick Town center - Compare 2019 and update Statewide
River Corridors March 2026



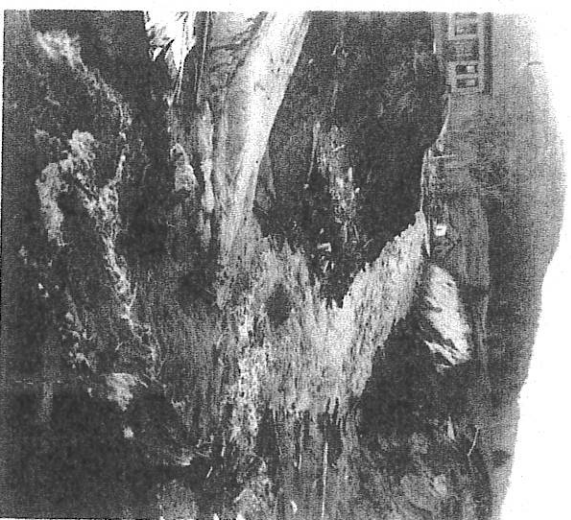
Future Opportunity – Downtown Infill Mapping

The State has indicated that Hardwick may pursue in-fill mapping for portions of the downtown.

This process can identify areas within the mapped corridor that are suitable for development and create different levels of review, such as:

- * Areas where no review is needed
- * Areas where limited review is needed
- * Areas where full review may be required

If the Town adopts the river corridor overlay, DEC staff have indicated that they are willing to work with Hardwick on this effort.



Planning Commission Recommendation

The Planning Commission held public hearings and reviewed comments before forwarding the proposal to the Select Board.

The Commission concluded that the changes support:

- * Housing near services
- * Safer development patterns in flood-prone areas.
- * Reinvestment in East Hardwick
- * Continued local involvement in river corridor permitting

The Select Board is now holding this public hearing to receive additional comments before considering adoption.



Thank You!

Planning and Zoning contact information –
zoning.administrator@hardwickvt.gov or (802) 472-1686.

Where to find materials online – Planning Commission page on
the Hardwick Vermont Website

<https://hardwickvt.gov/government/planning-zoning-floodplain/planning-commission-hpc/>