That WHEREAS, Vermont's downtowns and villages have served as the social and economic centers of our communities for generations and they play a key role in a region's economy; and

WHEREAS, almost one fifth of Vermont's economic activity and jobs are based in our downtowns; and

WHEREAS, recent decades have brought tremendous economic, technological and social changes, often with adverse effects on our downtowns along with the national trend of disinvestments in downtowns; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, the State of Vermont’s Agency of Commerce & Community Development created the Downtown Program to bring tax credits, grants, training and technical services to "designated" downtown organizations in order to preserve and revitalize historic downtowns and create strong communities; and

WHEREAS, Burlington was one of the first municipalities in the state to receive downtown designation from the Downtown Program; and

WHEREAS, the City of Burlington, through the Office of the Mayor, the Church Street Marketplace District Commission, the Community and Economic Development Office, Burlington City Arts, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of Public Works and the Department of Planning and Zoning in conjunction with the Burlington Business Association, seek to undertake a program of reinvestment in the City's downtown along with supporting additional housing in the surrounding area; and

WHEREAS, this must involve a long-term commitment to enhancing economic opportunities, preserving historic buildings, and improving public spaces and infrastructure in the commercial district along with adjacent development of additional housing ensuring the vitality of Burlington’s downtown; and

WHEREAS, PlanBTV indicated a desire for additional density within our designated downtown and particularly for additional housing opportunities within the immediately adjacent areas; and

WHEREAS, the Vermont Legislature has created a Neighborhood Development Area designation, to encourage municipalities and developers to plan for new and infill housing in the area within walking distance of a designated downtown; and

WHEREAS, incentives currently offered include that:

* qualified “mixed income” projects are exempt from Act 250 regulations;
* Act 250 projects not qualifying for the exemption receive a 50% discount on application fees;
* Agency of Natural resources fees for wastewater review are capped at $50.00 for projects that have received sewer allocation from an approved municipal system;
* There be an exemption from the land gains tax;
* State funding be a priority for a variety of programs; and

WHEREAS, the City of Burlington desires to seek a Neighborhood Development Area designation for the area on the attached map to encourage new and infill housing within walking distance of the downtown; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Neighborhood Development Area designation does not change or override the Burlington Comprehensive Development Ordinance or the process by which development in Burlington is reviewed or approved by the City; and

WHEREAS, both the City Council Community Development & Neighborhood Revitalization Committee and the Planning Commission have endorsed the Neighborhood Development Area as proposed on the attached map;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council authorizes the Mayor, through the Planning and Zoning Office in conjunction with the Community and Economic Development Office, to submit an application for the new Neighborhood Development Area designation that encourages municipalities and/or developers to plan for new and infill housing in the area within walking distance of its designated downtown, village center, new town center, or within its designated growth center and incentivizes needed housing, further supporting the commercial establishments in the designated centers.

lb/RWH/Resolutions 2014/CEDO, P&Z – Submit Application for Neighborhood Development Area Designation (reinvest in downtown & add housing)

3/5/14