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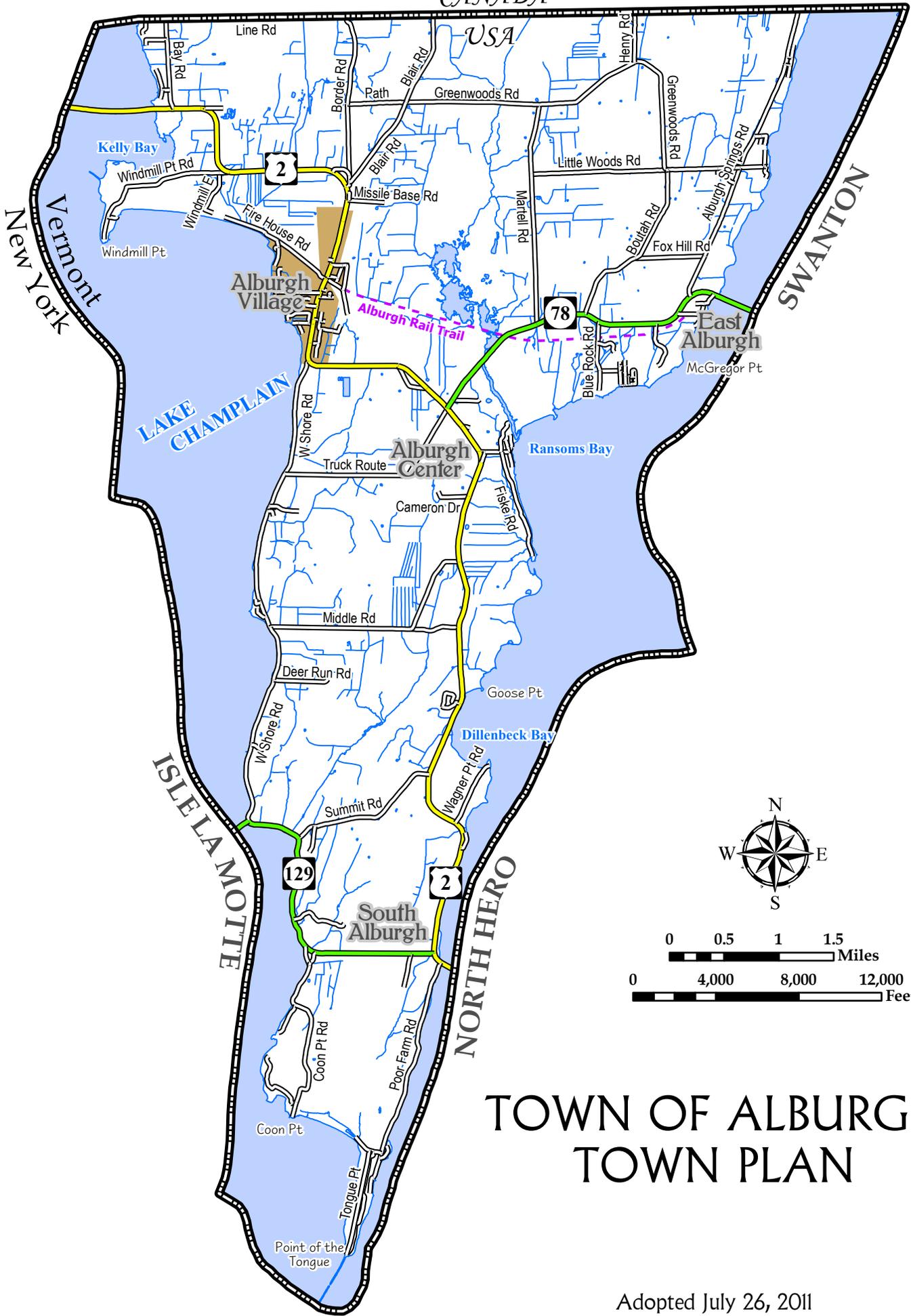
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# TOWN OF ALBURGH TOWN PLAN

Adopted July 26, 2011

# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Photographs taken by Emily Minck, NRPC Intern 2006

# Alburgh Town Plan

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## Vision for the Future of Alburgh:

The Alburgh Planning Commission developed the following vision for the Town based on the town survey and their conversations with friends and neighbors.

❖ *A friendly town that encourages local residents to stay and tourists to visit again and again;*

❖ *A fun town that provides natural resource activities during the day and unique cultural events at night;*

❖ *A town with good roads;*

❖ *A town known for the high quality of its fire and rescue personnel and emergency facilities;*



❖ *A town that provides its children with a high quality care and education and its adults with the opportunity for life-long learning and advancement;*

❖ *A town that balances year-round residents and seasonal visitors;*

❖ *A town that provides good-paying local jobs for its residents;*

❖ *A town where people can buy the things they need daily locally;*

❖ *A town where people feel safe and healthy;*

❖ *A town where all residents have access to good quality, affordable housing;*

❖ *A clean town, where residents and visitors show that they care about the community by properly disposing of their garbage and maintaining their residences;*

❖ *A town known for its conservation of natural resources;*

❖ *A town where all people can enjoy the beauty and recreational opportunities of Lake Champlain;*

❖ *A town that maintains its historic buildings;*

❖ *A town that maintains its rural and agricultural character by maintaining its farms and small-town atmosphere.*

## Chapter 1. Town Plan Goals, Policies and Objectives

The following Goals, Policies and Objectives were largely developed as part of the 2006 Town Plan update. These items have been either carried forward and readopted or revised as part of the 2011 Plan Update and Readoption process. Objectives that were completed or are not relevant to the Town of Alburgh's vision for 2011 were deleted from the Plan. An analysis of the 2006 Objectives and a discussion of what remains relevant to the Town in 2011 can be found in Appendix A, Implementation Report.

At the April 19<sup>th</sup> public meeting people in attendance identified a list of the assets which make Alburgh unique:

- The Lakeshore
- Capable people
- Comparatively low taxes
- A major thoroughfare
- Good schools and school choice after Grade 8
- Senior housing
- Campgrounds
- A community that takes care of one another
- Fourth of July Parade and fireworks
- Affordable housing
- Alburgh Dunes State Park
- Calm, quiet and remoteness
- Rail Trail
- Golf Course

### Population, Housing & Economic Development

#### Goals:

*An economically vibrant Village District that includes a mix of small to medium sized retail and commercial businesses and residential uses in a densely developed area. A selection of stores that sell items and provide services that meet the needs of local residents and support local businesses.*

*To build an economy based on clean businesses that provides healthy working conditions for local people, pay good wages and that minimally impact the environment.*

*To sustain a vibrant agricultural economy that builds on the proud history of Alburgh farmers and prepares the way for future generations to continue farming in town.*

*To provide high quality housing for all Alburgh residents and insure that such housing is available and affordable to all income levels.*

*To insure that adequate health care is available and affordable to all town residents.*

*To seek new, well-paying economic opportunities that can use the skills of local residents, including new uses for traditional crafts to appropriate use of new*

*technologies such as electronic commerce.*

*To maintain and improve Alburgh's attractiveness for tourists and seasonal residents.*

**Policies:**

- P-A.** Encourage economic development compatible with the character and natural environment of Alburgh
- P-B.** Encourage the development of a variety of high quality housing types in the Town, especially housing for the elderly, affordable to a range of income groups.
- P-C.** Encourage the development of a mixed use Village district in Alburgh that includes a diversity of businesses and residential uses, particularly additional units for elderly residents.
- P-D.** Encourage small to medium sized businesses to locate in the Village. Businesses in this size category are those employing up to 30 people full-time.
- P-E.** Encourage the conservation of agricultural lands.
- P-F.** Ensure that the regulation of land development in Alburgh does not negatively impact the availability of safe and affordable childcare.
  
- P-G.** Encourage value-added activities on local farms, including such things as small to medium food processing, farm stands, farmers markets and use of products grown on local farms.
- P-H.** Encourage businesses that provide tourist facilities to locate in town.
- P-I.** Promote activities that facilitate socialization among Alburgh's full-time residents.

**Objectives:**

- P-1.** Advertise and promote the Alburgh Business Park to make it more competitive with New York and St. Albans/Swanton parks.
- P-2.** Acquire funding to renovate the Alburgh Business Park to increase its appeal to a greater diversity of business types, including commercial, light industrial and an incubator space for local businesses that provides both physical space and access to the business and marketing opportunities presented by the Internet and other emerging technologies.
- P-3.** Seek to attract restaurants or other year round dining options to Alburgh.
- P-4.** Assist prospective restaurants to find funding to upgrade ancillary systems.
- P-5.** Explore options for rehabilitating buildings on Main Street including grants and loans.
- P-6.** Work with the Health Center and other agencies and non-profits to provide services for Alburgh residents including but not limited to a pharmacy, a drugstore, and dental care.

- P-7.** Work with the Revitalization Committee to develop a marketing and communications strategy for Alburgh that will highlight the town's assets with the purpose of attracting commerce and tourism

## **Natural and Cultural Environment**

### **Goals:**

*Seek to maintain high quality water supplies and improve those areas where water quality of the lake, ground water and surface waters of Alburgh has been impaired.*

*To seek to make Alburgh more attractive for bicycle-based tourism.*

*Protect Alburgh's extensive wetland habitat for the benefit of present and future generations.*

*To develop a variety of low- impact economic activities that promote environmental conservation, such as bird-watching, fishing and hunting.*

*To insure that the town's substantial endowment of farm soils are available for food and fiber production for generations to come.*

*To protect sensitive natural and historic resources from harm.*

*To insure that Alburgh residents have year-round public access to Lake Champlain.*

*To insure that Alburgh's youth have access to outdoor recreational and educational facilities*

*Ensure that residents and visitors have safe and easy access to boat launch facilities.*

### **Policies:**

- N-A.** Encourage and support efforts to develop bicycle facilities and infrastructure (bicycle routes, bathroom, bike racks) in Alburgh.
- N-B.** Encourage and support efforts to improve public access to Lake Champlain.
- N-C.** Encourage and support efforts to improve facilities for users of Lake Champlain in all seasons.
- N-D.** Encourage and support efforts to improve Lake Champlain water quality.
- N-E.** New development along the lakeshore, including the conversion of seasonal camps to year-round use, must insure that wastewater is managed properly so that there is no negative impact on water quality and that

minimum state standards for wastewater disposal are met.

**Objectives:**

- N 3.** Develop Town owned lakeshore in Alburgh Center.
- N-4** Improve and develop additional bicycle-friendly facilities and address the need for safer bicycle routes through town

**Land Use**

**Goals:**

*Maintain economically and environmentally sound farms in Alburgh.*

*To preserve and protect scenic resources, including significant scenic roads, waterways and views, and important landscape features of the town.*

*To ensure that development in Alburgh is compatible with existing land uses.*

*To ensure that development occurs in areas where it will not impact water quality.*

*To ensure that development occurs only in those areas where soils are capable of supporting it with adequate depth to bedrock, stability and which do not have high water tables.*

**Policies:**

- L-A.** Discourage the subdivision of land into “spaghetti” lots, parcels of land that are exceptionally long and narrow.
- L-B.** Support the conservation of agricultural lands and natural resources with a variety of strategies including purchase of development rights and local policies that encourage conservation.
- L-C.** Protect water quality by limiting development in Wellhead Protection Areas, wetlands and along streambanks.
- L-D.** Protect Lake Champlain water quality by discouraging development along the lakeshore closer than 50 feet from the high water mark of 99 feet above sea level.

## Utilities, Facilities & Services

### Goals:

*To insure that Alburgh's infrastructure has adequate capacity to meet current needs and planned growth in a timely and cost-effective manner.*

*Support a high quality, sustainable recreational system based on the use of Alburgh's natural and cultural resources.*

*Insure the safety of the town's residents by maintaining a high quality of emergency services.*



*To provide excellent childcare, educational and vocational training opportunities in adequate facilities for Alburgh's children and promote lifelong learning in both public and private facilities.*

*Maintain and improve a high quality health care system that is accessible and affordable to all town residents.*

*Develop additional elderly housing in Alburgh to enable local and new residents to live in Alburgh as they age.*

### Policies:

- U-A.** Secure land for future expansion of the sewer and wastewater treatment system
- U-B.**
  - Plan for expansion of both the Village and Alburgh Springs water systems
- U-C.**
  - Encourage and support bicycling-based tourism by addressing the need for safer bicycle routes, by improving existing and developing new bicycle facilities and infrastructure (bicycle routes, bathrooms, bike racks) and similar activities in Alburgh.
- U-D.**
  - The town should be prepared to accept donations of recreational land, including purchases of land offered at price below market value
- U-E.**
  - Encourage and support efforts to improve public access to Lake Champlain.
- U-F.**
  - Encourage and support efforts to improve facilities for users of

- U-G. Lake Champlain in all seasons.
  - Encourage efforts to improve water quality of Lake Champlain to create more desirable conditions for recreational purposes.
- U-H.
  - Encourage the development of a dry hydrant whenever a new public lake access site is developed or upgraded.

Objectives:

- U-1. Assess the status of the current senior center structure. If necessary, look for a new home for a senior or multigenerational center that could serve the recreational and educational needs primarily of seniors, but also adults, teens and children, bringing different generations together through planned programs.
- U-2. Secure land for future expansion of the sewer and wastewater treatment system
- U-3. Seek permits to install dry hydrants for fire safety. A system of dry hydrants should be developed throughout the town. Permits and funding should be sought to implement the recommendations of the *1998 Fire Protection Water Supply Plan for the County of Grand Isle* dry hydrant study. (RC&D, 1998)
- U-4. Increase personal protection by developing and promoting a Neighborhood Watch system
- U-5. Work with the State to develop, install and maintain docks at the three Fish and Wildlife Access Areas to provide safer and easier conditions to launch a boat.
- U-6. Maintain the emergency management database that can be used by local fire and rescue personnel to improve emergency preparedness and response.
- U-7. Regularly update the Emergency Management Plan for the town, including an Emergency Rapid Response Plan and an Emergency Operations Plan.
- U-8. Construct a new Town Garage to serve current and future needs.

## Transportation



### Goals:

*To provide and maintain a safe, convenient and functional transportation network for vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle and other recreational use within the Town.*

### Policies:

- T-A.** The Town and the VT Agency of Transportation should work more closely together early in the development and design of state highway projects.
- T-B.** New construction, or major reconstruction of roads and highways in Alburgh should provide paths, tracks or wide enough shoulders for use solely by pedestrian or other non-motorized means of transportation, when economically feasible and in the public's interest.
- T-C.** Encourage the development of efficient transportation systems that offer alternatives to the single-passenger vehicle.
- T-D.** Encourage the development of efficient and convenient public transportation systems.
- T-E.** Private roads must be upgraded to town road standards for safety and access before the Town will consider taking over the road.
- T-F.** Support the complete removal of the Missisquoi Bay Causeway and the Carry Bay Causeway.

## Objectives:

- T-1.** Pursue funding for projects that can construct and enhance pedestrian and bicycle facilities in Alburgh
- T-2.** Improve the portion of the Rail Trail located in Alburgh so that it is appealing to a variety of users.
- T-3** Advertise the Alburgh Park and Ride Lot on websites like “Way To Go” and in other digital media.

## Energy

### Goals:

*To save money by reducing the overall energy consumption within the town through conservation and efficiency, and thereby reduce the adverse environmental impacts associated with energy consumption*

*To promote the development of local renewable resources as a replacement for imported nonrenewable resources*

*To provide and ensure that energy supplies will be reliable, affordable and environmentally sound*

*Encourage energy efficient and energy conserving patterns of land use*

### Policies:

- E-A.** To encourage energy efficiency in the construction and renovation of new and existing structures.
- E-B.** To encourage land use patterns that promote energy conservation, such as encouraging passive solar design, cluster development and the use of vegetation for winter wind buffers and summer shading.
- E-C.** To encourage local economic and agricultural development that reduces the need for local residents to commute to jobs and markets, including such developments as local farm stands, support for home occupations and industries, and economic development in the Village of Alburgh.
- E-D.** To encourage local renewable energy production facilities, such as methane production from dairy farms, that are compatible with land uses in the area, including consideration of the size, scale and impacts of the facility.
- E-E.** To encourage the development and use of energy conserving transportation systems including but not limited to bicycling, park and ride lots, and

public transportation.

**Objectives:**

- E-1.** Work with VEC to use solar power to provide energy for Alburgh Community Education Center

## **Chapter 2. Introduction and Purpose**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this town plan is to provide a guide for the future development of the Town of Alburgh. Its purpose is to enable all town residents to consider current resources and needs of Alburgh supported by useful statistics and maps. Perhaps most importantly, the plan describes the goals of the town, what it hopes to become in the future and how it intends to get there. In that sense, the town plan is a vehicle for discussion; a way to get people to share ideas about the future and to consider how they can work together to improve Alburgh as a whole.

### **Authority**

The town of Alburgh is authorized to prepare and adopt a Municipal Plan under Chapter 117, Title 24 VSA (Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act). The intent of the law is to encourage a municipality to “engage in a continuing planning process that will further several stated goals.” The act also states that municipal plans must be re-examined, updated and re-adopted every five years. Municipal planning is therefore an on-going process, one that considers how the town is developing, what its current needs are and what changes should be made to move the town toward its goals.

A town plan is intended to clearly state the goals of the town, its current and foreseeable issues, the resources it has available and the process the town intends to take to achieve the desired future. The legal framework that supports town planning includes some requirements that support these aims. Section 4382 of the Act identifies particular subjects that must be included in a municipal plan. The ten (10) elements that must be considered in the plan are the following:

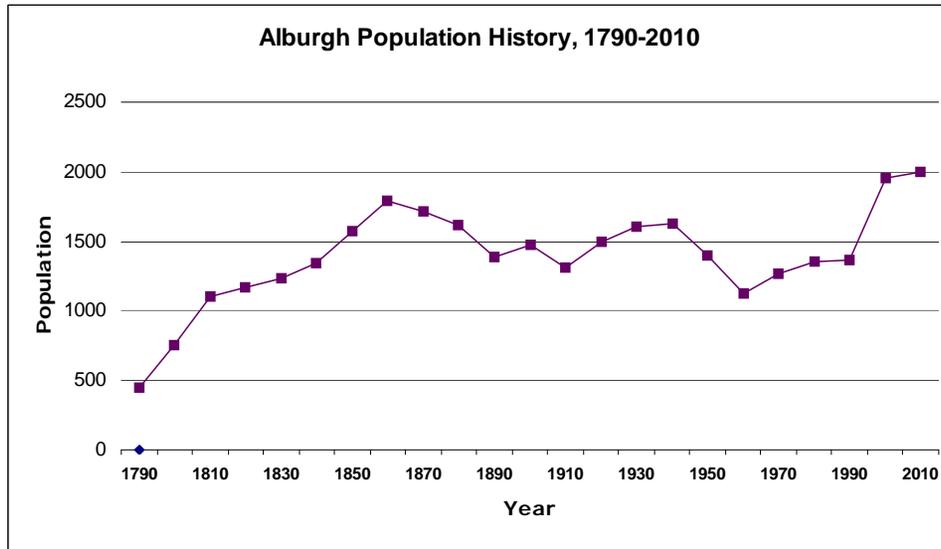
1. A statement of objectives, policies, and programs of the municipality to guide the future growth and development of land, public services and facilities, to protect the environment;
2. a land use plan;
3. a transportation plan;
4. a utility and facility plan
5. a statement of policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic and historic features and resources;
6. an educational plan;
7. a recommended program for the implementation of the objectives of the development plan;
8. a statement indicating how the plan relates to development trends and plans for adjacent municipalities, areas and the region developed under this title;
9. an energy plan; and
10. a housing element that shall include a recommended program for addressing low and moderate income persons' housing needs.

In order to develop regulatory mechanisms (bylaws) appropriate to guide development, a plan must first be adopted by the Town Selectboard. Once adopted, the Plan becomes the basis for evaluating development. The plan also makes it possible for the town to develop bylaws, including zoning and subdivision regulations, a capital budget and impact fees, if desired. Bylaws are a means of implementing the town plan but are not a requirement.

## **Planning Process**

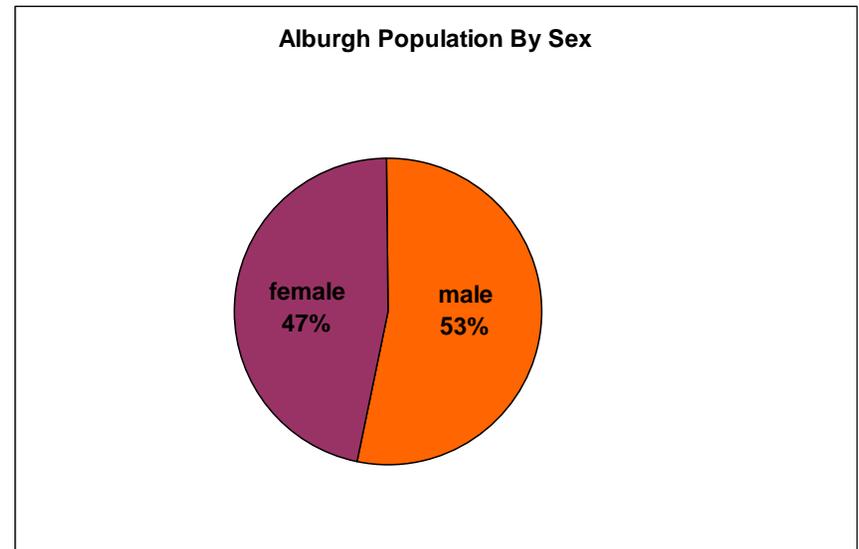
This is a re-adoption of the town plan which was originally developed in 2006. Town profile information (population, education, income and employment) has been revised based on the 2010 Census and American Community Survey and is included on the next several pages. Goals, policies and objectives from the 2006 Town Plan have either been carried forward, modified or deleted based on their relevance to current conditions in Alburgh. Additional policies and objectives have been added to the plan based on citizen input and Planning Commission discussion.

The Planning Commission developed and distributed a survey in March 2011 that provided feedback from residents on their vision for Alburgh. Planning Commission held a public meeting in April 2011 to further gather residents' input. This meeting was advertised in the *Islander* newspaper, on the Front Porch Forum ([www.frontporchforum.com](http://www.frontporchforum.com)) and on the Town's website ([www.alburghvt.com](http://www.alburghvt.com)).

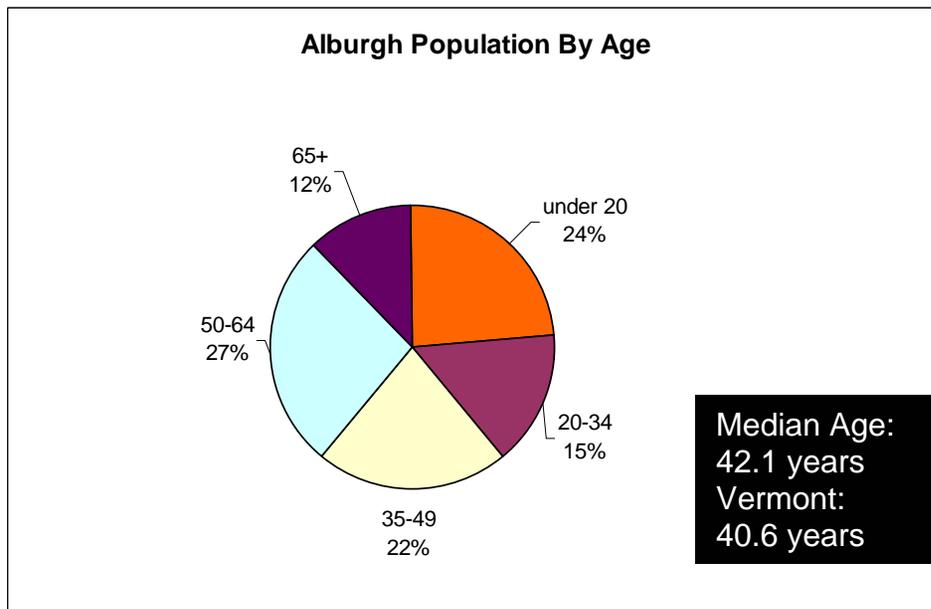


Growth Rate since 2000: 2.36%

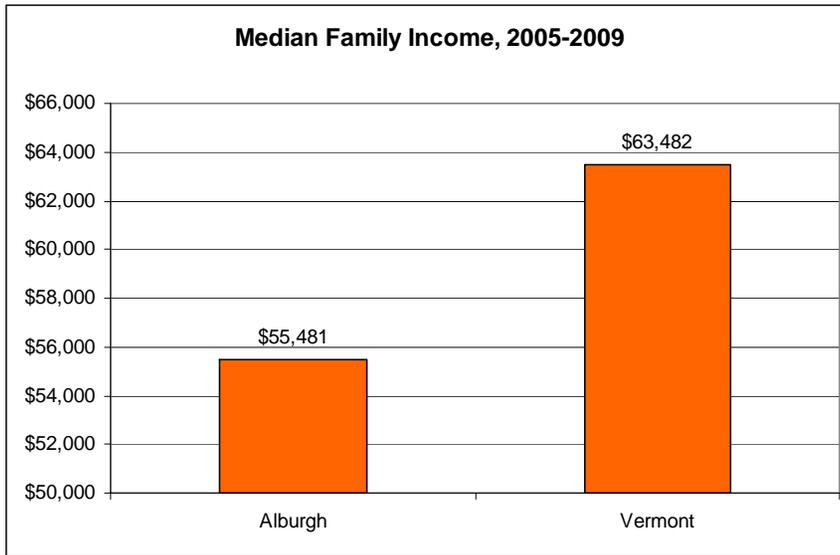
Vermont grew by 2.8% in that time



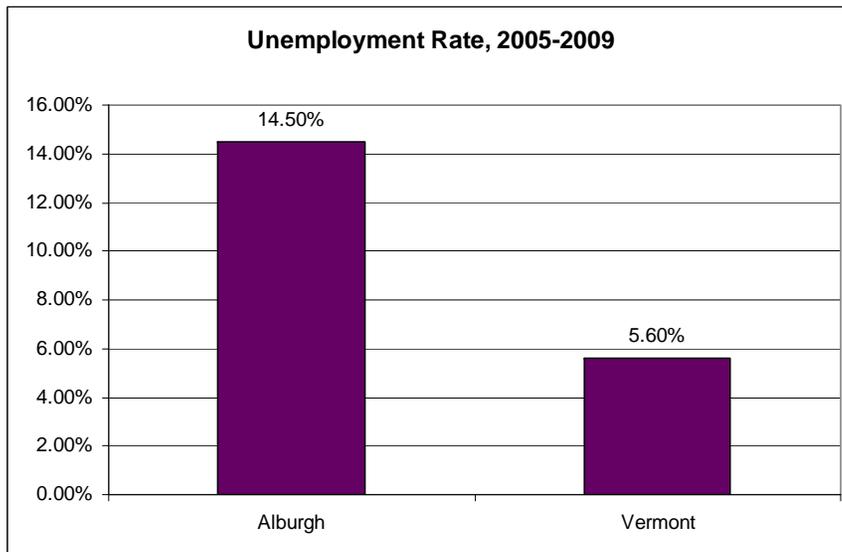
2005-2009 American Community Survey and 2010 Census



Median Age: 42.1 years  
Vermont: 40.6 years



1579 Alburgh residents are 16 and over. About 51% of the labor force is employed.



**Table 1: Employment By Sector, 2005-2009**

Employment Sector	Alburgh	%
Civilian employed population 16 years and over		
Manufacturing	153	19.08%
Retail trade	106	13.22%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	105	13.09%
Construction	85	10.60%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	75	9.35%
Public administration	59	7.36%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	56	6.98%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	52	6.48%
Wholesale trade	30	3.74%
Other services, except public administration	26	3.24%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	25	3.12%
Information	16	2.00%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	14	1.75%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>100.00 %</b>

Of 566 families in Alburgh, 11% are living below the poverty line. Statewide, about 7% of families are living below the poverty line.

Table 2: Educational Attainment		
	Alburgh	%
<b>Educational Attainment</b>		
<i>Of the population 25 years and older</i>		
Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	77	5.30%
9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> grade, no diploma	126	8.60%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	750	51.40%
Some college, no degree	201	13.80%
Associate's degree	72	4.90%
Bachelor's degree	145	9.90%
Graduate or professional degree	89	6.10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1460</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
High school graduate or higher	1257	86.10%
Bachelor's degree or higher	234	16.00%

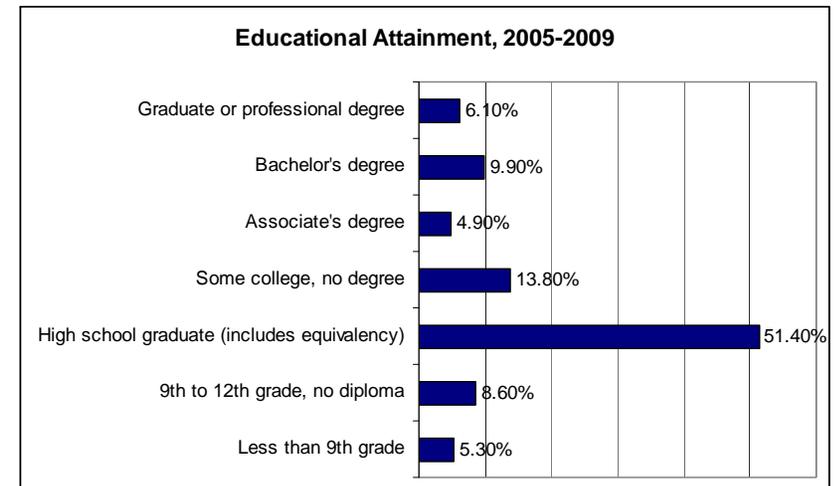


Table 3: School Enrollment and Participation					
	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	State of Vermont
Total School Enrollment	249	222	217	223	94,114
Attendance Rate	94.60%	95.30%	94.40%	N/AV	N/AV
Retention Rate	2.20%	1.90%	N/AV	N/AV	N/AV
Student/Teacher Ratio	11.51	9.99	10.48	9.82	11.13
Eligible Special Education	16.10%	13.50%	16.10%	27.40%	14.90%
Home Study (Number)	3	4	4	3	2,096

Of 825 households in Alburgh, 266 or 32% are families with children living at home

2005-2009 American Community Survey and 2010 Census

## Chapter 3. A Brief History of Alburgh, VT

### The First Settlers

The first permanent settlers of Alburgh were British Loyalists. They arrived starting in 1784 which was the year that the Revolutionary War ended. Upon reaching Alburgh they believed that they had reached Canada. When the exact location of the Canadian-US border was established, they found themselves in what was to be called Alburgh. Since they had cleared their land and liked the area most did not go on to Canada. Ira Allen, who was granted all of Alburgh, was kind to them and allowed them to remain on their land and charged them very little for this.



### The War of 1812

Alburgh found itself in a very precarious position when the British tried to invade and takeover the new country once again. Lake Champlain was the avenue of invasion and much of this was fought along and on Lake Champlain. Alburgh's location where the Lake enters Canada made it a real "hot spot". The Loyalist settlers had to now defend themselves from the very British that they had fought for.

The Alburgh Militia was formed and met at the home of Samuel Mott, their leader. The Samuel Mott homestead is the stone house at the south end of Alburgh Village.

### The First Railroad

The year 1850 saw the opening of the first railroad to cross Alburgh. It ran east and west entering at East Alburgh and crossing a second bridge to Rouses Point, NY. Soon after its opening posters were seen in the East Alburgh Station offering free transportation and free land in the West. By this time Alburgh was crowded with the large families of the early settlers and many took advantage of the land in the West. Some of the states that they went to were Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin, Kansas and others. Descendents of Alburgh's early settlers are still found everywhere in the West.

### Alburgh Springs

The new railroad opened Alburgh Springs as a resort area where the mineral waters were

sold as a cure for just about anything that one could think of. Alburgh Springs became a little “Boom Town.” Houses, stores and hotels sprang up as fast as they could be built. One quite lavish hotel became the focus and served all the needs of visitors from far and near. Carriages from the hotels met every train during the summer months to carry people to the Springs.

## Schools



Shortly after Alburgh became an organized Town in 1792 schools were established. By the early 1800's Alburgh had about 10 schools. “Smart” students were selected by teachers to become future teachers. Sometimes they were appointed as a teacher right after graduation from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

There was an Academy at Alburgh Springs in the mid-1800's which was Alburgh's first high school. Alburgh High School opened in 1939 and became the center of activities for many years.

## The Second Railroad

The Rutland Railroad opened in 1900. This was an event as important to the development of Alburgh as the opening of the first railroad. This railroad ran from Rutland, VT to Ogdensburg, NY with Alburgh almost exactly halfway between the two places. Alburgh became a terminal where train crews changed and repair shops were located. This new railroad created what is now the Village of Alburgh.

## Alburgh Village

Within a few years of the opening of the Rutland Railroad many homes, churches and places of business were constructed by and for the railway workers. The center of business in Alburgh now shifted to Alburgh Village from the former growing

communities of Alburgh Springs, East Alburgh , Alburgh Center and South Alburgh. By 1920 Alburgh Village had four grocery stores, two hotels, three churches, a Railroad YMCA, a department store, a bakery and several other places of business.



### **Alburgh as a Summer Community**

Alburgh’s many miles of fine lake shore property and the Lake itself have been and remain Alburgh’s greatest asset. Various places such as Alburgh Center, South Alburgh and others became little communities of summer residents. The value of lakeshore properties remains high and building continues.

### **More Recent Times**

The Rutland Railroad shut down in about 1963 and the tracks were torn up. This was probably the most troubling thing that ever happened to the Town since so many Alburgh residents depended on the railroad for their livelihood.

The Vermont State Division of Historic Preservation lists 162 sites in Alburgh in the state register of historic preservation. The Rutland Railroad Pumping Station is particularly noteworthy, receiving a listing in the National Register in 1999.

Some residents found it necessary to go elsewhere for jobs but, somehow, others arrived and no real drop in population resulted. The fine bridge connecting Alburgh to the State of New York, opened in the 1990’s, encourages further development of the Town.

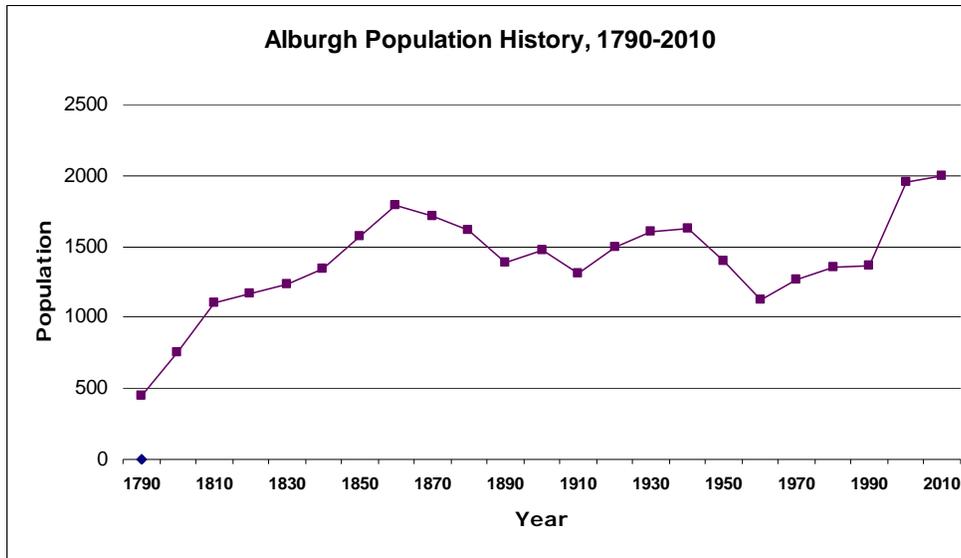
# Chapter 4. Population, Housing & Economic Development

## Population

### Population History

The first settlers of Alburgh arrived in 1791. The population of the town steadily increased until it hit its early peak in the mid-1800s, like many other Vermont towns. The year 1850 saw the opening of the first railroad to cross Alburgh. Soon after its opening, posters were seen in the East Alburgh Station offering free transportation and free land in the West. By this time Alburgh was crowded with the large families of the early settlers and many took advantage of the land in the West, leading to a decrease in the population. In the early 1900s, Alburgh's population began to increase rather than decrease like many other towns in Vermont. This was due in part to the opening of the Rutland Railroad in 1900 which encouraged economic growth in the town. The population continued to expand until 1940 when the population again began to decline.

Figure 1.



Source: Center for Rural Studies, VCGI Vermont Indicators Online and 2010 Census

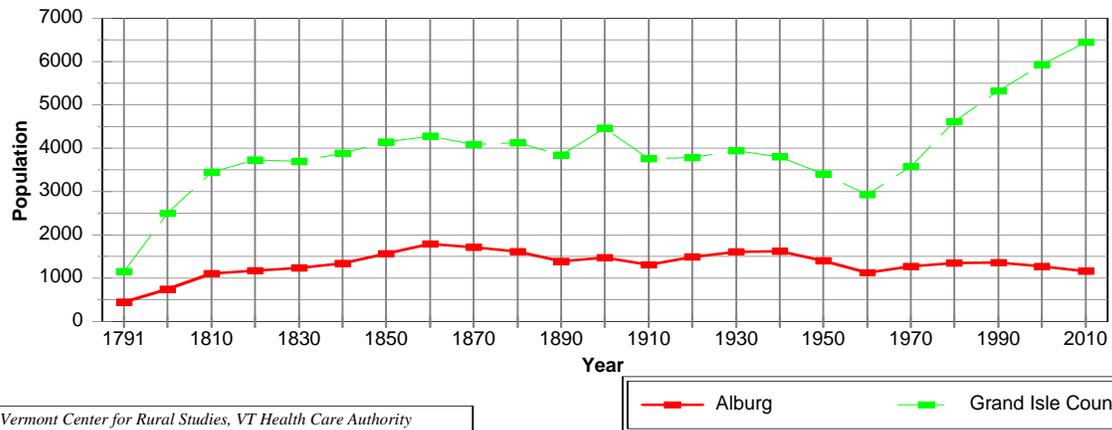
Since 1960, the population has been steadily increasing with the most dramatic growth occurring between 1990 and 2000. During this decade, the population had the fastest growth rate (43%) since the 1800s. *It is important to note that it is believed the 1990 US Census undercounted Alburgh's population.* When a more accurate account was completed in the 2000 Census, it dramatically expanded the number of people recorded

as living in the town compared to the low report in 1990, which may have contributed to the very high rate of growth recorded between the two periods. Today, Alburgh has a greater total population than ever before in its town history.

In 2000, Alburgh was called home by more than 35% of all the people living in Grand Isle County. While Alburgh tracked the relatively stable population trend seen overall on the Islands for nearly 200 years, this situation changed in the 1960's. At that time the County's population began to soar, outpacing Alburgh's continued moderate growth (see Fig. 2).

**Figure 2.**

**Population History**  
with projections to 2010



Source: Vermont Center for Rural Studies, VT Health Care Authority

In the 1980's Alburgh saw a large number of people move out of town, leaving the town with a net gain of only 10 people during the decade. The population projection, illustrated in Figure 2, is based on the assumption that trends of the 1980's continue for the next 20 years. If this were so, the town would be left with a population of only 1,159 by the year 2010. Estimates from the Vermont Department of Health suggest that past population projections are outdated and that instead of losing population the town grew by 13.4% between 1990 and 1998, adding an estimated 182 people during that period (*VT Dept. of Health, 1999*). Also, between 2000 and 2003, the population was estimated to grow by 5.6%, adding another 109 people to the population during this time (*VT Dept. of Health, 2003*). It is clear from this example that population projections are difficult to make, however, recent estimates and data suggest that Alburgh's population will continue to grow.

Surprisingly, the greatest population increase came from new people moving into town, reversing the trend seen in the 1980's (See Table 1). In 1990, the US Census reported Alburgh's population at 1,362, and in 2000 it was 1,952, showing a positive population growth, aligning with the estimates from the VDH. The 2010 Census found that

Alburgh's population had increased to 1,998, falling short of the 2004 estimate of 2,080.

**Table 1. Alburgh Population Change, 1960-2010**

	1960	1970	1980	1990	1997	2000	2010
Population	1123	1271	1352	1362	1539	1952	1998
Absolute Change	---	148	81	10	177	413	46
Percent Change	---	13.2	6.4	0.7	12.9	26.8	2.3

Source: Updated by the Center for Rural Studies, US Census and 2010 Census

Projections from 2003 for population growth through the year 2020 are depicted in Table 2. Alburgh's population is expected to grow more quickly than Grand Isle County. Between 2000 and 2020, Alburgh's population is projected to increase by 825 people, averaging about 41 people per year. This is a projected average annual growth rate of less than 2% per year

**Table 2. Alburgh Area Current and Projected Population Through 2020**

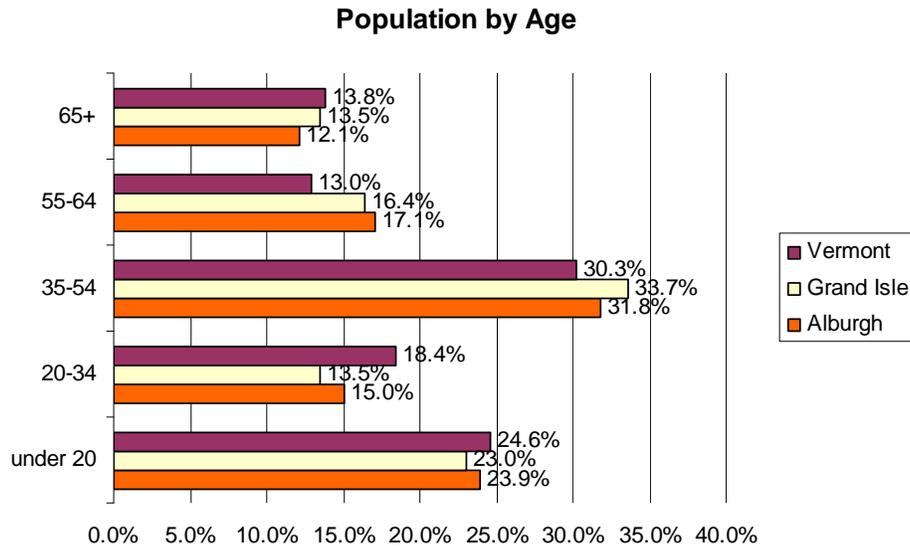
	Actual 2000	Projected 2010	Projected 2020	% Growth 2000- 2020
Alburgh	1,952	2,354	2,777	42%
Grand Isle	1,955	2,110	2,266	16%
Isle La Motte	488	518	534	10%
North Hero	810	1,079	1,376	70%
South Hero	1,696	1,881	2,005	18%
Grand Isle County	6,901	7,923	8,958	30%
Vermont	608,827	639,241	666,041	10%

Source: VT Dept of Aging and Disabilities

According to the US Census, between 1990 and 2000, Grand Isle County's growth was more than two and a half times faster than Vermont's growth rate. Alburgh's growth rate between 1990 and 2000 ranked it the second fastest growing town in Grand Isle County (Table 3). Again, this rapid growth rate may have been due to an inaccurate Census count in 1990 and an accurate and correct Census count in 2000. While Alburgh grew 2.36% between 2000 and 2010, Vermont grew 2.8% in that same time frame. Alburgh's growth rate is consistent with the State's.

We can also learn meaningful information about the town by looking at the population breakdown by age. Figure 3 shows the Town's 2010 Census population grouped into five different categories.

**Figure 3. Population by Age for Alburgh, Grand Isle County and Vermont**



Source: ACS 2005-2009

The median age of Alburgh residents is 42.1 years, compared to 40.6 years which is the median age of Vermont residents at large. Due to a low influx and retention of people falling into the younger age categories, both Vermont and Alburgh are aging. The median age of both is likely to rise significantly by the time the next Census is taken.

The largest segment of Alburgh’s population by a fairly large amount is 35-54 years old (31.8%) and the smallest segment is seniors 65+, who make up 12% of Alburgh’s population. The small relative number of 65+ residents could be due to migration out of Alburgh in order to relocate closer to family living elsewhere. These numbers seem to be trending together with the County and State numbers in the same categories, except that the state has a slightly higher percentage of 65+ than 55-64 year olds.

### **Natural Increase and Net Migration**

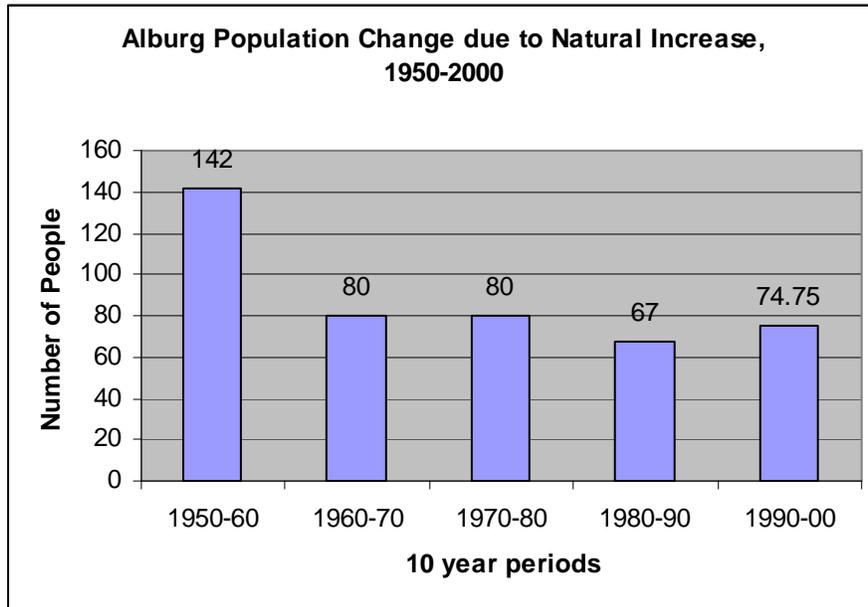
Population growth is composed of two major elements: natural increase and net migration. Understanding the difference between the two and how they relate to population change, clarifies the sources of the gain or loss in population.

Natural increase is defined as the difference between the births and deaths in a given period of time, with a positive number reflecting population increase due to more births than deaths. Net migration is the difference between people moving into an area (immigration) and those leaving the area (emigration). A positive number means that more people moved in than moved out during a given period.

During earlier periods when Alburgh had a smaller population, more people were added by natural increase than has occurred in recent decades (Figure 4). This reflects the

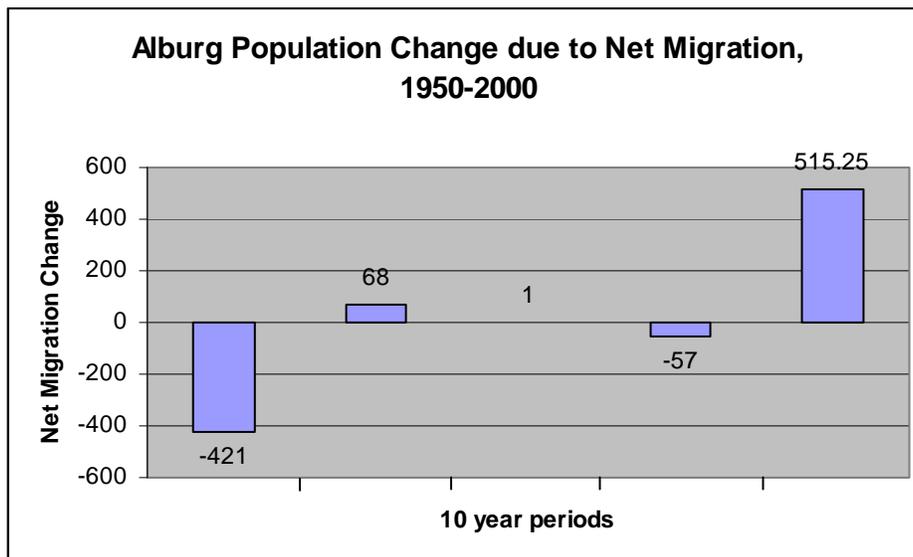
national trend toward smaller families over that same period. Even with a relatively high rate of natural increase, Alburgh lost population between 1950 and 1960 due to higher rates of emigration. According to the Census, during the growth years following 1960, natural increase contributed more to population growth than net migration (Figure 5).

**Figure 4.**



Source: Center for Rural Studies, US Census

**Figure 5.**



Source: Center for Rural Studies, US Census

As noted earlier, the 2000 Census may have overstated the influence of net migration between 1990 and 2000, when the US Census reported 515 people moving into town. However, it is very likely that eventually immigration will lead natural increase as the

primary component of population growth in Alburgh.

### Demographic Profile

The 2010 Census and the 2005-2009 American Community Survey provide more specific information on community characteristics. The following table and figures show a brief demographic profile of the town of Alburgh in the year 2010 compared to Grand Isle County, and Vermont.

**Table 3. Alburgh Community Profile Compared to Grand Isle County and Vermont, 2005-2009**

	Alburgh	Grand Isle County	Vermont
<i>Population</i>	1,998	6,970	625,741
% Male	53%	50%	49%
% Female	47%	50%	51%
% Minority	4.5%	3%	4.1%
<i>Median Age</i>	42.1	44.5	40.6
% Children (under 20 years)	24%	23%	24.5%
% Elderly (65 and over)	12%	13.5%	13.8%
% High school diploma or higher (25 years and over)	86%	91%	90%
% College graduate or higher (25 years and over)	16%	29.4%	33%
<i>Per Capita Income</i>	\$22,142	\$30,558	\$27,036
% Below poverty level	9.3%	6.7%	11%
% Children below poverty level	10.2%	10.3%	13.5%
% Elderly below poverty level	7.4%	2.7%	8.6%
<i>Median Family Income</i>	\$55,481	\$66,667	\$63,482
% Families with children (under 18 years)	32%	30.6%	28.2%
% Families below poverty level	11%	10%	7%

Source: 2010 Census and ACS, 2005-2009

Alburgh is similar in many ways as compared to Grand Isle County and Vermont. Alburgh is slightly more diverse than both the county and the state. The median family and per capita income levels are significantly lower, while the percentage of families living below the poverty line is higher. Conversely, the percentage of individuals living below the poverty line is lower than in the state at large. The percentage of people who are college graduates or have a high school diploma is also lower.

Alburgh's comparatively lower median family income and higher rate of families living below the poverty line may also be a factor of the higher unemployment rate compared to

the state at large.

## Housing

Between 2000 and 2010, Vermont saw a 2.36% increase in population, which has also resulted in an increase in the number of households. During the 1990's, Vermont gained 30,000 new households but only 23,000 new housing units, directly reflecting supply inadequacies (Between a Rock and a Hard Place, 2003). Therefore, one can conclude that in the early 2000s Vermont was facing a housing crisis. When the housing stock is in short supply, rents are driven up, further perpetuating the cycle.

In 2003, 68% of Vermont jobs paid less than the average housing wage. The housing wage is the wage needed to afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent. This is not the average cost of an apartment, but rather a unit costing 10% less than the median price. To say that nearly 70% of Vermonters cannot afford a home that is 10% less than the median state price is staggering. An inadequate number of affordable homes have been an issue plaguing Alburgh, Grand Isle County and Vermont State for many years.

**Table 1. Growth Rates- Vermont and Grand Isle Region, 2000-2010**

<b>Geographic Region</b>	<b>Growth Rate 2000-2010</b>
Vermont State	2.8
Grand Isle County	1
North Hero	-0.9
<b>Alburgh</b>	<b>2.3</b>
South Hero	-3.8
Isle La Motte	-3.5
Grand Isle	5.7

Source: U.S. Census, 2010

**Table 2. Available Housing Units- Alburgh, Grand Isle, Vermont, 2000-2010**

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005-2009</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Alburgh</b>	<b>1,259</b>	<b>1,316</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
<b>Grand Isle</b>	4,663	4,947	6.1%
<b>Vermont</b>	294,382	31,1617	5.9%

Source: ACS, 2005-2009

**Table 3. Alburgh Housing by Units, 2004**

	Alburgh	% of	Grand Isle	% of	Vermont	% of
<b>Total Occupied Units</b>	791	Occupied units	2761	Occupied Units	240,634	Occupied Units
<b>Owner-occupied housing units</b>	<b>633</b>		<b>2247</b>		<b>169,784</b>	
in buildings with 1 unit	505	64%	1,889	68%	143,926	60%
in buildings with 2 units	6	<1%	22	< 1%	5,534	2%
in buildings with 3 or more units	6	<1%	10	<1%	4,444	2%
that are mobile homes	110	14%	323	12%	15,804	7%
that are boats, RVs, vans or other	0	0%	0	0%	69	<1%
<b>Renter-occupied housing units</b>	<b>158</b>		<b>514</b>		<b>70850</b>	
in buildings with 1 unit	73	9%	268	10%	19,134	8%
in buildings with 2 units	8	1%	30	1%	13,225	5%
in buildings with 3 units	45	6%	112	4%	34,442	14%
that are mobile homes	38	5%	107	4%	4,021	2%
that are boats, RVs, vans or other	0	0%	0		35	<1%
<b>Vacant housing units</b>	<b>468</b>	Vacant Units	<b>1902</b>	Vacant Units	<b>53748</b>	Vacant Units
in buildings with 1 unit	411	88%	1674	88%	40249	75%
in buildings with 2 units	8	2%	16	<1%	2421	5%
in buildings with 3 or more units	4	<1%	9	<1%	7702	14%
that are mobile homes	37	8%	185	10%	2806	5%
that are boats, RVs, vans or other	8	2%	18	1%	570	1%

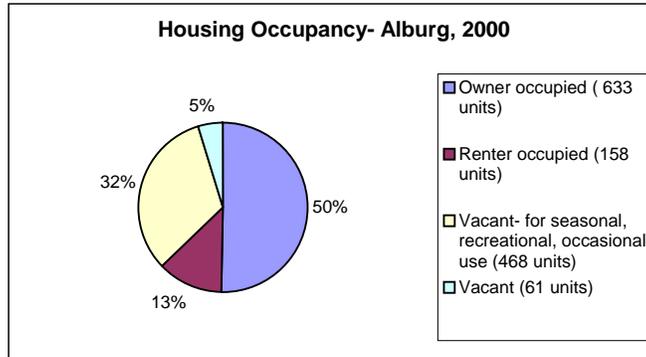
Source: Vermont Housing Data, 2005

The majority (73%) of occupied units, whether renter or owner-occupied, are single-unit buildings (see Table 3). This clearly illustrates the value Alburgh residents see in living in single-unit rather than multi-family housing. In addition, 19% of occupied units are mobile homes as compared to 16% for Grand Isle County and 8% for Vermont State. This is nearly 1/5 of the total occupied units. Because nearly 1/5 of Alburgh residents reside in mobile homes, it is safe to conclude that a stable portion of the population lives in an affordable housing unit, and see mobile homes as a sufficient type of affordable housing.

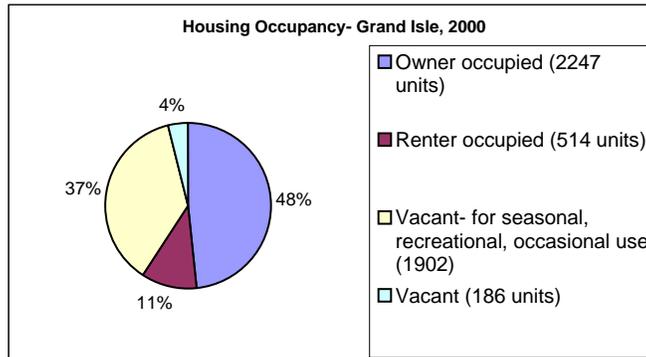
Housing experts say a healthy housing market will have a 3% vacancy rate for owner-occupied housing and a 5% vacancy rate for rental housing (“Between a Rock and a Hard Place,” 2003). Alburgh’s vacancy rate for owned and rented homes is 5% (see Fig. 1). It is higher than both the Grand Isle County and Vermont Average (see Fig 2. and Fig. 3).

Historically, Vermont has had problems staying at the recommended standards. “Between 1990 and 2000, Vermont only added enough housing units to accommodate five out of every six new households.” (“Between a Rock and Hard Place,” 2003)

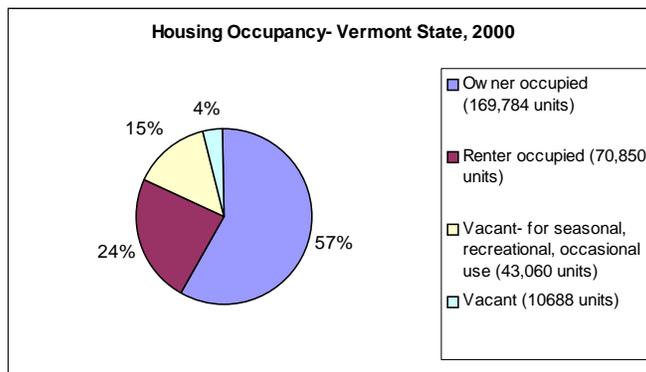
**Figure 1: Total Housing Distribution – Alburgh, 2000**



**Figure 2: Total Housing Distribution – Grand Isle County, 2000**



**Figure 3: Total Housing Distribution – Vermont, 2000**



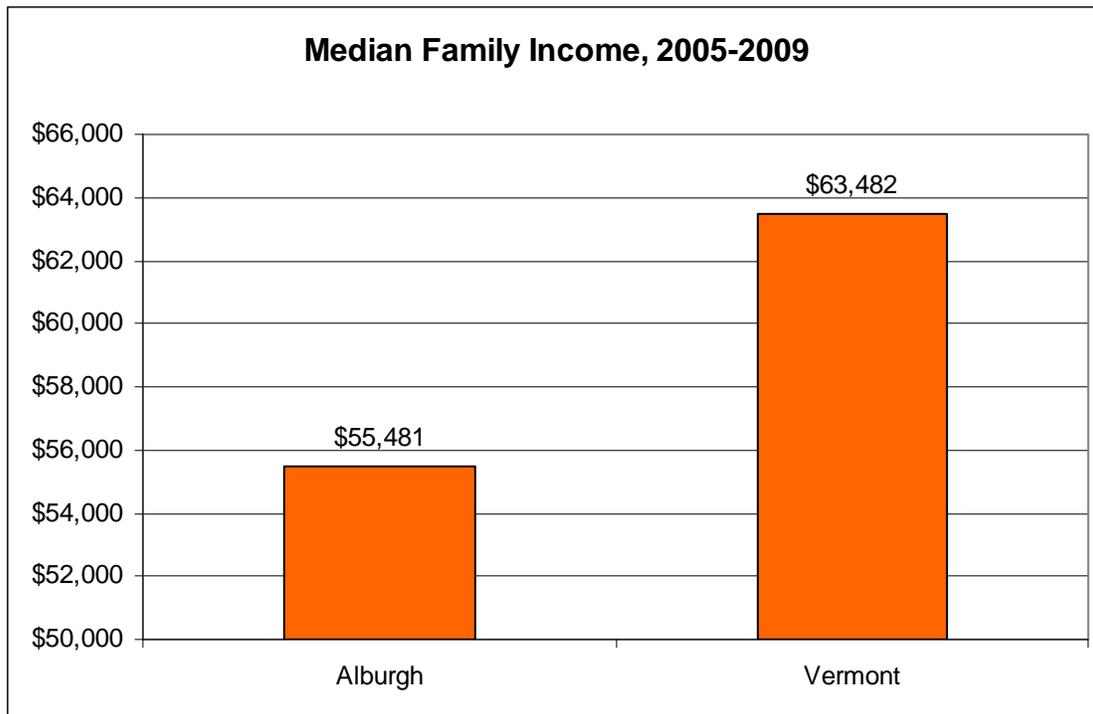
Currently, Vermont’s vacancy rate for owner-occupied units is 0.9% and for rental units is 3.8%, both below the healthy housing market average. Alburgh is below for both as well, but not to the same extent as the state. Alburgh has a very healthy stock of seasonal homes accounting for 73% of vacant units and 32% of total units. Seasonal units used to account for 45% of the total housing stock but have since fallen. Seasonal visitors must be seen as an asset to Alburgh because they bring in without adding children to the capital school system. However, too many seasonal visitors may detrimentally affect Alburgh’s sense of community, because they are absent from the area for a good portion of the year.

**Table 4. Housing Wages By Bedroom Number and as a Percentage of Minimum Wage- Alburgh, 2004**

<b>Ability to afford...</b>	<b>Housing Wage</b>	<b>In Terms of Annual Income</b>	<b>Housing wage as a percentage of the state minimum wage (\$7), 2004</b>
0 bedroom unit	\$10.96	\$22,796	157%
1 bedroom unit	\$12.12	\$25,029	173%
2 bedroom unit	\$15.23	\$31,678	218%
3 bedroom unit	\$19.48	\$40,518	278%
4 bedroom unit	\$21.81	\$45,364	312%

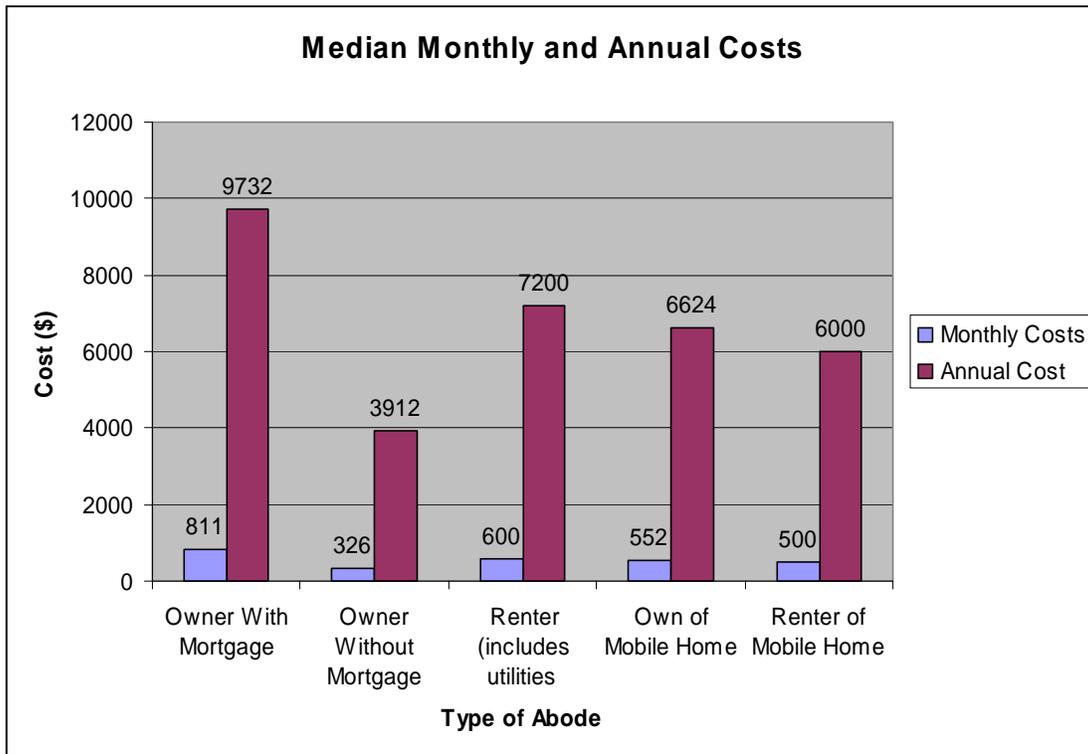
Source: Vermont Housing Data, 2005

**Figure 4. Median Family and Household Income Levels- Alburgh, Vermont**



Source: ACS, 2005-2009

**Figure 5. Median Monthly and Annual Costs to Owners and Renters- Alburgh, 2000**



Source: Vermont Housing Data, 2005

The Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs has determined that housing is affordable when it requires no more than 30% of the income of a household earning 80% of the state median income. Two facts affect the affordability of housing: the price of the house and the ability of a household to pay the price.

Vermont’s average housing wage in 2003, which is the wage needed to afford an apartment and only pay 30% of one’s income toward housing costs, was \$13.58 wage (\$28,246/ year). The average for Grand Isle County was \$11.27 (\$24,336/ year) (“Between a Rock and Hard Place,” 2003). Remember the average housing wage is the wage needed to afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent, which is 10% below the median price for units. The housing wage has been consistently more than the state minimum wage. For Alburgh, the housing wage for all units is much higher than the state minimum wage (see Table 4). This means that anyone making the state minimum wage would not be able to afford a home of any size in Alburgh. The median household income for Alburgh, in 1999, was \$33,148. This is significantly lower than both the Grand Isle and Vermont averages (see Fig. 5). 80% of this median income level is \$26,518. Therefore, for housing to be considered affordable, someone earning this annual wage should not be spending more than \$7,995 (30%) annually on their home. Consequently, according to the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs, owning a home with a mortgage is not an affordable option for an average Alburgh

resident. It is important to note the affordability of owning or renting a mobile home in Alburgh. For either situation the annual costs are far below \$7,995.

**Table 5. Median Year Structure Built - Alburgh, Grand Isle, Vermont, 2000**

<b>Median year structure built</b>	<b>Alburgh</b>	<b>Grand Isle</b>	<b>Vermont</b>
All housing units	1971	1970	1968
Occupied housing units	1974	1974	1967
Owner occupied	1976	1976	1971
Renter occupied	1964	1967	1953

Vermont Housing Data, 2005

Vermont has the second oldest housing stock in the nation (“Between a Rock and Hard Place,” 2003). The median age of the Alburgh housing stock is 1971, which is older than the Grand Isle and Vermont median age (see Table 5). Over 30% of the homes in Alburgh were built before 1960 (see Table 6). This indicates that the majority of these homes could contain lead based paint, because most homes built before 1960 used lead-based paint. Exposure to lead in early childhood and adolescence may contribute to the impairing of one’s cognitive abilities, learning disabilities, behavioral problems, motor function problems, blood anemia, as well as impairing one’s reproductive abilities. At very high levels, seizures, coma, and even death may ensue (CDC Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, 2005).

**Table 6. Year Structure Built- Alburgh, 2000**

<b>Year Structure Built</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1999 to March 2000	26	2.1%
1995 to 1998	76	6.0%
1990 to 1994	144	11.4%
1980 to 1989	188	14.9%
1970 to 1979	217	17.2%
1960 to 1969	200	15.9%
1940 to 1959	127	10.1%
1939 or earlier	281	22.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005

Over 65% of homes were built before 1980 (see Table 6). This indicates that some of

these homes may have used asbestos during construction. Asbestos was widely used from 1950 to the early 1970s in areas requiring soundproofing, thermal proofing, or durability (e.g., floor and ceiling coverings, heating and water pipe insulation). Asbestos that is in good condition and not breathable is generally not a risk. However, when it becomes frayed asbestos fibers can be released into the air. Exposure to these fibers has been associated with lung cancer, asbestosis, and mesothelioma (Teran-MacIver, 2005).

### **Current Programs Specific to Affordable Housing:**

Development Funding for both of Alburgh's low-income assistance programs comes from the Vermont Housing Financing Agency Loan (VHFA). This program aids in providing members of the community with affordable housing. "The VHFA offers low interest construction and permanent mortgage financing for the development and preservation of affordable rental housing" ("Main Housing Data Profile: Alburgh, Grand Isle County, Vermont," 2005). There are some specific requirements regarding rent restrictions. Further, qualifying household income may vary with the funding source. However, a consistent requirement is that developments must serve at least 51% low and moderate-income Vermonters. Funds usually come from a number of sources including: proceeds from the sale of tax-exempt or taxable bonds; Federal Home Loan Bank non-member advances; pension fund mortgage pools; and VHFA reserves ("Main Housing Data Profile: Alburgh, Grand Isle County, Vermont," 2005).

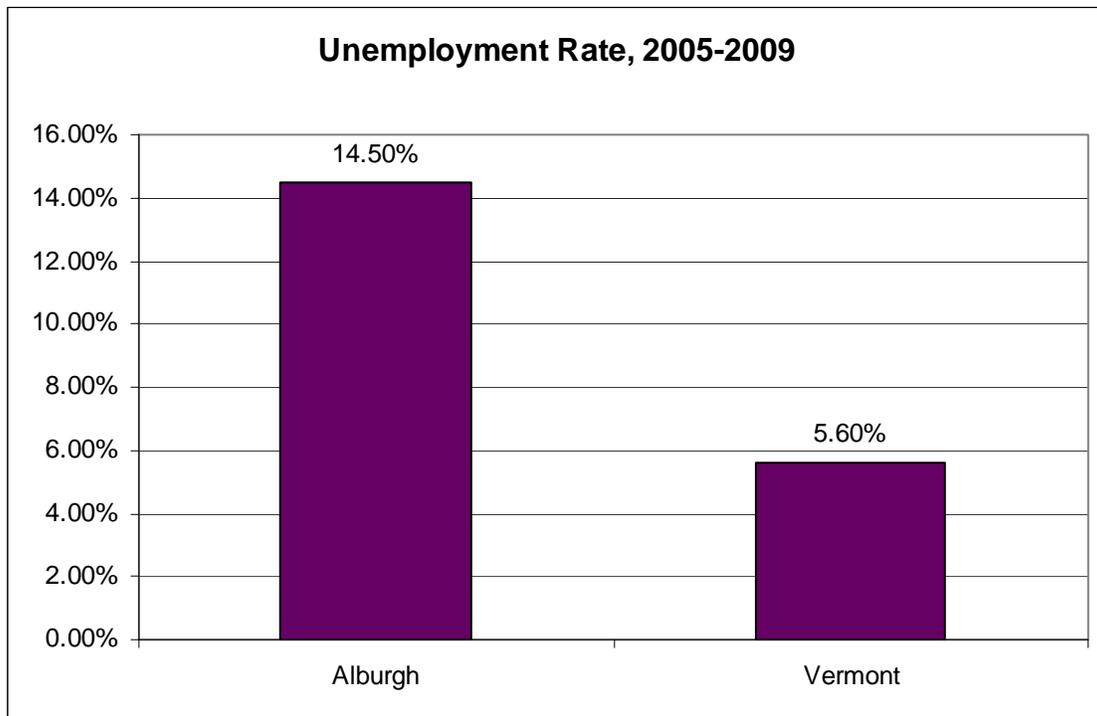
**Alburgh Family Housing-** is owned and managed by Champlain Housing Trust. Currently, Alburgh Family Housing provides for 13 units; five two-bedroom, 6 three-bedroom and two four-bedroom units. Rental assistance for all of these units comes from the Section 8 New Construction/ Substantial Rehabilitation Program. Through this initiative, housing developers are funded to build new housing specifically reserved for low-income tenants. Further, it can be used to rehabilitate a building in need of repair or convert a building to housing. Housing units created through this program are given project-based rental subsidies that stay with the apartments they support ("Main Housing Data Profile: Alburgh, Grand Isle County, Vermont," 2005).

**Pine Manor-** Is also owned and managed by Champlain Housing Trust. Currently, they manage 16 units; fourteen one-bedroom and two two-bedroom. All of these units are occupied by elderly persons. This is a positive sign, because this is one demographic area identified as being in need of attention. All rental assistance for these units is also provided for under the Section 8 New Construction/ Substantial Rehabilitation Program ("Main Housing Data Profile: Alburgh, Grand Isle County, Vermont," 2005).

## Economic Development

Alburgh steadily added jobs between 1975 and 1995, with a decline in the number of jobs reported in only one year. (See Fig. 2) Despite the increase in local jobs in town Alburgh remains a relatively low income town. In Dec. 1999 the town had an unemployment rate of 13.5%, compared to the state average of 2.7% during that same month (*VT DET*). The unemployment rate remains high at 14.50% according to the most recent American Community Survey data sampled between 2005-2009, in contrast to the state's relatively low unemployment rate of 5.6%.

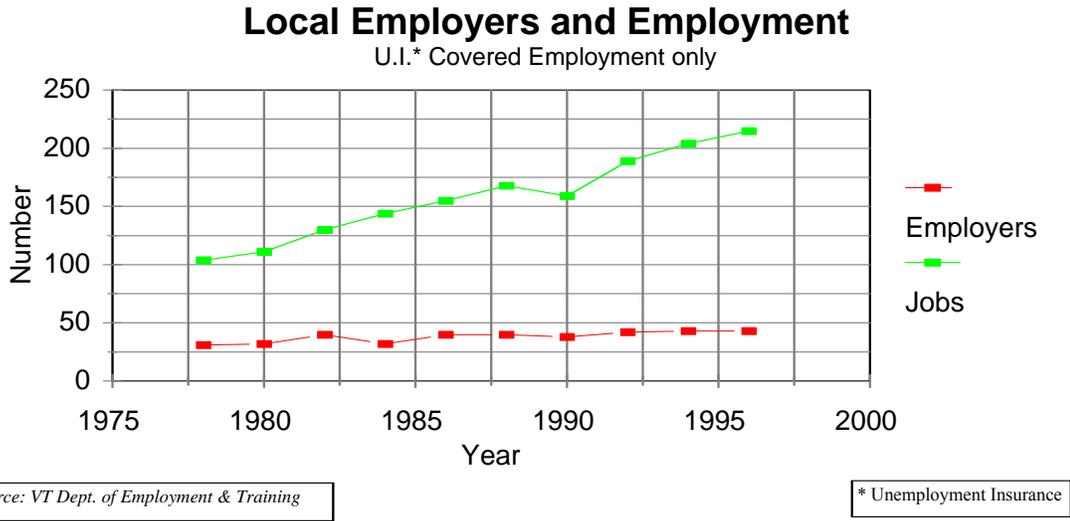
**Figure 1. Unemployment Rate for Alburgh and Vermont, 2005-2009**



Source: ACS, 2005-2009

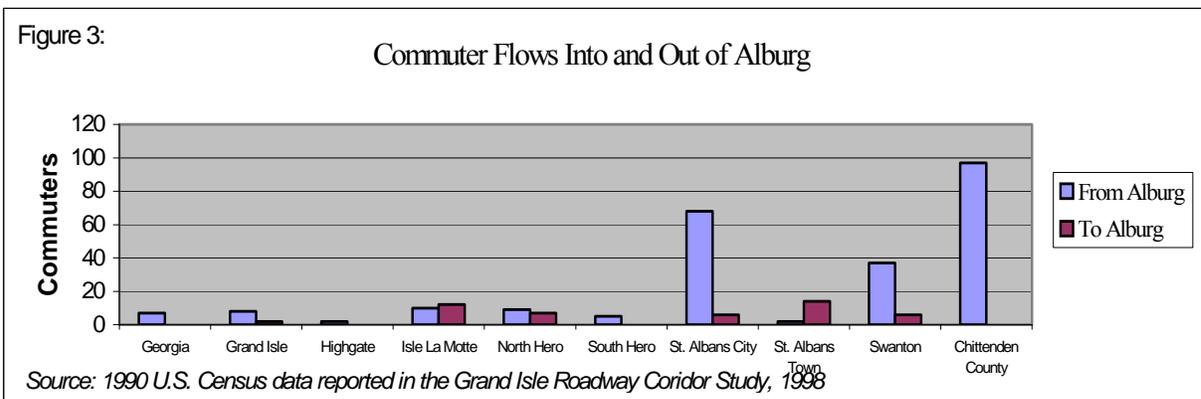
This high unemployment rate contributes to the higher relative percentage (11%) of residents living below the poverty level as opposed to 7% at the state level. Clearly economic development is of major importance to the residents of Alburgh.

**Figure 2. Local Employers and Employment in Alburgh, 1975-1995**



Alburgh provided local employment for 220 people in 1998, with 159 of these jobs going to town residents. St. Albans Town and Isle La Motte send the most commuters to Alburgh. On the whole, however, Alburgh is a net exporter of labor, sending 300 people outside of town for work. Nearly half (148) of the town’s commuters go to towns in Franklin County and 97 went to work in Chittenden County. Employment in New York State is also significant, providing employment for 43 people. (Figure 3)

**Figure 3. Commuter Flows into and out of Alburgh**



The majority of jobs in town are provided by the private sector, with government jobs making up about one-fifth of total employment. (See Table 3) Within the private sector retail trade provides the largest number of jobs. Jobs in the retail sector are relatively low paying, with annual incomes averaging \$10,291 compared to the \$15,411 average local wage. Contract construction, in contrast, paid an average wage of \$21,717 in 1997

although relatively few people were employed in this category.

The town has undertaken some significant economic development efforts in recent years. The most notable effort was the development of an industrial park adjacent to the Village. The Park has approximately 100 acres, including some wetland. Marketing the Park has been and continues to be challenging. Past marketing efforts have included a brochure, but these efforts have been hindered by competition with Plattsburgh, N.Y., where companies have access to natural gas.

Businesses currently residing in the Business Park include: Beeline, Rowley Fuels Inc. a fuel oil distributor, and the Alburgh Health Center. An additional 10 acres has water, sewer, road access and electricity, and is permitted and “ready to go.” The Town has been considering changing the intended use of the Park from industrial use to a more diverse assortment of businesses. Alternative uses of the Park could include incubator space for new and growing businesses as well as commercial and industrial space.

Particularly interesting is the strategy of developing incubator space for small businesses at the Park. In addition to providing affordable rents for local business people and small start-up companies, an incubator space could include a technological resource center that provides businesses with access to both computer hardware and support services for companies wanting to use the Internet to advance their business. This “high-tech” investment in the industrial park also include installation of a fiber-optic communication hub. This project is currently being planned and implemented by the Economic Development Council of Northern Vermont (EDC). By clustering small businesses in a single location higher quality hardware and technical assistance can be provided to these businesses at much lower costs. The increased economic activity of the small business center would also provide an important boost to the economic vitality of the adjacent downtown area as employees take meals and buy goods within walking distance of their job sites.

In addition to the Industrial Park, Alburgh’s economic advantages include proximity to both Montreal and Burlington,. The Town is also known for some annual as well as weekly activities that bring people to town. Annual events such as the International Fire Training School brings 300-400 people to town, while the Alburgh Auction House is known throughout the region for



the great diversity of items offered for bid. Weekly attendance at the Saturday auction ranges from 100 to 125 people, providing a weekly influx of visitors that provides opportunities for other local entrepreneurs. Challenges to economic development include a need for labor force training, sewer capacity challenges, no high school and no access to natural gas.

**Table 3. Alburgh's Local Employment 1987 & 2004**

Data Source: Vermont labor Market Information, 2004 <b>Industry</b>	<b>1987 Average wage Units</b>	<b>1997 Average Wage Units</b>	<b>2004 Average Wage Units</b>	<b>1987 Annual Average Employment</b>	<b>1997 Annual Average Employment</b>	<b>2004 Annual Average Employment</b>	<b>% Change Employment</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>282</b>	59.5
<b>Private</b>	36	37	47	114	165	206	55.3
Mining/Quarry	NA3	NP4	N/A	11	NP4	N/A	N/A
Contract Construction	6	6	12	13	16	56	23.2
Manufacturing	3	NP4	N/A	11	NP4	N/A	N/A
Transport/Utilities	NP4	NP4	16	NP4	NP4	59	N/A
Wholesale Trade	NP4	NP4	N/A	NP4	NP4	N/A	N/A
Retail Trade	11	15	13	44	72	52	15.4
Fire	5	NP4	N/A	15	NP4	N/A	N/A
Services	8	7	N/A	27	35	N/A	N/A
<b>Local Government</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>27.7</b>
Services	1	1	3	32	31	65	50.8
Public Administration	2	2	2	15	10	12	20
<b>Federal Government</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>37.5</b>
Transport/Utilities	2	2	2	5	6	5	0
Public Administration	2	1	2	3	2	5	40

1 – Unemployment Insurance Covered Employment only ; 2 - Employers; 3 – Not available;  
4 - Not publishable but included in subtotals; 5 – Fire, Insurance & Real Estate

## Chapter 5. Natural and Cultural Environment

The University of Vermont conducted a natural resource inventory of Alburgh in 1990. This inventory provided much of the information contained in this chapter. Additional information was gathered from Vermont Center for Geographic Information databases as well as local knowledge. Natural resource information is displayed on the *Natural Resource* map included in the Appendix.

### Bedrock Geology

The Alburgh Peninsula lies within the Champlain Lowlands Sedimentary Basin, composed of materials deposited during the last glacial period, approximately 10,000 years ago. The Town is underlain primarily by layers of shale and limestone. Over the years shale has been excavated at a number of sites in the town, although no commercially exploitable deposits of either shale or limestone has been found. Natural gas is also present in these formations but exploratory efforts have failed to locate economically attractive reserves. A significant drilling effort in 1966 drilled to a depth of 5,000 feet, but failed to find significant reserves of natural gas.

### Soils

Alburgh contains large areas of prime agricultural soils. A study by graduate students at the University of Vermont in 1990 estimated that approximately 35% of the town is made up of agricultural soils.

### Topography and Slope

The Town of Alburgh contains approximately 29 sq. miles of land, or 18,560 acres. The town is relatively flat with rolling hills. The high point in the town is 240+/- feet with large low-lying areas where wetlands have formed.



### Climate

The climate of Alburgh is influenced by the proximity of Lake Champlain, the Green Mountains and the Adirondacks. The lake significantly moderates the climate, extending the growing season to 160 days, much longer than most places in Vermont. Prevailing winds are generally from the south with frequent shifts

to the north in the winter. Winter snows are light relative to most places in Vermont. (FIS, 1980)

## Floodplains

A flood insurance study (FIS) was prepared by the engineering firm Dufresne-Henry in 1980 for FEMA. The study concluded that flood damage is primarily caused by high levels of Lake Champlain, causing erosion of the bank along the shore. The rise in lake levels is often associated with sudden snowmelt, which releases large volumes of water from the mountainous and large (8,277 sq. mile) Lake Champlain drainage basin. (FIS, 1980) The study found the following flood elevation levels:

**Table 1. Lake Champlain Flood Levels**

Flood Source & Location	Elevation (feet)			
	10-year	50-year	100-year	500-year
Lake Champlain	101.2	101.9	102.0	102.3

Source: FEMA, Flood Insurance Study, 1980

The FIS study also produced Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for Alburgh. These maps show that most of the town’s shoreline and wetlands are within the 100-year floodplain. In 1981, shortly following the completion of the FIS the town considered and voted to reject proposed flood hazard zoning by-laws, which resulted in the suspension of the town from the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The Town has adopted FEMA maps and rejoined the NFIP in recent years.

The town has experienced periodic flooding, the most significant flooding in 1993. In 2004 and 2005, the Lake level reached 101 feet, although damage from those high levels was minimal. Flooding in Spring of 2011 has been record breaking with the lake reaching at least 103.2 feet, resulting in the Town declaring a state of emergency. There are no records of water being this high in all the time the water level has been recorded (Since 1865).

## Groundwater

Groundwater mapping is an expensive and difficult undertaking. No such effort has been undertaken in Alburgh but data from the logs of well drillers provides some indication of the groundwater status. Well-log data collected since 1966 generally suggests a consolidated bedrock aquifer. This is supported by reports of generally low-yielding wells and a sulfur taste in many drilled wells in town.

## Surface Waters and Wetlands

The town has two significant streams, Sucker Brook and Mud Creek as well as many

intermittent streams and drainage canals that flow into Lake Champlain. Large and extensive wetlands are present throughout the town, accounting for 5,146 acres, or 27% of the town excluding Lake Champlain. These calculations are based on VCGI wetlands maps, which maps wetlands listed in the National Wetland Inventory.

## Wildlife and Habitat

Alburgh's extensive wetland system provides significant habitat for many wildlife species. Data from the Nongame and Natural Program (NNHP) of the Vermont Dept. of Fish and Wildlife identified 41 sites in town with state or federally endangered, rare or threatened species or natural communities in 1997. Included in this list are 21 vascular plants, 9 vertebrate habitats and 11 natural communities.

The town's mapped deeryards are located on the southern end of the peninsula and include 463 acres. Deeryards provide winter habitat where deer can find both food and shelter from winter snow and wind.

## Land Cover



The total area of the town includes a significant portion of Lake Champlain, giving the town a total area of approximately 30,410 acres. Of this total, approximately 18,946 acres are contained within the shoreline of the town. Within this area the two main land cover types are forest land and agricultural lands.

Approximately 7,214 acres, or 38% of the town is covered by forestland, either deciduous, coniferous,

mixed forest or forested wetland. Agricultural lands account for an estimated 8,356 acres, or 44% of the town's land area. The remaining land area includes built-up lands and roadways.

## Chapter 6. Land Use

### Current Land Use

As noted in the earlier section on Land Cover, the majority of land in Alburgh is either in agricultural use or is forested, often over wetlands. Farming is the most extensive land use in town by far, occupying most of the land that is not wetland in the interior of the peninsula. The USDA Agricultural Census reported that Alburgh had 18 farms in 2002. (National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), 2002) The USDA defines a farm as “any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year”. (NASS, 2005) The Northeast Organic Farming Association reports that these include five organic operations. This is the largest number for any town in Grand Isle County, which has eight in all. (Northeast Organic Farming Association, 2005)

There is a wide variety of agricultural products being produced by farms in Alburgh, including livestock and their related products, hay, pasture, vegetables and melons, berries, and grains. Dairy farming is also still an active and important industry in Alburgh, with a third of farmers in the town reporting that they produced dairy products in 2002. (NASS, 2002) According to the 2002 Census, seven producers in the town receive some sort of payment from Federal Farm Programs. All seven of these producers are receiving less than \$50,000. (NASS, 2002) Even so, the net cash returns from the sale of agricultural goods for the county have decreased over time. (NASS, 2002)



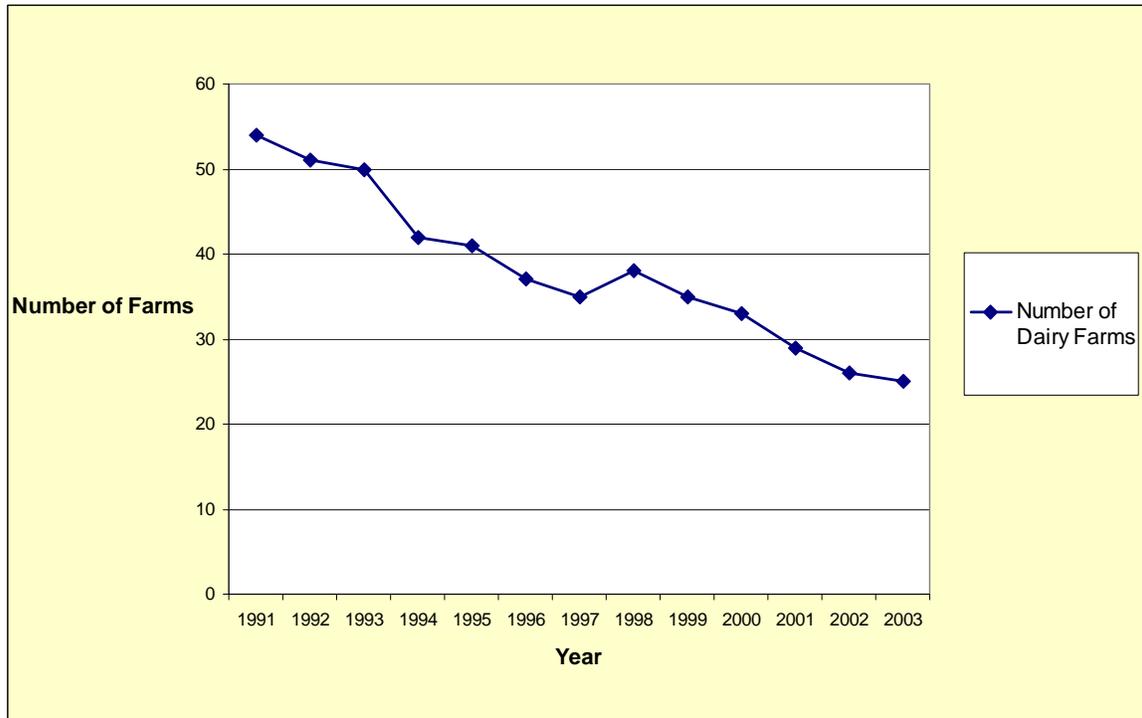
Alburgh is rich in agricultural resources, though over time the number of active farms remaining in the town has dwindled. According to the Census of Agriculture, there were 34 operating farms in Alburgh in 1997. (Baker et al., 2002) The 2002 Ag Census lists just 18 farms for the town. This represents a significant loss of farms, with over 47% of the town’s farms ending their production between 1997 and 2002.

Traditionally, dairy farming has been and continues to be a very important sector of the local agriculture. One third of agricultural producers in Alburgh reported that they produce dairy products. However, over the past ten years, dairy farm numbers have decreased significantly in Grand Isle county and the state. Information on dairy farm numbers over time for the town of Alburgh was not available. However, according to a 2002 Community Profile of the town, locals estimated that there were between 11 and 13 active dairy farms in the town, though the Census of Agriculture reported just 6. (Baker et al., 2002 and NASS, 2002)

<b>Product</b>	<b>Number of Producers</b>
All Crops (including Nursery and Greenhouse)	11
Cattle/Calves Inventory	10
Cattle/Calves Sold	9
Corn for Grain	*
Corn for Silage	*
Dairy Products	6
Forage	14
Grains	*
Horses/Ponies	*
Maple	*
Milk Cow Inventory	7
Other Animals	*
Poultry and Eggs	*
Sheep, Goats, and Related Products	*
Soybeans for Beans	*
Turkeys	*
Vegetables and Melons	*
* Denotes only 1-4 farms produce this commodity, exact information withheld to preserve confidentiality	

Data Source: Census of Agriculture 2002, USDA NASS

**Figure 1. Number of Dairy Farms in Grand Isle County, 1991-2003**



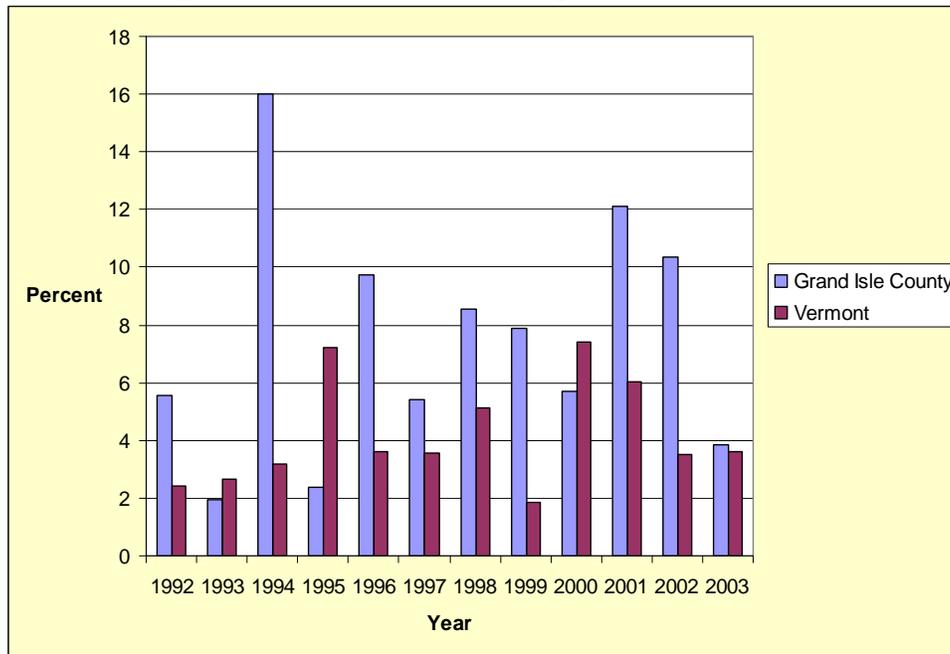
Data Source: Vermont Dairy, 2003

Chart 1 shows the decrease in the number of dairy farms in the county of Grand Isle between 1991 and 2003. According to Vermont Dairy, the number of dairy farms dropped from 54 in 1991 to just 25 in 2003. (Vermont Dairy, 2003)

Chart 2 compares the percent decrease by year for Grand Isle County and the state of Vermont. When compared to statewide changes in dairy farm numbers, the rate of farm loss is generally higher in Grand Isle County. However, as there are fewer dairy farms in Grand Isle County, the loss of even a few farms accounts for a larger percentage loss.

A larger percent of farmers live on the farm in Alburgh than in the rest of the state. The figure for Grand Isle County in Table 2 is presented as a range. The exact figure is not known as this information has been withheld by the National Agriculture Statistics Service to protect confidentiality.

**Figure 2. Percent Loss of Dairy Farms, 1992-2003**



Data Source: Vermont Dairy, 2003

**Table 2. Characteristics of Agricultural Producers, 2002**

Characteristic	Alburgh	Grand Isle County (except Alburgh)	Vermont
Single Operator	44.40%	44.16%	48.70%
Multiple Operators	55.56%	55.84%	51.30%
Primary Operator Living on Farm	94.44%	85.71%-89.61%*	87%
Primary Operator Reporting Farming as Primary Occupation	61.11%	54.55%	53.05%
Full Owner	38.89%	61.05%	51.95%
Part Owner	61.11%	32.90%	44.16%
Tenant	0%	6.05%	3.89%
*Shown as a range due to confidentiality concerns.			

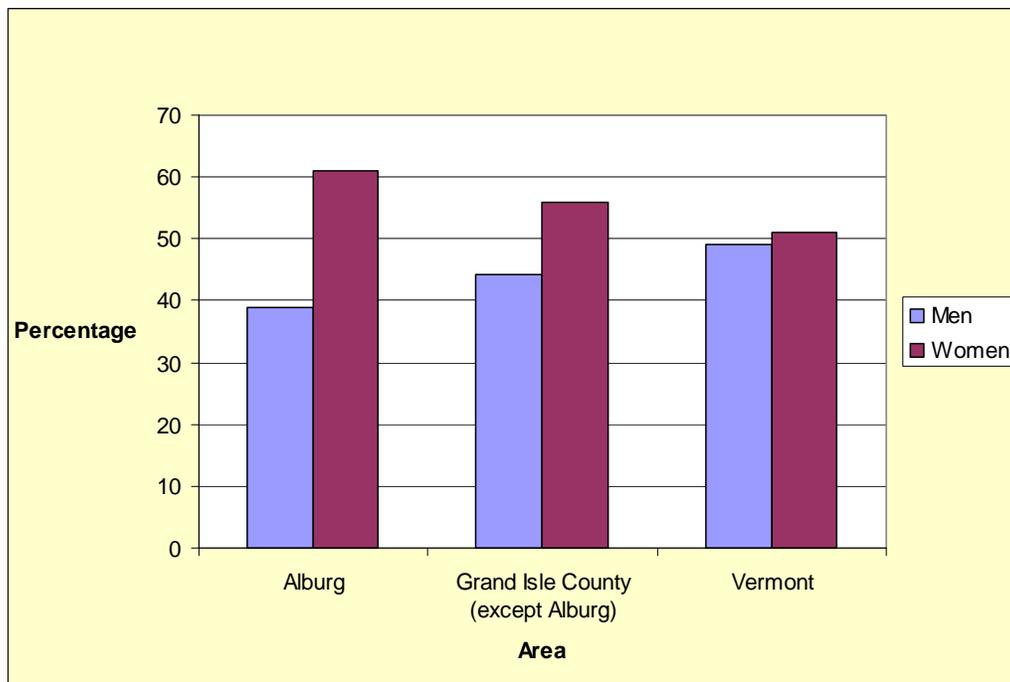
Data Source: Census of Agriculture 2002, USDA NASS

A larger percent of farmers live on the farm in Alburgh than in the rest of the state. The figure for Grand Isle County in Table 2 is presented as a range. The exact figure is not

known as this information has been withheld by the National Agriculture Statistics Service to protect confidentiality. The Census notes that it withholds information for any figure comprised of less than four producers. Therefore, this range represents a percentage for anywhere from one to four producers. Also in the chart, it becomes apparent that there is also a larger percent of agricultural producers in Alburgh who report farming as their primary occupation when compared to the rest of Vermont as a whole. When contrasted with the rest of the state, in Alburgh there is a larger percent of part owners than full owners or tenants.

In the state of Vermont, there are more female farmers than male farmers. There is a higher percentage of women farmers in Alburgh than compared to the state and the rest of the county. This fits with the national trend towards an increase in the number of farms being run by women. Despite the fact that farming has historically been a male-dominated occupation, in 2004 one in ten farms was operated by a woman. (Ludden, 2004)

**Figure 3. Farm Operators by Gender**

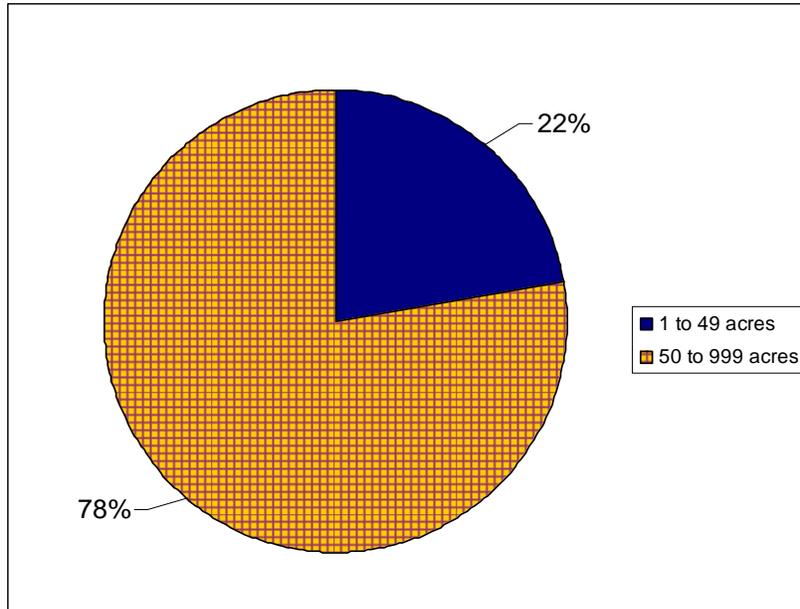


Data Source: Census of Agriculture 2002, USDA NASS

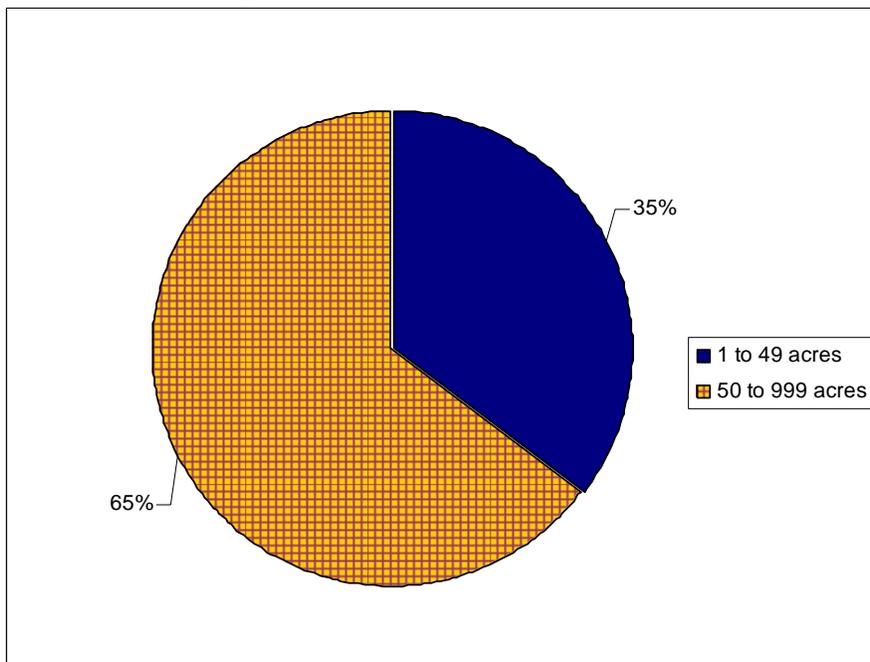
Chart 4 and Chart 5 compare the size of farms in Alburgh and Grand Isle County. A larger percent of farms in Alburgh are in the size range of 50-999 acres than in the rest of the county. There is currently insufficient data available to determine if farms in other

parts of the county are getting smaller, or if this size difference has been consistent over time.

**Figure 4. Size of Alburgh Farms**



**Figure 5. Size of Grand Isle Farms**



Data Source: Census of Agriculture 2002, USDA NASS

In contrast to the open lands of the interior, Alburgh has a distinct pattern of built-up areas. Alburgh Village is the largest cluster of mixed use buildings in town, consisting of a variety of residential, retail and commercial uses. Immediately adjacent to the Village is the Alburgh Business Park.

The Village is not the only high density area in town. Reflecting past history, Alburgh contains a number of high density clusters around the town, notably in East Alburgh, Alburgh Springs, and Alburgh Center. Alburgh's more recent history as a vacation destination has led to extremely high density development along much of Alburgh's shoreline. Structures along the shore tend to be built on very small lots and reducing the impact of this development on Lake Champlain's water quality is a challenge.

There is also an extensive amount of conserved land in town. Alburgh Dunes State Park occupies a 608 acre piece of land at the southernmost section of the town. The Vermont Land Trust and other conservation groups have also purchased conservation easements on an assortment of agricultural lands in town. These conserved lands can be seen on the *Proposed Land Use* map.

## Proposed Land Use



Future land use in Alburgh was based on a combination of existing land uses, desired growth areas, conserved lands and underlying natural resource characteristics. Using these criteria, proposed future land use was divided into eight general land use categories. The land use categories are described below and the general boundaries are illustrated on the map titled *Proposed Land Use*.

**1) Village and High Density Residential** – This land use category includes most of the existing Village area, as well as other existing high density areas in the town. Intended uses of these areas include high density residential development and commercial uses compatible with residential development. Commercial uses should be of a scale and

character compatible with residential development. Existing land uses in these areas are grandfathered. Minimum lot width is 100 feet.

**2) Shoreland** – This land use category includes all land within 300’ of mean high water that is not either in the Village/High Density category or either Conservation Land A or B. The intended land uses in this category are residential, recreation, conservation uses. Protection of Lake Champlain water quality is a high priority and development should seek to minimize impact on the lake. Existing land uses in these areas are grandfathered.

To protect lake water quality a 50 foot undeveloped and vegetated buffer strip is required for new development, measured from the high water mark of 99 feet above sea level. The minimum lot width is 100 feet.

**3) Commercial Area** – This land use category covers the areas designated for commercial development. Commercial development includes land uses such as small gas stations, gift shops, retail stores, farmer’s markets and Park & Ride facilities. Currently, the Commercial Area is situated at the “Four Corners” located at the intersection of Rt. 78 and Rt. 2. The boundaries of the area are 350 feet from the road centerline in all directions, forming a diamond pattern extending 350 feet from the intersection.

**4) Industrial Area** – This land use category follows the lines of the existing Industrial Park in Alburgh Village.

Land uses included in this district include light and heavy industry, manufacturing and commercial uses. All uses must be compatible with the residential and commercial nature of the adjoining Village area.

**5) Agriculture and Low Density Residential Area** – This land use category extends 300 feet on either side of all town and state-owned roads. It does not include land that is in either the Village/High Density areas, the Commercial area, the Industrial area or Conservation Lands A and B.

Intended land uses in these areas include low density residential development and agriculture. The minimum lot width in this area is 250 feet.

**6) Conservation Lands A** – This land use category includes lands that are unsuitable for residential, commercial or industrial development because of natural resource limitations, primarily wetlands.<sup>1</sup> No further residential, commercial or industrial development should

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<sup>1</sup> Wetlands were determined based on the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps. These maps were developed from color infrared aerial photos flown between 1975 and 1978, U.S. Geological Service topographic maps and other mapped and text data. The data was digitized by the Vermont Center for Geographic Information and released in 1996. Wetlands less than 3 acres in size were not included in this dataset. This information was the best computerized data available that could be accessed by the Planning Commission at the time this Plan was developed. These wetland maps were developed for planning purposes only. Questions regarding official wetland boundary determinations should contact the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Water Quality Division, Wetlands section, (802) 244-6951

occur in these areas. Primary land use is wildlife habitat and recreational uses compatible with the sensitive environment of this area. Such uses include hunting, bird-watching and hiking.

**7) Conservation Lands B** - This land use category includes lands that have been conserved by federal, state or private non-profit groups. These lands include prime agricultural soils, important wildlife habitat, and shore land areas.

Development on these lands should be minimal, limited by the conservation restrictions and/or management plans that place conservation of either agricultural soils, wildlife habitat, water quality or low impact recreation as their primary aim.

**8) Agriculture and Open Space** – This land use category includes all lands not included in other categories. The majority of these lands are in agricultural use and should remain available for agriculture. Lands in this category are distant from existing roads and development could entail increased costs to the town if municipal services are extended into these areas.

Primary use of these lands should be agriculture and recreational open space. Residential development in this district should be clustered to avoid impacting agricultural operations. Conservation of these lands is strongly encouraged.

## Chapter 7. Utilities, Facilities & Services

### Education

Alburgh only has one local school, the Alburgh Community Education Center. It currently serves 223 students grades K-8. The student/teacher ratio has gone down from 10.48% in 2007 to 9.82% in 2008, this ratio is now below the average of 11.6% in the.

**Table 1. Grand Isle Supervisory Union Enrollment 2003- 2004**

	2001	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Alburgh Community Education Ctr	237	222	217	223	201	195
Folsom Ed. & Community Ctr.	204	159	149	148	131	127
Grand Isle Elementary School	214	209	212	209	221	203
Grand Isle S.U.	32	65	62	75	75	68
Isle La Motte Elementary School	35	31	32	36	34	32
North Hero Elementary School	74	70	68	46	52	58

Source: Vermont

**Table 2. Alburgh Community Education Center: General School Information**

	2003-2004	2004-2005	2006-2007	2007-2008	State of VT
Total School Enrollment	240	249	217	223	94,114
Attendance Rate	94.9%	NA	94.40%	N/Av	N/Av
Retention Rate	0.5%	NA	N/Av	N/Av	N/Av
Student/Teacher Ratio	11.9	11.5	10.48	9.82	11.13
Eligible Special Education	17.1%	19.7%	16.10%	27.40%	14.90%

Source: Vermont Department of Education

Grand Isle County does not have its own high school and Alburgh students are sent to high schools outside of the county. In 2003 to 2004 there were 107 high school students that were sent out of town and in total there are 383 high school students in Grand Isle County that also do not have their own high school and could possibly benefit from building a new facility in the county.

Within the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment System each grade level is expected to know a different level of information. Development Reading is what 2<sup>nd</sup> graders are tested on which includes them reading a story and retelling the story in his or her own words. For elementary and middle level Mathematics there is testing on core concepts to see if the student understands mathematical processes and ideas, skills, to see if the student can perform the mathematical routine or technique correctly, problem solving, to see if the student can show and apply appropriate skills and concepts.

Elementary and Middle level English and Language Arts covers basic understanding of

reading, where students must demonstrate the ability to comprehend a variety of materials, analysis and interpretation of reading, where students must demonstrate the ability to analyze and interpret what they read, writing effectiveness, where students must have the ability to write effectively in a variety of formats, writing conventions, where students must show control of the conventions of the English language.

A review of Alburgh’s Community Education Center assessment shows that there has been improvement over time in most areas of the school. The second grade education dipped briefly and then improved, achieving the necessary standards, which is above the average for the State of Vermont.

Assessment of Alburgh students at the top two levels of achievement (Proficient with Distinction and Proficient) for Grades 3-8 varies by subject area. For Reading, results are similar to Grade 2, with achievement dipping briefly, and coming back up to the same level as 2002. However, the number is still quite low compared to the State as a whole.

In Math, achievement has increased substantially since 2006 although there is still a significant gap between Alburgh’s students and those statewide. In upper level Writing subjects, performance has decreased substantially since the 2006-2007 school year. Science scores also fall below the State of Vermont average.

**Table 3. Alburgh Community Education System Student Performance based on NECAP Results and Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program**

	Alburgh			State of Vermont	
	<b>Grade 2</b>				
	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2007-2008	
<b>Developmental Reading (1)</b>	87%	83%	85%	84%	
<b>Reading</b>	<b>Grades 3-8</b>				
% at two highest levels of achievement	54%	53%	54%	71%	
<b>Math</b>	<b>Grades 5 &amp; 8</b>				
% At two highest levels of achievement	44%	49%	49%	66%	
<b>Writing</b>	<b>Grades 5 &amp; 8</b>				
% At two highest levels of achievement	24%	25%	14%	54%	
<b>Science</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Primary</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>
% At two highest levels of achievement	38%	12%		48%	27%

(1) Percent of Students in the Highest Two Performance Levels: Achieving the Standard or Achieving the Standard with Honors

## Child Care Facilities

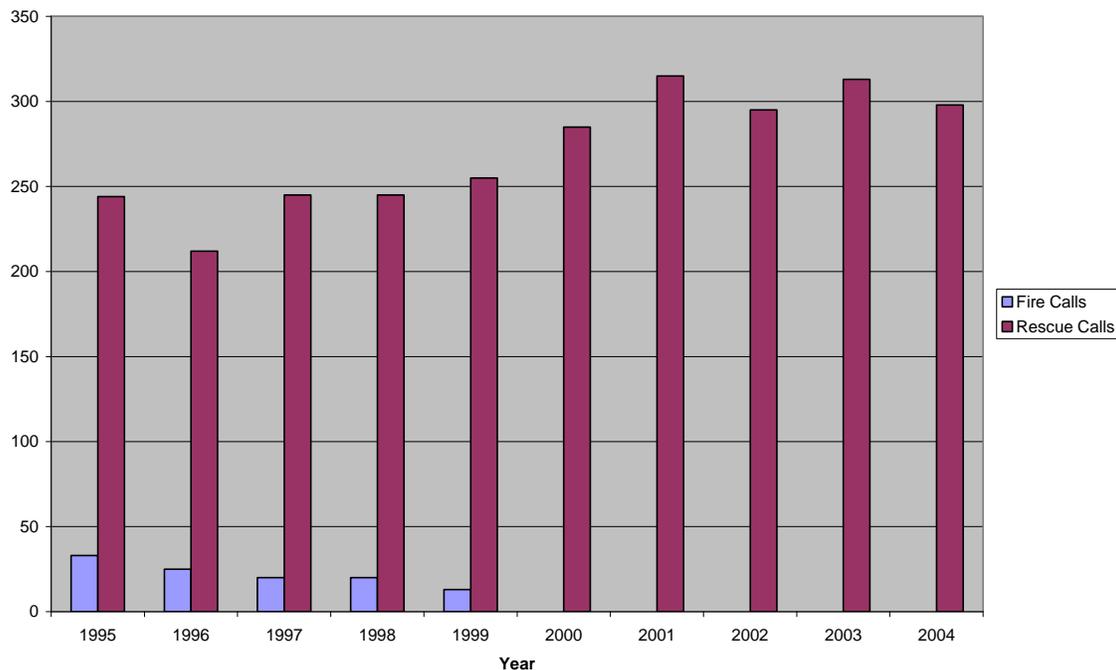
Childcare can be a growing concern for existing and prospective families, whether it means finding quality services or securing the costs of services. High quality, available childcare is a critical component supporting a stable workforce.

According to State data, Alburgh has seven registered childcare homes and one childcare center.. The 2005-2009 American Community Survey indicated that there are 234 children from birth to age 9 living in Alburgh. Data on other options, such as siblings, stay at home parents, family care providers, un-registered childcare homes or other opportunities are not available. Therefore, there is currently no data on how the needs of the 234 children are being met.

## Emergency Services

A very important part of the community is the Alburgh Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. It provides fire protection for the community of Alburgh as well as emergency calls. In 2003, Alburgh responded to 313 rescue calls from Alburgh, as well as other Grand Isle county towns and New York communities . The statistics displayed in Figure 1 shows how rescue calls have increased over the years until about 2001 were they began to fluctuate around 300 calls.

**Figure 1. Rescue Calls**



Source: Alburgh Annual Town Reports, Alburgh Volunteer Fire Department.

It was first organized in 1968 as an independent self-governing organization and since continues to ably service the community.

The fire department also helps in the economic development in Alburgh by hosting the Annual International Fire School that brings in around 400 people every year. This helps in boosting sales at local shops while improving the safety of communities in Vermont and Canada.

The Fire Department is funded by a variety of sources about 30% of it in 2003 coming from the town. Other income sources are Fire Department Auxiliary (15%), donations (6%), and grants (20%) (Town of Alburgh, 2003).

In 1998 the Northern Vermont Resource and Conservation Area (RC&D) developed a plan for dry hydrants in Alburgh. Eight sites were proposed for Alburgh and are included on the Utilities, Facilities and Services map in the Appendix. Dry hydrants are particularly expensive to site in the Islands due to icing problems. Whereas a typical dry hydrant on the mainland might cost approximately \$1,500, a dry hydrant in the Islands can cost up to \$10,000. This added cost is due to the difficulties and increased permitting and material costs associated with extending an inlet pipe beyond the icing depth in the Lake. (Personal Communication, RC&D) Efforts are currently underway at the writing of this plan to implement these recommendations in some parts of Town.

Because of the size of Alburgh’s population, it does not have its own police services and instead is serviced by the Grand Isle Sheriff’s department and the Vermont State Police. Over the past few years, Alburgh has had the highest number of reported crimes in the county.

**Table 4. 2003 Crime Statistics**

Crime Rate	Actual Crime		Crime Rate per 1,000 people	
	Part 1 <sup>1</sup>	Part 2 <sup>2</sup>	Part 1 <sup>1</sup>	Part 2 <sup>2</sup>
Alburgh	52	154	25	75
North Hero	7	24	8	28
Grand Isle	6	53	3	26
South Hero	26	47	15	26
Isle La Motte	4	17	8	34
Grand Isle County	95	275	13	38

Source: VT Department of Police Services: 2003 Crime Statistics

1 Part I crimes include criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft and arson

2 Part II crimes include forgery, fraud, embezzlement, possession of stolen property, vandalism, sex offenses, drug offenses, family/children offenses, liquor violations, disorderly conduct, simple assault, weapons, prostitution, gambling, driving under the influence and all other offenses.

Both in actual crime and the crime rate per 1,000 people in 2003, Alburgh had almost twice the number of reported crime than that of other towns in the county. The majority were property crimes showing little change from five years ago in the previous town plan where vandalism, burglary and larceny were at the top of the list. In 2003, vandalism and larceny still continue to be the majority of crimes reported in Alburgh. Though there

continues to be lower level crimes, the frequency of part 1 crimes has halved since 1997.

**Table 5. 2003 Crime Statistics**

<b>Part I Crime</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Part II Crime</b>	<b>Number</b>
Homicide	0	Forgery	0
Rape	2	Fraud	7
Robbery	1	Embezzlement	0
Aggravated Assault	3	Stolen Property	1
Burglary	16	Vandalism	37
Larceny	28	Sex Offense	6
Auto Theft	2	Drugs	9
Arson	0	Family/Child	33
		Liquor Violations	5
		Disorderly Conduct	5
		Simple Assault	14
		Weapons	0
		Prostitution	0
		Gambling	0
		Vagrancy	0
		DUI	12
		Other	25

Source: VT Department of Police Services: 2003 Crime Statistics

## Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment

Approximately 35% of Alburgh's population is served by the two municipal water systems. The water source for both is Lake Champlain and after treatment the water is delivered to the users.

**Table 6. Alburgh Municipal Water Supply Systems**

	<b>Population Served</b>	<b>Maximum Daily Demand (Gal/Day)</b>	<b>Capacity (gal/day)</b>	<b>Reserve Capacity (%)</b>
<b>Alburgh Springs Water Company</b>	91	12,000	21,600	63
<b>Alburgh Village Water</b>	590	140,000	288,000	51

Source: VT Department of Natural Resources: Water Supply Division, 2003

The quality of the water is considered to be high and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Water Supply Division monitors the public water systems that are published in annual reports. In 2003 and 2004 reports were written saying that certain contaminants were found in the Alburgh Fire District on a few occasions. Total haloacetic acids, trihalomethanes and coliform were found in the water. Haloacetic acids can be found in chlorinated water when chlorine reacts with natural organic matter and/or bromide ions.

Trihalomethanes are similar in that they can occur as a result of the reaction between natural organic matter in the water and chlorine added as a disinfectant (Glossary, 2004, Nov. 15). Coliform is of or relating to the bacilli that commonly inhabits the intestines of humans and other vertebrates. Each of these can cause short term health problems such as problems with E. coli and similar bacteria (Annual Compliance Reports, 2004).

**Table 7. Water Contamination Violations**

	<b>System Name</b>	<b>Constituent</b>
<b>2003</b>	Alburgh Fire District #1	Total Haloacetic Acids
<b>2003</b>	Alburgh Fire District #1	Total Trihalomethanes
<b>2004</b>	Alburgh Fire District #1	Total Coliform

Source: VT Department of Natural Resources: Water Supply Division.

Alburgh Village is served by its own wastewater treatment facility. The design capacity for the facility is 130,000. Over the past seven years, the metered flow has only risen by 3% while the reserve capacity has gone from 11% to 25%. The amount of committed flow has decreased since 1998 when it was 25%, in 2005 there is less than 10% unused and committed to projects.

**Table 8. Alburgh Municipal Wastewater Treatment Facility: Design and Capacity**

<b>Design Capacity (gal/day)</b>	<b>Metered Flow</b>	<b>% of Design Capacity</b>	<b>Committed Flow GPD Unconnected</b>	<b>Uncommitted Reserve Capacity GPD</b>
130,000	87,480	67%	9,600	25%

Source: VT Agency of Natural Resources, Waste Water Treatment, Virginia Little.

## **Solid Waste**

Alburgh is one of the 15 member communities that comprise the Northwest Vermont Solid Waste Management District. The Town of Alburgh operates a transfer Station that is available for the use of Alburgh and Isle La Motte residents and businesses. The Northwest Vermont Solid Waste Management District offers collection services for those wastes that otherwise would not have management options, such as special wastes, tires, appliances, and household hazardous wastes. All solid waste disposal and planning is managed by the Northwest Vermont Solid Waste management District, as outlined in the district's most recent Solid Waste Implementation Plan.

## Municipal Buildings



A Town Office building was constructed in 2004 in front of the Fire department building that was constructed in 2003. The library that was once in the same building as the Alburgh Town Clerk's Office was moved into its own building, freeing up more space for both the Library and the Clerk's office.

The library is run mostly by volunteers with the help of the town, donations, grants. In 2003, eighteen volunteers donated 1,024 hours of their time. About 75% of their income comes from the town with the rest from grants, fund raisers and donations (Town of Alburgh, 2003)

## Communications

Currently Alburgh is not served by a cable company but has been assigned a cable franchise by the State of Vermont., Grassroots Cable or Island Cable will be assigned to the town. People generally use conventional and satellite access television

The local telephone service is provided by Fairpoint New England with access to a variety of long distance providers. Residents of the town are able to access a variety of high kilowatt radio stations transmitting from Burlington, St. Albans as well as from New York and Canada.

There is one local daily newspapers published in the northwest region of Vermont, the St. Albans Messenger. The area is also served by a statewide daily, The Burlington Free Press. The County Courier, a weekly serving Franklin County and Alburgh; and the Islander, serving Grand Isle County also provide newspaper coverage for the town.

Proposals for new towers, upgrades to existing facilities, and upgrades to similar structures such as high voltage electric transmission lines must adequately address the following issues to be found compatible with this Plan:

- ❖ All such facilities shall be located in appropriate areas, respecting the integrity of residential areas, aesthetic concerns, agricultural uses and natural resources. Protection of scenic beauty is of great importance.
- ❖ Wherever possible, facilities shall be co-located at or on existing structures or facilities, unless the Planning Commission determines that separate facilities will create less visual impact or disturbance to the community.
- ❖ Towers, related facilities and similar structures shall only be as tall as absolutely necessary. Where towers are located within treelines, they should be made

extendable, so they can “grow” with the trees, and maintain the minimum height above the treetops.

- ❖ Unless required by the FAA, towers shall not be illuminated. Where required, lights shall be shielded in order to minimize aesthetic impacts, and so that light is cast only where needed.
- ❖ Structures shall be designed to minimize aesthetic impacts. Equipment sheds can be hidden in trees; depending on site-specific circumstances, tower structures may be monopole or lattice, of appropriate colors and minimal reflectivity, or even disguised as steeples, trees or as part of silos. Towers, related facilities and similar structures shall be screened from view to the greatest extent possible.
- ❖ Electric or transmission lines shall be installed so as to minimize aesthetic and ecological impacts.
- ❖ Any permits granted for these facilities shall be for a limited time period. This will allow for periodic review, and new permit conditions reflecting advances in knowledge, experience and technology. Equipment shall be downsized as technology advances, and removed when no longer used or needed.
- ❖ Any towers, related facilities and similar structures that are not operated for a period of twelve (12) months shall be considered abandoned and hazardous to public health and safety, unless the owner of the said facility provides proof to the contrary through quarterly inspections. The owner shall remove the structure within 90 days of receipt of a declaration of abandonment from the Selectboard notifying the owner of such abandonment. A bond may be required to ensure that funds are available to accomplish these purposes.
- ❖ The Planning Commission may modify the above requirements if they determine such modifications to be necessary to protect public health, safety or welfare, or to promote the town goals outlined in this Plan.

## Recreation

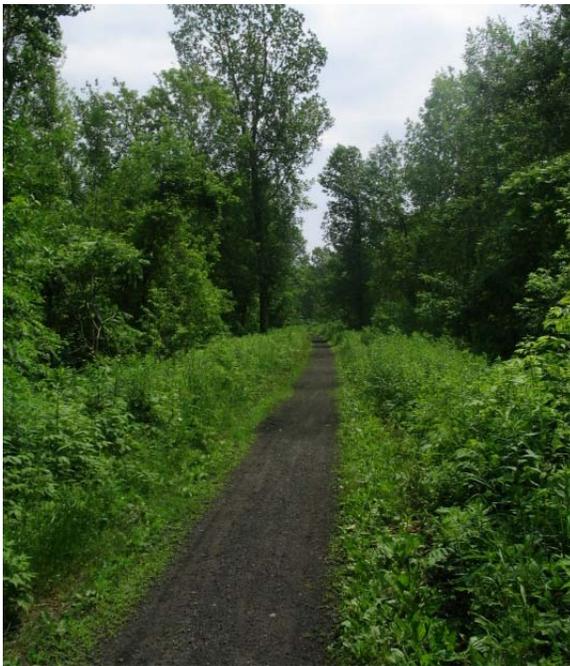
Alburgh is a town rich with recreational opportunities. Triangular in shape, the town is bordered on two sides by Lake Champlain, the town’s population swells in the summer with people coming to enjoy Alburgh’s lakeshore. In the winter ice fishing draws many outdoor enthusiasts, including many Canadian visitors. Many people access the lake from private land along the lake. Public access to the lake includes three public access points owned by Vermont Fish and Wildlife. Major public recreation facilities include the newly designated Alburgh Dunes State Park and the Alburgh Rail Trail. Smaller recreational facilities open to the public include the Alburgh Community Park and the park at St. Amadeus Parish.



## **Alburgh Dunes**

Alburgh Dunes, comprising a 608 acre tract at Alburgh's southern tip, became a state park in 1996. The park is currently limited to day use only. The beach at Alburgh Dunes is among the finest in the State, and the entire park is a showcase of natural history and ecological diversity. A bike route along the "beach road" parallels the lakeshore, and the park boasts 1 ½ miles of walking/hiking trails as well. This old road pre-dates VT 129 and was the preferred route between Isle La Motte, the Alburgh Tongue, and North Hero in the days before VT 129 provided a dry travel way through the extensive wetland north of the beach. The beach and dune system between this wetland and the lake comprise a true barrier island, geologically similar to formations found along ocean coastlines. The sand comes from a layer of glacial till, the soil that was left atop low bluffs southeast of the beach when the last glacier melted. The bluffs have eroded over thousands of years and lake currents have transported the sand, eventually forming the beach in this pocket between two rocky points. In the summer and late fall when lake levels are lowest, prevailing southerly winds blow the sand back from shore, forming dunes as a barrier between the lake and marsh. These dunes, however slowly, continue to migrate back into and over the wetland.

Alburgh's dunes were altered before the area became a state park. Portions of them were bulldozed for sand to replenish the beach. Fencing was placed around the dunes to minimize human disturbance and allow the dunes to eventually repair themselves, and to protect rare plants. Two of these plants, *Champlain Beach Grass* and the low-growing *Beach Pea*, are remnants from an earlier era when Lake Champlain was an inland estuary of the Atlantic Ocean. "Isostatic rebound", a slow rising of the earth's crust once freed from the massive weight of overlying glaciers, has lifted the lake to a present elevation of about 100 feet above sea level. Thousands of years of rain and snow runoff have flushed out the seawater.



## **The Alburgh Rail Trail**

The Alburgh Rail Trail is a 3.5-mile path that follows an abandoned railroad corridor. The trailhead is in the Alburgh Industrial Park across from the Town Offices. The Trail entrance is unmarked, so first time users look for a black cinder track heading away from the village. The path crosses slightly rolling terrain through farmland and the Mud Creek State Wildlife Area to the shore of Lake Champlain in East Alburgh. The cinder and gravel surface allows for year-round activities and the maximum grade of 3% provides relatively easy cycling. For safety and maintenance considerations, only non-motorized uses are permitted, with the exception of motorized

wheelchairs and snowmobiles. In fact, the Alburgh Rail Trail is part of the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) snowmobile trail network and is frequently used by snowmobiles during the winter.

The Rail Trail is part of a larger network of bike routes that is being developed for Grand Isle County. The pamphlet *Bicycling the Lake Champlain Islands* was published in 1999 and is available for free from the Lake Champlain Islands Chamber of Commerce. The Lake Champlain Bikeway principal route passes through Alburgh on Route 2. In addition to the main route the Grand Isle Advisory Committee to the Lake Champlain By-Ways Committee identified 2 bike routes in Alburgh. The first incorporates the Alburgh Rail Trail and covers an 11.7 mile loop east of Alburgh Village. The second trail, located in the south end of the town, covers a circuit of 9.3 miles and links Alburgh with North Hero. A shorter version of this bike route is a 5.8 mile loop entirely within Alburgh. This route takes advantage of the state park, traveling the “beach road” parallel to the lakeshore.

### **Public Lake Access Areas**

Public access to Lake Champlain is available at a number of sites in town. The VT Dept. of Fish and Wildlife maintains public access areas at Dillenbeck, West Shore, Kelly Bay and at the Alburgh Dunes State Park. The Town owns a right-of-way and access area by the pumphouse in Alburgh Springs. The property is at the terminus of an old town road where old side wheelers used to drop off visitors who were coming to bathe in the mineral waters of Alburgh Springs. This town-owned area does not have an adequate parking area and has not been developed as a public access site.

### **Issues**

During a meeting with representatives from the Lake Champlain Basin Program in January 1994 the Alburgh Selectboard identified 4 recreation-related issues affecting the town (*VDFPR, 1994*). These issues, updated by the Planning Commission in 2005, include:

- 1) The three Vermont Fish and Wildlife Access Areas (Dillenbeck, West Shore and Kelly Bay) all need docking facilities. Due to heavy winds, launching a boat is difficult to manage at all three areas. Boats are often damaged as they are blown against the rocks. A dock would help alleviate this problem. In addition, the Dillenbeck Access Area needs dredging. In 1999 the Planning Commission noted that adding a hook to the breakwater at the State’s West Shore access would improve the facility.
- 2) Eurasian milfoil and algae are prolific along the shoreline, creating undesirable recreational conditions. This problem has been accelerating over the years.
- 3) Alburgh is one of the most highly visited towns in the state, due largely to Canadian and other foreign visitors entering the country through the international ports of entry. This high volume of visitors requires adequate tourist facilities and

infrastructure. To serve the tourist industry additional public restrooms are needed and roadways need widening. Locally, Alburgh has ample tourist lodging facilities, including Bed and Breakfasts and campgrounds. Projects that promote tourism in keeping with the character of Alburgh, such as the Lake Champlain Bikeways, are strongly supported.

4) Alburgh does not have a serviceable town-owned beach. The town does own land in Alburgh Center but the beach has not been developed for public use and the site does not have adequate parking. Issues with neighboring landowners will need to be resolved before the town can develop this property for significant levels of public use – something that is desired by the public.

## Chapter 8. Transportation

Three state highways serve Alburgh. US Route 2 moves traffic north/south and then east/west through the town, VT Route 78 which brings traffic in from the east/west and VT 129 provides a corridor linking Isle La Motte to US Route 2. US Route 2 from the Vermont/New York State Border to the intersection with VT 78 is part of the Vermont Truck Network, which designates certain state roads in the Vermont transportation network as routes upon which trucks up to 53' in length can travel without obtaining a permit. VT Route 78 from the intersection with US Route 2 in Alburgh to its intersection with I-89 in Swanton is part of the same network. The VT 129 causeway provides the only vehicular access to Isle La Motte.



The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), maintains a record of the conditions of all of the state highways called “sufficiency ratings”. Highway sufficiency rating is a method of combining a number of disparate elements into a single rating of a road's adequacy with respect to American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and Vermont

Agency of Transportation (VTrans) Standards. The method uses a series of point values to measure the *structural condition*, *safety aspects*, and *service aspects* of a road. The evaluation of each of these elements is somewhat arbitrary, as are the weights assigned to each of the elements. However, an attempt has been made to combine each of these elements in the proportion that each one contributes to the total of the road's adequacy. According to the sufficiency rating system used in Vermont, the structural condition of a roadway relates to its foundation, drainage, and pavement surface, which are important in determining the road's ability to handle traffic, including heavy truck traffic, without surface deterioration or foundation failure. Safety aspects are concerned with surface width, roadbed width, stopping sight distance, and consistency of alignment and grade. All of these items are important geometric features relative to how safely a driver can negotiate a highway. Service aspects include average speed, passing sight distance, ease of driving and corrections for excessive grades and restricted vertical clearance, which are concerned with how well the driver is served and with how much stress and effort are required by the driver to negotiate the highway. The result of the sufficiency rating system is a score in the range of 0 to 100.

- Roads with scores between 0 – 40 are classified as “bad”
- Roads with scores between 40 – 60 are classified as “poor”
- Roads with scores between 60 – 80 are classified as “fair”
- Roads with scores between 80 – 100 are classified as “good”

The 2001 sufficiency ratings and AADT for US Route 2 in Alburgh are:

	ROUTE	TOWN	TOWN	MP	MP	LENGTH	AADT	RATING
US	2	Alburgh		0.00	0.91	0.91	4,500	89.1
US	2	Alburgh		3.41	4.77	1.36	5,290	44.5
US	2	Alburgh		4.77	6.23	1.46	5,010	62.6
US	2	Alburgh		6.23	6.92	0.69	2,450	77.4
US	2	Alburgh		6.92	11.40	4.48	1,800	79.6
US	2	Alburgh	North Hero	11.40	1.00	1.33	1,970	73.4

Source: VTrans

The 2001 sufficiency ratings and AADT for VT 78 in Alburgh are:

	ROUTE	BEGIN TOWN	END TOWN	BEGIN MP	END MP	LENGTH	AADT	ADJUST RATING
VT	78	Alburgh	Swanton	0.00	0.45	3.78	4,600	64.1

Source: VTrans

The 2001 sufficiency ratings and AADT for VT 129 in Alburgh are:

	ROUTE	BEGIN TOWN	END TOWN	BEGIN MP	END MP	LENGTH	AADT	ADJUST RATING
VT	129	Alburgh	Alburgh	0.00	2.74	2.74	740	56.7

Source: VTrans

Alburgh is also served by a network of paved and unpaved local roads.

Town	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	State
Alburgh	0	10.77	31.48	1.72	17.8
Isle La Motte	0	7.89	10.41	0.12	0.41
North Hero	0	9.43	8.66	0.1	9.34
South Hero	0	7.63	14.46	0.41	7.38
Grand Isle	0	9.31	18.23	1.14	10.18

Source: Vermont Indicators Online 2006

**Class I Town Highway:** Forms the extension of state numbered highway routes through a town, and which carry a state highway route number. Class I town highways are subject to concurrent responsibility and jurisdiction between the Municipality and VTrans on several matters. VTrans is responsible for surface maintenance or resurfacing while municipalities are responsible for pot hole patching, crack filling, etc; VTrans is responsible for center line pavement markings, while the municipalities are responsible for sidewalks, crosswalks and parking. VTrans has exclusive authority to designate Class

I highways.

**Class II Town Highways:** Those highways selected as the most important highways in each town. As far as practicable they shall be selected with the purposes of securing trunk lines of improved highways connecting two towns and to places which by their nature have more than the normal amount of traffic. The selectmen, with the approval of the Vermont Agency of Transportation, shall determine which highways are to be class II highways. Class II highways are the primarily the responsibility of municipalities. VTrans is responsible for center line pavement markings if municipalities notify VTrans of the need to replace them, while municipalities are responsible for crosswalks, sidewalks and parking. Class II mileage normally may not exceed twenty-five (25) percent of the total Class II and Class III mileage in the municipality.

**Class III Town Highway:** All other town highways that are “negotiable under normal conditions all seasons of the year by a standard pleasure car”. Class III town highway, including sidewalks, crosswalks and parking are the responsibility of municipalities.

**Class IV:** All other town highways are considered Class IV town highways. The majority of these receive limited or no maintenance. They are negotiable “at your own risk”, usually impassable in winter, and referred to as “jeep trails” at other times of the year. Class IV town highways, including sidewalks, crosswalks and parking are the responsibility of municipalities.

In the summer US Route 2 is also heavily used by bicyclists and tourists. Roadway conflicts exist between bicycle users and motorized traffic. This problem is expected to worsen as the VT Dept of Tourism and Marketing develops its tourism promotion activities for the county (*Grand Isle County Roadway Corridor Study, 1998*).

Truck traffic is also believed to have increased in recent years. Trucks pass through densely settled areas of the town, particularly in the Village area. Speed limits are alleged to be commonly violated and there are no areas where it is safe to pass a large truck. The possibility of “traffic calming” techniques that enable trucks to pass through the town safely and easily should be considered.

The inadequacy of the Missisquoi Bay Bridge has been a widely recognized problem for many years. In May of 2007 a new replacement bridge was opened for traffic. The project also involved removal of the old drawbridge and the partial removal of the existing causeway. The 3,600-foot 23-span crossing is the largest bridge in Vermont and serves as a vital transportation link between Vermont and Canada. It is also the only connection between northern New York and Interstate 89 in Vermont. While most vehicle trips are generated by single occupancy vehicles. Alburgh is second in the county when it comes to carpooling to work - and Alburgh leads the county in the number of people walking to work.

One method that is well-proven to reduce road congestion and save energy are “Park and Ride” facilities that enable travelers to leave their car in a safe and convenient spot while they finish their commute in a vehicle shared with others. A Park and Ride site has been

designated at the “4-Corners” area at the intersection of Routes 2 and 78.

Municipality	2000 Population	Single Occupancy Vehicle	Carpooled	Bus	Bicycle	Walk	Other	Average Travel Time to Work (mins)
Alburgh	1,952	633	134	0	0	31	15	36.85
Grand Isle	1,955	798	143	2	0	19	10	32.9
Isle La Motte	488	142	50	0	0	6	10	39.33
North Hero	810	312	76	3	0	8	4	36.86
South Hero	1,696	674	168	3	3	17	1	27.54

Source: VT Indicators Online 2006

## Public Transportation

Green Mountain Transit Agency (GMTA) is one of two agencies in the Northwest Region responsible for public transit for Grand Isle County, the other agency being Champlain Islanders Developing Essential Resources (C.I.D.E.R.) While the GMTA is the region’s Transit operator, CIDER receives funding from VTrans through NVPRN to provide Elderly and Disabled transportation services such as rides to medical appointments, trips to the grocery store/pharmacies as well as a whole host of support services that allow elderly and disabled individuals the assistance required to continue to live in the islands – what CIDER refers to as a “neighbor-helping-neighbor” ethic. GMTA operates a fixed-route bus service originating in Alburgh, and connecting Swanton, Highgate, St. Albans, and Georgia. The service provides transportation challenged individuals with a ride to their place of employment, and runs once in the morning and again in the evening.

The GMTA route connects with the existing fixed route services between Richford and St. Albans and the St. Albans Downtown shuttle. GMTA also coordinates the Medicaid Program and elderly transportation services.

Amtrak provides passenger rail service on a daily basis from St. Albans, VT to Washington, DC via the *Vermont* rail service. The region is also served by the Franklin County State Airport, located in neighboring Highgate, Vermont. Passenger air travel is available at the Burlington International Airport in South Burlington, Vermont.

## Other Transportation Systems

Pedestrian facilities are limited to sidewalks in Alburgh Village. Sidewalks primarily serve the immediate area around the Town Offices and local destinations. Another transportation facility is the Alburgh Recreation Rail Trail. The Rail Trail runs from the

Village to the Town along a section of VT 78, and is described in greater detail in the Recreation section of this Plan.

Plans for additional sidewalks are underway in Alburgh Village through funding from VTrans to improve pedestrian safety. The project includes extending, repairing and connecting targeted sidewalk segments from Peterson Place to the Alburgh Community Education Center, a crosswalk and bulb out at Peterson Place to the Congregational Church and potentially off street public parking.

## Chapter 9. Energy

Energy production is essential to human society and, at the same time, threatens the environment that sustains us. Most energy sources have negative environmental impacts and the challenge for the future will be to reduce energy consumption in general, and to shift demand from the more harmful energy sources toward those that are renewable and have an overall low environmental impact. Energy conservation is an important step in developing a comprehensive energy plan for the future of Alburgh.

Land use and energy are closely related. Land resources are used in the production, transport, and disposal of energy products. Land use patterns exert a strong influence on major end uses of energy, including transportation, heating and cooling of buildings, and the energy used in developing infrastructure. Furthermore, land is used for the disposal of waste products resulting from our energy consumption.

Vermont's energy use is divided into three main sectors: residential, commercial, and industrial. However, because the amount of energy that is used in transportation is significant, it is sometimes analyzed as a separate sector. In 2006, for the Northwest Region of Vermont, transportation consumed just over 57 percent of the total delivered energy while the residential sector consumed nearly 34 percent, the commercial sector along with the industrial sector consumed a combined amount of 8.5 percent (NRPC Regional Plan, 2006).

### Local Energy Consumption

**Table 1. Housing Units by Heat Source, 2009**

	<b>Alburgh</b>	<b>Grand Isle County</b>	<b>Vermont</b>
Utility gas	18	36	35,478
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	150	873	37,569
Electricity	30	104	10,321
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.	548	1830	134,100
Coal or coke	0	0	434
Wood	79	270	29,603
Solar energy	0	0	102
Other Fuel	0	15	1,744
That Are not Heated	0	0	1,024

Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey

According to the 2005-2009 American Community Survey, fuel oil and kerosene are the most popular home heating fuels and were used by 548 homes, or nearly 66% of the 825 occupied housing units. Liquefied Propane gas was the second most popular home heating fuel with 150 units (18%). The third most popular home heating fuel is wood with 79 units (10%), closely followed by electricity, used by 30 housing units (3.6%). The total number of households using fuel oil has dropped by 2.8%, while liquefied propane gas has increased by 12%, and wood has increased by 65% over reported usage in 2000.

## **Alternative Energy Sources**

**Solar Power:** Solar power is a potentially viable source of energy. Despite Vermont's cloudy climate; it could easily provide power for homes and businesses. "Photovoltaics offer, long-term reliability even during power outages, predictable costs, once the panels are installed the power is free. Silent power generator, no buzzing or humming, and renewable energy that creates no air pollutants or toxic emissions." (UVM Solar Energy Project) Also during winter because of the color of the panels (black), winter tends to melt off of them fairly quickly. "According to the EPA, a 5 kW photovoltaic system in the state of Vermont can avoid 18,583 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>, or about 9 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> (a known greenhouse gas) per year. This is equivalent to, the emissions from driving approximately 23,229 miles in an average passenger car; this would be equivalent to driving across the United States almost 8 times." (UVM Solar Energy Project) Solar power can be used by households to heat water, and can also heat homes using radiant floor heating systems. In 2006, it was estimated that the cost of a personal water heating system could run between \$4,000 and \$7,000 (Source: VT Solar), water and radiant floor heating system can run from \$8,000 to \$15,000 (VT Solar). There are also systems that provide electricity to a house, these systems can be 100% solar power, or can combine solar power with power from the grid. In 2006, these systems ran between \$10,00 and \$18,000 (VT Solar), including the solar panels, batteries, and a system monitor. Either system can be installed on the roofs of any buildings, and will not only reduce an individuals energy bills, but will reduce their dependence upon non-renewable forms of energy.

There are a number of incentives for the use of solar power; the Energy Policy Act of 2005 established a 30% tax credit up to \$2,000 for the purchase and installation of residential photovoltaic (solar electric) and solar water heating property. In Vermont Solar Electric and Wind power systems each qualify for a \$2/Watt incentive, Solar Hot Water systems qualify for \$2/hundred BTU if they are connected to the grid. Also the Vermont state sales tax exemption incentive includes solar hot water, solar-electric systems.

**Wind Power:** The geographical composition of Alburgh presents a unique situation in the utilization of wind as renewable energy source. Being a town with little to no rise in elevation as well as bordering a lake causes frequent and powerful gusts of wind to blow through the town. The consistency and strength of these winds creates an environment

seemingly engineered for the use of wind power. The daily mean wind speed for the western part of the town is around 14-15mph at 30 meters(90 ft), (New England Wind Map) while for a large scale wind turbine (260 ft tall, 130ft rotors) the minimal wind speed needed to provide adequate amounts of power is 10mph. This means that it could be possible for 90-100 ft wind turbines to be set up that could be operating at generating speed all day. “An economic study for Renewable Energy Vermont (REV) indicates that just six wind farms located in Vermont could produce 10% of the state’s electricity. The development and construction phases of these six wind farms would create more than 400 jobs for Vermonters—a mix of highly skilled laborer, construction, engineering and other quality jobs. Additional jobs would be created for ongoing operation and maintenance.” (Small Wind Vermont)



Wind power can be used to provide all electrical power to a household, or if constructed correctly, to a whole town. These windmills could provide power to a section of town, or the town as a whole, depending on the size and number of windmills. Further investigation should be conducted to determine where suitable sites for such power generation facilities exist in Alburgh, and to what standard aesthetic requirements will be outlined.

In May 2005, a Wind Turbine to provide power to the Alburgh welcome center finished construction, it was made possible by a \$21,000 grant from the federal government, and it will offset approximately 1.2 tons of pollutants and 250 tons of greenhouse gases over its 30-year operating life. It will produce more

then 5384-kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity in the next year. (Governor Jim Douglas Press Release).

There is another wind farm in Searsburg, VT. It contains 11 wind turbines that generate around 14 million kWh of electricity each year. Review of this data seems to show that electricity could be generated for approximately 2,000 residents, which is about the number of residents within Alburgh. (Vermont Wind).

There are high initial set up costs that are associated with building wind turbines, which in the long run could be paid off by the power being generated. There are also incentives and grants available, such as one offered by the Vermont Department of Public Service will provide \$311,000 in grant money for wind turbine demonstration construction within the next year. These grants will cover a portion of the cost of installing small scale net-metered wind systems. Renewable energy equipment is also exempt from the VT sales

tax, which at this time is around 6%. Municipalities are also allowed to provide property tax exemptions for land devoted to renewable energy. (Vermont Wind)

**Methane Power:** Alburgh can also encourage and promote the use of methane recovery as a source of power for farms. This technique may be harder to implement because it requires a large amount of methane to create any useable amount of energy. The problem being that given current technology farms within Alburgh are not large enough to produce the amount of methane needed. As technology advances it may be feasible for a small farm to use Methane power, making it critical for Alburgh to encourage farmers to continue to monitor progress within this field.

## Energy Conservation

At the local level, energy conservation concerns generally fall into four categories: energy efficiency of town-owned or town-maintained buildings; promotion of energy conservation techniques for residences and businesses; efficient development patterns; and energy used for transportation.

The Town of Alburgh, like all towns, can promote energy conservation in many different ways. Replacing fixtures and components with energy efficient units can save Alburgh money in heating and lighting while helping to protect the environment. Alburgh can also work with local utility companies to promote energy conservation programs aimed at residences and businesses, to reduce energy demand, save money, and preserve natural resources.

Alburgh can also promote energy conservation and efficiency through development controls. Subdivisions and developments in Town that come under Act 250 review are required "to reflect the principles of energy conservation and incorporate the best available technology for efficient use or recovery of energy." The Town currently does not have zoning, subdivision regulations or a building code.

Energy efficient development means more than just well constructed buildings utilizing the best technology. For example, development that is clustered together provides for greater efficiency. Clustering means fewer miles of road are needed to connect the homes or commercial buildings, school buses and snow plows travel smaller distances, and electric utility lines need not extend as far. In addition, other public services such as fire and ambulance, as well as sewage and water, should they become a municipal service, are all made more efficient by "well planned" new development. Carefully considered placement of a building on a lot adds to the efficiency of any new development by increasing passive solar gain and decreasing wind pressures.

While the clustering of development helps decrease transportation costs, it is not the only answer. Many of Alburgh's residents travel to St Albans or Chittenden County for employment. Car-pooling can be beneficial for these residents not only because it conserves fuel, but also because it reduces wear and tear and maintenance costs on individual vehicles.

One important component of any car-pooling program is finding a suitable location where car pool users can leave their vehicles. Currently, there is a formal designated "park and ride lot" in Alburgh, located at the 4-Corners area at the intersection of Routes 2 and 78.

## **Chapter 10. Compatibility with Neighboring Towns and the Region**

### **Compatibility with Neighboring Towns**

Within Grand Isle County Alburgh is separated from the two adjoining towns by Lake Champlain. The Town of Isle La Motte has neither a Town Plan nor zoning nor subdivision bylaws. The Town of North Hero has a locally adopted and regionally approved municipal plan and zoning regulations. Alburgh's plan is compatible with North Hero's and shares an interest in seeing improvements to the Route 2 corridor.



The Town of Swanton shares a border with Alburgh in the middle of the Lake. A common land link between the two municipalities is the Missisquoi Bay Bridge. The Swanton Town and Village Plan was adopted in 2010.

### **Compatibility with the Northwest Regional Plan**

The Alburgh Town Plan is compatible with the Northwest Regional Plan, adopted in 2006. The Alburgh Town Plan seeks to conserve sensitive natural areas, maintain the town's agricultural economy and broaden its economic base. Due consideration is given to protection of environmental resources, such as wildlife, water quality and conservation of agricultural soils. Consistent with the Regional Plan, the Town Plan supports improvements to the local transportation system that include safety and reduction in energy use. The Town Plan also identifies construction of a new Missisquoi Bay Bridge as a critical objective, an interest shared by the region. The Town Plan also provides for improvement in the quality and availability of affordable housing.

The Town Plan describes a pattern of future land use that is consistent with the general goals of the Regional Plan, including the designation of compact high density districts and the conservation of environmentally sensitive lands. The Town Plan identifies Alburgh Village as a high-density district, which is in keeping with the Regional Plan's designation of the Village as a growth center. Implementation of the Alburgh Town Plan would provide a wide range of regional benefits in keeping with the goals of the Northwest Regional Plan.

## Chapter 11. Implementation

Plan implementation will involve an ongoing discussion with Planning Commission about how to achieve the objectives listed in Chapter 2, Goals, Policies and Objectives. and what the next steps will be.

While the overall emphasis will be on increasing public involvement and understanding of the plan, there are a number of areas on which there is strong consensus in Alburgh. Strong agreement exists on the need for improvements in the transportation system; local economic development that provides suitable high quality employment; support for community infrastructure such as a community center, youth activities and outdoor recreation facilities; support for emergency services and some very basic land use regulations that ensure public safety such as adoption of set-back regulations from roads and property lines. Progress in these areas can and should be accomplished in as short a time as feasible.

### Implementation Activities

- Planning Commission Worksession on tools for implementing the Town Plan (general)
- Public forum on economic development and marketing/communications
- Grants and financial assistance that can assist the town in achieving its goals should be actively pursued. Technical and financial assistance should be sought in the following areas:
  - Economic development
  - Downtown revitalization
  - Marketing and Communications
  - Municipal facilities
  - Historic preservation
  - Agricultural land conservation
  - Natural resource conservation
  - Recreational facilities
- The Town intends to encourage state and federal agencies to work closely with the Town to ensure timely and appropriate project design and implementation. Specific agencies that the Town will seek to improve communication and coordination with are the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. A similar strategy of communication and coordination will be pursued with other agencies as opportunity arises.
- Prior to the expiration of this Town Plan the Planning Commission shall conduct a survey of Town residents to identify important issues that should be addressed in the updated Town Plan.

**Appendix A –Implementation Report of 2006 Town Plan Objectives  
April 2011**

The 2006 Alburgh Town Plan included 27 Plan implementation objectives. Of these, 17, or over 60% of the objectives were met or were partially completed during the five year planning period. The table below outlines the 2006 Plan objectives, their current status and a recommended action.

Thirteen of the 2006 plan objectives could be carried forward and incorporated into the 2011 Plan update either because they have not been fully completed or no action has been taken to date, but they still seem to be a Town priority.

Plan Objective		Discussion	Status	Action
<b>Population, Housing and Economic Development</b>				
P1	Advertise and promote the Industrial Park/Small Business Park	Blanket permit is in place. Town bought back nine acres of already permitted land.	Outstanding. Still a priority.	Carry forward in 2011 update
P2	Secure a local grocery store for Alburg Village	Currently there are only “Quick Stops” in town. Groceries are limited and prices are not affordable compared to larger stores. People go to Swanton or elsewhere to shop at large stores. No real potential for an in-town grocery.	Outstanding. No longer a priority	None
P3	Develop a local community center for Alburgh accessible to all age groups.	A committee attempted to create a community center where high school students and senior citizens could be together but it didn’t work out. There is a senior center but the building is old and underutilized. Nothing for youth right now. Churches provide community but there’s only one priest for all the islands.	Senior center = Partial Youth center = Outstanding	Carry forward in 2011 update
P4	Seek to attract a motel and additional Bed & Breakfasts to Alburgh.	There are two B & Bs in Alburgh. Ransom Bay has a new restaurant. Need more food options to appeal to local population.	Completed	None
P5	Seek to attract additional convenience stores that are in keeping with the town’s character, to locate in Alburgh.	No more convenience stores needed.	Completed	None
P6	Renovate the current Industrial Park to serve a greater diversity of business types, including commercial, light	See above Industrial Park discussion (P1).	Outstanding. Still a priority.	Carry forward in 2011 update

**Appendix A –Implementation Report of 2006 Town Plan Objectives  
April 2011**

<b>Plan Objective</b>		<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Action</b>
	industrial and an incubator space for local businesses that provides both physical space and access to the business and marketing opportunities presented by the Internet and other emerging technologies.			
<b>Natural and Cultural Environment</b>				
N1	Work with the State to develop docks at the three Fish and Wildlife Access Areas.	One citizen donates his personal dock so there is a dock at least one of the Fish and Wildlife areas.	Outstanding. Still a priority.	Carry forward in 2011 update
N2	Acquire land in Alburgh for town recreational use.	Town is in the process of permitting a 10-acre lakefront parcel in East Alburgh that connects to the Alburgh Rail Trail. Next step is to develop priorities for the use of the parcel and needed improvements.	Completed	Carry forward in 2011 update with next steps
N3	Develop local septic regulations.	State manages septic regulations now. Town no longer has jurisdiction.	Completed	None
N4	Encourage environmentally sound alternative wastewater disposal systems that enable development on lots smaller than 10 acres, thereby encouraging the conservation of agricultural lands and supporting the creation of affordable house lots.	State manages wastewater regulations now. Town no longer has jurisdiction.	Completed	None
N5	Improve and develop additional bicycle-friendly facilities and address the need for safer bicycle routes through town.	Town was granted permission for signage but signs are not posted. Town is talking with Local Motion about increasing bike facilities. Making the town more attractive to cyclists is an opportunity for economic development and good for health. Town is working with NRPC on a Safe Routes to School program in the next year.	Partial	Carry forward in 2011 update
N6	Acquire public right of way on the town-owned parcel of land having the potential	See above discussion (N2).	Completed	None

**Appendix A –Implementation Report of 2006 Town Plan Objectives  
April 2011**

Plan Objective		Discussion	Status	Action
	to be developed as a town beach.			
N7	Work with State and federal agencies to survey and digitize the soils map of the town.	State manages this process now.	Completed	None
<b>Land Use</b>				
L1	Develop setback standards for distances from roadways, property lines and lakeshore.	The Planning Commission developed zoning regulations in 2009 and 2010 which were narrowly voted down by the public. Some time needs to pass until the Town reexamines this option.	Outstanding. Not a priority at this time.	Carry forward in 2011 update
L2	Develop subdivision regulations.	See above discussion (L2)	Outstanding. Not a priority at this time.	Carry forward in 2011 update
<b>Utilities, Facilities &amp; Services</b>				
U1	Build a new multigenerational center that would serve the recreational and educational needs of seniors, adults, teens and children.	See above discussion (P3)	Senior center = Partial Youth center = Outstanding	Carry forward in 2011 update
U2	Secure land for future expansion of the sewer and wastewater treatment system.	The Town is in the process of examining alternatives for this option.	Outstanding	Carry forward in 2011 update
U3	Develop a sewer ordinance for the town.	State manages sewer regulations now.	Completed	None
U4	Seek permits to install dry hydrants for fire safety. A system of dry hydrants should be developed throughout the town. Permits and funding should be sought to implement the recommendations of the 1998 <i>Fire Protection Water Supply Plan for the County of Grand Isle</i> dry hydrant study. (RC&D, 1998).	No action has been taken on this item.	Outstanding	Carry forward in 2011 update
U5	Support the Fire Department's efforts to purchase a new tanker within the next five years.	Tanker has been purchased.	Completed	None
U6	Increase personal protection by	No action has been taken on this item.	Outstanding	Carry forward

**Appendix A –Implementation Report of 2006 Town Plan Objectives  
April 2011**

	<b>Plan Objective</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Action</b>
	developing and promoting a Neighborhood Watch system.			
U7	Docks should be provided at the three Fish and Wildlife Access Areas to provide safer and easier conditions to launch a boat. The breakwater at the West Shore access should be modified to provide greater protection of the access area.	See above discussion re: Docks (N1). The West Shore access has a breakwater in place now provided by the state (added stone, raised, added ramp).	Breakwater: Complete	None
U8	Work with the State to develop docks at the three Fish and Wildlife Access Areas.	See earlier discussion re: Docks (N1)	Outstanding. Still a priority.	Carry forward in 2011 update
U9	Acquire public right of way on the town-owned parcel of land having the potential to be developed as a town beach.	Consider amending language that refers to this parcel as a “beach” in favor of “natural area.”	Completed	None
U10	Develop an emergency management database that can be used by local fire and rescue personnel to improve emergency preparedness and response.	Adopted	Completed	None
U11	Develop an Emergency Management Plan for the town, including an Emergency Rapid Response Plan and an Emergency Operations Plan.	Adopted	Completed	None
<b>Transportation</b>				
T1	Advertise the location of the designated Park and Ride at the “4-Corners” area at the intersection of Routes 2 and 78.	The Park and Ride is adequately signed.	Completed	None

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# TOWN OF ALBURGH Current Land Use

## LEGEND

### Boundary Features

- Town Boundary
- Village Boundary

### Transportation Features

- Federal Highway
- State Highway
- Road
- Alburgh Rail Trail

### Surface Water Features

- Stream or Brook
- Lake or Pond

### Land Use Features

- Built-Up (residential, commercial, industrial)
- Agricultural (row crop, hay)
- Forested (deciduous, coniferous, mixed forest)
- Wetland

Vermont Coordinate System  
Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.  
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Prepared by:  
Northwest Regional  
Planning Commission  
155 Lake Street  
St. Albans, VT 05478  
802.524.5958  
www.nrpcvt.com  
Adopted July 26, 2011

Data Sources: All map features  
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Location: z:\gis\projects\county\  
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Kelly Bay

Windmill Pt

Alburgh Village

Alburgh Center

East Alburgh  
McGregor Pt

South Alburgh

Coon Pt

Point of the Tongue

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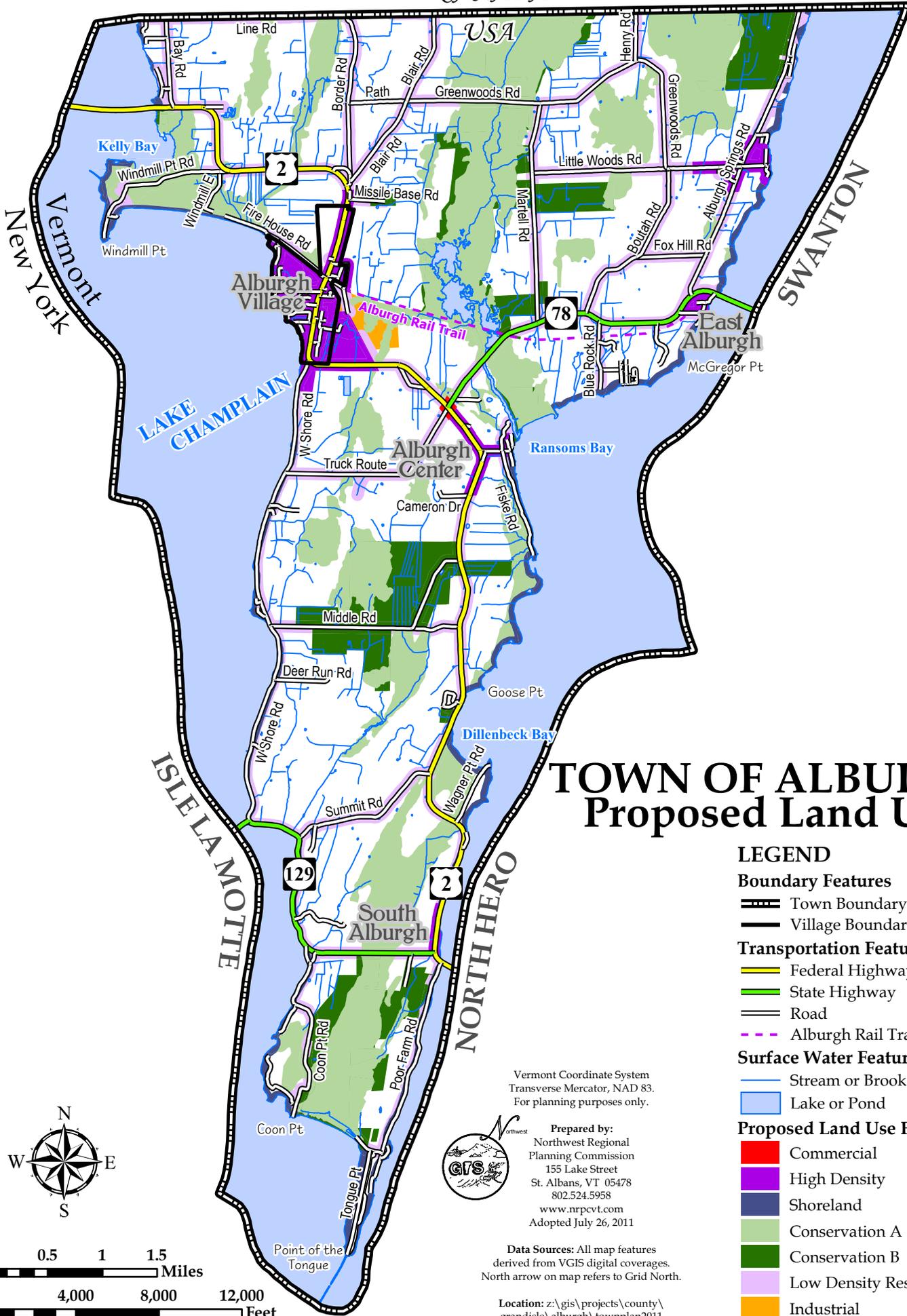
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Windmill Pt

Alburgh Village

CANADA

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# TOWN OF ALBURGH Proposed Land Use

## LEGEND

### Boundary Features

- Town Boundary
- Village Boundary

### Transportation Features

- Federal Highway
- State Highway
- Road
- Alburgh Rail Trail

### Surface Water Features

- Stream or Brook
- Lake or Pond

### Proposed Land Use Features

- Commercial
- High Density
- Shoreland
- Conservation A
- Conservation B
- Low Density Residential
- Industrial

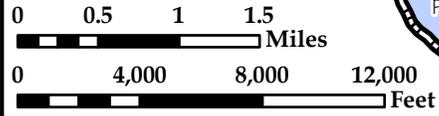
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Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.  
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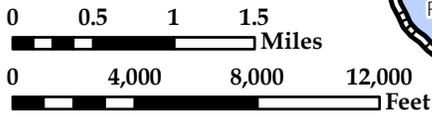
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Alburgh Village

Alburgh Center

East Alburgh  
McGregor Pt

South Alburgh

# TOWN OF ALBURGH Transportation System

## LEGEND

### Boundary Features

- Town Boundary
- Village Boundary

### Transportation Features

- U.S. Numbered Route
- State Numbered Route
- Class 2 Town Highway
- Class 3 Town Highway
- Class 4 Town Highway
- Surfaced
- Gravel
- Graded and Drained
- Impassable or Untraveled
- Unknown
- Alburgh Rail Trail

### Surface Water Features

- Stream or Brook
- Lake or Pond

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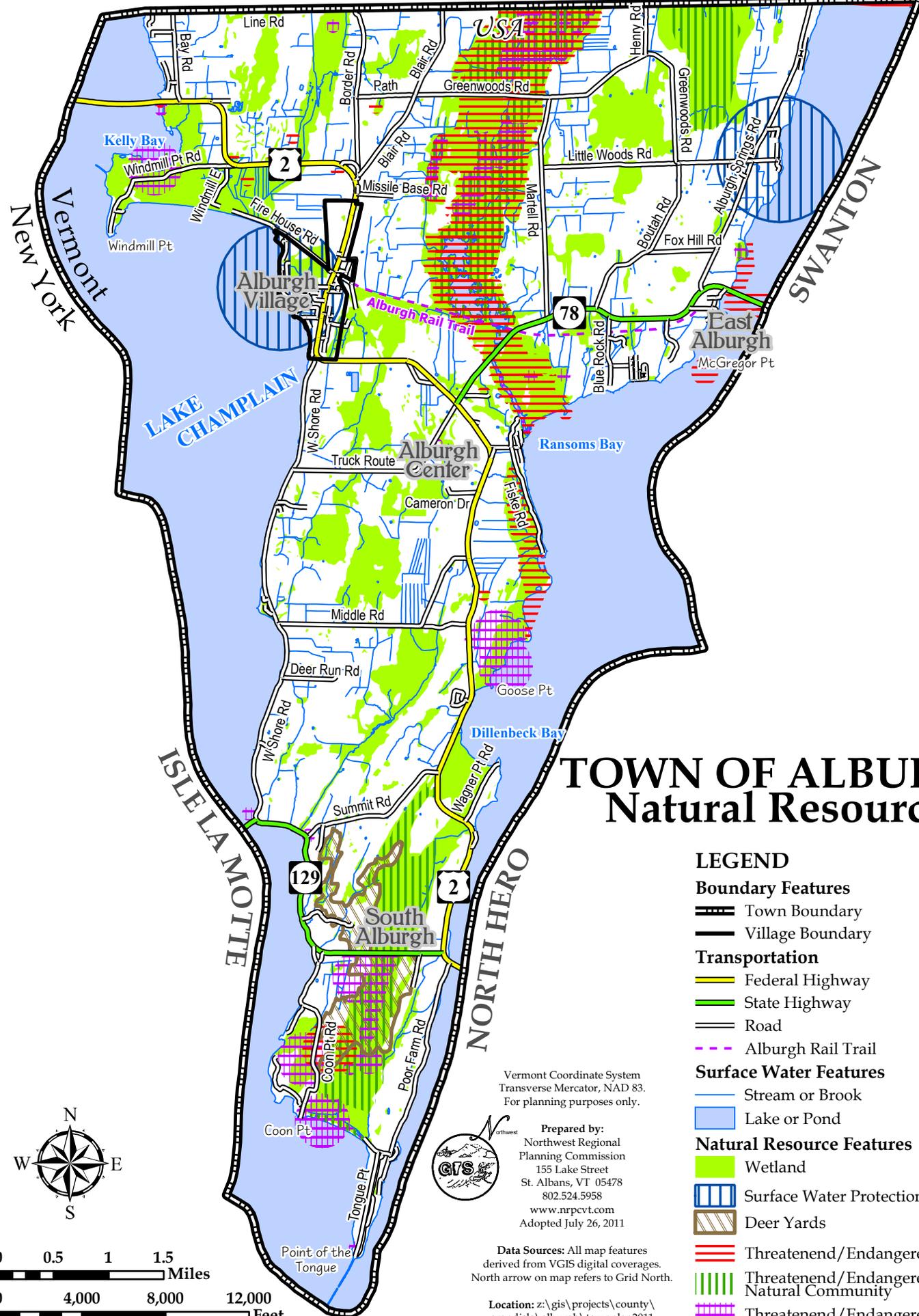


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# TOWN OF ALBURGH Natural Resources

## LEGEND

### Boundary Features

- Town Boundary
- Village Boundary

### Transportation

- Federal Highway
- State Highway
- Road
- Alburgh Rail Trail

### Surface Water Features

- Stream or Brook
- Lake or Pond

### Natural Resource Features

- Wetland
- Surface Water Protection Area
- Deer Yards
- Threatened/Endangered - Animal
- Threatened/Endangered - Natural Community
- Threatened/Endangered - Plant

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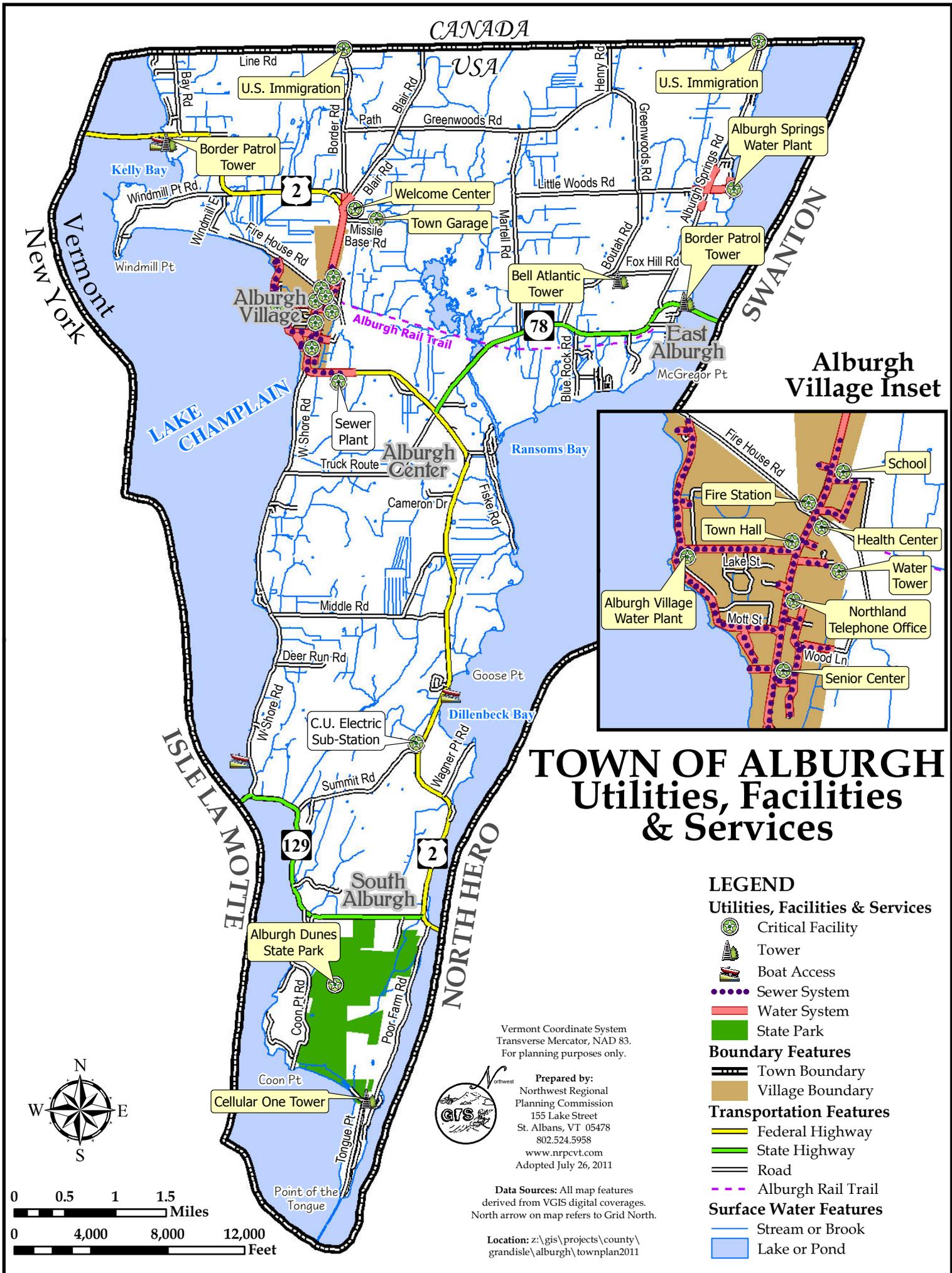
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### Alburgh Village Inset

# TOWN OF ALBURGH Utilities, Facilities & Services

## LEGEND

### Utilities, Facilities & Services

- Critical Facility
- Tower
- Boat Access
- Sewer System
- Water System
- State Park

### Boundary Features

- Town Boundary
- Village Boundary

### Transportation Features

- Federal Highway
- State Highway
- Road
- Alburgh Rail Trail

### Surface Water Features

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- Lake or Pond

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