

# TOWN OF ST. ALBANS Franklin County, Vermont

## Town Plan

Adopted June 27, 2011



Prepared By:  
Town of St. Albans  
579 Lake Road  
St. Albans, VT 05478

The Town of St. Albans Selectboard has reviewed and approved the Town Plan for the Town of St. Albans by majority vote. The Town of St. Albans Selectboard recognizes responsibilities and duties to enforce the policies of the Town of St. Albans Town Plan in full accord to Vermont Statute and for the citizens of the Town of St. Albans.

---

Selectboard Member & Chair, William Walker

---

Selectboard Member & Vice Chair, Paul Larner

---

Selectboard Member, John Gray

---

Selectboard Member, Joseph J. Montagne

---

Selectboard Member, William Nihan

The Town of St. Albans Selectboard members were all present at their June 27, 2011 Public Hearing on the Town Plan and the following vote:

Approve

Selectboard Member & Chair, William Walker  
Selectboard Member, John Gray  
Selectboard Member, Joseph J. Montagne  
Selectboard Member, William Nihan

Not Approve

None

No Vote

Selectboard Member & Vice Chair, Paul Larner

The Town of St. Albans Town Plan is hereby adopts the Town Plan on this day 27 of this month June in this year 2011.

---

Witnessed in form and signature by:  
Administrative Assistant, Jennifer Gray

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

### 2011 Selectboard

Selectboard Member & Chair, William Walker  
Selectboard Member & Vice Chair, Paul Larner  
Selectboard Member, John Gray  
Selectboard Member, Joseph J. Montagne  
Selectboard Member, William Nihan

### 2010 Selectboard

Selectboard Member & Chair, William Nihan  
Selectboard Member & Vice Chair, Bernard Boudreau  
Selectboard Member, John Gray  
Selectboard Member, Paul Larner  
Selectboard Member, William Walker

### 2011 Planning Commission

Planning Commissioner & Chair, Cheryl Teague  
Planning Commissioner & Vice Chair, Bruce Cheeseman  
Planning Commissioner & Clerk, Steven Wechsler  
Planning Commissioner, Jack Brigham  
Planning Commissioner, Samuel Smith

### 2010 Planning Commission

Planning Commissioner & Chair, David Schofield  
Planning Commissioner & Vice Chair, Cheryl Teague  
Planning Commissioner, Bruce Cheeseman  
Planning Commissioner, Paul Larner  
Planning Commissioner, Steven Wechsler

### Town Plan Contributors

Donna Howard  
David MacCallum  
Jay Sweeny  
Former Planning Commissioner, Josh Cox  
Franklin Central Supervisory Union, Superintendent of Schools, Robert Rosane  
Northwest Regional Planning Commission

### Town Plan Team

Town Manager, Christine Murphy  
Zoning Administrator, Rebecca Bushey  
Public Works Director, Steve Beauregard  
Administrative Assistant, Jennifer Gray  
Town Clerk, Anna Bourdon  
Planning Administrator, Matthew Feske

## **SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Town of St. Albans Selectboard would like to acknowledge and thank the community for their participation and valuable input on the Town Plan. The Town Plan is written for and belongs to the community of the Town of St. Albans. Community participation is vital for a vibrant Town.

The Town of St. Albans Selectboard would like to acknowledge and thank the Town of St. Albans Planning Commission for their dedicated work on the Town Plan. The Town of St. Albans Planning Commission has provided an invaluable service when accepting the task of drafting a Town Plan.

The Town of St. Albans Selectboard would like to acknowledge and thank the previous Selectboard for their dedicated work on the Town Plan. The writing of the Town Plan could not have been accomplished without their work.

This page is left blank intentionally.

# Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. INTRODUCTION.....                               | 9  |
| 1.1. Vision Statement.....                         | 9  |
| 1.2. Key Concepts (Definitions) .....              | 9  |
| 1.3. Town Planning .....                           | 9  |
| 1.4. Framework Policies for the Town Plan.....     | 10 |
| 1.5. Plan Preparation .....                        | 11 |
| 1.6. How To Read A Town Plan.....                  | 11 |
| 1.9. Chapter Policies in the Town Plan.....        | 13 |
| 1.10. Policies and Suggested Actions.....          | 15 |
| 2. TOWN DESCRIPTION AND POPULATION .....           | 18 |
| 2.1. Location.....                                 | 18 |
| 2.2. Town History .....                            | 20 |
| 2.3. Population and Future Projections.....        | 23 |
| 2.4. Policies and Suggested Actions.....           | 28 |
| 3. LAND USE.....                                   | 30 |
| 3.3. Current Land Uses.....                        | 31 |
| 3.4. Land Use Regulations .....                    | 34 |
| 3.5. Proposed Land Use Changes .....               | 38 |
| 3.6. Purpose, Current and Future Planning .....    | 40 |
| 3.7. Policies and Suggested Actions.....           | 50 |
| 4. TRANSPORTATION.....                             | 54 |
| 4.2. Description.....                              | 54 |
| 4.4. Sections of the Transportation Chapter.....   | 55 |
| 4.5. Road Network.....                             | 56 |
| 4.6. Regional Roadways .....                       | 56 |
| 4.7. Roadway Classifications.....                  | 58 |
| 4.8. Local Road Management and Maintenance .....   | 59 |
| 4.9. Other Roadways .....                          | 60 |
| 4.10. Non-Motorized Travel .....                   | 61 |
| 4.11. Transit and Rail.....                        | 62 |
| 4.12. Policies and Suggested Actions.....          | 64 |
| 5. HISTORIC, SCENIC AND NATURAL RESOURCES.....     | 67 |
| 5.1. Introduction.....                             | 67 |
| 5.2. Background and Context .....                  | 67 |
| 5.3. Purpose .....                                 | 67 |
| 5.4. Historic Resources .....                      | 67 |
| 5.5. Scenic Resources.....                         | 68 |
| 5.6. Natural Resources and the Environment.....    | 68 |
| 5.7. Agricultural and Forest Land Definitions..... | 75 |
| 5.8. Policies and Suggested Actions.....           | 79 |
| 6. HOUSING .....                                   | 82 |
| 6.1. Preface.....                                  | 82 |
| 6.2. Purpose .....                                 | 82 |
| 6.3. Housing Issues .....                          | 82 |
| 6.4. Sections of the Housing Chapter.....          | 83 |
| 6.5. Housing Availability and Growth.....          | 83 |
| 6.6. Senior Housing .....                          | 84 |
| 6.7. Existing Conditions Summary .....             | 84 |

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| 6.8. Housing Problems .....  | 84         |
| 6.9. Housing Need.....   | 85         |
| 6.10. Housing Costs and Affordability .....                            | 86         |
| 6.11. Policies and Suggested Actions.....                              | 88         |
| <b>7. FACILITIES, UTILITIES, AND SERVICE.....</b>                      | <b>90</b>  |
| 7.1. Preface.....  | 90         |
| 7.3. Planning to Serve the Population .....                            | 93         |
| 7.4. Public Safety and Emergency Services .....                        | 97         |
| 7.5. Municipal Facilities and Property .....                           | 98         |
| 7.6. Telecommunication Services.....                                   | 98         |
| 7.7. Health and Human Services.....                                    | 98         |
| 7.8. Policies and Suggested Actions.....                               | 98         |
| <b>8. ENERGY.....</b>  | <b>101</b> |
| 8.1. Preface.....  | 101        |
| 8.2. Description.....  | 101        |
| 8.3. Energy Supply and Consumption.....                                | 101        |
| 8.4. Energy Conservation and Efficiency.....                           | 105        |
| 8.5. Local Energy Generation Opportunities .....                       | 105        |
| 8.6. Policies and Suggested Actions.....                               | 106        |
| <b>9. JOBS AND THE ECONOMY .....</b>                                   | <b>108</b> |
| 9.1. Description.....  | 108        |
| 9.2. Employment .....  | 108        |
| 9.3. Employment Options in St. Albans Town .....                       | 110        |
| 9.4. Retail Sales and Services.....                                    | 112        |
| 9.5. Policies and Suggested Actions.....                               | 112        |
| <b>10. EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE .....</b>                               | <b>115</b> |
| 10.1. Description.....   | 115        |
| 10.2. Education .....  | 115        |
| 10.3. Childcare and Early Education .....                              | 118        |
| 10.4. Policies and Suggested Actions.....                              | 119        |
| <b>11. PLANNING WITH ADJACENT COMMUNITIES AND THE REGION.....</b>      | <b>121</b> |
| 11.1. Description.....   | 121        |
| 11.2. Consideration of Land Use Planning in Adjacent Communities ..... | 121        |
| 11.3. Consideration of Policies, Goals and Implementation.....         | 121        |
| 11.4. Policies and Suggested Actions.....                              | 121        |
| <b>12. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN .....</b>                            | <b>124</b> |
| 12.1. Description.....   | 124        |
| 12.2. Policies and Suggested Actions.....                              | 124        |
| <b>APPENDIX A.....</b>   | <b>126</b> |

This page is left blank intentionally

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Vision Statement

As the foundation of the Town Plan, the following "vision statement" describes the community the citizens want the Town of St. Albans to be like in the future:

**"The Town of St. Albans will be a town where there is balance between residential, commercial and industrial development for robust and sustainable economic growth and a town with wholesome neighborhoods, agricultural character and natural, cultural and historical resources."**

The Town Plan includes policies that, used as a strategic plan of action, can move the Town toward a future described by the vision statement.

## 1.2. Key Concepts (Definitions)

Several important terms are incorporated in the Vision Statement. An understanding of the meaning of these terms and other terms used in the plan is crucial to understanding the vision of the community.

### Balance

The proportioning of each element of the community and environment to exist in a complementary and tolerant relationship.

### Agricultural Character

Allowing agricultural activities to continue and conserving views and open spaces.

### Neighborhood

An area primarily devoted to residential use that is oriented toward children and families with common areas or open space areas to create an environment conducive to social interaction.

### Wholesome

An atmosphere in which personal safety is assured and positive interaction between neighbors is encouraged including: separation of traffic from family facilities; absence of excessive noise excessive light and other disturbances caused by traffic, industrial activity, night life, and railroad activity; conservation of open space; and promotion of view protection

## 1.3. Town Planning

In 1968, the Vermont General Assembly enacted the Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act (24 V.S.A. Chapter 117). The Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act give all State of Vermont municipalities the authority to prepare, implement and maintain a town plan (**Appendix A**).

The Town Plan includes policies that can be used as a strategic plan of action. The Town Plan also includes policies for Land Use Regulations and further planning efforts. Projects that come under Vermont's Land Use and Development Act (Act 250) must conform to the Town of St. Albans Town Plan.

#### **1.4. Framework Policies for the Town Plan**

1. Provide a means for the Town to reach its desired future - The overriding intention of the Town Plan is to provide a means for shaping Town policies and land use decisions in a manner that enables the community to reach the future described by the citizens in the Vision Statement.
2. Manage growth in a logical, sustainable manner - The Town Plan provides for the growth of the community in a manner that allows the maintenance of economic well being, healthy, functioning environmental systems, and a sustainable high quality of life. The intent of the Town Plan is to meet and/or exceed the goals for planning established by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission and all related legislation.
3. Provide for citizen involvement - Ongoing public involvement in the planning process is encouraged by providing a formal process for reviews and updates of the Town Plan. The development of the Town of St. Albans area is continuously monitored to ensure that growth is occurring in an orderly fashion and is not adversely affecting the Town's ability to provide adequate services and facilities.
4. Conduct coordinated planning - In recognition of the regional nature of many planning and growth issues, the Town of St. Albans actively engages in communication and cooperation with Northwest Regional Planning Commission, Franklin County and adjoining jurisdictions, state and federal agencies to ensure the orderly development of the area.
5. Control urban sprawl through the designation of Growth Center Overlays, Lake Shore Overlays, Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations and other methods.
6. The Town Plan provides for development patterns that are compact and unscattered through the designation of appropriately sized Growth Center Overlays and Lake Shore Overlays.
7. Provide for the conservation of natural resource lands - In recognition of the importance of natural resource lands for the economic success and continued quality of life for residents, the region, and the state, the Town Plan provides for the conservation of such lands and their protection from inappropriate development.
8. Protect sensitive environmental areas - Recognizing the importance of critical environmental systems such as wetlands, habitats, and creeks to economic success, sustainability of human activities and continued quality of life of the people of the Town of St. Albans, the region, and the state, the Town Plan takes steps to identify such lands in the Town of St. Albans to protect and conserve them from inappropriate development.
9. Provide for the coordinated sustainable economic health of the community - The Town Plan provides measures for maintaining the health of the local economy, including balancing competing interests of residents with those of the business community, reducing regulatory hindrances to successful economic activity and promoting local economic activity.

## 1.5. Plan Preparation

The original Town Plan was prepared by the Town of St. Albans Selectboard and the Town of St. Albans Planning Commission to establish policies intended to direct future development of the Town. The Town of St. Albans first adopted a Town Plan in 1983. Land Use regulations were first adopted in 1970. With a growing population and the likelihood of mounting development pressures, the Town of St. Albans began a comprehensive planning program aimed at addressing the many complex issues pertaining to community development.

In 2010, an update to the Town Plan was required in accord with Vermont Statutes. The Planning Commission undertook the task of constructing a draft town plan and in July of 2010 forwarded a draft town plan to the Selectboard for review and approval. In July of 2010, the Selectboard accepted the forwarded draft town plan and took on the task of completing the town plan. On June 27, 2011, the Town of St. Albans Selectboard adopted the Town Plan.

The Town of St. Albans Planning Commission is charged with managing the town plan with approval by the Selectboard.

Citizen participation is important to all levels of the planning process. Opportunities for citizen involvement have been assured throughout the Town Plan update through several initiatives.

### Citizen Participation Program

#### 2010 Town Plan

1. Project Website and On-line Discussion Forum
2. Three Public Forums on Land Use and Development; Transportation and Energy; and Public Facilities, Services, and Education
3. Meeting with key stakeholders and groups, including representatives from schools, the fire department, and law enforcement agencies; and the St. Albans Watershed Committee.

#### 2005 Town Plan

1. Planning survey distributed to a random sample of 1,234 people. The survey's response rate was 42%. It is available at the Town Clerk's Office.

## 1.6. How To Read A Town Plan

Each chapter contains at least one policy statement and suggested action.

### POLICIES

A policy in the Town Plan is the broadest statement of community values. It is a generalized ideal which provides a sense of direction for action. The essence of the Town Plan is contained within its policy statements.

### SUGGESTED ACTIONS

A suggested action describes the specific steps necessary to achieve a policy and defines the level of commitment to be executed. The key questions that eventually need to be addressed for suggested actions in the Town Plan are:

- 1 Who is responsible for the implementation item?
- 2 When is it to be carried out?
- 3 How much will it cost?
- 4 How will it be funded?

A suggested action provides the basis for establishing priorities, scheduling, and assigning staff and other resources to specific actions needed to implement the Town Plan. It is important to note that suggested actions are guides for decision makers, not decisions themselves.

### **1.7. Policy Interpretation**

For a policy to be useful, it must be clear. However, not all policies are the same; they differ in terms of expected results, commitment of resources, and indication of importance or urgency. Therefore, it is important to simplify the language used in the Town Plan and understand the distinctions between the different levels of policy. The following definitions of terms provide guidance in interpreting the policy language of the Town Plan; where other action terms are used that are not specified here, they are to be equated to the closest applicable term described below.

#### Shall

Policies containing the word “shall” indicate that an action must be taken in all cases. This represents absolute commitment to the policy, and the expectation is that the policy will always be carried out.

#### Should

Policies containing the word “should” indicate that an action will be taken in most cases, but exceptions are acceptable for good reasons.

#### Encourage

Policies containing the word “encourage” indicate that these actions are highly recommended or desired and should be pursued when feasible.

#### Allow

Policies containing the word “allow” indicate that a proposed action will be supported within certain parameters and following certain guidelines.

#### Coordinate

Policies containing the word “coordinate” indicate that an action will occur with another entity and the Town will carry its share of the burden or responsibility.

#### Explore

Policies containing the word “explore” indicate that an action will be taken to investigate the subject at hand to discover whether or not some further commitment is in order.

#### Consider

Policies containing the word “consider” indicate that an action may or may not be taken, depending upon the results of analysis that remains to be completed.

#### Limit

Policies containing the word “limit” indicate that an action will be taken to keep the subject within certain limits, or will at least make undesired change more difficult.

#### Restrict

Policies containing the word “restrict” indicate that an action will be taken to keep the undesired action to a minimum.

## **1.8. Amending the Town Plan**

The Town Plan is not static, but rather is a dynamic and multi-faceted policy document that defines and addresses the changing needs of the Town of St. Albans. The Town Plan is based on an on-going assessment and understanding of existing and projected community needs. To assure that the Town Plan is kept current, short-term policies and actions may be reviewed periodically to reflect compatibility with budgetary priorities and related program status. Long-term policies and actions must also be given consideration to assure timely funding and development of critical infrastructure and public services and facilities.

### Relationship to Other Plans and Programs

Although the Town Plan serves as the primary means to help implement its vision, several other management and implementation tools are needed to ensure that the policies identified here are fully realized.

### Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations

The Town's Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations are the primary tools used to implement the policies of the Town Plan. The Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations provide more detailed direction related to development standards; permitted, conditionally permitted, and prohibited uses; and other regulations. The land uses specified in the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations are based upon and should be consistent with the land use policies set forth in Chapter 3 – Land Use. Changes to the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations may be necessary due to the adoption of provisions in this Town Plan and could require changes to the Zoning Map and development standards.

### Planned Unit Development

Planned Unit Development is a mechanism to provide flexibility in the application of development standards that would yield a more desirable and attractive project than would otherwise be possible with strict application of the underlying zoning regulations. All Planned Unit Development shall be consistent with the Town Plan.

## **1.9. Chapter Policies in the Town Plan**

The Chapters and their associated policies are listed in this Section as a quick reference guide.

### Chapter 1 - Introduction

1. Encourage relevant Boards to meet periodically to evaluate how their respective groups are working to implement the Town Plan.
2. Periodically review and update the Town Plan to reflect the changing needs of the community. Focus on reviews and updates during economic “down cycles” that anticipate and set direction for anticipated “boom cycles.”
3. Adequately budget for processing amendments to, and conducting comprehensive updates of, the Town Plan.
4. Provide the opportunity for adequate public review and comment for projects that have the potential to impact the community.

#### Chapter 2 - Town Description and Population

1. Allow for future population data into future updates to the Town Plan.

#### Chapter 3 - Land Use

1. The Town shall restrict the utilization of the principles and/or practices of eminent domain except in situations where the health and safety of the public is at risk as defined and determined by the Selectboard.
2. The Town shall restrict the Flood Hazard Overlay regulations at the minimum National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) standards for eligibility of flood insurance purposes only.
3. The Town shall continue the existing growth patterns consisting of concentrated high density mixed uses in the growth centers at 1-89 exits 19 and 20 surrounded by decreasing intensity of use in the residential, rural, conservation, and lakeshore areas.
4. The Town shall encourage the development of bike paths, recreational trails and walking paths.
5. The Town shall assess the level of service of Police Services, Fire Services and Utilities.
6. The Town shall have environmental regulations that balance a landowner’s inherent property rights to develop land with the public’s interest in protecting the environment.

#### Chapter 4 - Transportation

1. The Town shall maintain a Capital Improvement Program which shall be updated annually per the Capital Improvement Program Policy.
2. The Town shall maintain the current roadway network that the Town owns and provides service to the residents, business and industry.
3. The Town shall explore the expansion to the current roadway networks to meet the needs of economic development and population growth.
4. The Town shall maintain Sidewalk Master Plan.
5. The Town should maintain bike paths, recreational trails and walking paths
6. The Town shall establish a Forest and Parks Committee.
7. The Town shall explore mandated storm water regulations and determine the impact and implementation.

#### Chapter 5 - Historic, Scenic and Natural Resources

1. The Town shall set community standards for historical structures, culturally sensitive areas and scenic areas.
2. The Town shall set community standards for development on hillside slopes.
3. The Town shall explore water quality programs and methods for the St Albans Bay.
4. The Town should be pro-active in the water quality for Lake Champlain.

5. The Towns shall explore programs and methods to protect streams and brooks.
6. The Town shall comply with National Flood Insurance Program requirements.
7. The Town should explore conservation methods for wetlands.
8. The Town shall explore programs and methods to protect all water sources.
9. The Town shall explore programs to manage the Town Forest.
10. The Town shall explore storm water and water quality issues and regulations.

#### Chapter 6 - Housing

1. The Town should have housing stock that meets the needs of all people in Town.

#### Chapter 7 - Facilities, Utilities and Services

1. The Town shall plan for future growth and development so that facilities and services continue to meet the needs of the Town.
2. The Town shall update the Capital Improvements Program and capital budget on a regular basis.
3. The Town shall conduct a cost-benefit analysis on the current Town Hall and Public Works Department Building.
4. The Town shall establish a Forest and Parks Committee.
5. The Town should establish an Energy Committee.
6. The Town shall conduct an independent needs study for the Town for fire suppression services.

#### Chapter 8 - Energy

1. The Town should be as energy efficient as is economically feasible.

#### Chapter 9 - Jobs and the Economy

1. The Town shall promote a strong and diverse economy

#### Chapter 10 - Education and Childcare

1. The Town shall work with the school boards and supervisory unions to ensure a high quality level of education for the Town of St. Albans.
2. The Town shall encourage childcare facilities for the benefit of the Town residents.

#### Chapter 11 - Planning with Adjacent Communities and the Region

1. The Town shall be aware of the effect of growth and development on the region and the state, as well as the community in which it takes place.

#### Chapter 12 - Implementation of the Plan

1. The Town should implement actions in the Town Plan to achieve the policies to implement the vision.

### **1.10. Policies and Suggested Actions**

#### Policies

1. Encourage relevant Boards to meet periodically to evaluate how their respective groups are working to implement the Town Plan.
2. Periodically review and update the Town Plan to reflect the changing needs of the community. Focus on reviews and updates during economic “down cycles” that anticipate and set direction for anticipated “boom cycles.”
3. Adequately budget for processing amendments to, and conducting comprehensive updates of, the Town Plan.

4. Provide the opportunity for adequate public review and comment for projects that have the potential to impact the community.

Suggested Actions

1. Conduct a new Board members' orientation program to acquaint all new members with Town issues and the proper application of the Town Plan.
2. Participate in programs through the local Board of Realtors to educate real estate professionals of the policies and suggested actions in the Town Plan.
3. Conduct a review and prioritization of capital improvement projects based on long-range strategic plans for provision of municipal services, per the adopted Capital Improvement Policy.
4. Review the development application process and outline possible streamlining opportunities.

This page is left blank intentionally

## 2. Town Description and Population

### 2.1. Location

The Town of St. Albans, Vermont is located in the northwestern portion of Franklin County on the shores of Lake Champlain (**Figure 2.1**). The Town of St. Albans has a total area of 60.6 square miles, of which 37.6 square miles (62.4%) is land and 23.0 square miles (37.98%) is water. The Town of St. Albans surrounds the City of St. Albans and shares borders with the Town of Swanton, the Town of Fairfield, the Town of Fairfax, the Town of Georgia, and extends into Lake Champlain. Across Lake Champlain is the Town of North Hero and the Town of Grand Isle (**Figure 2.1a**). The Town of St. Albans is approximately 30 miles north of the City of Burlington, Vermont's largest City, and approximately 80 miles south of Montreal, Canada. The major roadways serving the Town of St. Albans are Interstate 89 and Route 7, which ties in with Route 105 and Route 207 at the north end of the Town and Route 104 at the south end of the Town.

**Figure 2.1 – Town of St. Albans Location**

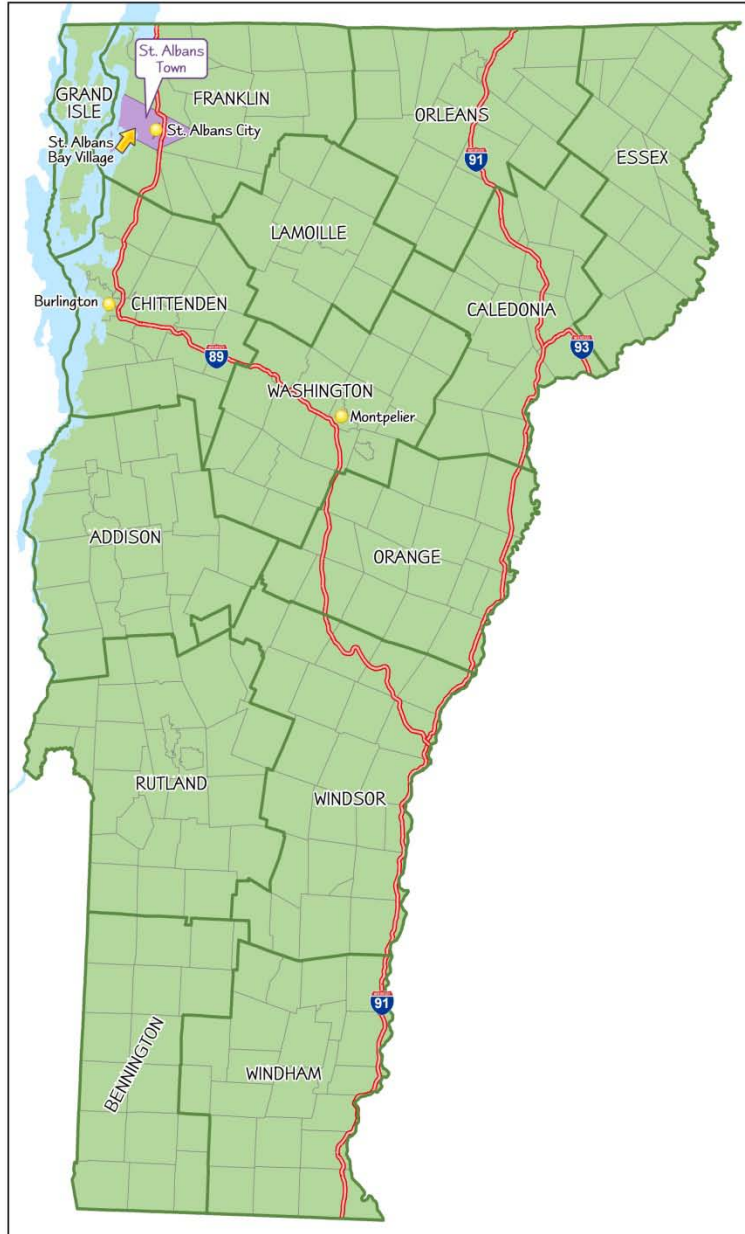
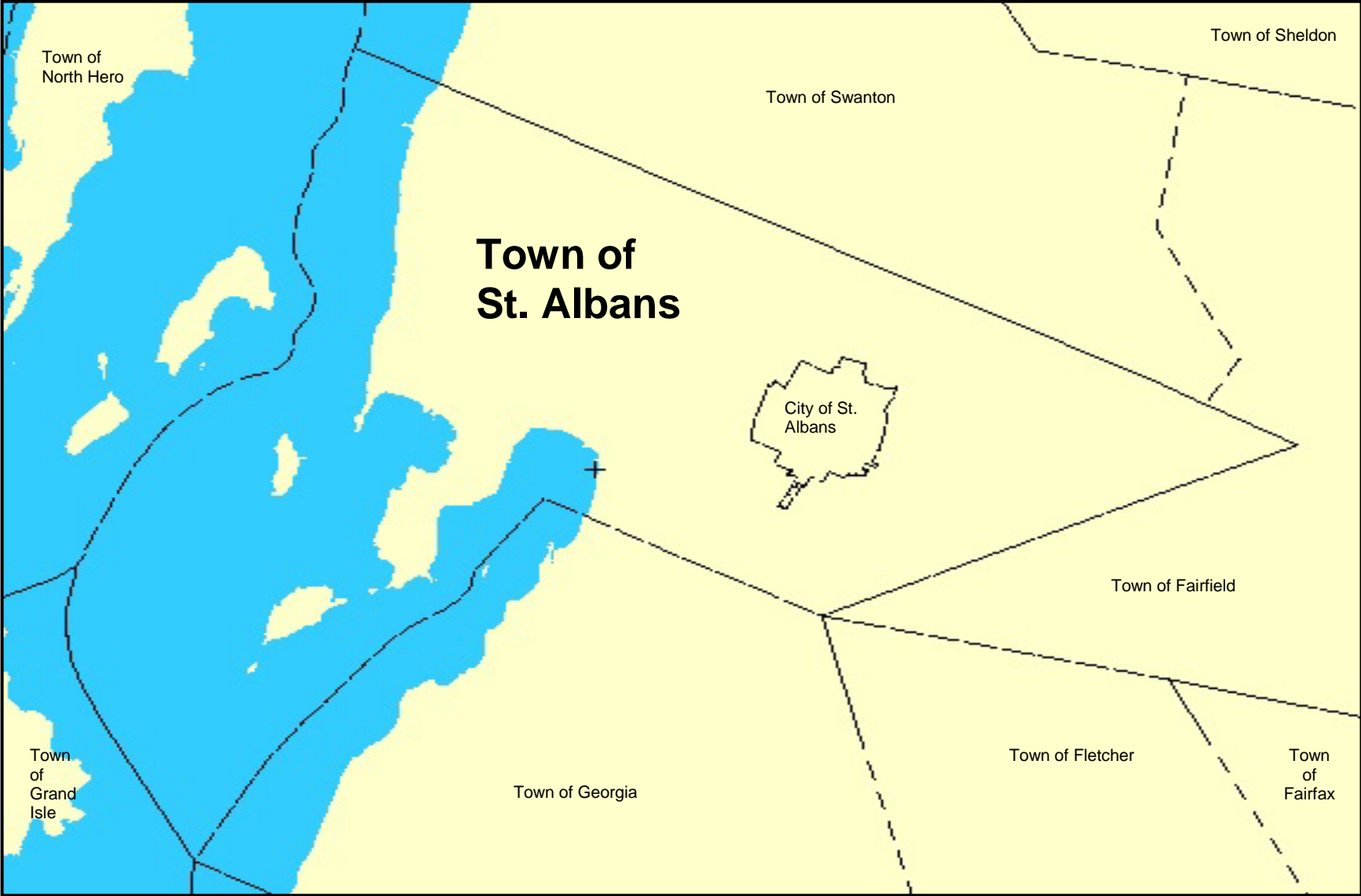


Figure 2.1a – Town of St. Albans



## 2.2. Town History

At the end of the War between Great Britain and France [known as “the French and Indian War” (1754-1760)], the ownership of French North America, including claims to more than half of Vermont, was transferred to Great Britain. The land that would become Vermont was laid out for settlement by Benning Wentworth, Royal Governor of New Hampshire, and William Tryon, Royal Governor of New York. On August 17, 1763, the Town of St. Albans was granted a charter by Wentworth. St. Albans derived its name from St. Albans, England, a historic city twenty miles north of London. The first Town Meeting was held in 1788.

By 1791, there were 256 residents in St. Albans Town. The early settlers included many Revolutionary War veterans from southern Vermont and other New England states. Ten years later, there were over 901 residents in the Town, and the population continued to increase for at least one hundred years. Initially, farming was the principal activity. It began as subsistence farming, but it quickly developed as transportation methods improved.

St. Albans Bay was originally called Bellamaquam [Good Beaver], by the French and Native Americans. From the earliest days of settlement, it was the entry point for boats and vessels coming to the Town. Over time, St. Albans Bay developed into a prosperous community. Three piers were constructed at the Bay by 1835 and several sloops were built there in 1814 and 1815. The St. Albans Bay Post Office was established in 1870 in the brick house on Lake Road opposite the Town Hall.

In 1826, the St. Albans Steamboat Company, organized by local businessman, Lawrence Brainerd, was chartered by the State of Vermont to run between St. Albans and Plattsburgh. This firm has changed ownership several times but still operates several ferries between Vermont and New York.

In 1850, the first steam locomotive and train arrived in St. Albans on the newly constructed Vermont Central Railroad. In 1860, the Vermont Central Railroad general offices were moved to St. Albans Village. Over time, St. Albans became known as the “Railroad City of Vermont.” With the advent of the railroad, the freight traffic on the Lake went into a gradual decline, dying out in the early 1900s. As the traffic on the Lake declined so did the commercial activities at St. Albans Bay. The ship owners shifted their emphasis from freight to passenger and excursion service, often times working in cooperation with the local railways that promoted tourism and brought customers from afar to the various lake ports where they could embark on luxurious side-wheel steamers for tours of the lake. At the tip of St. Albans Point [now known as Hathaway Point] a twenty-five room hotel was constructed. The hotel subsequently became the center of Kamp Kill Kare summer camp for boys and is now the site of Kamp Kill Kare State Park.

The St. Albans Street Railway running from Swanton through St. Albans City and then to Railway Dock at the Bay, was chartered in 1901. It was a flourishing enterprise for a while but went out of business in 1922 when automobiles became widely available.

According to the census of the 1800’s the population grew from 901 in 1800 to slightly less than 8000 by 1890, with a large increase (3637-7014) occurring between 1860-1870.

## **Separation of the Town and City**

*By Donna Howard*

Not long after the beginning of the Town of St. Albans in 1763, businesses began to congregate in what is now the City of St. Albans. This area became known as the Village. The Village became increasingly urban, with businesses and residents expecting and demanding more sophisticated services which many on the farms outside the Village felt were expensive and unnecessary. In 1855, there was an abortive attempt to create a fire district in the Village. Four years later in 1859, the Village of St. Albans incorporated. Discord among the Town and the Village followed. The Village assessed its own taxes, but it was paying the Town as well. More of the roads laid by the Town were located outside of the Village. The first annual report of the City points out that there was a “feeling the streets and waterworks were not handled honestly...”

The exact details of the events leading up to the decision to split may forever remain murky. The St. Albans Messenger contains surprisingly little on the decision, simply announcing the split. Interestingly, the Town’s record book, with minutes of Town meetings, expenditures, elected officers and other Town business is missing for the crucial years.

In 1896 the St. Albans Board of Trade drafted the charter for the City of St. Albans. It passed the state legislature only a month later, and a month after that the Town voted to accept the act of the legislature forming the City of St. Albans.

## **History of St. Albans Town Schools**

*By David MacCallum*

At the beginning of the twentieth century the school system of St. Albans Town consisted of a number of small, predominantly one-room schools which were scattered throughout the Town. By mid-century classroom space had consolidated into three buildings: Town Hall at St. Albans Bay, Lake Road School (presently VFW Headquarters) and Parsonville School (now a private home on Route 7).

As the population of the Town steadily increased, the community committed itself to gathering the children under one roof in a modern facility. The St. Albans Town Elementary School located in St. Albans Bay was dedicated in 1961. A picture of the new school graced the cover of the 1962 Town Report, proof of the justifiable pride and satisfaction that community members derived from this accomplishment.

By September of 1967, a burgeoning population necessitated the use of a mobile unit to house two classrooms and work had started on an addition which would more than double the size of the six-year-old school. By the following year seventh and eighth-graders were sharing the cafeteria/gymnasium for their classroom space. Students moved into the addition in September 1969, but the respite from overcrowding was short-lived. New houses were springing up throughout the Town and the purchase of the former Central Catholic High School in 1971 seemed to solve the problem for the foreseeable future. Grades six, seven and eight moved into the renamed St. Albans Town Central School that year. They were joined by the fifth grade in 1977 as enrollment numbers grew.

For years the St. Albans Town Elementary School had been commonly referred to as the “Bay School.” In 1983 it was renamed James P. Callaghan Memorial School in honor of its long-time principal. Voters approved adding kindergarten in 1985 and preschool classes began in 1987 but were held at the Central School because of space constraints at Callaghan Memorial. What had seemed inconceivable in 1971 when the Town had purchased Central Catholic High School had now become a harsh reality. The Town was once again outgrowing its school buildings. All available classroom space was being utilized at Central and over time, hallways and shower rooms were converted into teaching space at Callaghan Memorial.

In 1995 ground was broken for a major renovation and addition at the Central School site. The dedication for the new facility, St. Albans Town Educational Center, was held on August 28, 1996. For the first time in twenty-five years, the St. Albans Town students were all under one roof again. As growth stabilized and St. Albans Town Educational Center proved itself adequate to meet the needs of the student population, the decision was made in 2006 to sell the Callaghan Memorial School to Northwestern Counseling and Support Services to house one of its programs.

So now at the beginning of the twenty-first century, St. Albans Town has a single educational facility. St. Albans Town Educational Center houses all of the town’s elementary students and serves as a venue for a host of community events. High school students attend Bellow Free Academy which became a public high school for St. Albans City and Town as a result of a referendum in 2005.

### **History of St. Albans Town Fire Department**

*By Jay Sweeny*

In the early years the greater St. Albans community was served by one fire department which was stationed in St. Albans City. In 1975 it was decided by the Town to create the St. Albans Town Volunteer Fire Department. Also formed at the same time were the St. Albans Town Firefighters Association and the Women’s Auxiliary.

The first equipment purchased for the Department was a new 1975 Maxim pumper with a 1500 gallon per minute pump system. Originally built for another community it became the good fortune for the Town when the deal fell through and the truck became available. The Maxim pumper would go on to serve as the crown jewel of the fire department for many years until its eventual retirement in 2001. The first fire equipment was kept in a portion of the Town garage located on Georgia Shore Rd. In 1978 the Town purchased an acre of land from the St. Albans Bay Cemetery for \$1.00 and station was built in its current location on Lake Road.

In 1975 there was little in the way of radio and paging systems to alert firefighters in the event of an emergency call. The initial alert system consisted of a phone tree with certain members having what was known as a “red phone” in their home.

In response to a number of serious motor vehicle crashes in the Town and surrounding communities that resulted in occupants being entrapped for extended periods of time, the firefighters raised \$10,000 and in 1980 purchased a set of Hurst Rescue Tools otherwise known as the Jaws of Life. In 1984 the firefighters association purchased a portable air cascade system that is used to fill air bottles that allow firefighters to enter buildings during a fire.

In 1990 the fire department formed a water rescue team in response to a series of distress calls and a boating accident. The team has since received ice rescue equipment and training allowing them to respond to emergencies on the lake during all 12 months of the year.

In 2004 following a devastating fire at a large housing complex that was nearing completion and thankfully unoccupied, the firefighters brought the need for a ladder truck to the voters. This truck makes it faster and safer for firefighters to rescue persons from upper floors if necessary and also makes the task of roof ventilation during a fire much easier.

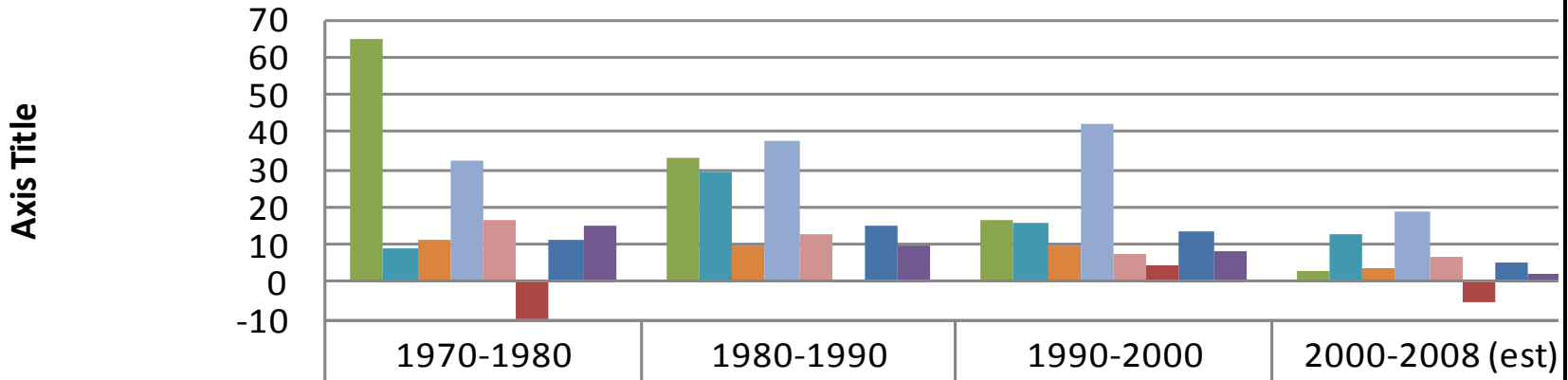
### **2.3. Population and Future Projections**

As of the writing of the Town Plan, the 2010 U.S. Census has released limited data. The 2010 U.S. Census data shows an overall growth in population for the State of Vermont, but individual municipal data has not been officially released as of the writing of this Town Plan. As new U.S. Census data is released it will be incorporated into the updates to the Town Plan.

The 2000 U.S. Census shows the Town of St. Albans had a population of 5,324 people, which is projected to increase to 6,195.

Since the 1960's, the Town of St. Albans has experienced high rates of growth when compared to adjacent communities (**Figure 2.2**). The Town of Fairfax and the Town of Georgia have consistently experienced greater percent increases in population due to their closer proximity to the larger job market in Chittenden County. Areas further from employment opportunities, including the Town of Fairfield and the Town of Swanton, have less growth than the Town of St. Albans.

**Figure 2.2 - Percent Change in Population in St. Albans Town and Surrounding Communities**



|                   |       |       |       |       |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| ■ Georgia         | 64.7  | 33.18 | 16.57 | 3.02  |
| ■ St. Albans Town | 8.72  | 29.56 | 15.59 | 12.96 |
| ■ Swanton         | 11.23 | 9.63  | 10.06 | 3.63  |
| ■ Fairfax         | 32.14 | 37.73 | 41.87 | 18.94 |
| ■ Fairfield       | 16.19 | 12.53 | 7.14  | 6.44  |
| ■ St. Albans City | -9.58 | 0.42  | 4.24  | -5.23 |
| ■ Franklin County | 11.21 | 14.92 | 13.6  | 5.58  |
| ■ Vermont         | 15.01 | 10.03 | 8.18  | 2.04  |

Population growth in Franklin County as a whole is greater than the population growth for the State of Vermont as a whole. In recent times, the greater northwestern area of Vermont (including Chittenden, Franklin, and Lamoille Counties) has experienced a large portion of growth for the State of Vermont.

The 2008 U.S. Census Estimates projects the population for the Town of St. Albans at 6,014. According to this estimated figure, the Town of St. Albans will have experienced an increase of approximately thirteen percent (13%) since 2000. The U.S. Census calculates population estimates at the County and State level by using birth counts, death counts, immigrations, emigration and group quarter counts. County population estimates are distributed to each municipality referenced on building permit data, mobile home shipments and house age. For the period between 2000 and 2008, the Town of Fairfax is the only Town in proximity to the Town of St. Albans estimated to have higher rate of population growth.

The 2000 U.S. Census has provided an Age Distribution chart for the Town of St. Albans and the State of Vermont. The Age Distribution charts assist the Town in evaluating the current and future service needs, specifically schools and senior services. A breakdown by age category in the Town of St. Albans (**Figure 2.3**) and Vermont State (**Figure 2.4**) is provided by and based on the 2000 U.S. Census. Currently, the 2000 U.S. Census is the only data source providing population by age breakdown at the Town level.

**Figure 2.3 – Town of St. Albans Population Pyramid**

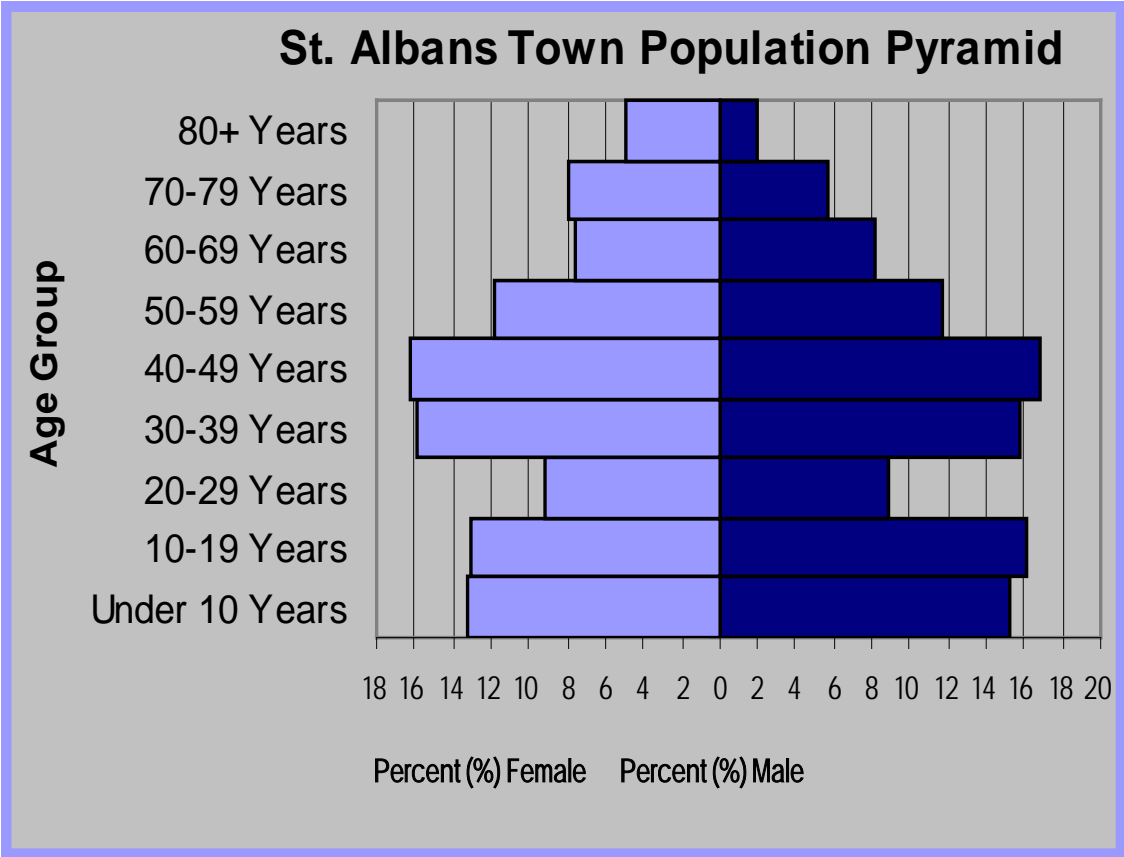
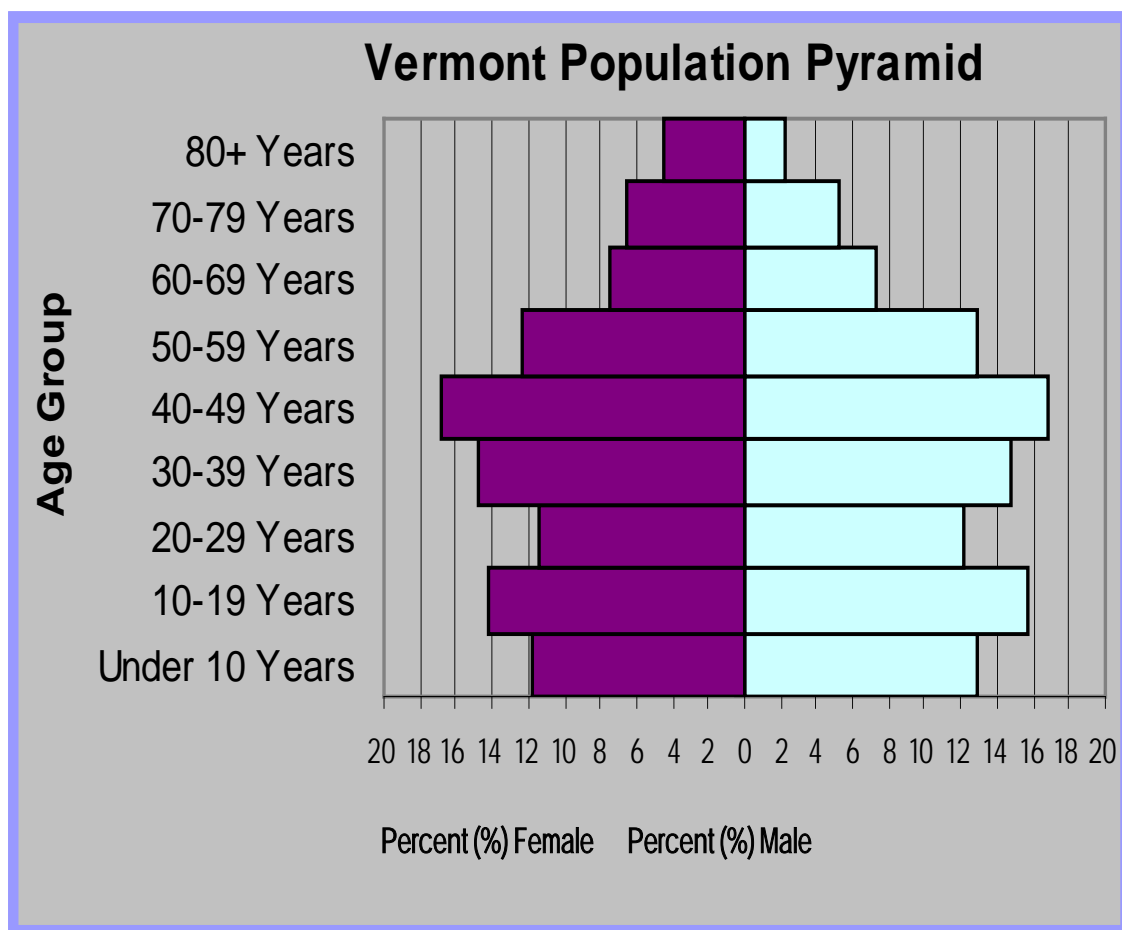


Figure 2.4 – Vermont State Population Pyramid



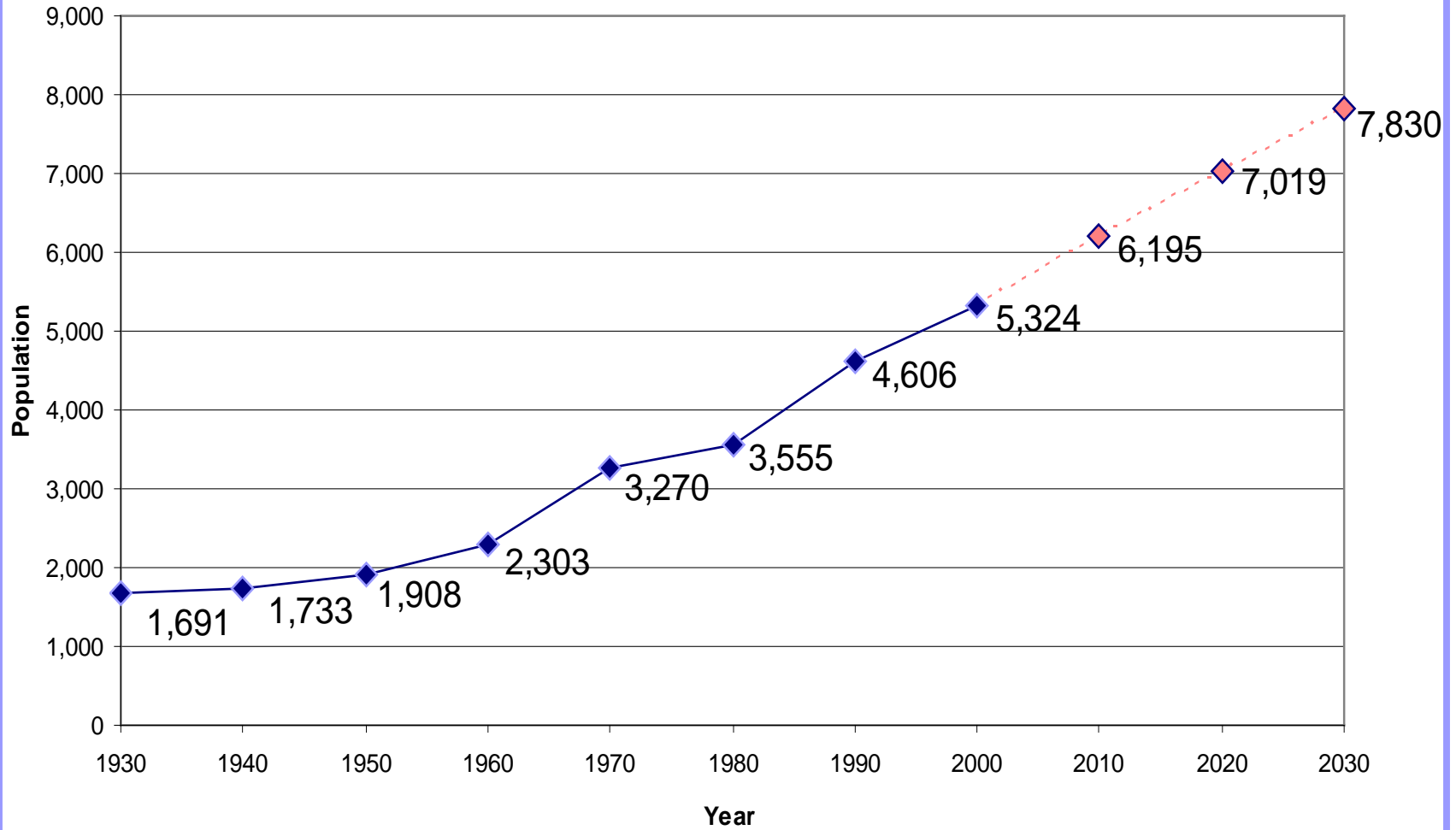
The 2000 U.S. Census reports that the median age in the Town of St. Albans is 37.9 years old. This is 2.2 years older than the median for Franklin County and approximately the same as the State of Vermont. The Town of St. Albans age breakdown is very similar to the State of Vermont as a whole, with the largest age group being from 30 to 49 years old (in 2000, the baby boomer population age group was 36-54). As the baby boomers approach retirement age, demand for senior services such as housing options and rural transit will likely increase. In addition, baby boomer echoes (the baby boomer’s children and children’s children) compounded with the trend of decreasing average household size will likely ensure a solid, but slowly decreasing average school age population, with minor fluctuations from year to year. Planning for school population is discussed further in Chapter 10 – Education and Childcare. Senior housing is discussed in Chapter 6 - Housing and transit is discussed in Chapter 4 - Transportation.

Population Projections

Population projections are a useful planning tool and have been used to make calculated assumptions for the Town Plan. Population projections through the year 2030 show a forty-seven percent (47%) increase from year 2000. Year 2030 Census date projects a population of 7,830 (**Figure 2.5**). To add perspective, the Town of St. Albans experienced an increase of sixty-three percent (63%) during the last 30 years (1970-2000).

**Figure 2.5**

**St. Albans Town Population Projections**



## **2.4. Policies and Suggested Actions**

### Policies

1. Allow for future population data into future updates to the Town Plan.

### Suggested Actions

1. Explore future U.S. Census data to include into future assumptions and conclusion with regular updates to the Town Plan.

This page is left blank intentionally

## 3. Land Use

### 3.1. Preface

Land use is the traditional foundation of a Town Plan. A detailed land use plan and strategies for implementation are essential for the Town of St. Albans to achieve its vision of the future. They give expression to the community's desires regarding where expected growth will go and in what densities, forms, and quantities.

This Land Use Chapter establishes policies for the physical structure of the Town as it continues to develop and describes how the community will implement its vision of future distribution of land uses through land use policies and regulations. The Chapter has been written to be consistent with and supported by the other Chapters of the Town Plan. It also serves as the basis for revisions and creation of new land use and development regulations to implement its policies.

### 3.2. Sections of the Land Use Chapter

The remainder of this Land Use Chapter is divided into the following sections:

#### Current Land Use

This Section contains the current land use designations and areas of development and data necessary to understand land use issues in the Town.

#### Land Use Regulations

This Section describes the different tools used to regulate land development. These tools are needed to ensure proper land development. The Town of St. Albans shall balance the need for regulations with property owner rights.

#### Proposed Land Use Changes

This Section describes the proposed changes to various areas and land uses. The proposed changes are needed to promote the appropriate development of the land in conformance with the vision of the community.

#### Purpose, Current and Future Planning Use

This Section starts with the General Development Standards that apply to all Zoning Districts. Each Zoning District and Overlay includes a purpose, current and future planning sub-section. The purpose describes the reason and accepted land uses. The current describes what is currently developed and how the land is currently being used. The future planning describes the proposed and/or direction of development and land use. This will assist in forming the framework for the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations.

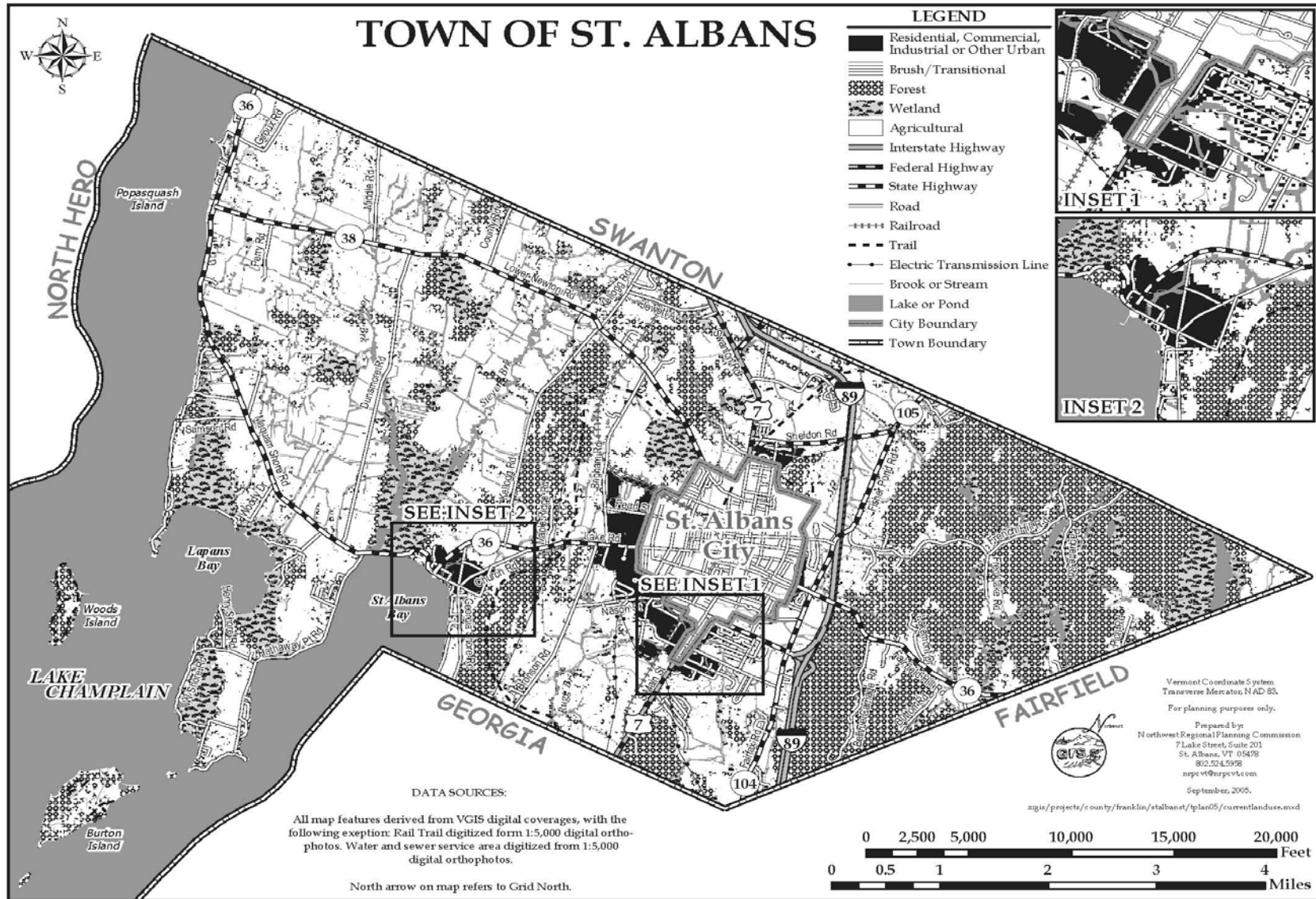
#### Policies and Suggested Actions

These are expressions of the community's Land Use Chapter desired means to meet the challenges and opportunities presented by expected growth. The policies and suggested actions are divided into sections relating to residential, commercial and industrial development. Policies and suggested actions for other types of land use issues, such as housing, community facilities, parks, and open space are also discussed in other chapters of the Town Plan.

### **3.3. Current Land Uses**

The Town of St. Albans is continuing to evolve from a primarily agricultural community to one that supports a mix of agricultural, residential, commercial and industrial development. The Town encourages commercial development, especially around exits 19 & 20 of Interstate 89, and that type of development brings opportunities to the Town for increased residential development. The current/future Land Use Map (**Map 3.1**) in the Town is a good broad-based vision of how development should continue in the future, with allowances made for in-fill and expansion.

Map 3.1 – Town of St. Albans Current/Future Land Use



### Areas of Town

Using Route 7 as an east/west dividing line, the Town of St. Albans follows a discernable development pattern.

1. Western Area of Town - This area is dominated by the lakeshore, including the historic St Albans Bay settlement area and has a Lakeshore Overlay. Lakeshore development is mainly given over to dense year round and seasonal residential use, the exception being the St Albans Bay area that is characterized by mixed use development, although the density and intensity of use here is less than in other mixed use areas. Also located on the western side are the majority of the remaining agricultural operations in town and single family residential homes.
2. Eastern Area of Town to Interstate 89 - This area consists of sparsely developed hill areas that lead down to the growth center areas, in the north and south, along Route 7 and Interstate 89. Located in this area are the radar site, low density residential development, some agricultural uses, and the designated sites for telecommunication towers.
3. Center Area of the Town - This area is predominately the boundaries of the City of St. Albans creating an island within the Town of St. Albans boundaries.
4. Northern Area of Town - This area contains one of the designated growth center overlay districts and consists of high density commercial and industrial development, mostly along Route 7 and Interstate 89 Corridors. Outside of the designated growth center overlay districts are high density residential developments. Incentives are available to encourage greater density in this area.
5. Southern Area of Town - This area contains one of the designated growth center overlay districts and consists of high density residential and commercial development. Incentives are available to encourage greater density in this area.
6. Town of St. Albans Industrial Park - This area is within the southern area of Town, but has been and continues to be developed as an industrial park.

A broad overview of the land use pattern shows a conscious effort by the Town of St. Albans to cluster development appropriately. The high intensity of residential, commercial and industrial uses is located in areas that have easy access to major thoroughfares such as Route 7 and Interstate 89 and the railway. The exception is the Lakeshore area where there is intense residential development. The hillside areas to the east are sparsely developed and the area to the west is mostly agricultural.

Lakeshore development has a long history with the Town of St. Albans. Development along the lakeshore consists of intense residential uses and some commercial uses. The value of lakeshore property is consistently at a premium and the intense land use is not expected to decrease in the near future.

New technologies and techniques are opening up previously challenging areas to development. The potential to develop these otherwise challenging areas will require the awareness of the effect on the environment. Increased development standards should be explored to protect the community, water quality, soils and wildlife habitat.

Agricultural land adds intrinsic value in natural beauty and heritage to the Town of St. Albans. By recognizing the important benefit that all town residents derive from our farmers, we can consider policies that will make it easier for our farmers to remain on the land and keep this historical resource as part of the future of our community.

The Town of St. Albans current land use patterns is appropriate for a vibrant economy and in keeping with the natural beauty of the area. Land use patterns that are highly functional and aesthetically pleasing increases the overall value and makes the Town of St. Albans a desirable place to conduct business, work and live.

The Town of St. Albans current land use provides a solid foundation for current and for future growth.

1. The Lakeshore area is an inherently beautiful area where people want to live and conduct business.
2. The large tracts of open land dedicated to working farms is keeping with the heritage of the Town and provides the local businesses with products that the community desires.
3. The mix of residential development allows for affordable housing for all people of all economic levels.
4. The continuing increase in commercial and industrial development provides employment opportunities for the people to work within their community.
5. The continuing increase in commercial and retail provides opportunities for the people to shop within their community.

### **3.4. Land Use Regulations**

In 1970 The Town of St. Albans began to regulate land use. Land use regulations are implemented through the Town of St. Albans Ordinances, Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations. It is important to have land use regulations to ensure that land is developed according to the vision of the Town. The Town of St. Albans desires regulations to provide a structure for orderly development. However, the Town of St. Albans also recognizes that regulations represent a restraint on landowners' property rights. Consideration will be taken to balance these two competing interests when reviewing and updating Ordinances, Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations.

#### Eminent Domain

In 2005, the United States Supreme Court ruled on an eminent domain case (*refer to the case of Kelo v. City of New London available at Town Hall*) that allowed for a broader definition for the use of eminent domain that can have an effect on the views by the lower courts on eminent domain cases. As such, the Town of St. Albans has determined it appropriate to set the philosophy and the direction of eminent domain for the Town in the Town Plan.

**The Town of St. Albans does not believe that eminent domain principles and/or practices should be used, except where the health and safety of the public is at risk as determined by the Selectboard. Rather than invoke eminent domain, the Town**

**of St. Albans will work with property owners if there is ever a need to purchase land for public health and safety reason, as is practical.**

The Town of St. Albans has defined health and safety of the public as immediate danger to life and/or limb and/or property.

National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is an insurance program to protect the safety, health and welfare of life and property. If a resident is out of compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), then the insurance of all landowners in Town of St. Albans could be voided. Other environmental regulations are just that, regulations to protect the environment. If a resident is out of compliance with an environmental zoning regulation they face a zoning violation and not cancellation of their insurance. If the Town of St. Albans chooses to add additional environmental regulations, a separate overlay district should be created with specific environmental regulations and it could overlap with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

Zoning Districts

Zoning Districts define how land should be developed in a given area, what kind of uses will be allowed in a defined area, and what the Town of St. Albans requires for certain uses. Zoning Districts serve to give notice to landowners about what they can expect will be allowed both on their land and the land of their neighbors.

A Zoning District has a purpose that is described in the section called “purpose definition”. In addition to the purpose definition, the regulations are defined that supports the purpose. A Zoning District defines how land should be used and developed. Regulations include but are not limited to uses, density, minimum lot size, minimum setbacks and minimum frontage.

A Zoning District is designed to ensure development that: the land is capable of supporting; to avoid sensitive areas; and to encourage intense development where the infrastructure is available.

A Zoning District allows certain uses that are compatible in: purpose; and intensity; and traffic generation; and demands upon a municipality’s services and facilities.

Currently the Town has the following Zoning Districts:

1. Conservation District
2. Lakeshore District
3. Rural District
4. Residential District
5. Commercial/Residential District
6. Commercial District
7. Light Industrial/Commercial District
8. Industrial District

Currently the Town has the following Overlays:

1. Flood Hazard Overlay
2. Telecommunications Overlay
3. Corrections Facility Overlay
4. Growth Center Overlay

Zoning Districts provides a base zoning regulation standard and the Overlays allow for flexibility and incentives for development that the Town wants. The regulations balance the protection of landowner's rights and the promotion of economic and community development where appropriate.

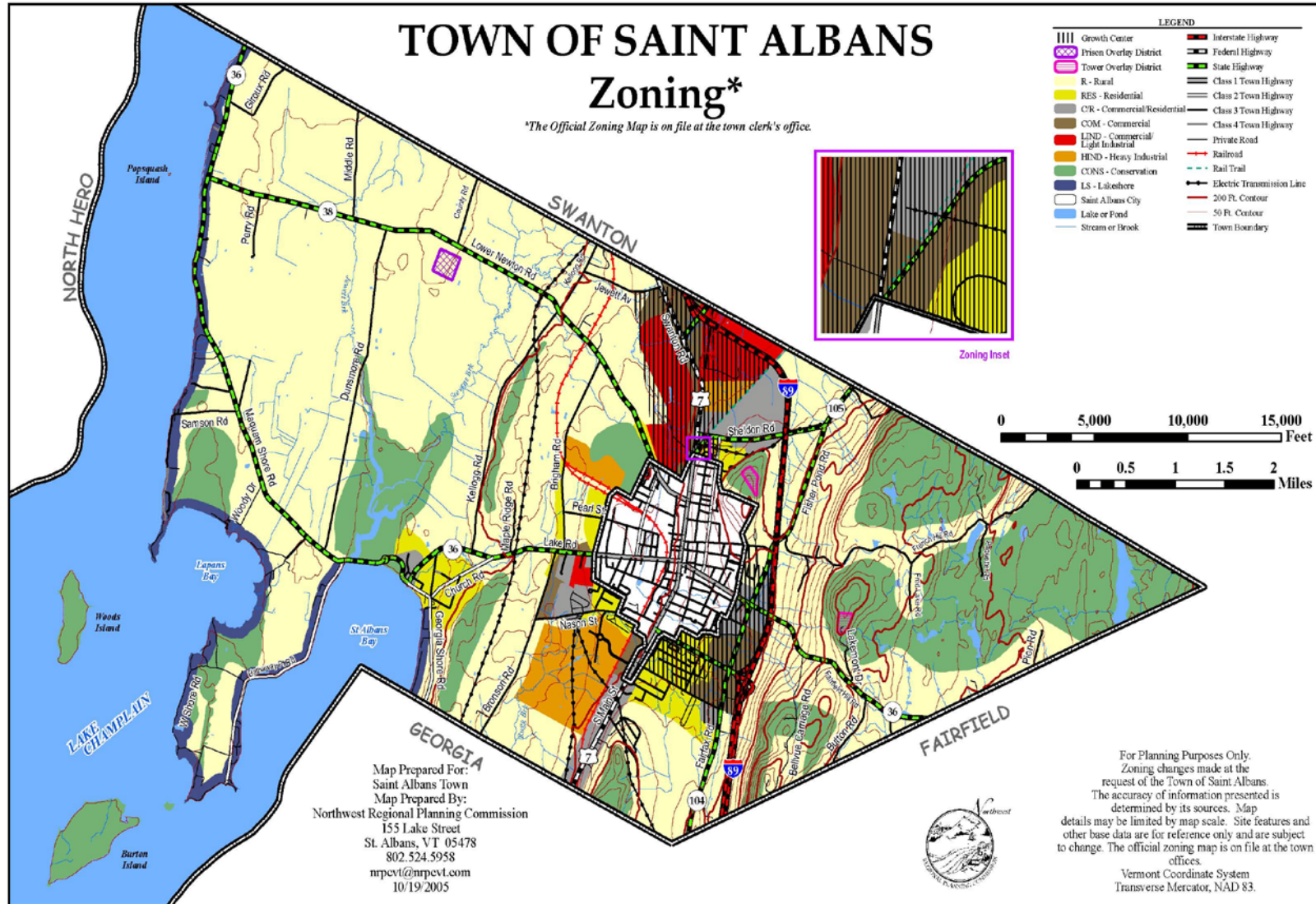
As part of the Land Use Chapter, the current Zoning Map shows the Zoning Districts and Overlays (**see Map 3.3.**)

#### Town Boundary Line Survey

Currently there are some properties within multiple Zoning Districts. While it may make sense to adjust the Zoning Map to current property lines, potential future subdivisions or lot line adjustments may conflict with any adjustment the Town makes.

A better solution is to have surveyed Town boundary lines and to have zoning districts tied to surveyed points on the boundary line. The Town currently does not have surveyed boundary lines. A survey would serve many purposes: it would settle disputes with abutting communities about where (taxable) properties lie; it would provide survey points for individual parcel surveys; and it would provide survey points for our Zoning Districts. To survey the boundaries would be an expensive proposition. However, a survey would be a benefit for landowners and Town regulators and if possible the Town should conduct the survey with abutting communities.

### 3.3 Map – Town of St. Albans Zoning Map



### 3.5. Proposed Land Use Changes

Two major changes for the Zoning Map:

1. Eliminate and replace Light Industrial/Commercial District to Commercial District along with its uses.
2. Adjustments of Zoning Districts to align with current property lines. While it is understandable that this is desirable from a property owner's perspective as their property is not in two zoning districts and potentially subject to differing regulations, property lines are subject to change and so the reason for a zoning district revision may not hold over time.

The Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations will be written to support the policies of the Town Plan. The Zoning Bylaw and Subdivision Regulation update process will include citizen participation of the proposed changes and solicit other suggestions for changes. Changes to the Zoning Map and accompanying Zoning District language will be part of the Zoning Bylaw and Subdivision Regulation update.

The Town of St. Albans has considered current land use, land use limitations and opportunities, and the policies of this plan to re-define a proposed land use map for the Town of St. Albans

1. Proposed Elimination of the Commercial/Light Industrial District to Commercial District: Currently, the only difference between the Commercial/Light Industrial District and the Commercial District is that the Commercial/Light Industrial District includes two additional conditional uses: 1) "contractor's storage facilities"; and 2) "light industry". The Commercial/Light Industrial District is located in two areas of Town: 1) The largest zone is in the Growth Center Overlay located at the North end of Town along Route 7; and 2) A small district next to the City boundary on Lake Street. In the current Commercial District, only multi-family residential uses are allowed in the Growth Center Overlay.

The elimination of the Commercial/Light Industrial District would be in keeping with the mix of commercial development and multi-family residential uses that do not have the potential for conflict with single family residential uses and less intensive commercial development as characterized by uses in the Commercial/Residential District. It also provides clear direction of the uses that will be permitted and where they shall be permitted in a Growth Center Overlay.

The elimination of the Commercial/Light Industrial Zoning District was based upon a determination that this district was unnecessary and with a minor modification to the Commercial District requirements, the original intent of the Commercial/Light Industrial District can be met by having just Commercial Districts where formerly Commercial/Light Industrial Districts existed. This will streamline and simplify our Land Use Map, Zoning Map and Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations.

2. Proposed Changes to North End Growth Center Overlay: The Town of St. Albans is proposing a North End Growth Center Overlay at the north end of the Town. The underlying Zoning Districts would remain and the North End Growth Center Overlay would be superimposed. However, the areas formerly identified as Commercial/Light Industrial District would now become Commercial District as discussed above. The

north end has been determined to be a designated growth area which includes the land northeast of Route 207, north to the Town of St. Albans boundary line with the Town of Swanton and is included in the North End Growth Center Overlay.

The north end of Town consists of commercial uses with areas of commercial/residential use and a small area of industrial use. The Commercial District within the North End Growth Center Overlay would allow multi-family residential use. However, single-family residential use would not be allowed in the majority of the North End Growth Center Overlay.

The Town of St. Albans wants to promote current and future development in this area. To provide flexibility in development regulations and incentives for development, the North End Growth Center Overlay is warranted and important.

3. Proposed Changes at the Northeast End from Commercial/Residential District to Residential District: At the northeast end of Town, between Route 105 and Interstate 89, there is an area that is currently Commercial/Residential District. It is proposed that this would change from Commercial/Residential District to Residential District.
4. Proposed Change to Commercial/Residential District South of Route 105: The proposed change is to align the Commercial/Residential District with current property lines. This would eliminate the multiple zoning regulations for a single property. This will simplify and clarify the development standards for these properties.
5. Proposed Change to Rural District Northwest of Route 7 Along Lower Newton Road: The proposed change is to change from Rural District to Residential District on Lower Newton to Kellogg Road. This will be keeping with the projected development of this area.
6. Proposed Name Change from "Heavy Industrial" to "Industrial": The proposed change is to rename "Heavy Industry" to "Industrial District". The need to separate the industrial uses is no longer needed with the elimination of the Light Industrial/Commercial District.
7. Proposed Change from Rural District to Residential District for the Area Bounded by the Railroad, Pearl Street and Brigham Road: The proposed change is to change from Rural District to Residential District for this area. This will be keeping with the development of this area.
8. Proposed Change to Residential District along Eastern Side of Brigham Road: The proposed change is to align the Zoning District with the parcel lines. This would eliminate the multiple zoning regulations for a single property. This will simplify and clarify the development standards for these properties.
9. Proposed Change to Commercial/Residential District along Western Edge Brigham Road: The proposed change is to align the Zoning District with the parcel lines. This would eliminate the multiple zoning regulations for a single property. This will simplify and clarify the development standards for these properties.

10. Proposed Changes to Light Industrial District along Lake Street: The proposed change will change this area from Light Industrial District to Commercial District. This is in conjunction with the elimination of the Light Industry/Commercial district.
11. Proposed Changes to Residential, Commercial/Residential and Commercial Districts along Lake Road In-between Jewell St and Bronson Road: The proposed change will combine all of these small districts into a singular Commercial/Residential District. This will streamline and clarify the development regulations for this area.
12. Proposed Changes to the Residential, Commercial/Residential and Commercial Districts along Nason Street and Bronson Road: The proposed change will combine all of these small districts into a singular Residential District. This will streamline and clarify the development regulations for this area.
13. Proposed Changes to the Industrial District at the Southwest end of Town: The proposed change will increase the Industrial District, which includes the St Albans Town Industrial Park, to the east and the south. This will allow for current and future development of this area.
14. Proposed Changes to South End Growth Center Overlay: The proposed change for the South End Growth Center Overlay will be extended to the south and east. The current underlying zoning districts will remain the same.  
  
The Town of St. Albans wants to promote current and future development in this area. To provide flexibility in development regulations and incentives for development, the South End Growth Center Overlay is warranted and important.
15. Proposed Change to the Rural and Residential Zoning Districts at the Southeast End of Town: The proposed change will extend the Residential District to the south and west for this area. The Commercial/Residential District along Route 7 remains the same. The Rural District will be changed to Residential District. This will be keeping with the development of the area.
16. Proposed New District, St Albans Bay Village Center: A new proposed Zoning District called St. Albans Bay Village Center located in the traditional village center of St Albans Bay is proposed. This will accommodate mixed-use development and commercial waterfront development, including marinas.

### **3.6. Purpose, Current and Future Planning**

General Development Standards apply to all Zoning Districts. The General Planning Standards apply to all land use areas and are considered common standards. To avoid repetition, the General Planning Standards have been outlined below.

Each Zoning District and Overlay is described below. There are three subsections called Purpose, Current and Future Planning. These subsections are used to assist in the formation and framework of the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations. The three subsections are as follows:

1. Purpose - the reason and accepted land uses.
2. Current – what is currently developed and how the land is currently being used
3. Future Planning - proposed and/or direction of development and land use.

General Planning Standards:

1. Lot Size – The Town of St. Albans, through its Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations, determine the minimum lot size per Zoning District. Minimum lot sizes are to ensure appropriate lot size for the allowed uses.
2. Access to Lots – The number of ingress/egress to lots should be limited. This facilitates proper traffic flow and improves public safety. Access plans shall be required for all developments and an Access Permit shall be required from the Town of St. Albans.
3. Screening - Development proposals could require landscape screening or other screening, but this decision should be made on a case-by-case basis based on the type of development, the location of the development and other criteria.
4. Bike Paths/Recreational Trails/Sidewalks – Bike paths, recreational trails and sidewalks are desired by the Town of St. Albans.
  - a. Development proposals could include bike paths, recreational trails, and sidewalks where it makes sense and is encouraged by the Town of St. Albans.
  - b. If a development proposal includes bike path, recreational trail and/or sidewalk, they should connect, if possible and practical, with other bike paths, recreation trails and sidewalks.
  - c. Any development proposal that includes bike paths, recreational trails and/or sidewalks shall take into consideration the public safety and access points.
  - d. The Town of St. Albans could consider creating incentives for this type of infrastructure.
5. Environmental Considerations – The Town of St. Albans recognizes the benefits of considering environmental impacts of development. However, the Town of St. Albans shall balance a landowner's inherent property rights and the public's interest in environmental protection. As such, the Town of St. Albans has developed minimum environmental consideration for all development proposals:
  - a. All State Water and Wastewater Permits;
  - b. Storm water Management Plan standards;
  - c. Erosion Control Plan standards, especially for access permits and construction sites;
  - d. Landscape screening; and
  - e. Stream and wetland set-backs and standards for developing near these sensitive natural areas.
6. Green Space/Open Space – Green space/open space is an important part of any development. Ownership and a maintenance plan will be required. This is to avoid the unintended consequence of the green space/open space becoming abandoned with no maintenance and/or ownership. An effective green space/open space within a development should include the following information:
  - a. The area must be defined and functional; and
  - b. The area must have an identifiable owner; and
  - c. The area must have an approved maintenance plan; and
  - d. The area must have an identifiable entity responsible for the maintenance plan (e.g. a Homeowners Association.).

7. Historic Buildings – The Town of St. Albans has a rich history which includes historic buildings. The Town of St. Albans encourages the retention and improvement of the quality and vitality of older buildings and neighborhoods through restoration of historic buildings.
8. Clustering – The Town of St. Albans encourages the clustering of uses with functional, well-maintained open space and limited access off the main thoroughfare and shared infrastructure.
9. Homeowners Association - The Town of St. Albans shall require the establishment of a Homeowners Association where there is shared infrastructure and/or green space/open space in a development. The Homeowners Association would identify ownership of the infrastructure and delineate a maintenance plan that includes provisions for costs allocation and ownerships and responsibility to maintain the infrastructure and/or green space/open space. A new subdivision approval shall include the formation of a Homeowners Association where the title deeds, for the properties in the development, shall include reference to the Homeowners Association.
10. Phasing – Traditionally, Towns would require phasing so as to minimize the impacts on schools and other infrastructure. However, with the school funding mechanisms now in place, this concern is no longer valid. The Town of St. Albans should draft regulations that allow phasing if asked by a developer, but should not be requiring it as part of development review unless the Town of St. Albans Public Works Department or the Town of St. Albans Fire Department requests phasing to meet infrastructure needs. Unnecessary phasing may add cost to the developer as economies of scale can be achieved by putting in all development infrastructures at once.
11. Strip Development – Strip development is defined as that type of development that is characterized by successive access points onto the travel way with development only along the front of the lot so that back lot development is not feasible. The Town of St. Albans does not encourage strip development. Rather the Town of St. Albans encourages development that clusters uses, leaves functional green space/open space and is accessed by one access point.
12. Home Occupations - By statute, no Bylaw may infringe upon the right of any resident to use a minor portion of a dwelling unit for an occupation that is customary in residential areas and that does not have an undue adverse effect upon the character of the residential area in which the dwelling is located. Bylaws shall reflect this statutory provision for home occupations, unless otherwise permitted by the statute (i.e. small size childcare facilities), and shall be regulated as a permitted use if they can meet established criteria wherever residential uses are permitted.

### Zoning Districts, Overlays and Proposed New Zoning District

The order of the Zoning Districts start with less-intensive land uses through more-intense land uses and concludes with the Overlays and proposed new Zoning District.

1. Conservation District
2. Lakeshore District
3. Rural District
4. Residential District
5. Mixed Commercial/Residential District
6. Commercial District
7. Light Industrial/Commercial
8. Heavy Industrial District
9. Flood Hazard Overlay
10. Telecommunications Overlay
11. Corrections Facility Overlay
12. Growth Center Overlay
13. Proposed New Zoning District at the St Albans Bay Area District

#### 1. Conservation District

Purpose - The purpose of the Conservation District is to limit development in order to protect sensitive natural areas such as wetlands and to provide habitat to wildlife sufficient to provide food, shelter and corridors for wildlife migration.

Current - The Conservation District predominantly consists of publicly-owned recreation and game lands, major wetlands, steep slopes, and flood hazard areas along streams, islands, and hills that are difficult to develop. Location, topography and soil limitations make some lands in this district unsuitable for intensive development. These areas are valuable for outdoor recreation and provide a habitat for wildlife. Agricultural, forestry, and public and private outdoor recreational uses are consistent with the character and physical capabilities of these select natural areas.

Future Planning - The current permitted and conditional uses should be reviewed to conform with the purpose of this district. Only residential uses should be a permitted use, subject to meeting the environmental requirements. All other uses should be subject to conditional use review for conformity of the stated purpose of the district. Planned Unit Developments should be considered, but for residential uses only. Residential clustering should be encouraged with functional, well-maintained green space/open space that protects sensitive natural areas and providing wildlife habitat. The appropriate General Planning Standards should apply to any development in this district. In addition to the General Planning Standards, special environmental considerations would be appropriate for the Conservation District. New innovations in development techniques have made it feasible to potentially develop land that was previously challenging to develop. In particular, those lands in the Conservation District that are on steep slopes could now be reasonably developed as long as the environmental planning considerations are met. In developing the special environmental considerations in the Conservation District, the Town of St. Albans shall balance the regulations with the property owner's right to develop.

#### 2. Lakeshore District

Purpose - The purpose of a Lakeshore District is to protect the shoreline of Lake Champlain from erosion, clearing, and hazardous development and to maintain its character of seasonal and year-round homes, open space, access to the lake, and commercial uses that support lakeshore recreational activities.

Current - The Lakeshore District is a strip of land bordering Lake Champlain that extends inland 500 feet from the shoreline (at mean lake level - 95.5 ft.). There is limited commercial development now with the majority of the development being seasonal camps and year-round homes.

Future Planning - The current permitted and conditional uses should be reviewed to conform with the purpose of this district. Residential use should be a permitted use and all other uses should be subject to conditional use review. Typical lakeshore public and commercial recreational uses should be allowed. The appropriate General Planning Standards should apply to any development in this district. In addition to the General Planning Standards, special environmental considerations are appropriate for the Lakeshore District. Shoreline erosion is a unique environmental concern for this Zoning District. New development proposals should show soil stability, prevention of shoreline erosion and no unnecessary clearing of vegetation

### 3. Rural District

Purpose - The purpose of the Rural District is to maintain the rural landscape by encouraging agriculture, forestry, recreation and single family (as opposed to multi-family) residences as the primary uses in the district.

Current - The Rural District is primarily working farms, forested land and single-family homes. This Zoning District contains the least densely-developed land in Town and is characterized by open space due mainly to the presence of the farms in this area.

Future Planning - The current permitted and conditional uses should be reviewed to conform with the purpose of this district. Given the economic challenges of farming and logging and the pressure of residential development, the open and forested space traditionally enjoyed by the Town of St. Albans community could be at risk. The appropriate General Planning Standards should apply to any development in this district. In addition to the General Planning Standards, the Town of St. Albans should consider using tools such as incentives, property tax relief and additional regulations to direct development and aid landowners in keeping their land open and functional.

#### a. Maintaining Open Land through State Tax Incentives – Current Use

The State of Vermont has a property tax reduction program that reduces taxes on agricultural and silvicultural lands that stays in its “current use”, that is, as long as the land remains in agricultural or silvicultural use. This is a State program, so the reduction in property and local school taxes is made up State-wide. It is anticipated that property enrolled in the current use program will remain into the foreseeable future to validate the property tax reduction. If a landowner takes the property out of the program, the property owner is subject to substantial penalties to discourage this from happening. Landowners who are eligible may be hesitant to participate, thus reducing the opportunity for open space preservation, because of the restrictive penalties for removal from the program. In addition, landowners may be hesitant to enroll in the program

because of the uncertain economic climate and the potential need to remove their land from the program at some point.

b. Maintaining Open Land through Local Tax Incentives - Local Contracts

The Vermont State Statutes provide that local communities if they so vote can create their own land contracts to maintain and encourage agricultural, forestry, and open space. The terms of the contract are up to the local community for the most part, so the Town could offer a local contract for a limited time to reduce the need for a long-term commitment on the part of a property owner, although a 10-year term is typically the minimal time for local contracts. The Town can also determine how much land a landowner must own to be eligible for the contract. The benefits of a local contract are that the contract terms are generally less restrictive than the State's current use program; therefore potentially attracting more users and conserving more open space. The downside of a local contract, as with all local contracts, is that the Town would have to make up the local school tax locally, rather than having those costs borne state-wide.

c. Maintaining Open Land through Regulations - Clustering Requirements

The Town can use regulations as another tool to keep land open and productive by using incentives to encourage that non-agricultural and forestry uses be clustered. Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) should be limited in this district to residential PUDs only. Landowners should be offered incentives such as density bonuses to encourage their use of PUDs when proposing development. New development should be sited if possible so as to avoid the most productive land and shall consider natural features.

d. Maintaining Open Land through Regulations - Limiting Uses

The Town should limit non-agricultural and non-forestry uses in this district to residential and recreational uses and compatible businesses. While single-family homes are desirable in this district, two-family homes, tourist homes and nursing homes are also appropriate. Conditional uses in this district should be compatible to the purpose of the district. Businesses providing agricultural, forestry, and farm animal support services are appropriate as are essential public service uses.

4. Residential District

Purpose - The purpose of the Residential District is to provide areas for residential development that maintains the characteristics of existing neighborhoods and sets aside areas for new residential-only development.

Current - The Residential District encompasses already established residential neighborhoods in addition to some undeveloped areas proposed for future residential development which could be readily and economically served by public services and facilities.

Future Planning - The current permitted and conditional uses should be reviewed to conform with the purpose of this district. The primary use shall be residential and should remain so. Any PUD's should be residential and have an associated HOA. The appropriate General Planning Standards should apply to any development in this district.

5. Mixed Commercial/Residential District

Purpose - The purpose of the Mixed Commercial/Residential District is to provide for residential development and certain commercial uses that enhance residential living by the provision of shopping facilities, personal services and professional services.

Current – This Zoning District is a mix of residential uses and commercial uses. This Zoning District tends to abut commercial and residential districts providing some buffering between these two Zoning Districts. Conditional use review is required for multi-family residential uses and commercial uses.

Future Planning - The current permitted and conditional uses should be reviewed to conform with the purpose of this district. The renaming of this Zoning District to Residential/Commercial District shall more accurately reflect the primary use in this area. The primary use shall be residential uses and some commercial uses. Mixed-use PUD's shall be encouraged. The appropriate General Planning Standards should apply to any development in this district.

6. Commercial District

Purpose - The purpose of the Commercial District is to provide an area for primarily commercial development with conditional use review of multi-family residential uses (in growth centers only) that clusters development. These Zoning Districts are in areas that have access to public services and facilities, including major thoroughfares. The land developments in this Zoning District serve the needs of the Town of St. Albans as a whole by providing services, a tax base and employment opportunities.

Current - This Zoning District is primarily commercial uses with some multi-family residential uses. Commercial Districts are currently sited along Route 7, Interstate 89, Route 104 and Lake Road. This Zoning District is well suited for business activity due to its proximity to existing infrastructure.

Future Planning - The current permitted and conditional uses should be reviewed to conform with the purpose of this district. The Commercial District shall replace the Light Industrial/Commercial Districts and include the two (2) uses of the Light Industrial/Commercial District not listed in the Commercial District. The Conditional Use review for all uses shall continue. Mixed-use PUD's shall be encouraged, especially with multi-family residential, to contribute to the vibrancy to this Zoning District. The appropriate General Planning Standards should apply to any development in this district. In addition to the General Planning Standards, some of the Commercial Districts should be included in either the North End Growth Center Overlay or the South End Growth Center Overlay. The Overlay should allow flexibility and incentives for intense development.

7. Light Industrial/Commercial District

This Zoning District shall be eliminated and replaced with the Commercial District. The uses will be included in the Commercial District. See above for purpose, current and future planning.

8. Heavy Industrial District

Purpose - The purpose of the Heavy Industrial District is to provide an area for intensive industrial uses including manufacturing, warehousing and transportation terminals that increase the Town's tax base and provides employment opportunities.

Current – This Zoning District includes the Town of St Albans Industrial Park, the Energizer plant and an undeveloped area along Brigham Road that has railroad access. This Zoning District has site characteristics desired by industries, including rail and major highway facilities and the potential for connection with City of St. Albans water and sewer service. No residential uses are allowed and all other uses are subject to Conditional Use review. There are no permitted uses given the intense industrial land use.

Future Planning - The current permitted and conditional uses should be reviewed to conform with the purpose of this district. With the elimination of the Light Industrial/Commercial District, this Zoning District shall be renamed to Industrial District. This Zoning District shall expand into the Town of St. Albans Industrial Park and along Bronson Road. The Conditional Use review for all uses shall continue. No residential uses or low-intensity commercial uses shall be allowed. These land uses have the potential to interfere and/or cause safety concerns for large manufacturing businesses and vehicles. The appropriate General Planning Standards should apply to any development in this district. The Overlay should allow flexibility and incentives for intense development.

9. Flood Hazard Overlay

Purpose - The purpose of the Flood Hazard Overlay is to assure compliance with minimum National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) standards, which limits increases in flood damage caused by development in flood hazard areas, minimizes future public and private losses due to floods and promotes the public health, safety and general welfare. Compliance with minimum National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) standards allow landowners designated on a FEMA floodplain map to buy flood insurance at a reasonable rate.

Current - All flood areas (i.e.: the 100 year flood plains) as shown on NFIP maps.

Future Planning – The Flood Hazard Overlay District shall be renamed to Flood Hazard Overlay to more accurately reflect the purpose and allow underlying Zoning Districts to exist. The Zoning Administrator shall review and take action on all uses. The Town shall ensure that the Flood Hazard Overlay Regulations meet the minimum National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requirements as stated in the Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is an insurance program and all Flood Hazard Regulations shall be restricted to the minimum requirements. Recently, the State of Vermont has made efforts to have communities regulate above the minimum National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requirements to achieve additional environmental goals. The Town of St Albans shall require minimum federal compliance in the Flood Hazard Overlay to ensure qualification of property for insurance coverage. Any additional environmental regulations shall be within the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations as to not inhibit the ability of the property access to flood insurance.

#### 10. Telecommunications Overlay

Purpose - The purpose of the Telecommunications Overlay is to cluster commercial communication tower sites to centralize the growth of commercial communication towers in Town.

Current – The Telecommunications Overlay District encompasses two hilltops in the eastern hill section of Town located on Aldis Hill and Fairfield Hill and each is approximately fourteen (14) acres. The Telecommunications Overlay rules and regulations only apply to development of telecommunication towers and associated uses. All other development is governed by the rules and regulations of the underlying Zoning District. Permitted uses are limited in this Overlay to installation of new antennas onto existing towers and replacement of antennas. All other uses are subject to conditional use review.

Future Planning – The Telecommunications Overlay District shall be renamed to Telecommunications Overlay to more accurately reflect the purpose and allow underlying Zoning Districts to exist. The requirements for permitted and Conditional Use review shall continue. The requirement to collocate onto existing towers whenever possible shall continue. The appropriate General Planning Standards should apply to any development in this district. Any federal telecommunications regulations concerning commercial communication antennas shall be part of the Town of St. Albans Bylaws.

#### 11. Corrections Facility Overlay

Purpose - The purpose of the Corrections Facility Overlay is to allow for the housing and rehabilitation of individuals who are being detained by local, state or federal authorities, and to help plan for the upkeep and possible expansion of the Northwest Correctional facility.

Current – The Corrections Facility Overlay District includes the existing correctional facility (Northwest Correctional) and surrounding lands for safety reasons. This Overlay is located on the Rural District. Where the provisions of the Rural District differ from the Overlay, the more restrictive regulations apply.

Future Planning - The Corrections Facility Overlay District shall be renamed to Corrections Facility Overlay to more accurately reflect the purpose and allow underlying Zoning Districts to exist. The requirements for permitted and Conditional Use review shall continue. Where the provisions of the underlying Zoning District and the Overlay differ, the more restrictive regulations shall be applied. Any federal regulations concerning correction facilities shall be part of the Town of St. Albans Bylaws.

#### 12. Growth Center Overlay

Purpose - The purpose of the Growth Center Overlay is to provide incentives to encourage dense, clustered and concentrated residential and commercial development in designated areas where public utilities and access to major thoroughfares is available.

Current - The Growth Center Overlay District is an area for mixed use development north and south of the St. Albans City boundary with good access to the Interstate 89 at exits of 19 and 20. The north end growth center has seen intensive retail

development and is easily accessible from exit 20 off I-89 and Route 7. Underlying districts currently include Commercial/Residential, Light Industrial/Commercial, Commercial, and Heavy Industrial. The only residential use allowed in the north end growth center is multi-family residences. The growth center to the south and east has seen dense residential development and commercial development. Current underlying districts are the Residential, Commercial/Residential, and Commercial Districts. This district is easily accessed by exit 19 off I-89 and Fairfax Road (Rte. 104).

Future Planning – The Growth Center Overlay District shall be renamed to North End Growth Center Overlay and South End Growth Center Overlay to more accurately reflect the purpose, reflect the different uses in each area and allow underlying Zoning Districts to exist. Growth Center Overlay regulations shall be constructed for these Overlays rather than reference the underlying Zoning Districts. Given the different types of underlying districts in the north and south end growth centers, the Town shall construct regulations for a North End Growth Center Overlay and regulations for a South End Growth Center Overlay. The appropriate General Planning Standards should apply to any development in this district. In addition to the General Planning Standards, the North End Growth Center Overlay or the South End Growth Center Overlay shall allow flexibility and incentives for intense development.

- a. North End Growth Center Overlay - The North End Growth Center Overlay is the area where the Town wants to attract a variety of commercial development including large national chains and multi-family residential development. This could be an expansion of the national chain stores and restaurants that currently exist. This Overlay should be expanded to attract the type of developments to increase the tax base and provide employment. Underlying Zoning Districts in this area will change to mostly Commercial Districts.
- b. South End Growth Center Overlay - The South End Growth Center Overlay is primarily intensely residential uses. However, this area has potential for more intensive commercial development to provide services to residents.

In the North End Growth Center Overlay and South End Growth Center Overlay incentives shall be explored to encourage development such as density bonuses, set-backs and lot size. Additional techniques and strategies should be explored to attract new businesses and residential development in the growth centers. In the North End Growth Center Overlay, mixed-use PUD's shall be encouraged, intense commercial uses mixed with higher density residential and prevent "dead zones" when businesses close. In the South End Growth Center Overlay, mixed-use PUD's shall be encouraged, intense residential and associated commercial uses and intense industrial uses within the Town of St. Albans Industrial Park.

### 13. Proposed New Zoning District at the St Albans Bay Area District

Purpose - The purpose of the St Albans Bay Area District is to allow for new residential and commercial development that maintains the historic village character of this area.

Current - Currently the zoning in this area is Commercial/Residential Districts and Residential Districts.

Future Planning - The St. Albans Bay Area District shall be a new Zoning District or an Overlay that would allow the Town of St. Albans to develop distinct regulations to support the role of St. Albans Bay as a location for social and economic activities. Residential/Commercial District designation may also be an appropriate designation for this area rather than a distinct new district. The Town should consider State of Vermont designation of a Village Center for this area so that additional incentives are available to landowners in the district. The bounds of this area and the scope of uses need to be determined and formulated as an amendment to the Town Plan and Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations.

### **3.7. Policies and Suggested Actions**

#### Policies

1. The Town shall restrict the utilization of the principles and/or practices of eminent domain except in situations where the health and safety of the public is at risk as defined and determined by the Selectboard.
2. The Town shall restrict the Flood Hazard Overlay regulations at the minimum National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) standards for eligibility of flood insurance purposes only.
3. The Town shall continue the existing growth patterns consisting of concentrated high density mixed uses in the growth centers at 1-89 exits 19 and 20 surrounded by decreasing intensity of use in the residential, rural, conservation, and lakeshore areas.
4. The Town shall encourage the development of bike paths, recreational trails and walking paths.
5. The Town shall assess the level of service of Police Services, Fire Services and Utilities.
6. The Town shall have environmental regulations that balance a landowner's inherent property rights to develop land with the public's interest in protecting the environment.

#### Suggested Actions

1. Determine if a unanimous vote or majority vote of the Selectboard for authorization of eminent domain.
2. Define public health and safety risk for eminent domain.
3. Annual review of eminent domain policy to address any new court cases or situations on eminent domain.
4. Add language to the Personnel Policy that prohibits employees from using the principals and/or practice of eminent domain without authorization from the Selectboard.
5. Add language to the Rules of Procedure for the Selectboard, Planning Commission and Development Review Board that prohibits elected officials and/or appointees from using the principals and/or practice of eminent domain without authorization from the Selectboard.
6. Restrict Flood Hazard Overlay regulations to meet and not exceed the minimum National Flood Insurance Program requirements so that property owners may obtain flood insurance.
7. Explore environmental regulations to include in the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations to provide greater environmental protections while keeping property owner rights in the forefront.
8. Review and update to the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations on a regular basis
9. Explore, plan and budget for a Town boundary line survey.

10. Explore other potential tools like a Village Center Designation for further incentives for development in specified areas.
11. Eliminate the Light Industrial/Commercial District in the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations.
12. Revise the Commercial District to include the uses in the Light Industrial/Commercial District in the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations.
13. Replace the Light Industrial. Commercial Districts with the Commercial District in the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Map.
14. Rename the Overlay Districts to Overlay to more accurately represent the purpose in the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Map.
15. Revise the Growth Center Overlay District to the North End Growth Center Overlay and South End Growth Center Overlay in the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Map.
16. Develop and write the proposed new Zoning District for the St. Albans Bay Area and update the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Map.
17. Review and update Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations that support industrial growth in the industrial areas, commercial growth in the designated growth centers, residential growth and supporting commercial business in the residential areas, and agriculture and forestry uses in rural and conservation areas.
18. Review and updates to the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations should include Zoning District regulations that include, but are not limited to, lot sizes, density requirements and setbacks to assure compliance with district goals on a regular basis.
19. The Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations should have environmental regulations that balances the landowner's right to develop land with the public's interest in protecting the environment.
20. Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations should include the above "General Planning Standards" and "Future Planning" considerations specific for each Zoning District and Overlay.
21. Explore and write regulations and process to allow phasing as a condition if requested by a developer.
22. Explore and write regulations and process to require phasing as a condition at the request of the Town Public Works Department and/or Fire Department.
23. Explore and write regulations and process to require an access plan for developments as part of the application process and review in the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations.
24. Write the specific regulations, incentives and process that conform to the Town Plan for the Overlays in the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations.
25. Explore, write regulations and process to require the establishment of a Homeowner Association as part of the subdivision approval in the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations.
26. Explore and publish different incentives for landowners to maintain their historic buildings on the Town website and Town Hall Public Bulletin Board.
27. Explore and publish land conservation program information to landowners on the Town website and informational brochures posted at the Town Hall Public Bulletin Board.
28. Explore ways to work with private landowners for either donated or purchased easements to create paths/trails in established areas.
29. Explore and write regulations, incentives and processes for bike paths, recreational trails and/ walking paths for new developments in the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations.

30. Explore and write incentives for developers to include infrastructure in their development plans in the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations.
31. Write regulations, standards and processes for the inclusion and development of infrastructure in development proposals in the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations.
32. Write regulations, standards, responsibilities and process for the formation of Homeowner's Associations as included in development proposals in the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations.
33. Write in the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations the requirement of the establishment of a Homeowners' Associations when there is shared infrastructure in a development.
34. Conduct cost analysis and level of service analysis of Police, Fire and Utility services providers in an annual report.
35. Conduct any appropriate independent studies to analyze need for increased Police, Fire and Utility Services as the Town grows.
36. Explore public investments in transportation, water/sewer and other infrastructure.

This page is left blank intentionally

## 4. TRANSPORTATION

### 4.1. Preface

The Transportation Chapter begins at the same point as the other chapters of the Town Plan with the community's vision of the future. As the community grows, decisions made regarding transportation issues must serve to implement that vision. In fact, transportation issues are often as crucial as land use decisions in shaping the community's future.

The Town of St. Albans' economic health and quality of life are directly tied to the Town's ability to move people and goods safely and efficiently through the community. The Town's residential, commercial, and retail uses benefit from a circulation network that allows the community to navigate through the Town with relative ease, as there are few congested areas that limit traffic flow. An effective circulation system also benefits the industrial uses; the movement of goods throughout the region and to areas beyond is essential to the Town's continuing success.

### 4.2. Description

Traditionally, transportation "planning" has actually been merely reacting to worsening conditions. In contrast, the Town of St. Albans wants the transportation planning chapter to be an integral part of a comprehensive policy document based on overall community vision. The chapter must support land use policies, in accord to environmental standards, and be consistent with the rest of the town plan. In addition, the proposed transportation improvements should be compatible with the plans for neighboring jurisdictions and the region.

The purpose of the Transportation Chapter is to identify the policies and suggested actions that the Town of St. Albans will take to improve the operation of the existing transportation network as the Town of St. Albans grows and develops. The objective is to document existing and future transportation facilities in the Town of St. Albans and to develop strategies to address the potential impacts to the circulation network resulting from future land uses identified in the Land Use Chapter. The Transportation Chapter will also assure the provision of a transportation system that supports the Town's land uses, is safe for all modes, and facilitates and maintains adequate mobility for its citizens.

#### Definition

Inter-connectivity of a transportation system means having, whenever possible, neighborhood, business and industry be accessible to each other through multiple modes of transportation: roads, bike paths, sidewalks and walking trails. While this may be desirable in some instances, it should be recognized that inter-connectivity may not be desirable all the time. There may be issues of public safety, private security, environmental reasons or simply existing conditions that would negate the benefit of inter-connectivity.

### 4.3. Relationship to Other Plans and Agencies

Of all the chapters in the Town Plan, the Transportation Chapter is most closely tied to the Land Use Chapter. The relationship between proposed land uses and the proposed circulation network serves as a fundamental framework for the other chapters of the Town Plan. Other chapters in the Town Plan are affected by the policies identified in the Transportation Chapter. The Town's bikeways and trails provide recreational value and

non-motorized accessibility for the Town's residents and visitors and, as a result, policies for trails can be found in both the Land Use Chapter and Transportation Chapter.

The successful implementation of the policies in the Transportation Chapter also requires coordination with regional agencies, including the Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT), the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) and the Green Mountain Public Transit (GMTA).

#### NRPC Transportation Advisory Committee

Regional planning efforts such as the NRPC Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) affect the Town's circulation network. The TAC is composed of delegates from the region's municipalities. This committee provides local input to the Vermont Agency of Transportation, to identify needs and to develop transportation improvement programs. TAC is the committee which oversees which oversees the transportation planning program. The TAC also acts as a liaison between local communities and the Vermont Agency of Transportation, and provides local and regional input regarding transportation issues important to the region. The TAC serves in an advisory capacity to the Board of Commissioners.

NRPC and TAC are involved in transportation planning as part of Vermont's Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI). This is a statewide initiative that is designed to include all segments of the public in planning the improvements to Vermont's transportation system. The goal of TPI is to expand local decision making and planning of transportation priorities, projects and long range plans. This process, started in 1992, is funded jointly by the Federal Highways Administration as part of the Highway Planning and Research Program, the State of Vermont and Vermont's Regional Planning Commissions.

#### Airport Plans

Lastly, the Franklin State Airport Plans and Projects provide long-term development programs for the airport to ensure that it will provide a safe, efficient, economical, and environmentally acceptable air transportation facility. Should the Town make changes to its transportation network and related programs, the objectives identified by the Franklin State Airport must be considered to ensure the safety and vitality of one of the State's aviation transportation facilities.

#### **4.4. Sections of the Transportation Chapter**

The remainder of the Transportation Chapter is divided into sections:

1. Road Network – Current transportation network within the boundaries of the Town of St. Albans.
2. Regional Roadways – The State and Federal transportation networks that are interlaced with the Town. Most of these transportation networks intersect the City of St. Albans and reach beyond the Town of St. Albans boundary lines.
3. Roadway Classification – The different types of roadways within the boundaries of the Town St. Albans.
4. Local Road Management and Maintenance – The infrastructure maintenance and responsibilities.
5. Other Roadways – Discussion of some proposed expansions to the transportation network and scenic roadways.

6. Sidewalks, Recreational Trails, Bike Paths and Walking Paths – The current sidewalks and Sidewalk Master Plan. The current recreational trails and bike paths and parks systems within the boundaries of the Town of St. Albans.
7. Transit and Rail – Current public transportation options and rails systems within and available to the Town of St. Albans.
8. Goals and Suggested Actions

#### **4.5. Road Network**

The Town's roadway network is comprised of a hierarchy of streets that provide access to and throughout the Town of St. Albans. The arterials that serve the Town predominantly follow a north-south direction. The grid of streets that encompasses the majority of the urbanized area of the Town of St. Albans is extremely important in the effective movement of vehicular traffic throughout the Town.

The Town of St. Albans encircles the City of St. Albans. This creates inter-dependency by the City to the Town for a transportation system that allows appropriate traffic flow in and out of the City. The City is highly urbanized. The Town and City grid of streets complement and align with each other.

**Map 4.1** illustrates the roadway system that is planned to accommodate the Town's existing and future land uses, as identified in the Land Use Chapter.

#### **4.6. Regional Roadways**

Interstate and regional access to the Town of St. Albans is provided primarily by Interstate 89 (I-89). In addition, access to the Town of St. Albans is provided by US Route 7 (US7), Vermont Route 36, Vermont Route 104, Vermont Route 105 and Vermont Route 207.

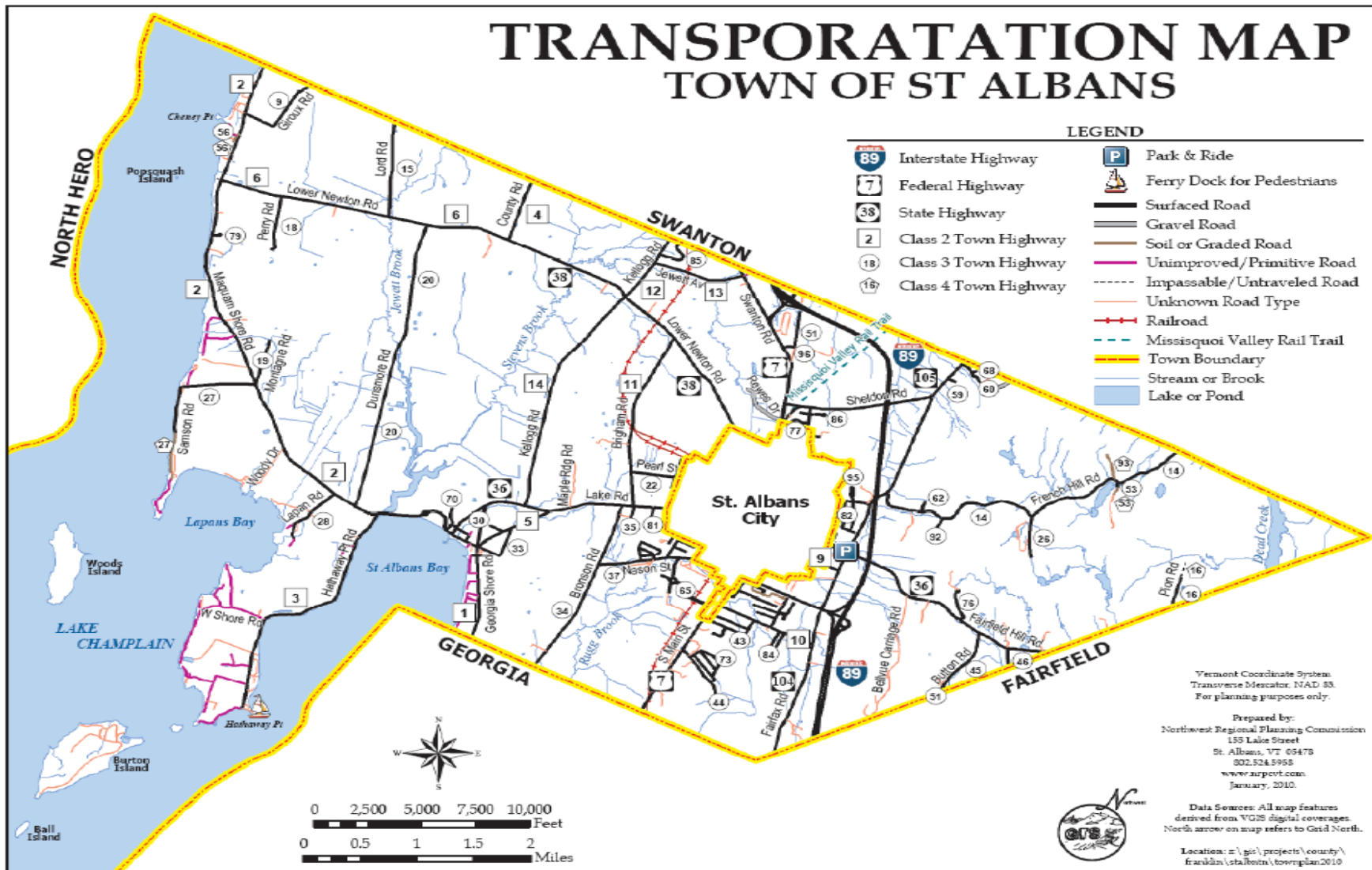
Lake Champlain provides access to the Town through a ferry and bridge system that connects to State and locally owned roadways. In addition to private and state owned marinas and docks.

I-89 is a north-south freeway traversing the eastern area of the Town and providing direct access to the Canadian border to the north and the City of Burlington to the south. This roadway is comprised of two general-purpose lanes in each direction for its entire length through the Town, approximately seven miles. I-89 has two interchanges within the Town boundaries; at Vermont Route-207 (exit 20) and St. Albans State Highway (exit 19).

US Route 7 is a north-south roadway traversing the mostly urbanized areas of the Town of St. Albans and traverse through the City of St. Albans. This roadway is comprised of one general purpose lane in each direction for its entire length through the Town and City, approximately seven miles. US Route 7 is the main business roadway for the Town and the City and has turn lanes at intersections and access to business centers.

Both Interstate 89 and US Route 7 provide direct access to the neighboring municipalities; Town of Swanton to the north and the Town of Georgia to the south.

Map 4.1 – Town of St. Albans Current Transportation



#### 4.7. Roadway Classifications

Each roadway located within the Town is designated with a classification depending on its role in the transportation network and its relationship to surrounding uses. The street classifications reflect the planned roadway configurations, not necessarily the existing roadway design. While the following descriptions provide an overview of the general features of each roadway classification, there may be exceptions for individual streets that require modified standards. The Town's transportation network is comprised of four roadway classifications: Interstate Highway, State Highway, Local Roads and Private Roads.

##### Interstate Highway and Exit Areas

Interstate 89 goes through the eastern part of the Town of St. Albans for nearly 6.5 miles. Interstate 89 provides an alternative to US Route 7 for those looking to travel between the north and south ends of the Town of St. Albans. Interstate 89 exits 19 and 20 provide direct access to the North End Growth Center Overlay and the South End Growth Center Overlay as identified in the Land Use Chapter.

##### State Highways

Several State Highways travel through the Town of St. Albans: US Route 7, Vermont Route 104, Vermont Route 36, Vermont Route 38, Vermont Route 105 and Vermont Route 207. The State Highways are important for providing access in and through the Town of St. Albans.

##### Local Roads

The State of Vermont classifies the Town of St. Albans Highways into four categories:

1. Class 1  
Form extensions of State Highways and are numbered as such.
2. Class 2  
Form connections from town to town, and/or carry a more significant volume of traffic than other roads in Town.
3. Class 3  
All other traveled roads receiving State Aid funds.
4. Class 4  
All other Town roads. Class 4 roads do not receive any state aid, and do not have to be maintained by the Town except for culverts and bridges.

The Town of St. Albans includes an extensive network of local roads as summarized below (**see Figure 4.1**).

| <b>Figure 4.1 – Summary of Local Roads</b> |             |
|--|-------------|
| St. Albans Town Local Roads:               |             |
| <u>Mileage and Class</u>                   |             |
| Class 1.....                               | 0 miles     |
| Class 2.....                               | 20.14 miles |
| Class 3.....                               | 30.78 miles |
| Class 4.....                               | 1.35 miles  |
| Private Roads.....                         | 30.01 miles |

### Private Road

Private roads are those roads not owned and maintained by the Town of St. Albans. In general private roads provide access to individual parcels of land and/or roadways in planned development communities. The private roads are maintained by the land owner and/or Homeowners Association. As part of a development approval, a maintenance plan and record of ownership shall be required to assure proper upkeep of the roads.

## **4.8. Local Road Management and Maintenance**

### Interstate

Interstates are owned and maintained by the State of Vermont and are typically funded through the Federal Government. Interstate 89 north and south between Exit 19 and Exit 20 is scheduled for resurfacing in 2010 while north bound I-89 between Exit 20 and Swanton is scheduled for reconstruction and resurfacing in the 2010-2013 VTTrans capital program.

### Culverts

The Town of St. Albans currently has 326 structures in its culvert inventory. The inventory is updated by the Town of St. Albans Public Works Director and all data is entered into the Vermont Online Bridge & Culvert Inventory Tool (VOBCIT). With this web-based application, local officials and interested members of the public can review the Town's culvert inventory including the type, size, condition and other factors. The Town of St. Albans last updated the inventory in the fall of 2010. According to the most recent data shows the following:

1. Excellent or good - 32%
2. Fair - 57%
3. Poor, critical or closed - 7%
4. 8 culverts condition are unknown.

### Road Standards

In 1988, the Town of St. Albans adopted regulations related to roads and driveways. These regulations provide the basic standards by which all roads; driveway accesses and culverts must be constructed in the Town of St. Albans. Since the adoption of these regulations, changes in road standards have occurred. As a result the Town of St. Albans has set a policy in this Chapter that the Road Ordinance be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to reflect changes to new standards and new Town policies.

Road standards are not restricted to the roads that the Town of St. Albans owns and maintains; the road standards also apply to private roads.

### Access Points

Access points are defined as points of entry/exit from land onto a road, access points are commonly termed "curb cuts". Access Points are part of the maintenance program in the Town's on-going maintenance schedule of roads. However, private roads also have access points that need to be maintained. As part of the responsibilities of maintaining a private road, the owner of the road should also be required to maintain the access points to ensure the standards are maintained and safety assured.

Having frequent and/or successive access points has an undesired consequence on public safety, on the environment and on the infrastructure. Access points can impact the environment by increasing the generation of storm water and increase the rate of erosion. In addition, access points can impact the infrastructure such as road beds, paved

surfaces, ditches and culverts. Proper maintenance and standards should help to reduce the unintended consequences.

#### Funding

1. The Town of St. Albans has included in the Capital Improvement Program a paving rotation program that provides for repaving of each of the Town roads on a 10-year schedule. This works out to paving five miles of road each year with a current estimated cost of \$450,000 annually. The CIP will also explore the possibility of allocating funds for strategic improvements that would help reduce long term maintenance costs. This rotation should allow the Town to maintain the roads on a regular basis.
2. The Town, with funding from Northwest Regional Planning Commission, completed an inventory of local road conditions in 2002. This was done as part of an overall program called Road Surface Management System (RSMS). RSMS is a comprehensive roadway management system for the municipality. It also allows the municipality to match future Town highway, bridge and culvert grant funds at 10% as opposed to the standard 30%. This system can help greatly in capital budgeting for future road improvements. Updating this road inventory to incorporate current road conditions is very beneficial for the Town.
3. The state provides aid for the maintenance of class 1, class 2, and class 3 highways from a general sum appropriated each year by the general assembly, which is disbursed quarterly. Use of grant funds is for Town highway construction, improvement, and maintenance purposes; or as the non-federal share of public transit assistance. Costs directly related to highways and bridges, such as maintenance employee fringe benefits, interest costs on loans or bonds, street lighting, etc. are considered to be eligible uses. Bicycle routes are another eligible use. Local tax dollars heavily supplement these funds to cover the full cost of road maintenance.

#### **4.9. Other Roadways**

##### US Route 7

US Route 7 is the main roadway that connects the north end to the south end of the Town and bi-sects the City of St. Albans. US Route 7 is the road that has direct access to the North End Growth Center Overlay and South End Growth Center Overlay and has been the subject of studies and proposals to enhance the traffic flow.

1. Federal Street Extension Project – proposal for a parallel route from the City of St. Albans to Interstate 89 exit 20 and the North End Growth Center Overlay to provide another route to the increasingly congested US Route 7.
2. US Route 7 Corridor Study Update (2007) – Since completion of the 2007 study, the Town of St. Albans has continued to examine the option of the parallel route by further refining a potential corridor for this proposed road. The study was commissioned to ascertain the future needs for transportation. The study addressed traffic issues comprehensively, to look at the Town of St. Albans, the City of St. Albans and the Town of Swanton as a whole rather than individually. The study took into account previously proposed road improvements, currently permitted development and planned developments in the Town of St. Albans, the City of St. Albans and the Town of Swanton to address future needs. The study recommended a set of improvements for roadways, bike, pedestrian and public transit, as well as land use and access management considerations. In addition the study further developed the concept of the US Route 7 parallel route.

3. State Route 207 and U.S. Route 7 Intersection - The Town of St. Albans is continuing the talks with the State of Vermont for the possible acquisition of a parcel of land west of the intersection of State Route 207 and US Route 7. Use of this parcel would allow construction of an alternative route for vehicles to travel to and from properties in the North End Growth Center Overlay area west of US Route 7. By offering this alternative, congestion could be reduced because this will reduce the number of vehicles on US Route 7 and decrease the number of turning movements on US Route 7.

#### Scenic Roadways

There are no local or State designated scenic roadways in the Town of St. Albans. The Lake Champlain Byway is a State designated Scenic Byway that travels along the shores of Lake Champlain. Even though there are not any designated scenic roadways, many of the roadways within the Town of St. Albans provide scenic views. This is one of many features of the Town that attract people and businesses to locate in the Town of St. Albans.

#### **4.10. Non-Motorized Travel**

The Town of St. Albans road system currently does not provide a designated lane for pedestrians, bicycles and other non-motorized transportation alternatives. Parts of the Town have sidewalks and many privately owned and maintained roads for vehicular and non-vehicular travel. The Town of St. Albans will update the Sidewalk Master Plan as part of the overall review and update of all policies and regulations throughout the Town.

#### Sidewalks and Walking Paths

Most existing sidewalks are within developments and privately maintained. The walking path at the Collins Perley Complex provides an option for the residents, but there are no connecting paths or sidewalks to access the facility. Access along the St. Albans State Highway that connects Collins-Perley to the Town school and other Town roads is controlled by the State of Vermont and any sidewalk proposal for this area would require the State of Vermont approval. The Town of St. Albans maintains a Sidewalk Master Plan that will be reviewed and updated periodically.

#### Trails and Bike Paths

The Missisquoi Valley Rail-Trail (MVRT) - This is a 26.4-mile crushed-stone trail on a rail banked corridor parallel to VT 105. This rail-trail, used for utilitarian and recreational purposes, extends from the Town of St. Albans to the Town of Richford, through the Town of Swanton, the Town of Sheldon and the Town of Enosburg. It is a multi-use trail that is popular for cycling, walking and running in warmer months and snowmobiling and cross-country skiing in the winter. The trail was constructed with funding from the State of Vermont in response to the request of residents in the Town of St. Albans and the City of St. Albans. The MVRT travels adjacent to the North End Growth Center Overlay and provides an opportunity for bicycle connections to the area. As part of the maintenance of the MVRT, the MVRT was resurfaced in 2010.

The State of Vermont has two State Parks on two islands within Lake Champlain.

1. Burton Island State Park – There is a perimeter-walking trail with two interpreted nature trails
2. Woods Island State Park – There is a perimeter-walking trail.

Lake Champlain Bikeway – This is a 363-mile route around Lake Champlain and along the Richelieu River to Chambly, Québec. There are two loop routes in the Town of St. Albans that travel along Maquam Shore.

#### **4.11. Transit and Rail**

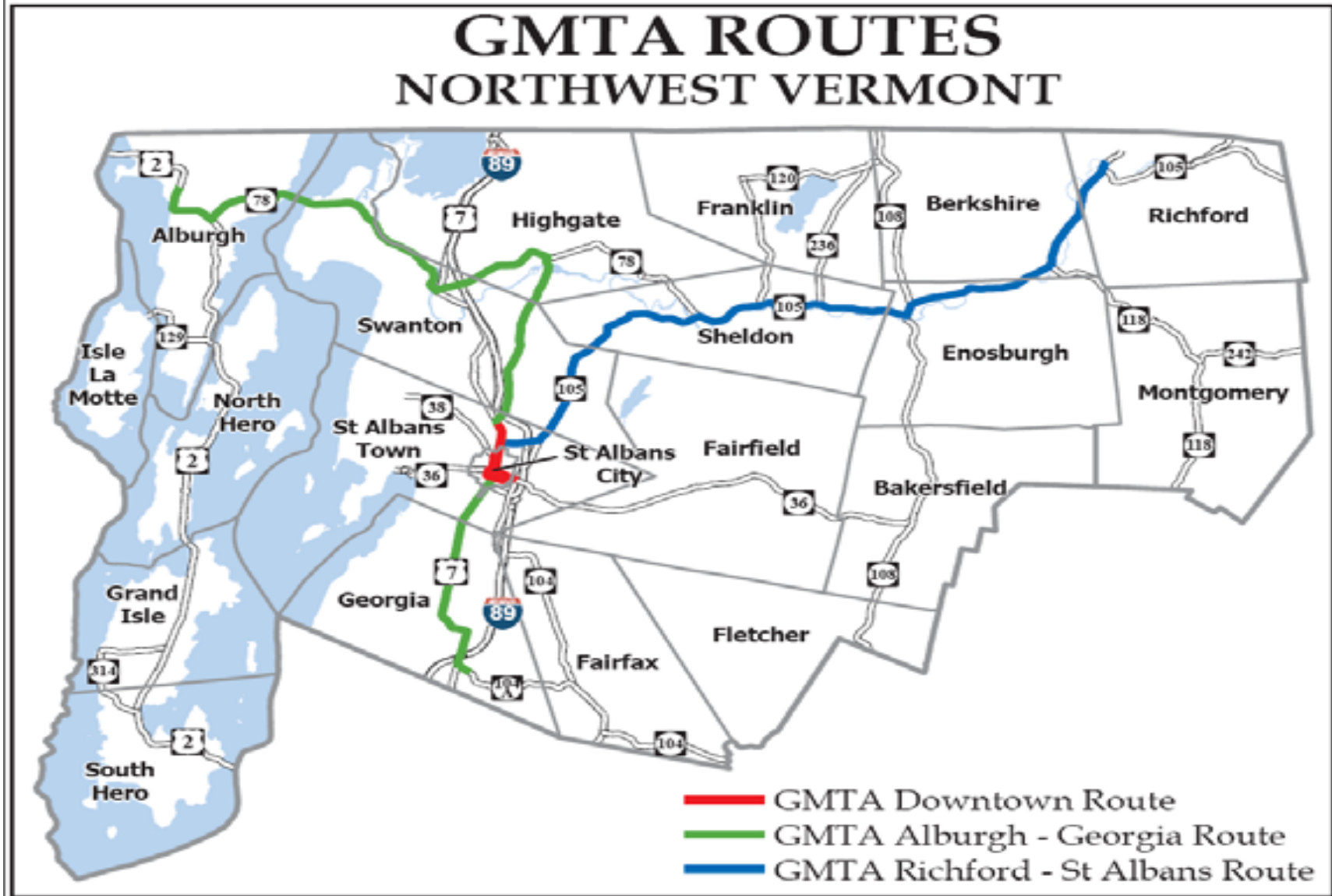
##### **1. Public Transportation**

Green Mountain Public Transit (GMTA) provides public transportation for Northwest Vermont and the Town of St. Albans (**Map4.3**). However the coverage within the Town of St. Albans is very limited. The fixed routes serve the Town of St. Albans Industrial Park and connect with other areas within Franklin County. The Downtown Connector route provides service to the North End Growth Center Overlay and the South End Growth Center Overlay. The Downtown Connector route averages 950 riders per month however, use of all of GMTA's routes is increasing. Currently, the service of the GMTA does not reach the majority of residents in the Town.

Chittenden County Transit Agency (CCTA) is a commuter bus that provides service to and from Chittenden County twice a day with two stops in the Town of St. Albans.

The Town of St. Albans has one Park and Ride Lot located at the intersection of Route 104 and Route 36 (Fairfield Street). The Park and Ride Lot have 86 spaces and is typically 70-90% full during the work hours.

Map 4.3 – Green Mountain Public Transit for Northwest Vermont



2. Rail and Air

There is no airport in the Town of St. Albans. International airports are located in Burlington, Vermont to the south, Montreal, Canada to the north and Plattsburg, New York to the east. In addition, there is a state airport near Highgate, Vermont.

Amtrak Vermonter is the primary passenger rail system and originates in the City of St. Albans or the Adirondack route in Rouses Point, New York.

New England Central Railroad operates freight service through the Town of St. Albans.

#### **4.12. Policies and Suggested Actions**

##### Policy

1. The Town shall maintain a Capital Improvement Program which shall be updated annually per the Capital Improvement Program Policy.
2. The Town shall maintain the current roadway network that the Town owns and provides service to the residents, business and industry.
3. The Town shall explore the expansion to the current roadway networks to meet the needs of economic development and population growth.
4. The Town shall maintain a Sidewalk Master Plan.
5. The Town should maintain bike paths, recreational trails and walking paths
6. The Town shall establish a Forest and Parks Committee.
7. The Town shall explore mandated storm water regulations and determine the impact and implementation.

##### Suggested Actions

1. Town Manager shall review and update the CIP on an annual basis, per the Capital Improvement Program Policy.
2. Review and update all infrastructure databases, including VOBCIT.
3. Review and update the Road Ordinance to include new standards and new policy decisions regarding Town roads.
4. Review and update regulations to assure that curb cuts ensure public safety and minimize negative impacts on the environment and infrastructure.
5. Explore and analyze potential park and recreation opportunities for the future when the means for their acquisition and/or development becomes feasible.
6. Review, explore and analyze the creation of new, expansion of existing and connecting bike paths, recreational trails and walking paths
7. Explore and analyze routes, via path and/or on-road bike lane, to connect MVRT to St. Albans Bay
8. Review and explore possible updates to the Bylaws to consider the inclusion of and/or incentives for the construction of bike paths, recreational trails and walking paths.
9. Explore and analyze the coordination with residents, businesses and/or agencies in the funding, construction and maintenance of bike paths, recreational trails and walking paths.
10. Explore opportunities to coordinate with the State of Vermont to plan for and construct sidewalks on Sate owned roadways.
11. Explore and encourage Homeowners Associations to plan for, construct and maintain sidewalks and bike lanes within their developments.
12. Analyze and consider public transportation services that would best serve the Town over the next five years.
13. Explore all public transportation options besides buses including funding sources.

14. Establish a Forest and Parks Committee who should make recommendations about trails and paths in the Town Forest to the Selectboard.
15. Explore and analyze storm water regulations, maps and tools to assure the regulations will not be overbearing for the Town to implement.
16. Explore opportunities to pro-actively guide and direct the studies and formation of regulations that could impact the Town.
17. Explore opportunities to proactively set water quality standards in coordination with other agencies.

This page is left blank intentionally

## 5. HISTORIC, SCENIC AND NATURAL RESOURCES

### 5.1. Introduction

The natural resource based agriculture and timber industries influenced the historical development pattern of the Town of St. Albans and played a significant role in the economic growth of the community.

### 5.2. Background and Context

Along with the State of Vermont, the Town of St. Albans is also known for its historic amenities, scenic environment and abundant natural resources, which inspire the Town's relaxed lifestyle and a great place to be. Lake Champlain, specifically the St. Albans Bay area and vast forest provide various habitats for a brilliant display of plants and wildlife.

The Town of St. Albans popularity has caused it to become increasingly urban and with urbanization come pressures on the historic, scenic and natural resources that make the Town attractive. These ongoing pressures illuminate the need to carefully manage and conserve the Town's historic, scenic and natural resources for future generations.

The Town of St. Albans historic, scenic and natural resources also provides the setting for its rich history and culture. Taken together, the Town's advantages beckon many to the Town of St. Albans and define the Town of St. Albans as a desired community.

### 5.3. Purpose

The purpose of this Chapter is to describe the community's commitment to the stewardship of the natural environment, and to provide a basis for policies to guide Town decisions which affect the natural environment. This environment is a complex system of interrelated components upon which the Town depends, including air, water, soils, plants and animals. The value of understanding the relationship between Town residents and the natural environment is to realize the importance of maintaining it as a mutually supportive one and to balance competing objectives to the maximum extent possible.

### 5.4. Historic Resources

#### Historic Districts and Structures

The Town of St. Albans has structures with historical significance that add to the architectural and cultural character of the community and the aesthetics of the Town.

A Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey of St. Albans Town were conducted in 1985 by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. There are currently sixty-eight (68) sites listed on the Vermont State Register of Historic Places Historic Sites and Structures Survey; however, several of the structures on the list have since been removed or altered.

National Register of Historic Places includes the Town of St. Albans Town Hall. This is the only structure within the Town of St, Albans on the National Register of Historic Places. Any modifications to this structure will have to comply with the regulations established by the National Register of Historic Places in addition to the Town of St. Albans regulations.

Inclusion on these registers can result in some public financial support for restoration, preservation and protection activities. Site listings, descriptions, photographs and historic district maps are available in the survey report available at the Town Clerk's Office.

However, being included in the Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey does not require any additional regulations beyond that of the Towns.

#### Archaeological Sites and Sensitive Areas

The Town of St. Albans was a major settlement area for Native Americans for most of the 12,000 years of our pre-European contact history. Since the late 19th century, artifact collectors and vocational archeologists have documented prehistoric Native American archeological sites throughout the Town, mainly focusing around the lakeshore, lake islands, streams, wetlands, and land areas underlain with Hathaway chert (a black, fine-grained rock, used for stone tool making).

In 1990, an archeological study of Jewett Brook identified two large Native American campsites of undetermined age. Historic period (from 1609 to 1950) archeological sites in St. Albans include early settlement sites, brick yards, boat building docks and wharves, hotels, railroad structures, abandoned farms and all types of commercial and industrial sites. These places are long abandoned, no longer standing and generally invisible on the ground.

#### Future Planning

Any future development for these areas should be balanced by an awareness of these sensitive areas with consideration of proper site planning that mitigates negative impacts. Flexible regulations will allow the Town to conserve its historic resources while not putting overly restrictive requirements on new growth. The National Register of Historic Places governs the regulations for any modifications and/or additions to designated historic structures on their list.

### **5.5. Scenic Resources**

Scenic resources should be a consideration in the development of land; including ridgelines, foregrounds of distant views, open lands, vistas and historic village settlements. The scenic resources contribute to the attributes that makes the Town of St. Albans an attractive place to conduct business, live and visit.

The Town of St. Albans working landscape and agricultural heritage with rolling fields, tree lines, and farm buildings are a critical component of the beauty of the area. Lake Champlain figures prominently in the sweeping views from the hills on the east of Town, to the views along the lakeshore and the beauty of islands. St. Albans Bay's natural beauty and historic village area also contribute to St. Albans Town's sense of place.

#### Future Planning

Decisions on future development for these areas should be balanced by an awareness of these sensitive areas with consideration of proper site planning that mitigates negative impacts on steep slopes and hilltops, and is in accord with the historic settlement pattern of the Town. Implementation of flexible, creative zoning which pays more attention to the character of the landscape and the built environment than to strict dimensional requirements will allow the Town the flexibility to conserve its scenic resources while not putting overly restrictive requirements on new growth.

### **5.6. Natural Resources and the Environment**

In the past this area was covered by a glacier and a much larger Lake Champlain. As the glacier receded and Lake Champlain reduced in size the area known as the plains of the Champlain Lowlands, Bellevue and French Hill were left behind.

The Town of St. Albans has three major streams: Stevens, Jewett, and Rugg Brooks. Stevens and Jewett merge prior to entering Lake Champlain while Rugg Brook drains into Mill River.

The Lake Champlain lakeshore provides wildlife habitat, recreation, and drinking water. The wetlands help to regulate ground water while providing wildlife habitat and recreational options. Burton, Ball, Woods and Popsquash Islands provide wildlife habitat and recreational options.

### Geology and Topography

Geologic events of the distant past have shaped the Town's topography. The Champlain Lowlands, a physiographic region which includes both the Champlain Valley and the Islands, were created by the flow of water and movement of glaciers over thousands of years. A thrust fault running north - south through western Franklin County separates the Champlain Lowlands from the Foothills of the Green Mountains. Aldis Hill, Prospect Hill and French Hill are the remnants of this thrust fault.

### Steep Slopes

Steep slopes are the boundaries of the past geological features that helped form this area and are characteristically covered by shallow soils that can present challenges to many types of development. Development on steep slopes may upset the natural slope repose angle and the removal of vegetation and the injection of effluent by onsite sewage disposal may increase runoff, erosion and the possibility of mass movement or slumping unless properly designed

Development on hillside slopes should be regulated as to address the impacts that may occur. As such, the Town of St. Albans should include land use regulations to address these concerns. However, the regulations should not prevent any development on hillside slopes.

### Soils

The latest soil survey in Franklin County was completed by the Natural Resource Conservation Service in 1998. The survey classifies soils on the basis of their structure, form, composition, and suitability for various types of development. However there have been many technological advances since the survey that makes development feasible, for example the development of innovative septic systems that no longer require septic fields.

The suitability of soils for a variety of purposes can be determined by an examination of the soil depth, texture and other characteristics along with the topography on which it occurs.

The majority of soils in the Town of St. Albans are members of the Covington, Farmington, Kinsbury, Georgia and Massena classes which are all either clays or stony loams and generally do not drain well. The hillside slopes in the eastern section of Town is typically Woodstock class which tend to be excessively drained and predominantly exist on hillside slopes.

Soil is a physical factor governing the use of the land and the Town of St. Albans land use regulations should take into consideration the potential impacts of development on

the soils. Proper drainage and BMP's should be used to ensure erosion control, stability and soils quality. The Town of St. Albans should monitor and amend land use regulations to minimize soil impacts. It is important not to be so restrictive that it discourages development.

Agricultural soils are classified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service as Prime, Statewide Importance or Local Importance.

*Prime soils* have very high potential and few limitations for farming.

*Statewide importance soils* have good potential but one or more limitations requiring more careful management.

The areas of high productivity potential correspond well to the areas that are currently in agricultural production. While there has been discussion of "land preservation", the Town of St. Albans will encourage "land conservation" over "land preservation" for this will allow the maximum flexibility for the property owner over the use and development rights associated with the property.

#### *Surface Water Resources*

##### Lake Champlain

St. Albans Town sits on the shoreline of Lake Champlain, the largest freshwater body in the United States, with the exception of the Great Lakes. Lake Champlain drains north to the St. Lawrence Seaway and ultimately to the Atlantic Ocean. According to the 2008 "State of the Lake" Report from the Lake Champlain Basin Program, water quality in the Lake is doing better on issues of human health and toxins, which include blue-green algae toxins, beach closures and fish advisories. However, phosphorus levels in the Lake remain the greatest concern for St. Albans Bay, as this nutrient is the primary factor in nuisance algae blooms.

In 2004, the State of Vermont created the "Clean and Clear Action Plan" in response to severe algae blooms in portions of the lake. The Lake Champlain phosphorus TMDL had been developed in 2002 as a joint effort between the State of Vermont and the State of New York. The phosphorus TMDL (total maximum daily load) defined the maximum allowable phosphorus load (i.e., input) from each sub-watershed of the lake, and allocated these loads among the various sources. In January 2010, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources issued a revised Phosphorus TMDL Implementation Plan, which lays out a strategy for achieving the phosphorus reduction targets. The Plan identifies ten specific "next steps" which include expansion of technical and financial assistance to farmers, requirements for additional storm water management, and technical and financial incentives for stream corridor protection and buffers. Currently these plans are under EPA review.

##### St. Albans Bay

The watershed draining into St. Albans Bay is approximately 50 square miles (129.5 square km) of agricultural, forested, and urban land. According to the Vermont Water Quality Standards, the Bay has a surface area of about 1,780 acres (7.21 km<sup>2</sup> or 2.78 square miles) and extends to Hathaway Point and Lime Rock Point. The Bay has an average depth of 27 feet with a maximum depth of 40 feet ([www.water.ncsu.edu/watershed-ss/info/stalbans/resdesc.html](http://www.water.ncsu.edu/watershed-ss/info/stalbans/resdesc.html)).

St. Albans Bay has a long history of water quality issues, including excessive algae growth caused by phosphorus enrichment, nuisance aquatic plant infestation, and fecal bacteria contamination. While storm water runoff is a contributing factor, there are other factors in water quality degradation including agricultural runoff and discharges from the City wastewater treatment plant. These issues have reduced the ability of area residents to use and enjoy the Bay in recent decades.

A Community Digester is one option being explored to control agricultural runoff. The Community Digester would create a centralized processing facility that manure can be sent for processing to reduce phosphorus levels before being returned to farmers for spreading on fields. The methane by-product can be used to produce heat and renewable energy. This is one option for the Town of St. Albans to play an active role in improving the water quality of St. Albans Bay and be pro-active in utilizing renewable resources for energy.

A major concern in St. Albans Bay is the increase of invasive aquatic vegetation. The shallow bay creates an environment where vegetation can thrive. During the summer months the vegetation becomes dense and impacts the ability to use and enjoy the Bay and often creates foul odors. In 2008, the Town of St. Albans helped the St. Albans Area Watershed Association (SAAWA) purchase a weed harvester that can be used to manually remove the vegetation in the Bay. Currently, the Town is exploring other methods and techniques in controlling the vegetation growth.

**Mission of the St. Albans Area Watershed Association (SAAWA)**

- 1) Foster the control of bacterial and nutrient loading in the St. Albans Bay and surrounding area waters
- 2) Advocate measures which reduce weeds and algae to acceptable levels for recreational use in these same waters
- 3) Advocate programs on lands adjacent to St. Albans Bay and surrounding areas for improvement of recreational and communal activities.
- 4) Conduct other activities which lead to the improvement of environmental quality in the St. Albans Watershed.

Brooks and Streams

Brooks and streams provide the link between the land in the watershed and the waters of the St. Albans Bay. The northern portions of St. Albans Town drain into Stevens Brook and Jewett Brook, which merge together just before entering St. Albans Bay. The southern portions of Town drain into the Rugg Brook, which empties into the Mill River, another tributary of St. Albans Bay. There are also sections of Town which drain directly to St. Albans Bay or to Lake Champlain.

Each year the State of Vermont prepares a list of waterways (called the 303d list) that are impaired and are unable to meet water quality standards. As of the writing of this Town Plan, the State of Vermont has an updated 303d list dated September 24, 2008. This list can be found at the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation – Water Quality Division.

Storm water runoff is a consistent issue that the Town of St. Albans is and will continue to address. There are a number of storm water runoff strategies that can be implemented to address water quality. However, the Town of St. Albans should take a careful and logical approach to storm water management. Any storm water project should be accompanied with a feasibility study to ensure the cost/benefit analysis has been thoroughly considered and that taxpayers monies are efficiently being utilized. This does not mean that the Town of St. Albans is not concerned with storm water runoff; rather the Town has a duty to carefully analyze all storm water projects for they tend to be expensive and have long term ramifications if done improperly

### Floodplains

Communities are required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to adopt flood hazard regulations under the National Flood Insurance Program. Flood hazard regulations are required for property owners to become eligible for home mortgage loans and flood insurance.

For a landowner who must have flood insurance, to require them to meet higher standards or lose their flood insurance is not the direction the Town chooses to follow. By writing regulations for this specific overlay district that guarantees compliance with federal minimum NFIP standards for insurance purposes, landowners can demonstrate to insurers that they are meeting the minimum standards as required and receive this critical insurance policy. It is contrary to the intent of the NFIP to make this insurance harder to get for landowners. Flood Hazard Regulations shall be written to the meet the minimum federal standards for compliance.

The Town can choose to implement additional environmental regulations through various bylaws. However, violation of the environmental regulations would be a zoning violation and not affect the landowners flood insurance.

### Wetlands

There are numerous wetlands within the Town of St. Albans, which are an integral component to a healthy watershed. They provide a number of critical services, including filtering out nutrients and pollutants, storing flood waters, dissipating wave energy at the shoreline, and serving as important habitat for a variety of species.

The Vermont Wetlands Rules, revised and adopted in 2001, protect wetland areas identified by the Vermont Water Resources Board as significant. A number of activities are allowed inside significant wetlands, including silvicultural and agricultural activities, providing no dredging, filling, or alterations to water flow occur. Significant wetlands fall under three separate classifications

The Federal Government through the US Army Corps of Engineers has jurisdiction over all wetlands in the State. Class I wetlands, the Federal Government may delegate down to State Government and the State Government has jurisdictional over Class II wetlands. The Town may regulate Class III as the State does not:

1. Class I wetlands are those which are considered exceptional or irreplaceable, and merit a high degree of protection under the Vermont Wetlands Rules. Class I wetlands must be specifically designated by the Water Resources Board. They are protected by a 100 foot minimum buffer zone in which only certain activities are conditionally allowed. There are no class 1 wetlands in the Town of St. Albans.

2. Class II wetlands are those that appear on National Wetland Inventory maps and any contiguous unmapped wetlands, and are protected by a minimum 50 foot buffer. There are approximately 1,900 acres of class II wetlands in the Town of St. Albans.
3. The Town of St. Albans has some of the largest wetland complexes. These include those along Lapans Bay (approximately 550 acres), the Black Creek Marsh (over 350 acres), and those associated with Fairfield Swamp (approximately 200 acres).
4. Class III wetlands are those that do not appear on National Wetlands Inventory maps, and are not considered significant by the Water Resources Board. Total acreage and their locations are therefore not known. As a result, Class III wetlands are not protected under the State Wetlands Rules.

In 2007, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources published “The Lake Champlain Basin Wetlands Restoration Plan.” This plan identified 149 potential wetland restoration projects in the Town of St. Albans, totaling approximately 1,745 acres. The Town of St. Albans should work with the agencies involved to ensure a proactive involvement.

#### Storm water Management

Storm water runoff has been identified as a threat to water quality, particularly within the developed portions of the Stevens and Rugg Brook waterways. Storm water runoff is typically a problem in areas with impervious surfaces that can include roads, parking lots, driveways and rooftops. These impervious surfaces prevent rainwater from filtering into the ground and instead the water moves across these surfaces collecting sediment, nutrients, other pollutants and velocity which flow into our streams, especially when there is not sufficient land available to absorb and filter the water. The result is that streams receive a higher volume of water during rain storms which leads to faster flows and the potential for more erosion and greater flood damage. The amount of impervious surface also reduces opportunities to recharge groundwater, which leads to lower stream flows during dry conditions.

There are a variety of stormwater management techniques that the Town of St. Albans will be exploring to reduce the impact of impervious surfaces.

1. The amount of impervious surface can be controlled at the development level by ensuring that the development is not creating excessive surfaces, such as unnecessary parking, long driveways or overly wide roads.
2. Capture and slow the water runoff, provide opportunity for filtration and allow nutrients and sediment to be removed before discharged into a stream.
3. Erosion control during construction to ensure that open ground is stabilized and to minimize the amount of sediment leaving construction sites.

The State of Vermont regulates stormwater runoff on construction sites disturbing more than 1 acre of land and on substantial development and redevelopment projects (typically those creating more than 1 acre of impervious surface). However, these stormwater regulations are unlikely to be enough to fix the stormwater impaired sections of the streams. In recent years, the Town of St. Albans has partnered with the St. Albans Area Watershed Association, the Northwest Regional Planning Commission, the City of St. Albans, and other state, regional and federal partners to pursue additional stormwater management projects above and beyond what is required by the state.

#### MS-4 Storm water Permit

The Town of St. Albans is anticipating that the State of Vermont will complete the regulations and procedures this year. Currently, the Town of St. Albans has not received

any information from the State of Vermont about the projected cost for the Town, except to acknowledge that it will run to the tens of millions. Additional costs will be incurred to hire staff in both the Town Hall and the Department of Public Works to meet the record-keeping, maintenance, education and outreach, permit enforcement and physical construction of the projects that are required under the permit.

The Town of St. Albans has taken a proactive approach to the impending MS-4 permit by attending informational meetings, meeting with State officials, meeting with EPA officials and working with other communities who have implemented MS-4 permit requirements. In addition, the Town is petitioning the State for funding sources in preparation of implementing MS-4 permitting. Some of the unknown questions are the impact of the MS-4 permit on the TDML for Lake Champlain and restoration of St. Albans Bay. In addition, the impact of MS-4 permitting on development is unknown. The Town of St. Albans is pro-actively researching and actively talking to other communities in similar situations to determine the best path to take.

How should the Town pay for these costs? One suggestion has been to form a storm water utility that would charge residents and businesses in the Town a certain amount per impervious surface of each property. Theoretically, this would provide monies to off-set the cost for this permit. Another suggestion is to capital plan for costs and uses the annual budget to pay for the permit expense. Both suggestions would increase the taxes of the residents and commercial properties which could make the Town unattractive for residents and businesses to locate in the Town.

#### Groundwater

Protecting groundwater is of the highest importance because the groundwater is the primary source of drinking water for much of the Town of St. Albans. A majority of the Town of St. Albans is underlain by deposits of unstratified glacial drift and bedrock. Drilled wells in these materials generally yield enough water for domestic or light commercial use. Some of the area near Jewett Brook is underlain by fine stratified drift that is characteristic of wetlands. This section generally yields sufficient water for domestic use only.

Public water service is currently supplied by the City of St. Albans to some Town residents and businesses. This water comes from Lake Champlain through a pumping station on Maquam Shore and from the St. Albans Reservoirs North and South in the Town of Fairfax.

A Surface Water Source Protection Area surrounds the Maquam Shore location; Ground Water and Surface Water Source Protection Areas for the St. Albans Reservoir are located in the Town of Fairfax, the Town of Fairfield and the Town of St. Albans. These recharge areas are to be protected from any activities and/or businesses that would harm the potability of water supplies.

#### Forest Resources

According to Landsat Thematic Mapper Imagery, approximately 27% of the land area of the Town of St. Albans is forested and is as follows:

1. 15% is deciduous forest;
2. 2% is coniferous;
3. 5% mixed; and
4. 5% forested wetland.

The Town Forest is located on French Hill and is 162 acres. In 2004, the Town of St. Albans logged the forest using low impact sustainable harvesting techniques. Sawable timber was sold at a profit for the Town and unsold wood was given to residents for fuel assistance or left in the forest. Currently, the Town Forest is a recreational area and wildlife habitat area and with careful management, the Town Forest will continue to be a recreational, scenic and wildlife resource.

As a result, the Town of St. Albans has prepared a Town Forest Management Plan that is under review prior to adoption. In addition, the Town of St. Albans should form a Forest and Parks Committee to advise the Town about recreational uses in the Town Forest and Parks.

### Earth Resources

There are little to no known underground resources in the Town of St. Albans that have commercial value. Any extraction or processing proposal shall include a plan for the rehabilitation of the site at the conclusion of extraction or processing activities. In addition any and all proper permits shall be obtained.

### Areas of Special Concern

The State of Vermont has identified numerous locations throughout the Town of St. Albans that support populations of designated rare, threatened or endangered animals, plants and natural communities. The Town of St. Albans has a vested interest in the protection of endangered or threatened species and will work with the agencies involved to ensure that the Town of St. Albans maintains a proactive position.

Endangered or threatened species could also be found in other locations in the Town. Burton, Ball, Woods and Popsquash Islands represent unique areas that provide habitat for plant and animal species, including several which are threatened or endangered. The State of Vermont has not identified any areas of deer wintering or bear habitat within the Town of St. Albans.

## **5.7. Agricultural and Forest Land Definitions**

The definitions for both agricultural land and forest land characterize the land use and the long-term commercial productivity of the agricultural or forestry activity on the land.

### Agricultural Land

Agricultural land is that land meeting any one or more of the following definitions:

1. Land primarily devoted to the commercial production of horticultural, viticultural, floricultural, dairy, apiary, vegetable, or animal products or of berries, grain, hay, straw, turf, seed, Christmas trees, finfish in upland hatcheries, or livestock, and that has long-term commercial significance for agricultural production; and
2. Land that is currently in use for agriculture as defined by the State of Vermont.

To define agricultural land productivity, the Town of St. Albans uses the following criteria:

1. Any parcel of land that is:
  - a. Devoted primarily to the production of livestock and/or agricultural commodities for commercial purposes;
  - b. Enrolled in the Federal/State reserve programs or its successor administered by the United States Department of Agriculture and/or State of Vermont Department of Agriculture; or

c. Other similar commercial activities as may be established by rule.

Agricultural lands shall also include

1. Any parcel of land, which is not contiguous, but otherwise constitutes an integral part of farming operations being conducted on land qualifying under this section as “farm and agricultural lands”; or
2. The land on which housing for employees and the principal place of residence of the farm operator or owner of land classified pursuant to (a) of this subsection is sited if:
  - a. the housing or residence is on or contiguous to the classified parcel; and
  - b. The use of the housing or the residence is integral to the use of the classified land for agricultural purposes.

#### Forest Land

Forest Land is primarily devoted to growing trees that could be used for commercial timber production that can be economically and practically managed for such production, including Christmas trees farms, and that has long-term commercial significance. In determining whether Forest Land is primarily devoted to growing trees for long-term commercial timber production on land that can be economically and practically managed for such production, the following factors shall be considered:

1. The proximity of the land to urban, suburban and rural settlements;
2. Surrounding parcel size and the compatibility and intensity of adjacent and nearby land uses;
3. Long-term local economic conditions that affect the ability to manage for timber production; and
4. The availability of public facilities and services conducive to preservation of forest land to other uses.

To define forest land productivity, the Town of St. Albans uses the following criteria:

“Timber land” means any parcel of land that is five or more acres or multiple parcels of land that are contiguous and total five or more acres which is or are devoted primarily to the growth and harvest of forest crops for commercial purposes. A timber management plan shall be filed with the proper authority(s) at the time an application is made for classification as timber land pursuant to this chapter or when a sale or transfer of timber land occurs and a notice of classification continuance is signed. Timberland means the land only.

#### Agricultural Lands in and around the Town

**Map 5.1** shows existing prime farmland soils with the best potential to be used for agriculture as identified by the USDA Soil Conservation Service Survey.

An examination of **Map 5.1** shows that most of the land inside the present Town boundaries, with the exception of the foothills, is classified as prime farmland by the USDA Soil Survey. Much of the agricultural land in the Town of St. Albans has been converted from commercial production of agricultural products and is now characterized by urban growth. However, numerous pastures and fields still exist adjoining the North End Growth Overlay.

#### Forest Lands in and around the Town

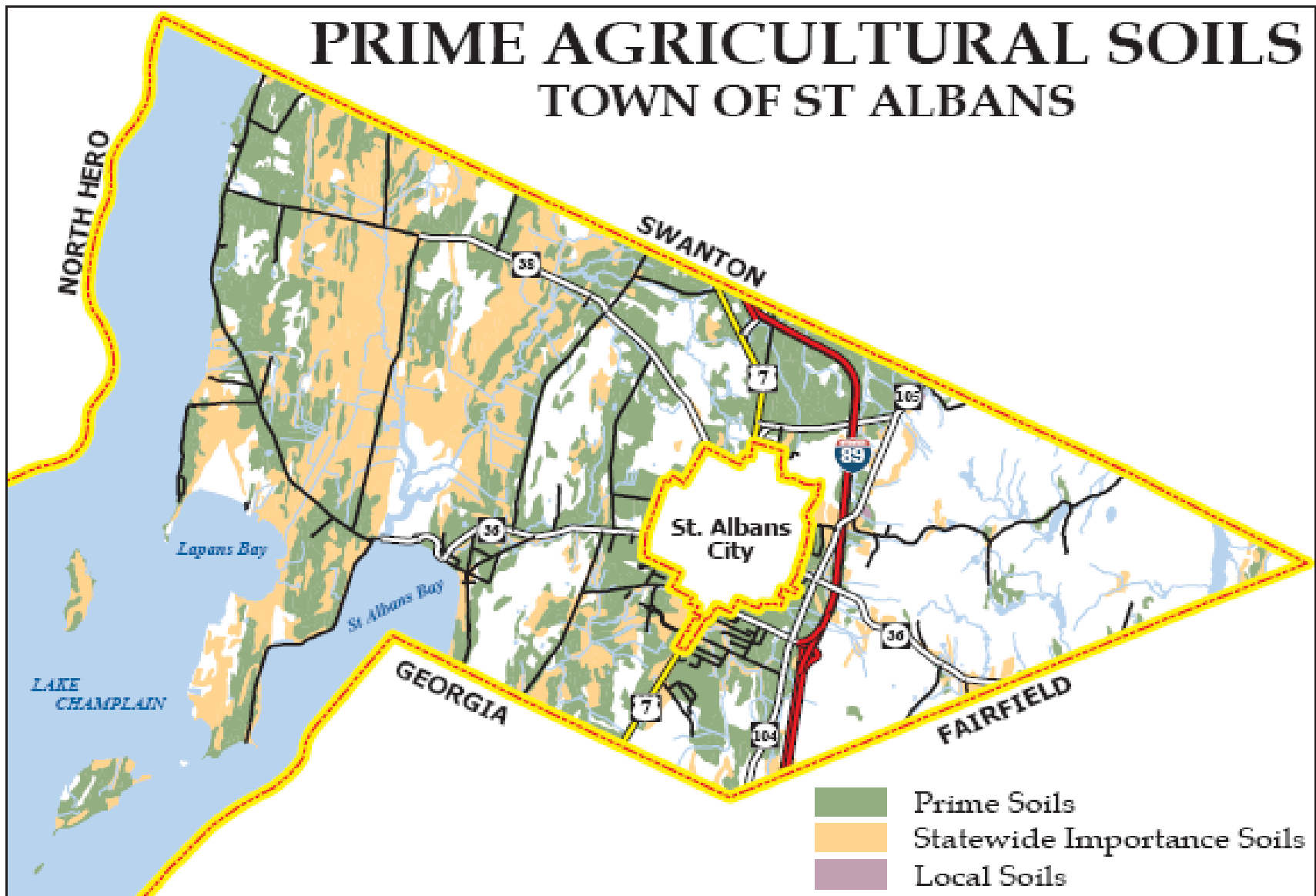
There are no forest resource lands designated by the Town of St. Albans.

### Right to Practice Farming and Forestry

A Right to Farm is a Vermont State Law that protects farming (12 V.S.A. § 5753) from private or public nuisance lawsuits. A private nuisance involves actions that interfere with the reasonable use or enjoyment of an individual's property. A public nuisance involves actions that threaten the public health, safety, or welfare or damages community resources. The Right to Farm laws are intended to protect agricultural as an element of rural character and natural resources production potential within the State of Vermont.

The right to practice forestry operations are regulated by the State of Vermont 10 V.S.A. §§ 2651 et seq. A public nuisance involves actions that threaten the public health, safety, or welfare or damages community resources. The forestry laws are intended to protect forestry as an element of rural character and natural resources production potential within the State of Vermont.

Map 5.1 – Town of St. Albans Prime Agricultural Soils



## **5.8. Policies and Suggested Actions**

### Policies

1. The Town shall set community standards for historical structures, culturally sensitive areas and scenic areas.
2. The Town shall set community standards for development on hillside slopes.
3. The Town shall explore water quality programs and methods for the St Albans Bay.
4. The Town should be proactive in the water quality for Lake Champlain.
5. The Towns shall explore programs and methods to protect streams and brooks.
6. The Town shall comply with National Flood Insurance Program requirements.
7. The Town should explore conservation methods for wetlands.
8. The Town shall explore programs and methods to protect all water sources.
9. The Town shall explore programs to manage the Town Forest.
10. The Town shall explore storm water and water quality issues and regulations.

### Suggested Actions

1. Review and update regulations, funding, inventory list and options for property owners to promote the preservation and restoration of historic structures and culturally sensitive areas and compliance with the regulations defined for those structures on the National Register of Historic Places.
2. Explore applying for Village designation for St. Albans Bay area.
3. Explore setting community standards for protecting scenic resources.
4. Review, explore and update regulations and innovative techniques for steep hill development that should minimize environmental impacts and protects fragile soils but does not prohibit development.
5. Explore and analyze different mechanisms and programs to improve water quality in St. Albans Bay where there has been success in other communities.
6. Explore opportunities to work with other organizations and agencies on funding sources for improving the water quality in St. Albans Bay.
7. Explore opportunities to coordinate efforts in water quality for Lake Champlain.
8. Review and analyze the possibility of a Community Digester Program and other pollutant reducing/eliminating programs.
9. Review and update regulations, as necessary, related to storm water in response to regulatory changes.
10. Review and coordinate information with other municipalities, agencies and organizations in implementing MS-4 and other storm water/water quality permits.
11. Explore and analyze other communities who have implemented MS-4 permit requirements and other storm water strategies.
12. Proactively engage with the State and other agencies for the MS-4 permit.
13. Explore, review and update community BMP's for storm water control during construction.
14. Review and update regulations for proposed developments to include a BMP plan and storm water plan.
15. Explore and analyze funding options in anticipation of the MS-4 permit and other storm water/water quality permits/programs.
16. Explore opportunities to coordinate storm water strategies with the State, agencies, agricultural community and other organizations.
17. Explore and analyze the affects of water treatment structures in the immediate and surrounding areas that could be affecting water quality.

18. Coordinate efforts with the State, agencies, municipalities and organizations on formulating accurate and consistent data collection methods and statistics for accurate reporting.
19. Explore and analyze the surrounding communities impacts to the streams and brooks within the Town.
20. Explore opportunities to coordinate storm water strategies with the surrounding communities.
21. Review and update regulations to ensure storm water compliance and permits with the State.
22. Review and update Flood Hazard Regulations to meet, and not exceed, the minimum required regulations for the NFIP and ensure any environmental regulations in the Bylaws do not interfere with the NFIP.
23. Explore, review and update environmental regulations into the zoning by-laws.
24. Review and update regulations that conserve Class II wetlands while allowing for permissible use in accord with state regulations and decisions.
25. Explore, review and update a wetland map to assist in planning and development of land.
26. Explore, review and analyze State regulations of public water sources
27. Review and update regulations in accord with State regulations of public water sources.
28. Explore additional programs to protect public water sources.
29. Explore funding sources to implement programs to protect public water sources.
30. Explore, review and update a map to show the latest source protection areas to assist landowners and developers.
31. Establish a Forest and Parks Committee
32. Review and adopt a Town Forest Management Plan.
33. Task the Forest and Parks Committee to make recommendations about recreational trails in the Town Forest to the Selectboard.

This page is left blank intentionally

## **6. HOUSING**

### **6.1. Preface**

This chapter describes present housing and develops programs for meeting future housing demand. That demand may be for housing that is both more varied and more affordable. While the gap between what is affordable to a potential household and what is available on the market may continue to widen, the Town of St. Albans population may demand different types of housing options.

Housing affordability affects all segments of the population. According to federal housing guidelines, no more than 30% of a family's gross monthly income should be spent on housing, including heating and other bills. Available, affordable, safe and decent housing is a critical ingredient to the success of how a community accommodates population growth.

In Franklin County, residential development has been concentrated in the Town of Fairfax. The Town of St. Albans should continue to encourage residential development, as part of the overall growth.

### **6.2. Purpose**

The Housing Chapter of the Town Plan has been developed to help the Town of St. Albans realize its "vision" of fostering a neighborhood-like atmosphere. This chapter is also to act in support of and maintain consistency with the rest of the Town Plan.

The Lake Champlain area is and will continue to be an attractive location for growth. The increased influx of people is a contributing factor in rising land and housing costs. In an effort to maintain the region's high quality of life and provide for the needs of its citizenry, the issue of housing affordability needs to be addressed. Following an analysis of affordability is an identification of land to accommodate the existing and projected housing needs of the community. After a need has been identified, it is necessary to inventory external resources, which potentially could assist in planning efforts. The implementation program provides for strategies and incentives based on community goals and values for overcoming housing deficiencies and fostering housing improvements.

The Housing Chapter is integrally related to the other chapters of the Town Plan. The Land Use Chapter, relying upon land use densities, land use compatibility, and growth estimates, indicates where and how much land needs to be made available to accommodate the housing needs. The Transportation and Facilities and Utilities Chapters indicate where and how public facilities will be provided to support the projected housing.

### **6.3. Housing Issues**

During the public workshops held on the Town Plan, the Town of St. Albans residents expressed a strong desire to protect the existing neighborhood quality as the Town grows. Change will occur in the Town as new neighborhoods are developed. Some existing neighborhoods may also see increases in densities. As new homes and new neighborhoods are built it will be the Town's responsibility to ensure that the new and existing neighborhoods are safe, attractive and livable. To meet this responsibility, Town policies and standards should ensure land use compatibility, quality open space and landscaping, adequate provision for transportation facilities, sufficient parks and public facilities, pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks, and safe public and private spaces.

Perhaps the most important and complex housing issues facing the Town will be providing appropriate housing opportunities for all economic segments of the population and ensuring that affordable housing opportunities are available for those households. Whether families and individuals can find the types of desirable housing at a price they can afford will define much of the Town's ultimate quality of life.

#### **6.4. Sections of the Housing Chapter**

The remainder of this Chapter is divided into the following sections:

1. Housing Availability and Growth - This section contains an existing analysis of the community and the type of housing in which people reside.
2. Senior Housing – This section describes the existing housing options.
3. Existing Conditions Summary – This section describes the increasing pressure of affordable housing.
4. Housing Problems – This section describes the housing problems that the Town should address.
5. Housing Need - This section describes the housing needs and types of housing
6. Housing Cost and Affordability - This section evaluates the changes in median income of the community relative to changes in housing and rental costs. This analysis helps determine to what degree housing has become a cost burden to various household incomes.
7. Policies and Suggested Actions - The housing goals and policies are expressions of the citizen's desired approach and direction to the challenges presented in the previous sections. The implementation program identifies specific regulatory actions and measures that can be undertaken to make the community vision a reality.

#### **6.5. Housing Availability and Growth**

The demand for housing in Vermont has increased in recent years. As housing prices increase in surrounding areas, people are looking to Franklin County for more reasonable housing prices. In addition, the increase in commercial, industrial and retail services has made the Town of St. Albans an attractive place to live and work.

##### Household Types

According to the 2000 Census, 2,257 housing units were located in St. Albans and are distributed as follows:

1. 68% were owner occupied year-round dwellings;
2. 14% were rental units; and
3. 18% were seasonal dwellings.

Single family dwellings are the most common type of housing unit. In 2009, the Town of St. Albans issued permits for approximately 80 housing units. Over the past few years the number of housing permits have increased and decreased in conjunction with the local and national economy.

In recent years several large residential subdivisions, including two with more than 150 units have been approved in the Town of St. Albans. These subdivisions will contain various types of dwellings, adding variety and choice to the local housing stock. In total over 530 housing units have been approved locally but have yet to be built due to phasing requirements or current market conditions.

### Employment Characteristics

Due to availability of land and the proximity of the farm production, Burlington International Airport, rail services, Route 7, Interstate 89 and Lake Champlain, the Town of St. Albans is an attractive location for employers. The work force is increasingly being employed in commercial, manufacturing and service sectors. However, agricultural activities and employment continue to be an important role in the local economy. The Town of St. Albans' attractive location, resulting in increasing land costs, will make it more difficult to develop affordable single family housing units.

### **6.6. Senior Housing**

There are a variety of reasons for people wanting to change their housing needs as they age. The Town of St. Albans is able to facilitate options for seniors wishing to stay in the community. There are assisted living apartments, age-restricted housing and nursing homes with various levels of care.

When reviewing senior housing and/or elderly care facilities, it is important to have the location near community services and access to public transit.

### **6.7. Existing Conditions Summary**

The information creates an informative picture of housing availability and affordability in the Town of St. Albans. The community has seen a great deal of population growth in the last 10 years, new residency and residential movement, coupled with an increasing number of homeownership units and escalating rental and home prices. Demand, particularly among those with very low incomes, has not decreased. More homeowners are paying monthly housing expenses that exceed 30% of household income. Renters are experiencing similar circumstances but more severely. In addition, there is continuing aging population that will need specialized housing facilities and services in the near future.

### **6.8. Housing Problems**

The mismatch between household income and housing costs typically results in two related housing problems: overpayment and overcrowding. According to the federal government, households spending too much for housing have limited income left for other basic necessities of life. To avoid paying too much for housing, many households choose to double up with other family members or members of other families. This may lead to a situation of overcrowding, which may increase traffic, result in parking shortages, and increase the wear and tear on a home. Housing problems of housing overpayment and household overcrowding are defined by the federal government as follows.

#### Defining Housing Problems

The federal government defines "housing problems" as households paying too much for housing, living in overcrowded housing conditions, or living in homes that have selected physical problems.

#### Overpayment

Overpayment refers to a household which pays more than 30 percent of its gross income for rental or ownership costs.

#### Overcrowding

Overcrowding refers to a situation where a household has more family members than rooms in a home (excluding halls, kitchens, bathrooms, etc.).

## 6.9. Housing Need

The Town of St. Albans greatest housing needs include a more diverse base of affordable housing opportunities signified by range of home ownership and rental units. In addition the community needs affordable senior housing options. The increases in market rate prices are preventing potential homebuyers and potential renters from locating within the Town of St. Albans. This trend could have a negative effect on achieving the vision of the community for a vibrant economy and healthy community.

There are no temporary shelters or transitional housing opportunities in the Town of St. Albans. Households experiencing domestic violence issues or youth homelessness receive services either from the community or from service providers that come into the community from somewhere else.

It is not clear that private for-profit entities can provide affordable rental and homeownership opportunities to people below median income without valuable partnerships and resources. While the land may be available to produce units, it is not clear that building for low-income families provides an adequate return to housing developers. To address this issue, the Town can consider the following options, all of which are consistent with and elaborate on the policies and programs stated earlier in this chapter:

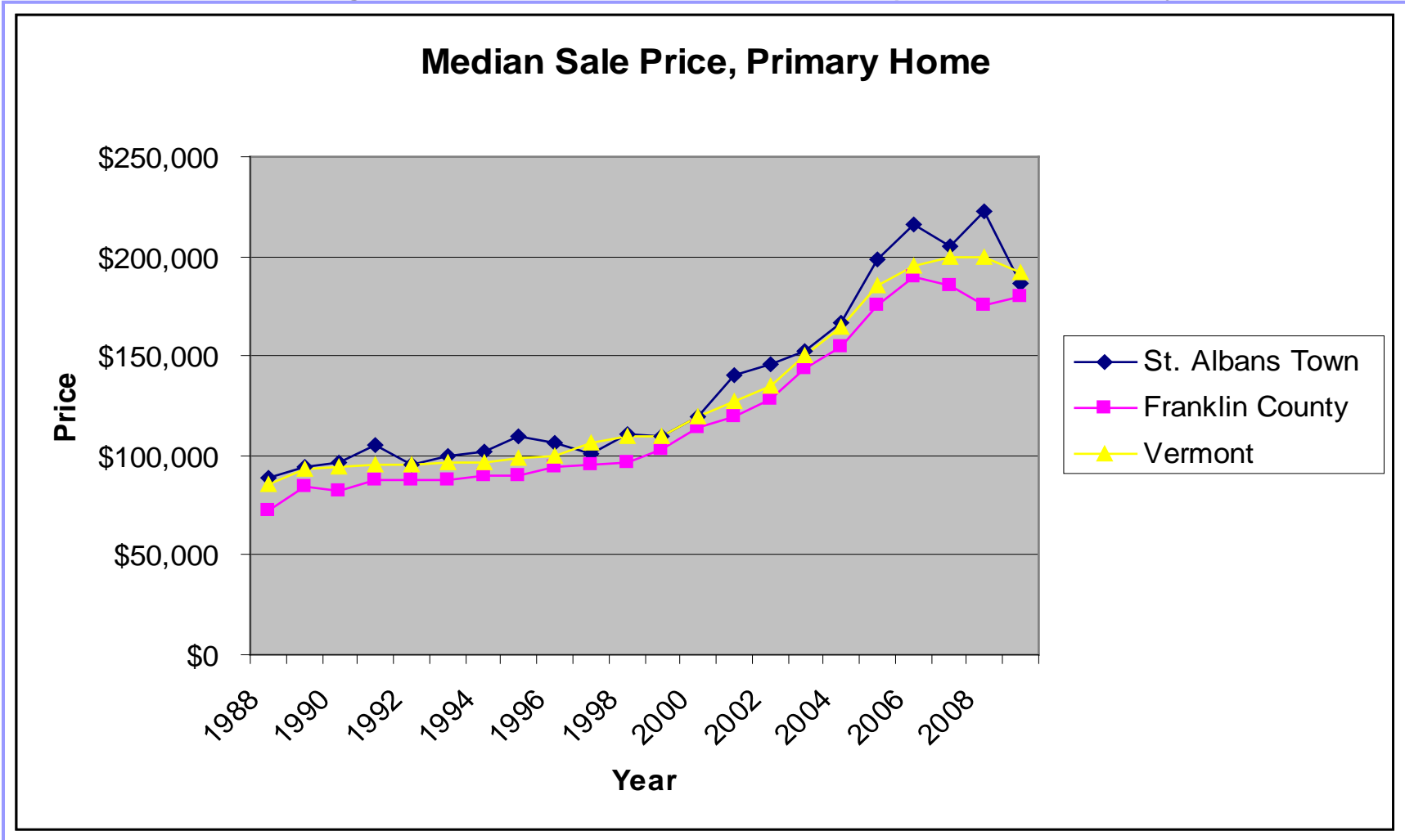
1. Develop a bonus program in which developers receive “credit” in additional units (beyond what zoning allows) if units available and affordable to households under 80% of median income are integrated into new projects.
2. Create an inventory of Town-owned land that can be set aside for housing development. Development costs can be reduced significantly if the Town can either lease land or sell at a discount to private or nonprofit developers. Cheaper land reduces overall costs, allowing for lower purchase or rental prices.
3. Work with local non-profit sweat equity programs for first time homebuyers. Habitat for Humanity serves households at 50% of median or less. This can be achieved in the Town of St. Albans as well.
4. Challenge local real estate agents to work with the Town and other non-profit agencies to alert them of property availability, particularly duplexes and triplexes. The Town and other non-profits can ensure conservation of existing affordable housing options or help create new ones.
5. Monitor the stability of existing affordable housing options to prevent the loss of existing affordable housing options.
6. Evaluate the possibility of facilitating an assisted living facility or more housing for the elderly given that this segment of the population will be significant.
7. Take advantage of local, County, State and Federal housing resources to construct affordable housing and provide services if needed.
8. Create a Redevelopment Department that includes affordable housing programs. This program pools individual Town resources including general funds and CDBG funds to use for housing purposes. The program is monitored to ensure a balanced distribution of housing production.
9. Expand the number of Section 8 vouchers and units available and encourage landlords to participate.
10. Create a program to assist families with budgeting and help them find appropriate housing matches.
11. Annually monitor housing production and affordability through a Redevelopment Department.

Facilitating housing is most effective when considered in light of the overall context of a community: its character and neighborhood design, location of amenities such as parks, schools and shopping, houses of worship, transportation nodes and centers and medical facilities, zoning and future trends. The vitality of any community depends not just on the health of one aspect but preferably by taking a holistic approach to growth and development, preservation and continuity.

**6.10. Housing Costs and Affordability**

Home prices in the Town of St. Albans have followed the overall trend upward in unison with Franklin County and the State of Vermont (**Figure 7.2**). According to the Town Lister, the 2010 median purchase price of a home in Town of St. Albans was \$200,000. The 2000 Census shows that 23% of homeowners reported that they paid over 30% of their income on housing costs, while 77% had housing costs below 30% of their income.

Figure 7.2 – Town of St. Albans Home Prices Compared to Franklin County



<sup>1</sup> Since 2006 St. Albans Town has been part of the Burlington Metropolitan Statistical Area, therefore the fair market rent reported in 2010 is based upon a different reporting area than in 2000.

Rent prices in the Town of St. Albans have increased. In 2010, the average Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom apartment was \$1,116 a month, representing a 58% increase over the cost in 2000 (Federal Department of Housing and Urban Affairs).

In 2004, the Vermont legislature amended the Planning and Development Act. Changes included requiring municipalities to allow as a permitted use one accessory dwelling unit per residence and requiring that multi-family dwellings be allowed in at least one zoning district. The Town of St. Albans has incorporated these changes into the bylaws. Future bylaw updates should take advantage of additional flexibility offered by the statutory changes.

## **6.11. Policies and Suggested Actions**

### Policies

1. The Town should have housing stock that meets the needs of all people in Town.

### Suggested Actions

1. Review and update regulations to encourage development of a diverse housing stock.
2. Review and update Growth Center Overlay regulations to allow multi-family housing.
3. Review and update the regulations to allow, account and be flexible in the accessory dwelling unit regulations.
4. Explore and analyze senior, affordable, and high density housing in areas within or adjacent to employment, education, recreation and services areas.
5. Explore creating incentives for developers to include affordable housing units.

This page is left blank intentionally

## **7. FACILITIES, UTILITIES, AND SERVICE**

### **7.1. Preface**

A municipality is to provide for public safety, recreation opportunities and maintain public infrastructure and facilities (**Map 7.1**). The Town works with the Franklin Central Supervisory Union on school facility (**Map 7.1**) related issues. Funding for municipal facilities and services is largely dependent on local taxes. Therefore it is essential to assess current needs and plan for future demands for these services.

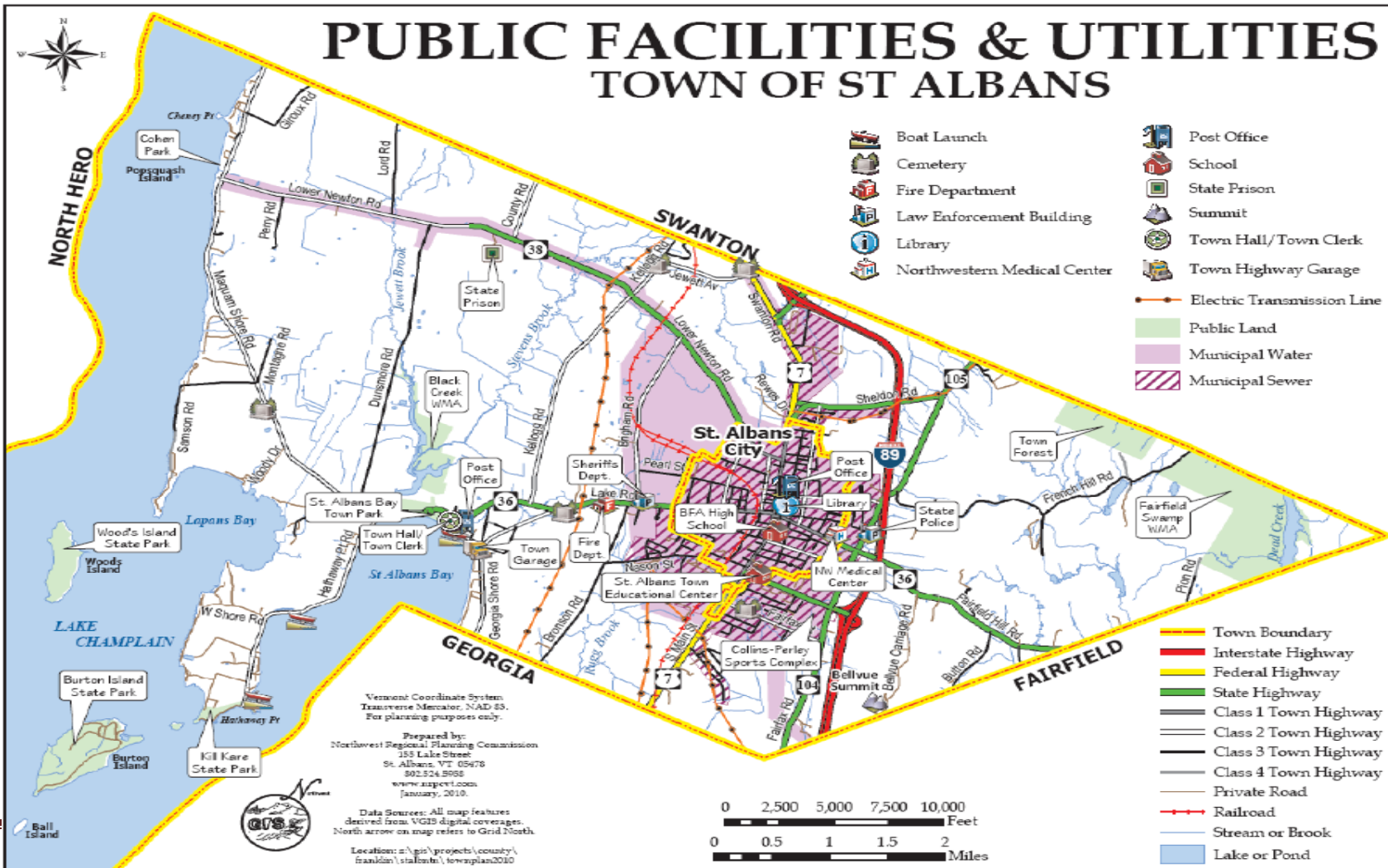
### **7.2. Capital Facility Financing**

The Town uses a capital program as a tool for assessing current needs for capital projects and improvements and planning for the future. A capital program prioritizes projects and creates a timeline of completion while efficiently using available funds and current resources. The capital program also sets predictions for the pace of growth and development. In addition, the Town collects impact fees assessed on new development which help to ensure that new growth and development pays its fair share.

On February 22, 2010, the Selectboard adopted a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Policy that vests the responsibility for developing the CIP and Capital Budget with the Town Manager. As part of this process, the Town Manager will consult with the Planning Commission in the spring of each year for any recommendations they may have for the Plan or the Budget. The CIP is a 5-year plan that includes an inventory of current Town assets such as infrastructure, equipment, facilities and other property. It lists anticipated needs for improvements and additions, especially as growth and development takes place. It outlines cost estimates, location, timeline, lifespan and other details for future projects. The CIP is updated annually and used as a guideline for creating an annual capital budget to ensure the best allocation of funding.

**Map 7.1 Public Facilities, Utilities and School**

# PUBLIC FACILITIES & UTILITIES TOWN OF ST ALBANS



### **7.3. Planning to Serve the Population**

Town Government - The Town of St. Albans provides myriad services to its citizens through the work of paid staff, paid elected officials and volunteers. The Town must evaluate the need for additional staff in general administration, planning and zoning and public works in order to meet changing demands due to growth and additional regulatory requirements.

#### General Administration

Selectboard - The Town is governed by a five-member elected Selectboard. The Selectboard adopts policies, ordinances and bylaws; sets tax rates, budgets and oversees other Town business.

Town Staff - Complete job descriptions for every staff member is available at the Town web site [www.stalbanstown.com](http://www.stalbanstown.com). Below are brief descriptions of the individual offices, departments and Boards.

1. Town Manager - The Town of St. Albans has adopted by Australian Ballot the Town Manager form of government. The Town Manager is appointed by the Selectboard to manage all aspects of Town affairs.
2. Town Clerk - The clerk is an independent officer who is ultimately accountable to the voters. The clerk is responsible for overseeing the Town functions in the following areas: municipal record keeping; issuance of licenses and official documents; conduct of local, state and federal elections; and general supervision of daily operations in the office of the Town Clerk.
3. Town Treasurer - The Treasurer is an independent elected town officer who is ultimately accountable to the voters. The Treasurer is also the treasurer of the school district and is delinquent tax collector for the Town. The Treasurer is chiefly responsible for performing all accounting functions, ensuring sufficient cash flow, preparation of timely financial reports, investment of Town funds, signing of all checks and ensuring that proper financial management procedures are in place.

In the Town of St. Albans, the position of Clerk and Treasurer is currently held by one person. The Clerk/Treasurer is assisted by a full-time assistant appointed and responsible only to the Clerk/Treasurer.

4. Listers - There are three elected Listers in the Town of St. Albans. They are responsible for property valuations, tax mapping and property transfers. The Listers are ultimately accountable to the voters and work closely with the Town Manager and other Town officials to coordinate services.
5. Zoning Administrator - The Zoning Administrator (ZA) is the Town's in-house expert on the zoning and subdivision bylaws and is responsible for issuing all required permits and enforcing the rules in accord with the local bylaws. In this capacity, the Zoning Administrator serves as a point of contact for development proposals and complaints. The Zoning Administrator serves to administer the development review process in the Town and works closely with the Development Review Board.
6. Planning Administrator - The Planning Administrator works closely with the Town Manager to recommend policies, research issues and will work on future bylaws and

Town Plan review changes while serving as staff for the Planning Commission.

7. Development Review Board - The Development Review Board (DRB) in the Town of St. Albans has seven appointed members each with a three-year term. The Development Review Board meets twice per month to hold public hearings to review site plans, conditional uses, development proposals, variances, appeals and subdivision applications in accord with zoning and subdivision regulations.
8. Planning Commission - There are five elected seats on the Town of St. Albans Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is responsible for preparing the Town Plan and the Bylaws. Other duties of the Planning Commission include participating in regional planning programs, and conducting other studies as needed.
9. Animal Control - The Animal Control Officer addresses issues of animal cruelty, handles animals that pose a threat to public health and deals with general issues regarding both wild and domestic animal complaints. This can include a report to the State for further action.
10. Board of Civil Authority - The Board of Civil Authority validates the voter checklist before each election, assists in counting votes, and hears appeals of property appraisals. All five Selectboard members serve on the board, in addition to Justices of the Peace and the Town Clerk.

#### Town Highway Management

The Director of Public Works manages the Town Highway Department. The Town Highway Department is responsible for road maintenance and repair of Town highways and drainage systems; maintains both the US Route 7 sewer system and pump station in the Industrial Park; and maintains other Town infrastructure. The Parks staff is seasonal and maintains all the Town parks and infrastructure. In addition, there are other seasonal employees who assist the full-time staff in the maintenance of roadside ditches and street sweeping. Town roads are paved on a schedule that is outlined in the Capital Improvement Plan. However, generally they are on a minimum 10-year re-paving schedule. Culverts and ditches are maintained annually in accord with the CIP

#### Water and Sewer Service

The majority of residents in the Town of St. Albans rely on privately drilled wells and septic systems for their water, waste water and sewer. For those areas that do not support on-site septic, new innovative systems may address this limitation on development.

The Town does not have a municipal water supply system or wastewater system. Residential and commercial buildings receive water supply from various sources:

1. Most buildings depend upon private springs or drilled wells.
2. The City of St. Albans municipal system supplies service to limited areas of the Town.

Water resources are adequate throughout the Town.

Groundwater provides the primary supply of potable water for the Town of St. Albans citizens. The greatest threats to groundwater resources are created by human activity, such as use of pesticides and fertilizers, road salting, animal husbandry and waste disposal. The duration, type and intensity of the activities determine the degree of risk that

is posed to both the groundwater quality and quantity. Prevention of contamination, rather than the difficult and costly remediation after contamination has occurred, is a practical and effective means of protecting the community's drinking water supplies.

The majority of the Town is on septic systems. Individuals wanting to install a septic system, to work on their leach field, or to drill a well need to obtain a Wastewater and Potable Water Supply Permit from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). St. Albans therefore does not have authority to review or permit wastewater systems. Any complaint or discovery of a failing septic system may be referred to DEC by the local Health Officer.

Sewage disposal systems shall be designed and constructed in consultation with a qualified state licensed professional engineer or technician in accordance with applicable State regulations.

#### Storm water Management

The amount of storm water runoff from roads, driveways, parking lots, and rooftops increases with development. A detailed explanation of issues associated with storm water runoff can be read in the Natural Resources Chapter. Storm water contributes to water quality impairment and exacerbates flooding in the Town's watersheds. Municipal storm water management helps improve and maintain water quality. Currently, storm water management activities are coordinated by the Public Works Department and largely involve maintenance of roadside ditches and culverts.

The State of Vermont regulates storm water runoff from new development equal to or greater than 1 acre and on construction sites, which disturb 1 or more acres of land. All development requires compliance with the Town of St. Albans Zoning and Subdivision Regulations. Local regulations can require site level storm water best management practices.

#### Solid Waste Management

The Town of St. Albans has adopted a Solid Waste Implementation Plan (SWIP) that is in accordance with the State Solid Waste Plan and supports the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) State Solid Waste Goals.

It is the responsibility of individual households to contract with a private solid waste hauler for curbside trash pick-up or to transport solid waste directly to a drop-off location or transfer station. The closest transfer station accepting solid waste from the Town of St. Albans is the Highgate Transfer Station. In compliance with the SWIP, the Town hosts two annual household hazardous waste collection days at the Town Garage.

#### Parks and Recreation

The Town of St. Albans is located in an ideal setting for recreational and outdoor pursuits. Lake Champlain borders the Town to the west. There is land preserved as open space and for recreation along the shore and on nearby islands. St. Albans also maintains a Town Forest in the northeastern section of Town. The Fairfield Swamp Wildlife Management Area is also located in this part of Town. The Town has a number of multi-use paths including the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail which originates in the North end of St. Albans and connects to adjacent communities, Hard'ack recreational trails and the Collins Perley walking path.

1. Municipal Parks - St. Albans Town provides residents with year-round opportunities to enjoy physical activity and the outdoors. The Public Works Department maintains two parks in the Town along with their facilities. The Town should create a Forest and Parks Committee to recommend how these resources can be used in the future. A brief description of the Town Parks follows:
  - a. St. Albans Town Forest - The St. Albans Town Forest contains 119 acres of wooded land on French Hill. This area provides an excellent place for school trips and other educational programs. Future recreational opportunities could include trails for hiking, cross-country skiing, and snow-shoeing. The St. Albans Town Forest also provides wildlife habitat.
  - b. Cohen Park - Along Maquam Shore Road is a 4 acre park that has open space, a playground, volleyball court, picnic area, grills, restrooms and off-street parking. Cohen Park has 430 feet of shoreline with a rocky beach for swimming. Interest has been expressed to build a tennis court at Cohen Park. The Forest and Park committee should investigate this option.
  - c. Bay Park - At the north end of St. Albans Bay is the 19 acre Bay Park. This area was originally established as a State Park in the 1930's. The Town leased the land from the State beginning in 1987 until 2004 when the State and the Town completed a land swap that gave the Town ownership of Bay Park. Within the Park is a historic stone bath house that can be reserved for gatherings and events. Another space for group events is a pavilion with picnic tables. The park has 2000 feet of shoreline and a pier that provides a great place to fish. Boat slips at the pier can be rented for the season. During the summer a number of events take place in the park such as the summer concert series. The Town dock needs to be repaired and/or elevated in the future. Options for repairing the sea wall also need to be evaluated.

### State Parks

There are several parks owned and operated by the state that offer exceptional recreational opportunities in the Town of St. Albans. While these areas are neither managed nor funded directly by the Town, they are natural and recreational assets to St. Albans.

1. Kill Kare State Park - Previously owned and operated as a summer resort and boys' camp, the State purchased the land on St. Albans Point in 1967 as a mainland connection to Burton Island. A ferry runs between the two parks daily during the summer. In addition the park has a swimming area, boat launch, picnic tables, grills, and an open air pavilion for public use.
2. Burton and Woods Island State Parks – Burton Island is a 253 acre park in Lake Champlain accessible only by boat. A ferry runs from Kill Kare State Park on the mainland during the summer. The island offers 3 miles of shoreline, several hiking trails, a nature center with food service, restrooms with running water and camping by reservation. The neighboring Woods Island is also a state park but does not have ferry service. There is remote camping offered in this smaller park by permit only.

Fairfield Swamp Wildlife Management Area – The Fairfield Swamp is located on the east side of Town, extending into the Towns of Fairfield and Swanton. This area, which contains Dead Creek and acres of forested land and wetlands, is owned and managed by the State Fish and Wildlife Department as critical habitat for rare plants, birds and fish. There is a canoe put in and some walking trails at the site.

#### Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail

The Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail (MVRT) is a 26.2 mile all season path that connects St. Albans to Richford. The gravel path can be used to walk, run or cycle in the warmer months. It is also maintained as a Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) trail in the winter.

#### Recreation Study

In 2005, a random sample survey that was conducted by the Center for Rural Studies at UVM, which can be found at:

<http://crs.uvm.edu/townhealthresources/profile.cfm?areaname=ST.+ALBANS+TOWN#rec>

### **7.4. Public Safety and Emergency Services**

#### Fire Protection

In 1975, the Town of St. Albans Volunteer Fire Department was organized to provide the community with fire protection and emergency rescue services. Since then, the Volunteer Fire Department has expanded to include heavy rescue and water rescue capabilities. The Volunteer Fire Department has a Muster Team that competes in rescue related competitions as well as an Honor Guard that represents the Department at formal events.

The Volunteer Fire Department has over 30 members, one tanker truck, one engine truck, one ladder truck, two rescue trucks and one marine rescue boat.

The Town of St. Albans should conduct an independent analysis of what level of fire suppression services are required in the Town including an analysis of whether we should move towards full-time staff and if so, how many would be required. As more development occurs on the North side of Town consideration of a second station and/or a possible cooperation agreement with the Town of Swanton could be warranted.

#### Police Protection

The Town currently has a pending contract with the City of St. Albans Police Department for law enforcement services. The Town will respond to a public demand for increased services as necessary.

It is anticipated that as the Town of St. Albans grows and continues to develop with expanding commerce and new residential neighborhoods, there will also be greater demand for police protection. The level of law enforcement provided should keep pace with the growth of the Town to ensure that residents and visitors can enjoy a safe and orderly environment.

#### Emergency Medical Services

Amcare is a private medical emergency response company located in St. Albans Town. The Town contracts with Amcare to respond to emergencies. Amcare also provides service to Fairfield, Georgia and St. Albans City. Each town contributes a per capita fee to Amcare in order to receive emergency medical services.

Since the company was started in 1988, it has expanded to 5 ambulances and a staff of 23 employees. Their offices are located in St. Albans City making their response to emergencies timely and effective in the Town. As with their public services, Amcare has indicated there may be a need to expand facilities as the need for services grows.

## **7.5. Municipal Facilities and Property**

### Town Hall

The St Albans Town Hall is located in the only building in town that is on the National Historic Register. While esthetically pleasing, the Town hall has reached the current limits of its utility. The Town is quickly running out of vault space; the Board room is not big enough to accommodate large meetings or Town voting; and electric, plumbing, heating, and computer infrastructure are in need of an overhaul. The building is not compliant with the American with Disabilities Act requirements for accessibility. The Town will conduct a cost/benefit analysis as to whether it is more cost effective to renovate the building or to move the Town Hall in the 2011/12 fiscal year.

### Town Garage

The Town Public Works Department operates out of facilities located on the Bay. The Town will assess moving the Department to another more suitable location, in fiscal year 2011/12. The Town manager and Public Works Director will lead this effort.

## **7.6. Telecommunication Services**

Access to telecommunication services, including high-speed internet and cellular phone service are important for economic development and quality of life for residents of St. Albans. Telecommunications technology can have a significant impact on the economy in rural communities such as St. Albans.

Cable, DSL, and wireless internet service are available through most of St. Albans Town. Residents and businesses have a number of options in their choice of service providers and can determine what is optimal for their individual needs.

## **7.7. Health and Human Services**

We have a number of health services provided by organizations in town and surrounding communities. Hospital services are provided by Northwestern Medical Center and Fletcher Allen Healthcare. Additional services can be found at Northwestern Counseling and Support Services. There are numerous doctor offices and health clinics throughout the Town. Ambulance service is available throughout the Town and all emergency help can be obtained by dialing 911.

## **7.8. Policies and Suggested Actions**

### Policies

1. The Town shall plan for future growth and development so that facilities and services continue to meet the needs of the Town.
2. The Town shall update the Capital Improvements Program and capital budget on a regular basis.
3. The Town shall conduct a cost-benefit analysis on the current Town Hall and Public Works Department Building.
4. The Town shall establish a Forest and Parks Committee.
5. The Town should establish an Energy Committee.

6. The Town shall conduct an independent needs study for the Town for fire suppression services.

#### Suggested Actions

1. Explore and analyze a broad spectrum of the community when considering changes to infrastructure and government provided services.
2. Review and update staff levels as to provide a high standard of customer service.
3. Review and update the CIP on an annual basis.
4. Review and update capital budgets on an annual basis.
5. Establish a Forest and Parks Committee to review, analyze and make recommendations to the Selectboard in regards to the Town Forest.
6. Establish an Energy Committee to review, analyze and make recommendations to the Selectboard in regards to the Town energy.
7. Conduct an independent needs study for future fire suppression services for the Town.
8. Review and update Impact Fee Ordinance.
9. Conduct a cost-benefits analysis of making improvements to the Town Hall and Town Garage for ADA requirements, updating the interior layout, vault space, communication infrastructure, plumbing, heat, electrical and wastewater infrastructure and parking needs comparing the cost of renovating the existing Town Hall and Town Garage with building a new Town Hall and Town Garage at another location.
10. Review and update a plan for future expansion of public water and sewer to meet projected development goals and needs.
11. Review and update the inventory of the location, condition and size of current infrastructure in the Town including water and sewer lines, culverts, ditches, etc.
12. Review and analyze contracted Law Enforcement service providers to determine if law enforcement coverage is adequate.
13. Review and update the implementation of the SWIP including waste diversion, encouraging reuse and recycling of household, industrial and construction waste and steps to increase the recycling of organic waste and to reduce toxic waste.
14. Explore opportunities to coordinate with neighboring communities to identify opportunities to cooperate on public safety issues.
15. Review and update regulations, as necessary, related to storm water in response to regulatory changes.
16. Review and coordinate information with other municipalities, agencies and organizations in implementing MS-4 and other storm water/water quality permits.

This page is left blank intentionally

## **8. ENERGY**

### **8.1. Preface**

The purpose of the Energy Chapter is to ensure that utility services provided by both public and private purveyors will be consistent with the Town Plan and be available to support the community's growth and development as anticipated in the Town Plan. This chapter has been developed to be consistent with the other chapters of the Town Plan. The Land Use Chapter establishes the overall growth strategy for the Town of St. Albans. The system design and timing for extension of utility services providing energy should promote the land use pattern and policies proposed in the Land Use Chapter.

### **8.2. Description**

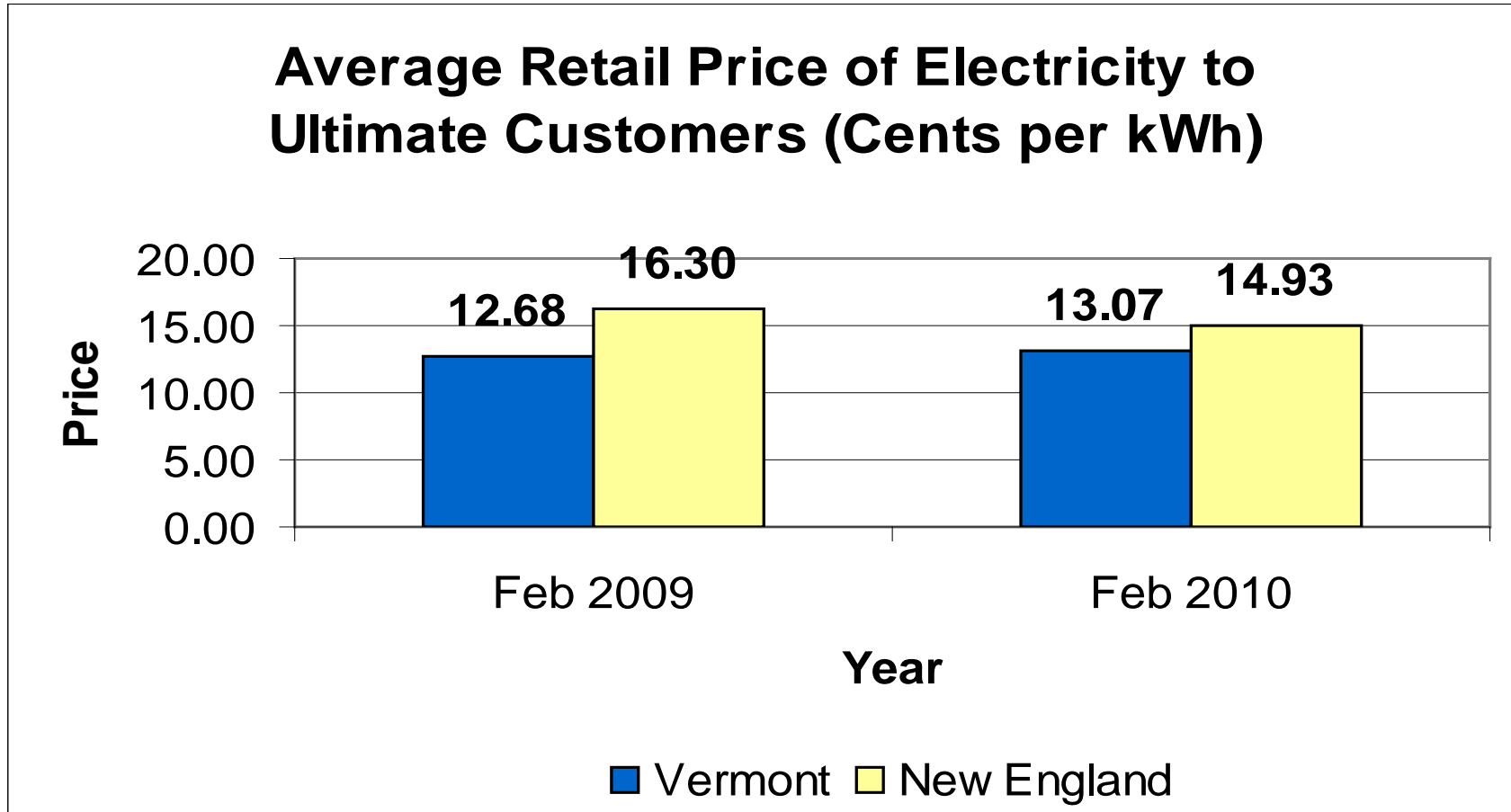
Energy supplies and demand are influenced by economic forces beyond the control of the Town. However there are many strategies that can be implemented at the local level including the promotion of renewable resources, energy efficiency and conservation.

### **8.3. Energy Supply and Consumption**

#### Electricity

St. Albans Town is served by two electric utilities, Central Vermont Public Service (CVPS) and Vermont Electric Cooperative (VELCO). CVPS and VELCO purchase or generate power from a variety of renewable and non-renewable sources. Figure 8.1 shows the cost of electricity.

Figure 8.1 – Town of St. Albans Retail Electricity Price Compared



Energy costs have been escalating for years, and with the uncertainty of energy resources in the future, the Town should do what it can to reduce energy use to reduce energy costs.

### Heat

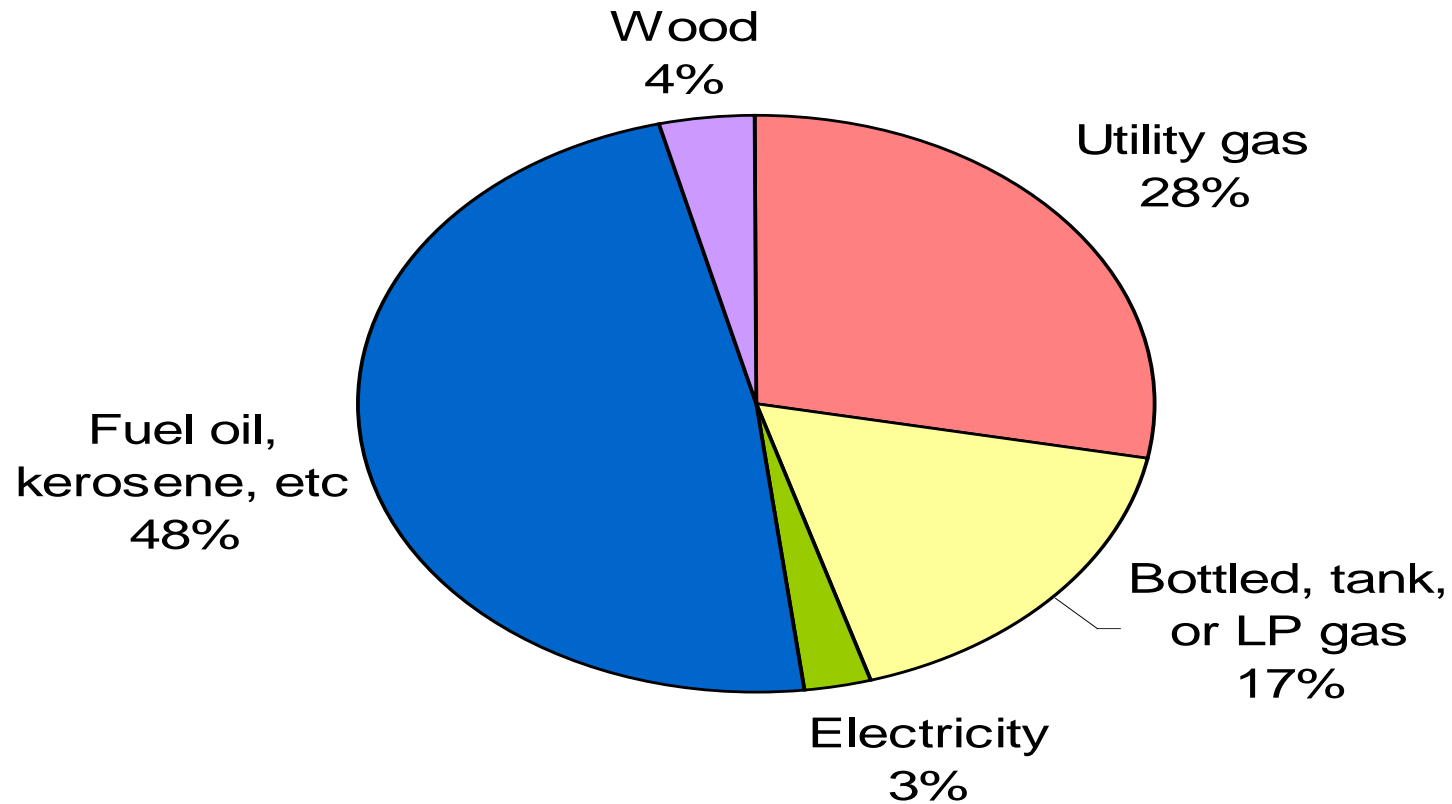
The Town of St. Albans has several sources of energy for heat that includes fuel oil, kerosene, liquid propane, natural gas, wood, and electricity (**Figure 8.2**). Private distributors sell fuel oil, kerosene, and propane to residences and businesses. Vermont's only natural gas company is Vermont Gas and it supplies natural gas from Alberta, Canada across the TransCanada pipeline.

Currently the Town Hall, Fire Department and Highway Garage utilize heating oil. The Town of St. Albans Educational Center is heated with a combination of natural gas and woodchips.

Programs administered through the Franklin/Grand Isle Community Action Council, which are specifically targeted to help income-eligible residents, include seasonal and emergency fuel assistance, supported in part through the WARMTH donations collected by private utilities, and free weatherization services to help reduce heating costs.

Figure 8.2 – Town of St. Albans Heating Source

## Primary Heating Source in St. Albans Town, 2000 U.S. Census



Source: 2000 U.S. Census

#### **8.4. Energy Conservation and Efficiency**

At the local level, energy conservation generally falls 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 site design; and energy used for transportation.

The Town should create an Energy Committee to take advantage at a Town level the many financial resources available for energy efficiency programs.

##### Municipal Energy Efficiency

Municipal energy savings can be realized by conducting energy audits and exploring the recommendations. The Town of St. Albans should explore energy efficiency programs available through Efficiency Vermont.

##### Land Use Patterns and Site Plan Design

Clustered developments can help to reduce energy consumption by reducing the distance energy has to travel from source to consumption. At the site level, building construction, orientation and landscaping can effectively reduce energy demand.

##### Transportation

Gasoline for motor vehicles makes up the largest percentage of total energy used in Vermont (VT DPS Utility Facts, 2008). The Town of St. Albans should explore reduction strategies through efficient land use patterns and conservation efforts that are balanced against other competing concerns such as storm water impacts. The Town of St. Albans should explore and encourage carpooling, public transportation, pedestrian and bicycle accessibility. In addition local job creation can decrease the energy requirements for commuter trips. The Town of St. Albans should explore and encourage the opportunities for local food and commodity production and consumption to further reduce the community's transportation energy use. The Town could encourage the growth of retail, commercial and service oriented businesses in clusters and near higher densely populated areas of the Town to reduce the travel time and thereby reducing transportation energy use.

#### **8.5. Local Energy Generation Opportunities**

Energy generation facilities that connect to the Vermont power grid are exempt from local zoning. They require a Certificate of Public Good from the Vermont Public Service Board (also known as Section 248 review). The Town of St. Albans should participate in the Public Service Board hearings to ensure that the Town of St. Albans desires are represented.

Various energy generation opportunities may be viable for municipal, residential, business, or farm applications in the Town of St. Albans which can include wood, solar, wind, biogas and geothermal. The Town of St. Albans should explore and discuss advantages and disadvantages of local energy generation options. The Town should facilitate the implementation of energy efficient technology by homeowners, businesses and industry.

Wood (sometimes referred to as biomass) has been traditionally used as a principal source of heat for much of the Town's history. The Town of St. Albans School has changed to a partial woodchip heating system under a state-sponsored program.

The Town of St. Albans is on the low end of being viable for both small scale and larger wind projects (Vermont Environmental Research Associates, 2004). However, recent turbine technology has allowed for wind power facilities of varying sizes across the state.

There are currently six farms in Franklin County generating electricity for CVPS, including one in the Town of St. Albans. According to CVPS, the farm in the Town of St. Albans produces over 15 million pounds of milk a year and is projected to produce 1.4 million KWH (kilowatt-hours) of electricity a year. In 2009, a Central Digester Feasibility study was conducted. This study explored the possibilities of establishing a community digester for dairy manure management and should be studied further. Further study should include mitigation to environmental impacts on water quality, reduction of methane emissions and renewable energy.

## **8.6. Policies and Suggested Actions**

### Policies

1. The Town should be as energy efficient as is economically feasible.

### Suggested Actions

1. Explore and analyze energy efficient programs.
2. Explore and analyze renewable energy sources, this includes a Community Digester Program.
3. Review and analyze the opportunities to implement energy efficiency programs with Town Hall and Public Works Building.
4. Review and analyze energy efficiency and conservation against other competing interests such as environmental management.
5. Review and update regulations to provide incentives for energy efficient developments in conjunction with State incentives.
6. Explore opportunities for property owners and publish the information to retrofit existing structures for energy efficiency.
7. Explore and publish energy efficiency programs for the public.
8. Explore funding sources for retro-fitting Town Hall with energy efficiency programs.
9. Explore, analyze and encourage innovative technology that creates/conserves energy resources.
10. Create a Town Energy Committee
11. Conduct a cost-benefit study for alternative energy sources for public and private buildings.
12. Review and update regulations to allow and encourage small-scale and community scale renewable energy generators.
13. Continue the exploration and analysis of a community digester.
14. Explore and consult with federal, state, and local groups and the development community when developing new regulations relating to energy efficiency and conservation.

This page is left blank intentionally

## 9. JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

### 9.1. Description

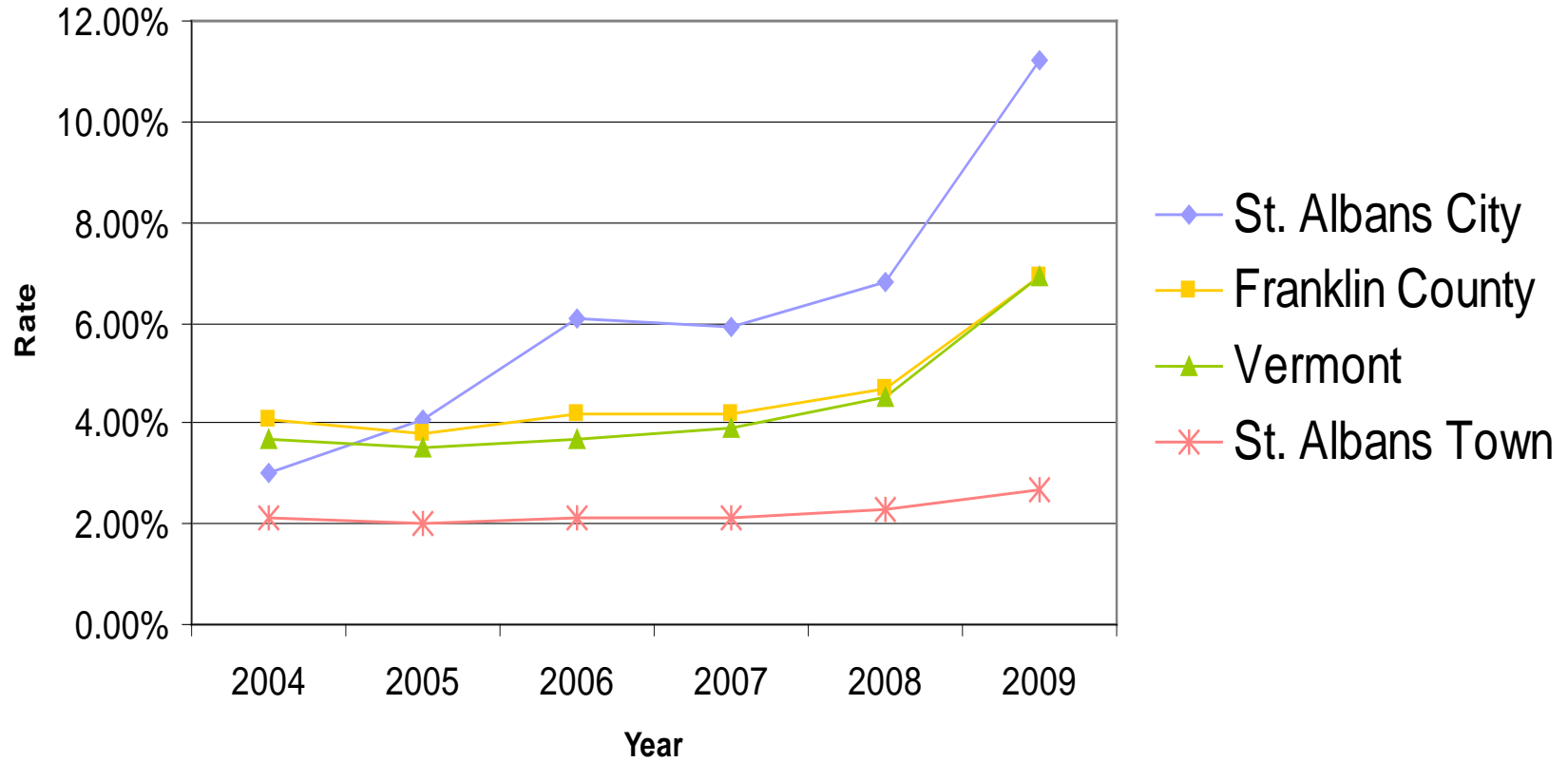
Several of Vermont's statewide planning goals relate to economic development and its critical role in creating healthy and vibrant communities. A well-planned community with sufficient infrastructure, available housing options, quality education and a vibrant quality of life encourages employers to locate and stay.

### 9.2. Employment

The Town of St. Albans has a civilian labor force of 3,230 (Vermont Department of Labor, 2009). The civilian labor force consists of the population aged 16 and over classified as employed and unemployed. The unemployment rate in 2009 was 2.7%, which is very low compared with the State, Franklin County, and neighboring municipalities.

Unemployment rates nationally have risen due to the recent economic recession. Unemployment in Vermont and Franklin County increased approximately 2% between 2008 and 2009, however the unemployment rate in the Town of St. Albans has remained fairly stable (**Figure 9.1**). The ability to fend off any substantial increase in the unemployment rate indicates a resilient labor force well matched with available employment opportunities.

Figure 9.1 – Town of St. Albans Unemployment Rate (2004-2009)



According to the U.S. Census Local Employment Dynamics program, there were 2,334 primary jobs held by the St. Albans Town labor force in 2008. A primary job is the highest paying job for an individual worker for the year. Close to 40% of these jobs were located in the Town of St. Albans or the City of St. Albans. Over 30% were located in various Chittenden County towns; the remainder was in Swanton and other locations in Franklin County and the greater northwest Vermont region.

The Town of St. Albans labor force is employed in a variety of occupations. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, management, professional and related occupations make up the greatest percentage of the labor force at 32%. Sales and office occupations were reported by 26% of the labor force; production, transportation, and material moving occupations by 17%; service occupations by 13%; construction, extraction and maintenance occupations by 10%; and farming, fishing and forestry occupations by about 2%. Many businesses are home-based in the Town of St. Albans, helping to reduce commuting.

There are several indicators of income that can be considered. The median family adjusted gross income for the Town of St. Albans in 2007 was \$60,372, which is higher than the state and county figures of \$58,069 and \$55,766 respectively.

However, the annual average wage reported by the Vermont Department of Labor places the Town of St. Albans below the median for the State and Franklin County

### **9.3. Employment Options in St. Albans Town**

Average wages are influenced not only by the mix of industries and occupations in an area, but also the proportion of part-time and seasonal jobs. Such jobs will lower the annual average, although they may pay a competitive hourly wage (**Table 9.1**).

| <b>Table 9.1 – Town of St. Albans Income Statistics</b>                               |                                    |                          |
|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
|   | 2008 Median Adjusted Family Income | 2007 Annual Average Wage |
| St. Albans Town   | \$60,372                           | \$31,266                 |
| Franklin County   | \$55,766                           | \$36,119                 |
| Vermont   | \$58,069                           | \$38,317                 |
| Source: Vermont Department of Taxes and Vermont Department of Employment and Training |                                    |                          |

St. Albans Town is the destination for many commuters in the region. In fact, close to 30% of the Franklin County workforce commutes to work at a job located in St. Albans Town. Manufacturing jobs are concentrated in the St. Albans Town Industrial Park owned by the Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation. It hosts eight national industries employing approximately 900 people.

There are two additional industrial parks located within St. Albans Town - Franklin Park West and Franklin Business Park. These parks are being developed in phases with a total build-out plan of approximately 40 commercial/light industrial lots.

In addition to industrial and business parks within the Town of St. Albans, there are several major employers located near the Town of St. Albans. This affords employment options while maintaining residency with the Town of St. Albans and enjoying the benefits of Town life. By maintaining our current regulation that allows multi-family housing in the growth centers, our Town residents can be located near businesses and services thus encouraging and supporting local economic development in these areas.

#### **9.4. Retail Sales and Services**

In the Town of St. Albans retail sales and services are mostly located at Exit 19 and 20 off of Interstate 89. The retail services include a variety of grocery, hardware, appliance, clothing and other retail stores. In addition there are a variety of eating establishments that range from fast-food to sit-down dining.

The Town of St. Albans is exploring opportunities to expand the retail and restaurant choices. The concentration of these retail stores and restaurants should be in the designated growth centers because the infrastructure support is already in place to accommodate such growth. The expansion of retail stores and restaurants will give the community more options and variety

#### **9.5. Policies and Suggested Actions**

##### Policy

1. The Town shall promote a strong and diverse economy

##### Suggested Actions

1. Explore, review and analyze economic opportunities.
2. Encourage the creation of job opportunities.
3. Explore, review and analyze retail and service providers to meet the needs of the community.
4. Review and update regulations that provide opportunities for new employers to locate in the Town and for existing employers to expand operations.
5. Explore opportunities to attract new industry and retain current industry.
6. Review and construct infrastructure that attracts commercial and industrial development that is in keeping with the Transportation Chapter.
7. Explore opportunities to produce process and distribute locally grown food products and forest resources.
8. Review and update regulations in the North End Growth Overlay and South End Growth Overlay.
9. Review and update zoning regulations to attract business and industry.
10. Explore opportunities to work with economic development organizations, including the Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation, to attract and retain industry in the Town's industrial parks.

11. Work with the Federal, State, County agencies and the private sector to explore employment incentives and opportunities for the citizens.
12. Explore the option for a Redevelopment Department.

This page is left blank intentionally

## 10. EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE

### 10.1. Description

Public education is critical to the future of the St. Albans community. Our public schools prepare students to be successful as citizens, as lifelong learners, and as a vital part of the State and local workforce. Education is the most powerful tool at our disposal to support vibrant community, economic, and workforce development and St. Albans has three excellent schools: St. Albans Town Educational Center, Bellows Free Academy St. Albans, and the Northwest Technical Center.

Franklin County is the fastest growing county in Vermont. In part that is because the Town of St. Albans leaders have developed a well thought out plan, and have built the infrastructure necessary to support growth. The Town continues to attract business and demands for a larger workforce increases in addition to growth in population. The schools of St. Albans are prepared to support the development of that workforce and to accommodate an increasing student population.

As the State and Federal focuses on efficiency and outcomes increase, the logic of a unified K-14 school district makes sense. The current configuration includes a separate board of School Directors overseeing an autonomous district in St. Albans Town PK-8, St. Albans City PK-8, and the Bellows Free Academy Union District #48 grades 9-12. Northwest Technical Center serves over 200 students, in addition to over 1500 adults through continuing education courses. Community College of Vermont serves approximately 700 students leading to an associate degree (grades 13 and 14) and increasingly supports the high school and technical center through dual enrollment options and other natural links. It makes sense to explore ways to make the system more efficient in the future, providing the outcomes needed while keeping costs down. This will come through some form of governance consolidation.

The schools strive to provide an education that incorporates advanced technology, learning strategies, and subject matter that will meet the needs of all students and will provide a strong foundation for 21<sup>st</sup> century opportunities. Over 40% of the students who receive their initial schooling in St. Albans go on to succeed in their post-secondary education and in a wide-variety of careers. It is important for children and adults to be well-rounded citizens; therefore, the Town places importance on extra-curricular activities, athletics, and community involvement in addition to academic success.

Providing educational opportunities for all ages inspires residents to be lifelong learners and to actively pursue their interests. As the Town experiences development and population growth, it is important to continually assess whether education is keeping pace with these changes. The public schools in St. Albans are part of the Franklin Central Supervisory Union.

### 10.2. Education

#### Grades K-8

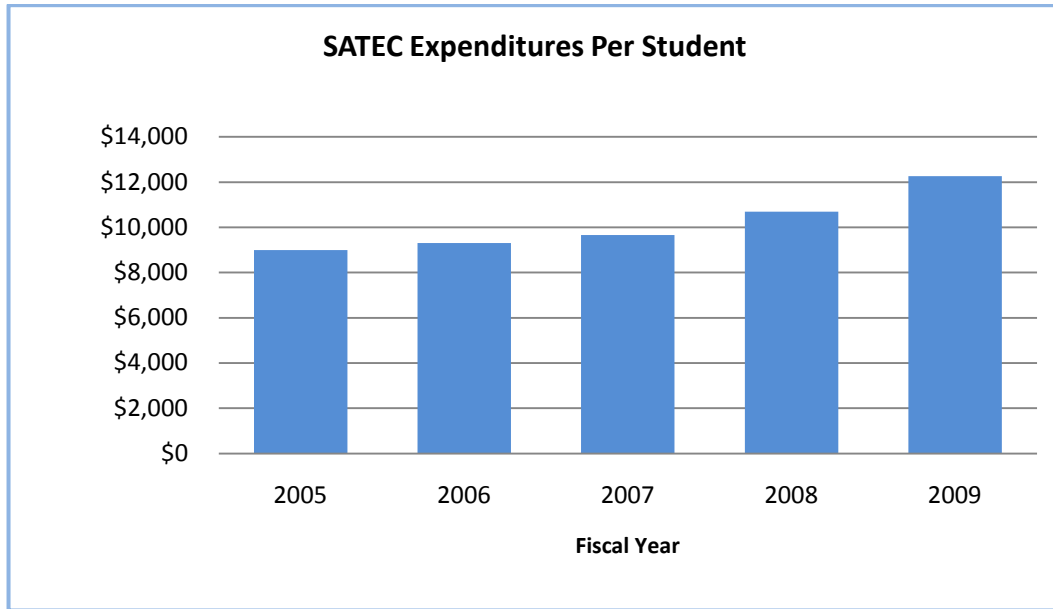
Elementary education is provided at the St. Albans Town Educational Center (SATEC) located on South Main Street. The education program utilizes the latest technology and methods for instruction to ensure that all students receive a high-quality education, regardless of their learning style or individual needs. The school's facilities have been renovated and updated in recent years, and there are no plans currently for any

construction. Although the buildings and grounds are in good condition, regular maintenance and minor improvements will be considered as necessary. SATEC is primarily heated by woodchips, and this has saved the school significantly on heating costs.

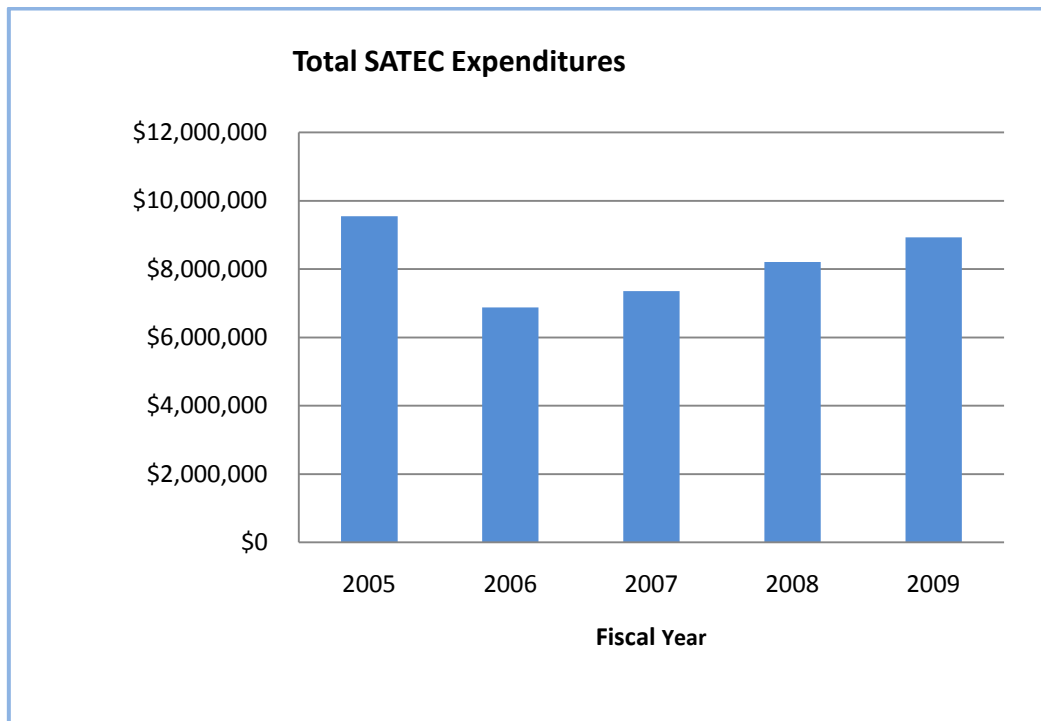
Since 2005 student enrollment has fluctuated between 665 and 705 students. The school has a capacity of about 850 students. The last enrollment projection study conducted for SATEC was completed in 2006, which predicted enrollment would drop. However, enrollment has increased over the past five years, which will likely continue as the Town population grows. Enrollment projections allow the school board to plan more effectively and ensure that quality education will be available to all students in St. Albans Town. The average student-to-teacher ratio has been about 11:1 for the past five years.

The school expenditures are based on the total amount spent on instruction and instructional materials, student services, staff, leadership, and extracurricular activities. Expenditures per student have been steadily increasing (**Figure 10.1**). Total expenditures have been increasing since 2006 but are still less than the total in 2005 (**Figure 10.2**).

**Figures 10.1 – SATEC Expenditures per Student**



**Figures 10.2 – SATEC Expenditures**



### Grades 9-12

Students from the Town of St. Albans attend Bellows Free Academy (BFA) for secondary education. The school is located on Main Street in St. Albans City. BFA houses a library that enhances learning with both in-house and online reference material and a media center with state-of-the-art audio/video communication equipment. The school also includes an auditorium for theater productions and a separate athletic complex.

During the 2009 – 2010 school year, renovations on the auditorium began. This will be beneficial for adding space for performances that will likely attract outside touring companies, potentially adding revenue to the school. The expansion will include improved dressing rooms, storage space, and new restrooms. In addition, this renovation will add three classrooms to help alleviate crowding as BFA nears capacity.

Athletics mostly take place at the Collins Perley Sports Complex, which is located outside the City on the Southeast side of Town. Within BFA is also the Northwest Technical Center, which offers courses in 4 four main subject areas: Marketing and Hospitality, Communication and Technology, Medical and Human Services, and Engineering Technologies. The NWTC serves approximately 200 students and 1500 adults annually.

Approximately half of the BFA students come from St. Albans City and Town. The balance is from tuition students from Fairfield, Georgia, Sheldon, Bakersfield, and Alburg. In the past five years school enrollment has fluctuated between 1100 and 1200 students. The school capacity is adequate for current enrollment, but administrators are anticipating future growth that might require expansion of the facility.

### Higher Education

Several opportunities exist for higher and continuing education in St. Albans as well as in the region. Community College of Vermont has a campus in St. Albans on South Main Street, offering special interest courses and diploma programs. The University of Vermont has an Extension office in St. Albans that also provides opportunities for lifelong learning for St. Albans Town residents.

There are several higher education institutions in Burlington, about 40 minutes south of St. Albans Town, including the University of Vermont, Champlain College, St. Michael's College, and Burlington College. Johnson State College and Lyndonville State College are also within commuting distance of St. Albans Town.

### Non-Traditional Education

The Soar Learning Center is operated by Northwestern Counseling and Support Services and is in its tenth year of operation. Soar Learning Center has grown from three students to 80 - 90 students in academic grade levels 1 through 12. The goal of the SOAR Learning Center is to teach students strategies and techniques to achieve success in school and life. The Soar Learning Center provides an alternative environment for students to obtain strategies and tools for continued success.

## **10.3. Childcare and Early Education**

Any person providing childcare to more than two families must register in the State of Vermont. According to the State of Vermont's Building Bright Futures listing, there are approximately 28 registered childcare homes and licensed providers in the Town of St. Albans. Additional childcare homes and/or licensed providers exist in the surrounding communities. Access to quality, affordable childcare enables a productive and stable

workforce, making it a key element for successful economic development. Quality childcare also supports school readiness, thereby saving costs in K-12 education.

#### **10.4. Policies and Suggested Actions**

##### Policies

1. The Town shall work with the school boards and supervisory unions to ensure a high quality level of education for the Town of St. Albans.
2. The Town shall encourage childcare facilities for the benefit of the Town residents.

##### Suggested Actions

1. Review and monitor the pace of development and population growth in order to evaluate the existing and projected capacity of the educational system in relation to growth.
2. Review and update regulations that will enable development of childcare facilities to meet the needs of residents and the local workforce.
3. Explore and analyze the availability of safe and affordable childcare.
4. Integrate childcare issues into the planning process.
5. Explore opportunities to support the efforts of school boards and supervisory unions to examine options for consolidation and unification of districts and schools
6. Explore opportunities to construct sidewalks and other pedestrian and bicycle paths to connect neighborhoods and schools, as defined in the Transportation Chapter.
7. Utilize locally designated funds and pursue state and federal grant funds for design and construction of bike and pedestrian path projects.
8. Explore funding sources for sidewalks and bike paths.
9. SATEC should undertake an updated enrollment projection study.
10. The Schools should assess feasibility for continued improvements and additions to school infrastructure.
11. The Schools should provide capital budget requests to the Town for identified capital needs.
12. The Schools shall examine the cost-effectiveness of energy-efficiency measures in the schools.
13. The Schools shall provide high quality education which meets state mandates.
14. The Schools shall ensure that the cost of education shall remain affordable to all residents.
15. The Schools shall encourage programs for preschool and elementary age children that support family activities, such as reading together, and encourage parenting skills programs.
16. The Schools shall continue to incorporate technology and the most up-to-date curriculum in their programs.
17. The Schools shall accommodate all learning styles and special needs of their students.
18. The Schools shall continue to provide varied opportunities for their students to be engaged in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities and athletics.
19. The Schools shall promote teaching all its citizens, through educational programs, about good farming practices and the benefits of eating fresh, healthy food.
20. The Schools shall encourage the development of public, private and non-profit programs designed to provide educational programs for all ages.
21. The Schools shall support, in partnership with area business and industry, public and private cooperation in offering vocational and basic skills training.
22. The Schools will promote lifetime learning.
23. The schools will exam the feasibility of consolidation for a more efficient governing structure within the school system.

This page is left blank intentionally

## **11. PLANNING WITH ADJACENT COMMUNITIES AND THE REGION**

### **11.1. Description**

Municipalities do not exist apart from one another and land use planning in one community can affect land use in neighboring communities. This Chapter considers the compatibility of proposed land use in this Town Plan with land use in adjacent communities.

### **11.2. Consideration of Land Use Planning in Adjacent Communities**

The Town of St. Albans has the following adjacent communities: City of St. Albans, Town of Georgia, Town of Swanton, Town of Fairfield, The Town of North Hero and The Town of Grand Isle.

The City of St. Albans adopted its most recent Municipal Plan in 2006. The Town of Georgia adopted its most recent Town Plan in September of 2006.

The Town of Swanton adopted its most recent Town Plan in 2005. The Town of Fairfield adopted its most recent Town Plan in 2009. The Town of North Hero is located across Lake Champlain. The Town of Grand Isle is located across Lake Champlain.

As development continues to grow, the Town of St. Albans along with the adjacent communities will need to share information as not to cause undo harm to each other. The Town of St. Albans and the adjacent communities should continue to have open dialogue on planning issues that could affect each other.

### **11.3. Consideration of Policies, Goals and Implementation**

The Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) is the regional planning agency that oversees regional planning issues. The NRPC is a coalition of the communities within Franklin County and Grand Isle County. . All communities, including the Town St. Albans, have equal voting representation by two locally appointed members of the governing Board of Commissioners. In 2007, the NRPC adopted the Northwest Regional Plan.

The Town of St. Albans is active on several subcommittees and advisory committees of the NRPC. The Town of St. Albans has a representative on the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), which is the regional transportation plan. The Town of St. Albans has a representative on the NRPC Policy/Project Review Committee, which reviews and comments on all Act 250 applications as they relate to the Northwest Regional Plan.

### **11.4. Policies and Suggested Actions**

#### Policies

1. The Town shall be aware of the effect of growth and development on the region and the state, as well as the community in which it takes place.

#### Suggested Actions

1. Participate in the Northwest Regional Planning Commission and the committees.
2. Review and analyze information to be shared with adjacent communities and the region.
3. Explore opportunities to collaborate with other municipalities and regional organizations to address important regional issues, such as improving water quality in Lake Champlain.

4. Review, analyze and consider the impact of land use decisions on adjacent municipalities.

This page is left blank intentionally

## **12. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN**

### **12.1. Description**

There are various ways to implement the goals and policies of this Town Plan, which fall into two general categories – regulatory and non-regulatory options. Regulatory options consist of land use regulations and other Town ordinances. Non-regulatory implementation options include, but are not limited to capital planning, special studies, and advisory commissions. Specific actions that will implement the Town Plan are included in Table 1.1 below and at the end of each chapter

Much of this Plan will be implemented through the Town's land use regulations, which include the Zoning Bylaws and the Subdivision Regulations. The Zoning Bylaws and the Subdivision Regulations will be revised in conformance with this plan within two years. Other local regulations, including the Road Ordinance, require updates and revisions to reflect the priorities of this Plan.

Capital planning is another important tool used by the Town to implement the Plan. It enables the Town to raise revenue for anticipated needs, provides flexibility in moving priorities around in an emergency, and improves the ability of the school and Town to plan capital projects in accordance with one another. It also serves as the basis for impact fees. In May of 2011, the Town of St. Albans Selectboard reviewed and approved the Five-Year Capital Improvement Program. In addition, the Capital Improvement Program is to be revised annually.

The Planning Commission will periodically review the Implementation actions of the Town Plan and make recommendations to the Selectboard and Town Manager on programs and projects necessary for effective implementation.

### **12.2. Policies and Suggested Actions**

#### Policy

1. The Town should implement actions in the Town Plan to achieve the policies to implement the vision.

This page is left blank intentionally

## Appendix A

24 V.S.A. § 4382. The plan for a municipality

§ 4382. The plan for a municipality

(a) A plan for a municipality may be consistent with the goals established in section 4302 of this title and compatible with approved plans of other municipalities in the region and with the regional plan and shall include 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, and to protect the environment;

(2) A land use plan, consisting of a map and statement of present and prospective land uses, indicating those areas proposed for forests, recreation, agriculture (using the agricultural lands identification process established in 6 V.S.A. § 8), residence, commerce, industry, public and semi-public uses and open spaces reserved for flood plain, wetland protection, or other conservation purposes; and setting forth the present and prospective location, amount, intensity and character of such land uses and the appropriate timing or sequence of land development activities in relation to the provision of necessary community facilities and service;

(3) A transportation plan, consisting of a map and statement of present and prospective transportation and circulation facilities showing existing and proposed highways and streets by type and character of improvement, and where pertinent, parking facilities, transit routes, terminals, bicycle paths and trails, scenic roads, airports, railroads and port facilities, and other similar facilities or uses, with indications of priority of need;

(4) A utility and facility plan, consisting of a map and statement of present and prospective community facilities and public utilities showing existing and proposed educational, recreational and other public sites, buildings and facilities, including hospitals, libraries, power generating plants and transmission lines, water supply, sewage disposal, refuse disposal, storm drainage and other similar facilities and activities, and recommendations to meet future needs for community facilities and services, with indications of priority of need, costs and method of financing;

(5) A statement of policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic and historic features and resources;

(6) An educational facilities plan consisting of a map and statement of present and projected uses and the local public school system;

(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, including an analysis of energy resources, needs, scarcities, costs and

problems within the municipality, a statement of policy on the conservation of energy, including programs, such as thermal integrity standards for buildings, to implement that policy, a statement of policy on the development of renewable energy resources, a statement of policy on patterns and densities of land use likely to result in conservation of energy;

(10) A housing element that shall include a recommended program for addressing low and moderate income persons' housing needs as identified by the regional planning commission pursuant to subdivision 4348a(a)(9) of this title. The program should account for permitted accessory dwelling units, as defined in subdivision 4412(1) (E) of this title, which provide affordable housing.

(b) The maps called for by this section may be incorporated on one or more maps, and may be referred to in each separate statement called for by this section.

(c) Where appropriate, and to further the purposes of subsection 4302(b) of this title, a municipal plan shall be based upon inventories, studies, and analyses of current trends and shall consider the probable social and economic consequences of the proposed plan. Such studies may consider or contain, but not be limited to:

(1) Population characteristics and distribution, including income and employment;

(2) The existing and projected housing needs by amount, type, and location for all economic groups within the municipality and the region;

(3) Existing and estimated patterns and rates of growth in the various land use classifications, and desired patterns and rates of growth in terms of the community's ability to finance and provide public facilities and services.

(d) Where appropriate, a municipal plan may provide for the use of "transit passes" or other evidence of reduced demand for parking spaces in lieu of parking spaces. (Added 1967, No. 334 (Adj. Sess.), § 1, eff. March 23, 1968; amended 1971, No. 257 (Adj. Sess.), § 7, eff. April 11, 1972; 1975, No. 236 (Adj. Sess.), § 2; 1979, No. 174 (Adj. Sess.), § 8; 1985, No. 188 (Adj. Sess.), § 10; 1987, No. 200 (Adj. Sess.), §§ 8, 10, eff. July 1, 1989; 1989, No. 280 (Adj. Sess.), § 7; 1991, No. 130 (Adj. Sess.), § 2; 1995, No. 122 (Adj. Sess.), § 2, eff. Apr. 25, 1996; 2003, No. 115 (Adj. Sess.), § 89.)