TOWN OF ST. ALBANS
Franklin County, Vermont

Town Plan

Selectboard Approved on Monday June 15, 2020

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 Statue and for the citizens of the Town of St. Albans.

The Town of St. Albans Selectboard members were all present at their June 15th, 2020 Public Hearing on the Town Plan and the following vote:

Approve

_____
Selectboard Member & Chair, Brendan Deso

_____
Selectboard Member & Vice Chair, Jessica Frost

_____
Selectboard Member, Erin Creley

_____
Selectboard Member, Stan Dukas

_____
Selectboard Member, Jonathan Giroux

The Town of St. Albans Town Plan is hereby adopted on the 15th of June in this year 2020.

_____
Witnessed in form and signature by:
Executive Assistant, Jennifer Gray

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

2020 Planning Commission
Planning Commission Chair, Erin Creley
Planning Commission Vice Chair, Casey Toof
Planning Commission Clerk, Al Voegele
Planning Commissioner, Anne Pomeroy
Planning Commissioner, Hannah Rounds

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.

Town of St. Albans
Planning Commission
Report on Proposed Town Plan update

The St. Albans Planning Commission has drafted a Town Plan update (hereafter referred to as the Town Plan or simply the Plan), as described in 24 V.S.A., Chapter 117, Subchapter 005.

A draft of the Town Plan update is available at St. Albans Town Hall, 579 Lake Road, St. Albans Bay, VT or to request a printed copy please contact Ned Connell at 802-524-7589 or nconnell@ stablanstown.com.

This report has been drafted in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 4384 (c), and its purpose is to explain the proposed Plan's consistency with State planning goals and to describe the likely effects of any new land designations in the Plan.

Extent to which the 2020 St. Albans Town Plan is consistent with the goals established in 24 V.S.A. § 4302

Each chapter has goals that are supported with various policy recommendations that touch upon many aspects of the quality of life in our community. Since September 2016 the Planning Commission has been developing the goals and policy recommendations in the Town Plan update, as compiled from various sources including:

- the previous 2017 St. Albans Town Plan;
- priorities adopted by the Selectboard;
- updates from various state and federal programs and initiatives; and,
- community input received at public meetings and submitted in writing.

The following table appears in the Town Plan. It links each of the 24 V.S.A. § 4302 state planning goals with the Town's goals under which are found relevant policy recommendations.

MET BY TOWN PLANNING GOAL		
State Planning Goals	**Met by**	**Comments**
1. Establish a coordinated, comprehensive planning process and policy framework	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6, 3.7 10.1	The Town Plan seeks to balance the use of resources with taxpayers' abilities to provide funds. The Town Plan promotes growth and development to maintain the character, form, and quality of life in St. Albans.
2. Encourage citizen participation	3.1, 9.1	The Plan was discussed in many public meetings, and special advertising was used to alert the community to the opportunity.
3. Consider the use of resources and the consequences of growth and development	3.2, 3.5, 3.6, 3.8, 4.1, 5.1, 6.2	The Plan proposes to capitalize upon and continue St. Albans' mixed development densities and smart growth ideals.
4. Encourage and assist municipalities to work creatively together	3.4, 3.5, 4.3, 4.9, 7.2, 9.1, 10.1	St. Albans has and will always try to work creatively with surrounding municipalities to meet our challenges.
5. Maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside	3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2, 4.5, 7.2, 9.1, 9.2	St. Albans embodies this goal and the Plan proposes to continue its efficient pattern of smart growth development.
6. Provide a strong and diverse economy	3.1, 4.1, 6.1, 7.2, 9.2	The Plan proposes to maintain and grow a wide range of available options for jobs and retail businesses within our growth centers.
7. Broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities	9.1, 7.1	The Plan proposes that the Town engage as it is able to and work with entities within the region to achieve this goal.
8. Provide for safe, convenient, economic and energy efficient transportation systems	4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.9	The Town's road network is walkable and efficient, and the Plan proposes to expand and improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities to make them easier and safer.
9. Identify, protect, and preserve important natural and historic features	3.7, 5.1	The Plan identifies the important and unique areas in Town with settings and features to protect and preserve.

MET BY TOWN PLANNING GOAL		
State Planning Goals	**Met by**	**Comments**
10. Maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, forests, and other land resources	3.1, 4.3, 4.8, 5.1, 8.2, 10.1, 10.2	The Plan proposes for the Town act with others to maintain and improve air, water, wildlife, forests, and other parts of our environment.
11. Make efficient use of energy, provide for the development of renewable energy resources, and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases	8.1, 8.2, 4.1,	The Plan identifies heating energy sources, vehicle miles traveled, energy burden, increasing energy resilience, reducing greenhouse gases, and giving sustainability.
12. Maintain and enhance recreational opportunities	4.2, 4.8, 11.1	The Plan celebrates the Town's recreational resources and proposes their preservation and improvement.
13. Encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries	3.2, 5.1	The Plan highlights St. Albans' agricultural heritage and present farming life that interconnect with this goal.
14. Provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont's natural resources	5.1, 8.2, 10.2	The Plan advocates for the preservation and cultivation of the Town's current natural resources, which benefits the landscape of the surrounding region.
15. Ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing	3.5, 3.8, 4.2, 6.1, 6.3, 9.2	The Plan highlights neighborhoods and providing housing, references a recent housing study and includes multiple proposals for ensuring affordable and safe housing for a broad range of residents.
16. Plan for, finance, and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services	3.3, 3.6, 7.1,	The Plan contains multiple proposals toward this goal.
17. Ensure the availability of safe and affordable childcare	9.2	The Plan proposes to reduce barriers and achieve this goal.
18. Encourage flood resilient communities	3.7, 10.1, 10.2, 10.3	The Plan includes multiple proposals toward this goal and references the local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1. Vision Statement

The following are a broad vision for our future community and describes the prospective civic aspirations of our citizens.

The Town of St. Albans is and will continue to be a community where there is:

- **a balance between residential, commercial, and industrial development;**
- **a robust, sustainable, and equitable economy;**
- **a common value in local agricultural businesses; and,**
- **an appreciation of our natural, cultural, scenic, and historical resources.**

This Town Plan includes goals, policies, and actions that result in the future described by the vision statement.

1.2. 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.

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.

1.3. Foundational Goals for the Town Plan

Goal - Provide a means for St. Albans to reach its desired future: The overriding intention of this Town Plan is to provide a means for shaping policies and land use decisions in a manner that enables the community to reach the future described by the citizens in the Vision Statement.

Goal - Manage growth in a logical and sustainable manner: This 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 exceed the goals for planning established by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) and all related legislation.

Goal - Provide for constant citizen involvement: Continuous public involvement in the planning process is critical within the formal process for reviews and updates of the Town Plan. The development of St. Albans is continuously monitored to ensure that growth is occurring in an orderly fashion that is not and will not adversely affect the Town's ability to provide adequate services, facilities, and infrastructure.

Goal - Conduct coordinated planning: In recognition of the regional nature of many planning, development, and growth issues, St. Albans actively engages in communication and cooperation with the NRPC, Franklin County, and neighboring towns to ensure the orderly development of the surrounding area.

Goal - Control sprawl through the designation of Growth Center Overlays, Lake Shore Overlays, and our Unified Development Bylaws by:

- Providing for development patterns that are compact and orderly through the designation of Growth Center Overlays and Lake Shore Overlays.
- Providing for the conservation of natural resource lands by recognizing of the importance of these lands for the economic success and continued quality of life for residents, the region, and Vermont.
- Protecting sensitive environmental areas by recognizing the importance of to the economic success, sustainability of human activities, and continued quality of life of the people of the Town of St. Albans, the region, and Vermont.
- Providing for the coordinated sustainable economic health of the community by 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.

Goal – Acquisition of private property through eminent domain as only a final option: The Town shall restrict the utilization of the principles and or practices of acquiring private property through eminent domain except in situations where the health and safety of the public is at risk as understandably defined, clearly determined, and after all other reasonable options have been explored by the Selectboard.

1.4. 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 in Town. 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, St. Albans began a comprehensive planning program aimed at addressing the many complex issues pertaining to community development.

An update to the Town Plan was required in accord with Vermont Statutes. The Planning Commission undertook the task of constructing a revised town plan and in February 2020 forwarded a town plan to the Selectboard for review and approval. In May and June 2020, the Selectboard accepted the forwarded town plan and took on the task of completing the town plan. On June 15 2020, the Town of St. Albans Selectboard adopted this Town Plan.

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

Citizen participation is critical to all levels of the planning process. Opportunities for citizen

involvement have been assured throughout the Town Plan update through several initiatives.

1.5. How To Read A Town Plan

Each chapter contains at least one goal and one policy statement.

Goal - A goal in this Town Plan is a broad statement of community values and a generalized ideal which provides a sense of direction. The essence of the Town Plan is contained within its goals.

Policy - A policy describes a specific step necessary to achieve a goal and provides a basis for establishing priorities, scheduling, and or assigning staff and other resources to that specific action needed to implement the Town Plan. It is important to note that each policy is a guide not a decision in themselves.

1.6. Goal Interpretation

For a goal to be useful, it must be clear. However, not all goals 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 goals. The following definitions of terms provide guidance in interpreting the goal 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 - Goals containing the word "shall" indicate that an action must be taken in all cases. This represents a commitment to implementation and the expectation that the associated policies will be carried out.

SHOULD - Goals containing the word "should" indicate that an action will be taken in most cases, but exceptions are acceptable for good reasons.

ENCOURAGE - Goals containing the word "encourage" indicate an action is highly recommended or desired and should be pursued when reasonable.

ALLOW - Goals containing the word "allow" indicate that a proposed action will be supported within certain parameters and following certain guidelines.

COORDINATE - Goals containing the word "coordinate" indicate that an action will occur with another entity and St. Albans will carry its share of the burden or responsibility.

EXPLORE - Goals containing the word "explore" indicate that an action will be taken to investigate a subject to discover whether or not some further commitment is in order.

CONSIDER - Goals 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 - Goals 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.

MAY - Goals containing the word "may" indicate that an action will possibly be taken depending upon future conditions or analysis.

RESTRICT - Goals containing the word "restrict" indicate that an action will prevent an undesired result.

1.7. 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 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 goals and policies may be reviewed periodically to reflect compatibility with budgetary priorities and related program status. Long-term goals and policies must also be given consideration to assure timely funding and development of infrastructure and public services and facilities.

Although the Town Plan serves as the primary means to help implement its vision. The Town's Unified Development Bylaws is the primary tool used to implement the policies of the Town Plan. The Unified Development Bylaws provide detailed direction related to development standards; permitted, conditionally permitted, and prohibited uses; and other regulations. The land uses in the Unified Development Bylaws and its Planned Unit Development mechanism, provides the Unified Development Bylaws with flexibility in the application of development standards that may yield a more desirable and attractive project than would otherwise be possible with a strict application of the underlying zoning regulations.

2. CENSUS

Map 2.1 – Town of St. Albans Location

2.1. Location

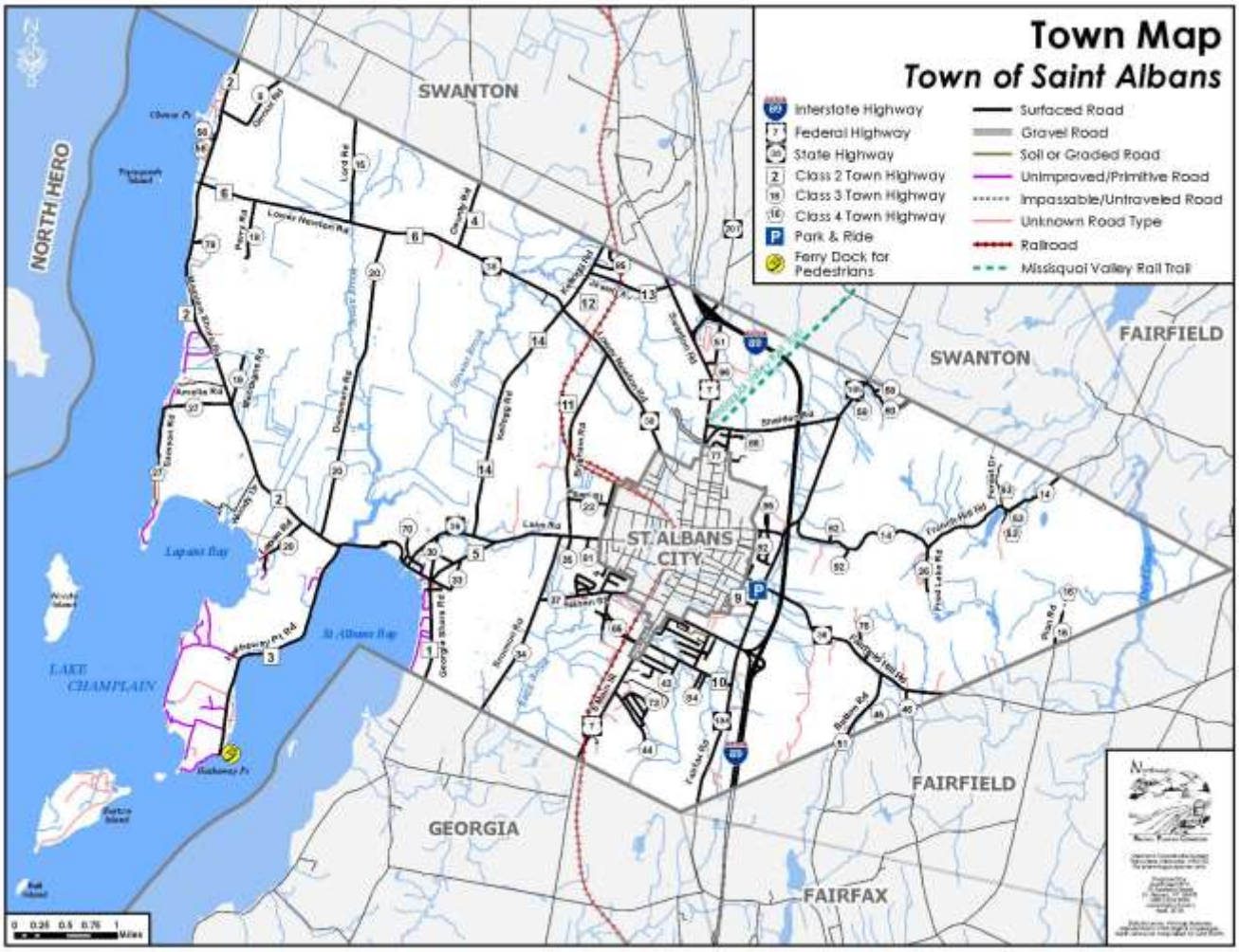
St. Albans, Vermont is located in the northwestern portion of Franklin County on the shores of Lake Champlain (**Map 2.1**). St. Albans has a total area of 60.6 square miles, of which 37.6 square miles (62.4%) is land and 23.0 square miles (37.98%) is water. St. Albans surrounds the City of St. Albans and shares borders with the Swanton, Fairfield, Fairfax, Georgia, and extends into Lake Champlain. Across Lake Champlain is North Hero and Grand Isle (**Map 2.2**). St. Albans is about 30 miles north of the City of Burlington and about 80 miles south of Montreal, Canada. The major roads serving St. Albans are I-89 and US Route 7, which tie in with VT Route 105 and VT Route 207 at the north of Town and VT Route 104 at the southern.

2.2. Current Population and Future Growth

The 2010 Census found that St. Albans had a population of 5,999 which was an increase of nearly 13% from the 2000 Census (**Figure 2.1**). Since 1960, St. Albans has experienced consistent growth, which is likely due to our close proximity to the large and strong job market in Chittenden County via I-89. Areas further from employment opportunities, including Fairfield and Swanton, have had lessor growth than St. Albans.

Over the next decade, many government agencies, economic models, and others are predicting slow and steady annual population growth in the Town of St. Albans at approximately 1.25% per year. Other communities in Franklin County are predicted to have much slower growth and in some cases declining population. These forecasts also predict that St. Albans growth will have a higher growth rate as compared with the State of Vermont as a whole.

Map 2.2 – Town of St. Albans



Slow and steady growth is good. However, the population of St. Albans is aging. The 2000 Census found that the median age was 37.9 years old in St. Albans and the 2010 Census found 41.6 years of age. Knowing that our population is aging and the overall Age Distribution for the community helps in evaluating current and potential future service needs, specifically for schools and senior services.

A breakdown by age group in St. Albans, Franklin County, and Vermont State (**Figure 2.2**) is provided by and based on the 2000 Census. Currently, the 2010 Census is the only data source providing population by age at the Town level. As the baby boomers approach retirement age, demand for senior services such as housing options and rural transit will likely increase and slowly decrease the school age population. Planning using population data is discussed further in other chapters.

Figure 2.1 – 1960 to 2010 Population

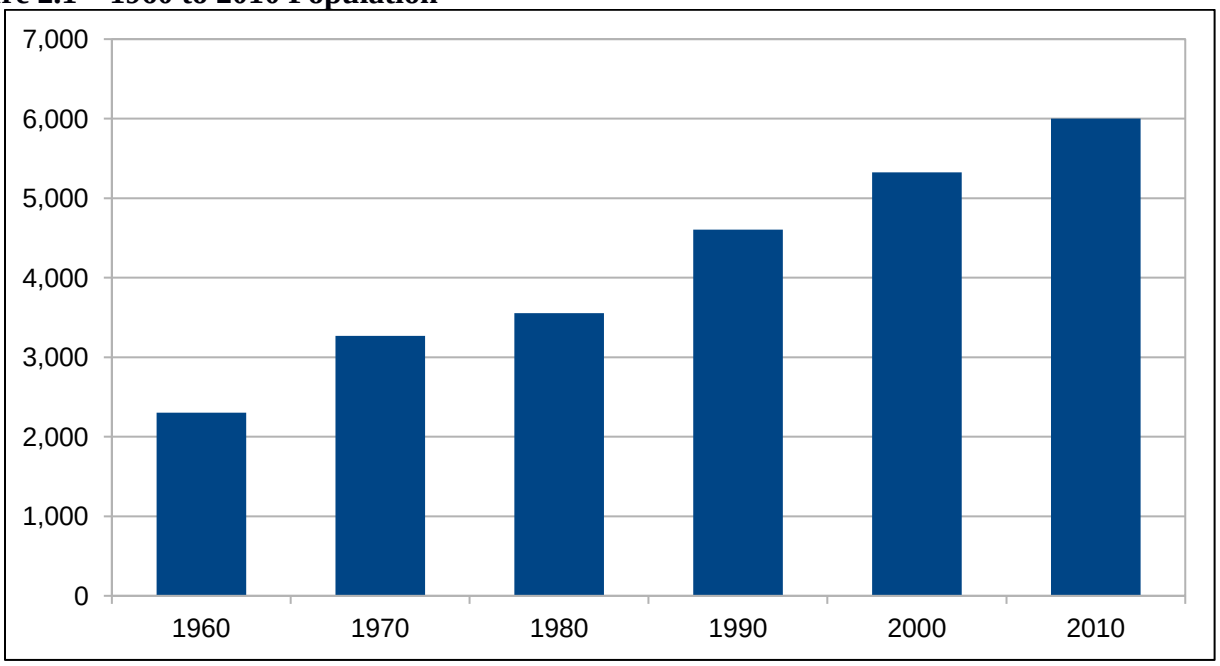
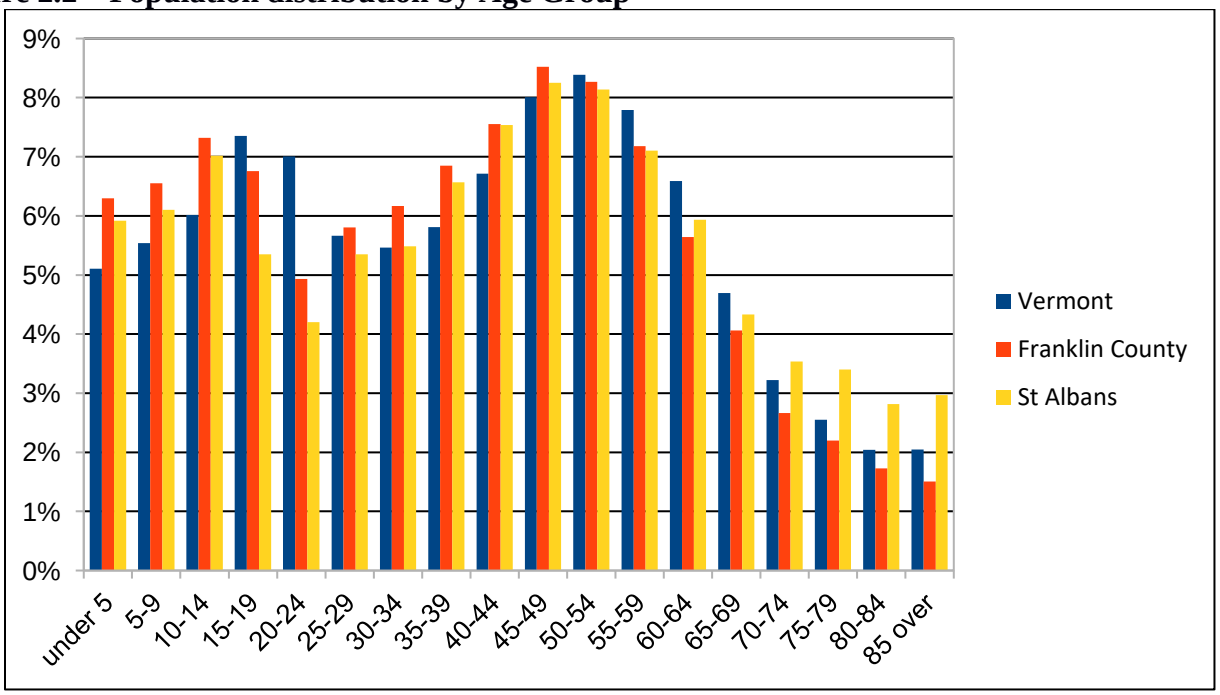


Figure 2.2 – Population distribution by Age Group



2.3. Current and Future Economic and Employment Growth

St. Albans is the primary employment center within Franklin County. Additionally, daily contributes numerous commuters into the economic vibrancy of Chittenden County. St. Albans has a strong and diverse economy and labor market that can clearly be see through the statistics and information covered at the VT Department of Labor, Economic, and Labor Market Information's website. St. Albans believes in, wants, and is continually working to maintain a strong local and regional economy. Economic

development plays a critical role in creating and maintaining vibrant community. A well planned community with sufficient infrastructure, available housing options, quality education, and an exciting quality of life encourages employers to locate and stay. St. Albans as the economic hub of Franklin County is strategically located along excellent transportation infrastructure, is home to a number of regionally significant institutions, and many large companies. Table 2.1 presents various estimate about the economic characteristics in St. Albans. However, this information is only an estimate based on nationwide trends and clearly incorrect based on monthly information reported to Vermont.

Table 2.1 - Economic Characteristics of Residents

	Estimate	Percent
Population 16 years and over	5,175	-
In labor force	3,217	62.20%
Employed	2,998	57.90%
Unemployed	219	4.20%
Not in labor force	1,958	37.80%
Unemployment Rate	-	6.80%
People whose income in the Past 12 Months is below the poverty level	-	8.20%
Median household income	$ 57,375	-
Mean household income	$ 72,478	-
Source: American Community Survey 2012-2016		

Our unemployment rate based on VT Department of Labor, Economic, and Labor Market data for April 2018 was 2.20% in St. Albans. Our monthly unemployment rate is substantially lower compared with the State at 3.0%, Franklin County at 2.8%, and the City at 3.0%. Unemployment rates of under 4.5% are generally assumed by most economists to be at or very close to full employment.

Over the next decade there are several indicators of good economic growth from many government agencies, various economic models, and others predicting slow and steady annual growth in St. Albans at approximately 1.25% per year. Other communities in Franklin County are predicted to have much slower growth and in some cases declining population. These forecasts also predict that our growth will be higher and stronger as compared with the State of Vermont as a whole.

2.4. Goal - Maintain a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities, that maintains the community's high environmental standards, expands wage advancement prospects for low per capital income persons, and continually strengthens the whole economy of St. Albans.

Policy: Continue our community's long-standing support and encouragement for a strong economy that is steady, durable, diverse, provides job opportunities, maintains high environmental standards, and expands economic opportunities for people with high unemployment or low income.

3. LAND USE

Land use is the traditional foundation of a Town Plan. A detailed land use plan and strategies for implementation are essential for 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 goals and policies for St. Albans 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. It also serves as the basis for revisions and creation of new land use and development regulations to implement its policies.

3.1. Goal - Encourage development in a manner that will promote the public health, safety, prosperity, convenience, efficiency, and the economy of St. Albans.

St. Albans is continuing to evolve from primarily an agricultural community to one that supports a mix of agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial development.

Policy: Encourage commercial development, especially around I-89 exit 19 and exit 20, which are our designated Growth Centers. The Current Land Use Map (**Map 3.1**) is a good broad vision for development in the future with allowances made for in-fill and expansion on existing sites.

Policy: Explore ways for developers and private landowners to either donate or sell easements to create bike paths, recreational trails, and walking paths between parks, schools, neighborhoods, high traffic sites, and other areas to lower the dependence on vehicles for travel between these sites.

3.2. Goal - Ensure that the Unified Development Bylaws incorporate smart growth principles.

In 1970, St. Albans began to regulate land use. Land use regulations are implemented through the Unified

Land Use – Statutory Goals

Planning Goals – 24 V.S.A. 4302

(1) To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.

(A) Intensive residential development should be encouraged primarily in areas related to community centers, and strip development along highways should be discouraged.

(B) Economic growth should be encouraged in locally designated growth areas, employed to revitalize existing village and urban centers, or both, and should be encouraged in growth centers designated under chapter 76A of this title.

(C) Public investments, including the construction or expansion of infrastructure, should reinforce the general character and planned growth patterns of the area.

(D) Development should be undertaken in accordance with smart growth principles as defined in subdivision 2791(13) of this title.

(6) To maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, forests, and other land resources.

(A) Vermont's air, water, wildlife, mineral, and land resources should be planned for use and development according to the principles set forth in 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a).

(C) Vermont's forestlands should be managed so as to maintain and improve forest blocks and habitat connectors.

(9) To encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries.

(A) Strategies to protect long-term viability of agricultural and forestlands should be encouraged and should include maintaining low overall density.

(D) Sound forest and agricultural management practices should be encouraged.

Development Bylaws. It is important to have land use regulations to ensure that land is developed according to the vision of the Town.

Policy: Periodically review, update, and adopt revised Unified Development Bylaws to account for new State regulations and account for any other necessary changes.

Policy: Periodically review that the Unified Development Bylaws encourages and permits logical and reasonable Smart Growth principles. Smart Growth is a planning term and theory that recommends concentrating new development in compact neighborhoods and or walkable retail centers to avoid new construction sprawling over prime agricultural soils and fields.

Land Use – Statutory Goals (Continued)

Planning Goals – 24 V.S.A. 4302

(11) To ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing for all Vermonters.

(B) New and rehabilitated housing should be safe, sanitary, located conveniently to employment and commercial centers, and coordinated with the provision of necessary public facilities and utilities.

(C) Sites for multi-family and manufactured housing should be readily available in locations similar to those generally used for single-family conventional dwellings.

(D) Accessory apartments within or attached to single-family residences which provide affordable housing in close proximity to cost-effective care and supervision for relatives, elders, or persons who have a disability should be allowed.

3.3. Goal - Ensure that new development maintains and complements the character of its surrounding neighborhoods and existing improvements through the permitted and conditional uses in our Unified Development Bylaws.

The Zoning Districts within the Unified Development Bylaws define how land should be developed in a given area, what kind of uses will be allowed in a defined area, and what 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 on their neighbor's land.

Policy: Regularly review the permitted and conditional uses for each zoning district and overlay area within the Unified Development Bylaws to evaluate if each use conforms with the purpose of the district.

Policy: Balance a landowner's inherent property rights to develop land with the public's interest in protecting the environment and character of the surrounding neighborhood.

3.4. Goal - Permit increased densities on lots served by both public water and sewer systems through smaller lot sizes and lesser dimensional requirements in our Unified Development Bylaws.

St. Albans uses incentives and tools that increase development density to aid landowners in keeping their land functional for present and future agricultural activities. A tool to keep land productive is to encourage clustering in Planned Unit Developments (PUD's) in all zoning districts and categories.

Policy: Periodically review that new PUD's in the Residential District have an accompanying Home Owner's Association bylaws or other mutual maintenance agreement and that the Home Owner's Association is regularly meeting. No commercial or industrial or mixed use PUD's have ever been proposed in St. Albans as of March 2018.

3.5. Goal - Allow new development phasing as part of our Unified Development Bylaws and our development review process unless the development phasing is to align with a specific municipal capital improvement or infrastructure need.

Policy: Periodically review and revise the Unified Development Bylaws to facilitate phasing as part of our development review process unless the Department of Public Works or the Fire Department or another department requests development phasing to meet a specific capital and or duly authorized infrastructure obligation.

3.6. Goal - Maintain sufficient regulation in the Unified Development Bylaws and the development review process that incorporates installation of necessary on-site and off-site infrastructure items.

The Unified Development Bylaws and our development review process towns are designed to minimize the impacts on our schools and other municipal infrastructure.

Policy: Periodically review the Unified Development Bylaws to determine if our regulations and the development review process are incorporating installation of necessary on-site and off-site infrastructure items.

3.7. Goal - Maintain sufficient regulation that will assure compliance with the minimum National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) standards; as required for homeowner eligibility under the NFIP for flood insurance purposes.

The NFIP is an insurance program to protect the safety, health, and welfare of life and property. If a resident is out of compliance with NFIP, then the insurance of all landowners in St. Albans could be voided. St. Albans added an overlay district with specific regulations to assure compliance with the NFIP and the continuing availability of property insurance.

Policy: Periodically review the Flood Hazard Overlay district within our Unified Development Bylaws to maintain sufficient regulation that will assure compliance with the minimum NFIP standards; as required for continued homeowner eligibility under the NFIP for flood insurance purposes.

3.8. Goal – Explore and coordinate infill development, adaptive re-use, and re-development of vacant land or dilapidated buildings.

Policy: Semi-annually review if growth and development patterns, over the prior 5 years, did occur as intended and in conformance with our Unified Development Bylaws, our present Zoning districts, the Future Land Use Map (**Map 3.2**), and this Town Plan.

Policy: Continue the existing growth patterns consisting of concentrated high density mixed uses in the growth centers at 1-89 exit 19 and exit 20 surrounded by decreasing intensity of use in the residential, rural, conservation, and lakeshore areas.

3.9. Goal – Encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries.

Policy: Continue our current strategy that protects the long-term viability of agricultural and forest lands through our Rural and Conservation zoning districts that require low density development.

Policy: Encourage economic development that facilitates the manufacture and marketing of value added agricultural and forest products.

Policy: Encourage the use and purchase of locally-grown food products through local farmer's markets, community-supported agriculture, and other means.

Policy: Encourage land owners to use sound forest and agricultural management practices.

Policy: Recognize and minimize the potential impacts and development pressure on agricultural and forest lands during capital planning and public investment enterprises.

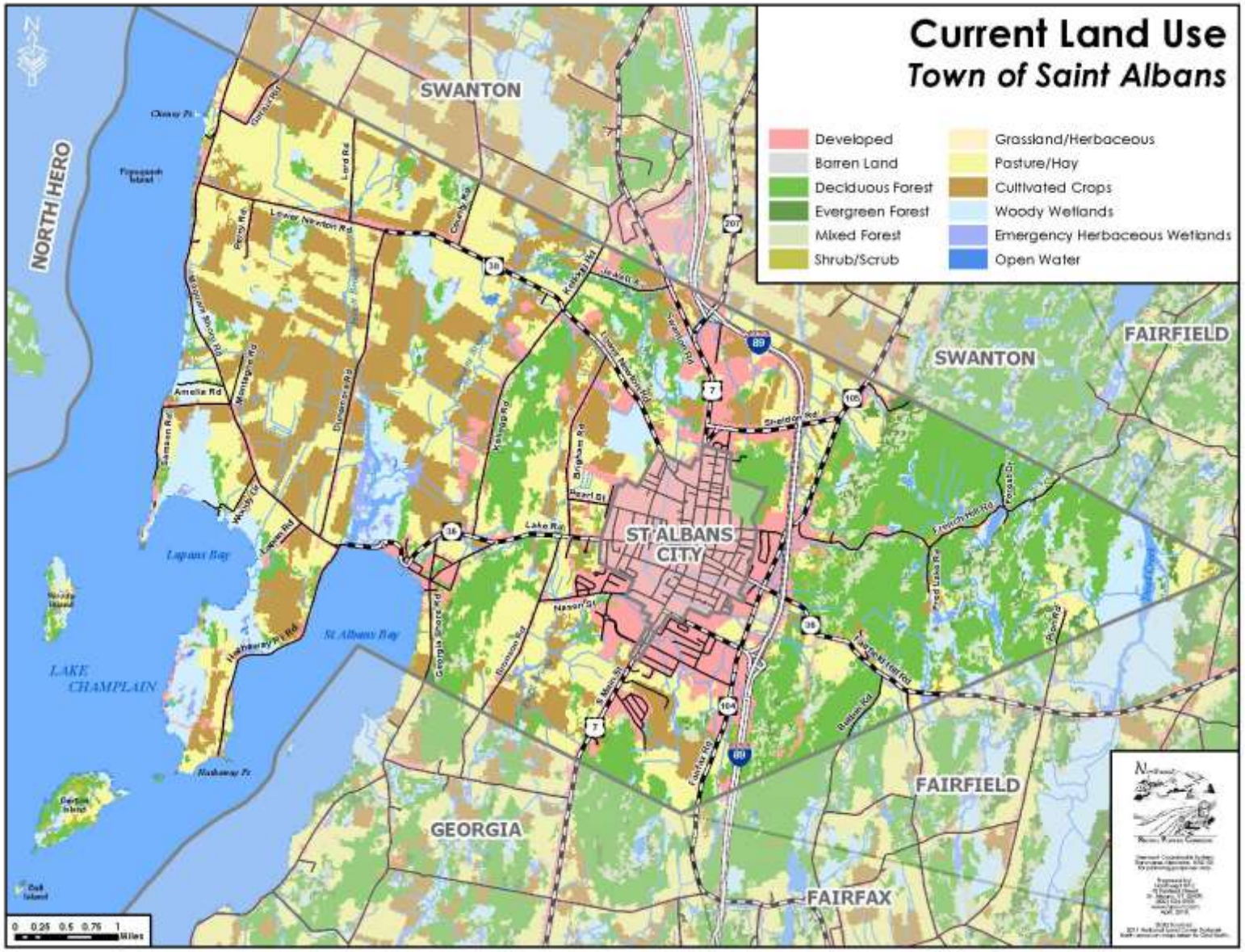
3.10. Goal – Apply for a Village Center designation in the St Albans Bay village area.

Policy: Continue the traditional village settlement pattern comprised of a cohesive mix of residential, religious, commercial, recreational, educational, and mixed use buildings, arranged along main streets, major connectors, and intersecting side streets that are within walking distance for residents and visitors to the core area of St Albans Bay.

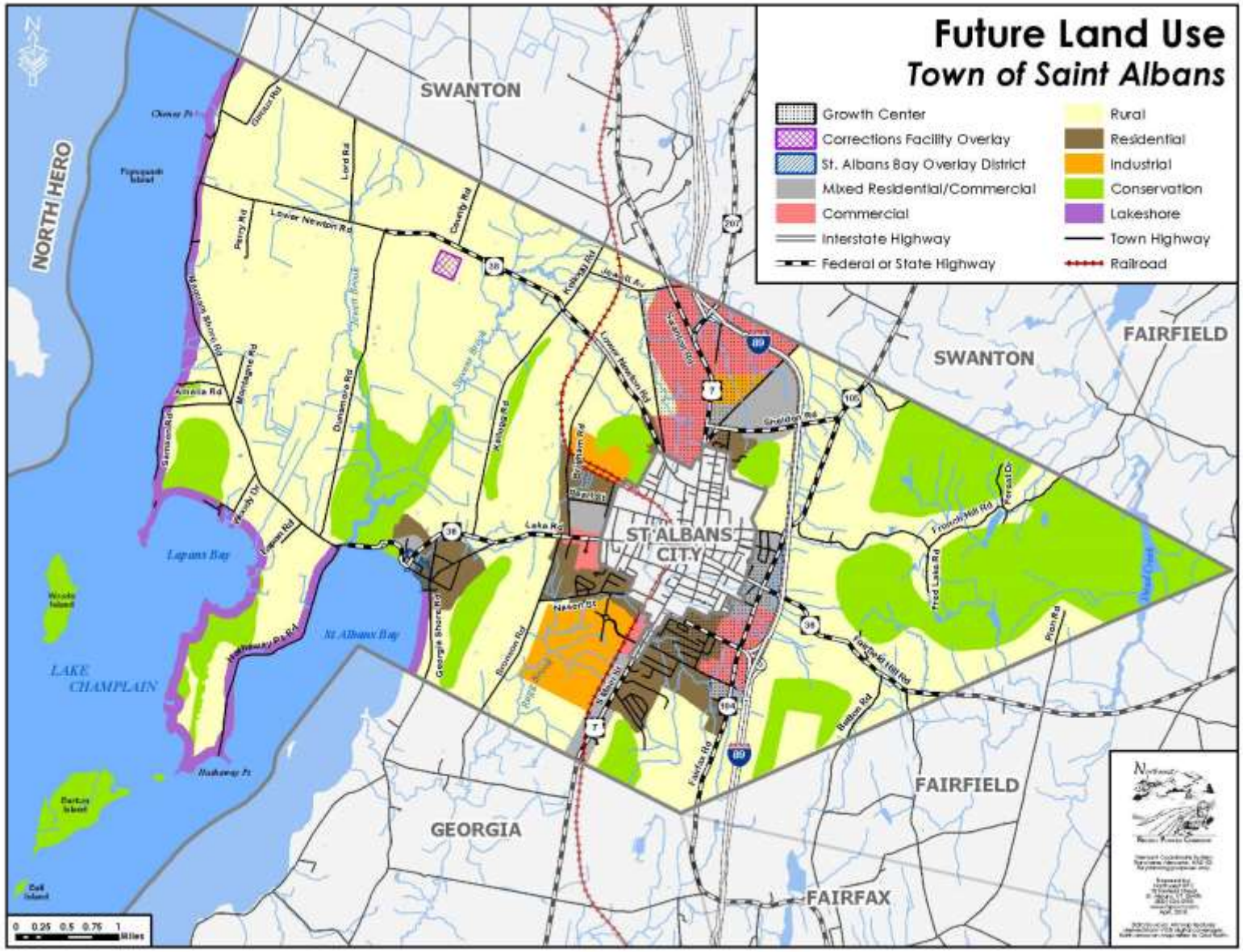
Policy: Apply for designation as a Village Center under the Vermont Designated Village Centers Program in the Division for Community Planning and Revitalization within the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Policy: Recognize, encourage, and utilize the benefits available under the Vermont village center designation program that supports local revitalization efforts by providing technical assistance and state funding to help designated municipalities build strong communities.

Map 3.1 – Town of St. Albans Current Land Use



Map 3.2 – Town of St. Albans Future Land Use



4. TRANSPORTATION

The penultimate transportation goal of St. Albans is to have a broad approach to transportation that emphasizes safe and efficient movement of people and goods utilizing a variety of transportation features that includes public transit, sidewalks, bikeways, multi-use paths, in addition to the movement of cars and trucks along our roads and highways. This, our primary transportation goal is intended to foster and support the utilization of Complete Street principles as recently enacted by the Vermont State Legislature under Act 34 of 2011. A complete and comprehensive road system will enable the town to facilitate the unimpeded movement of people and goods, protect public safety, promote healthy lifestyles, and foster community building throughout the town.

Transportation– Statutory Goals and Elements

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(4) To provide for safe, convenient, economic and energy efficient transportation systems that respect the integrity of the natural environment, including public transit options and paths for pedestrians and bicyclers.

(A) Highways, air, rail, and other means of transportation should be mutually supportive, balanced, and integrated.

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(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.

4.1. Goal - Develop a comprehensive approach to our transportation system that emphasizes the safe and efficient movement of people and goods utilizing a variety of transportation modes that includes public transit, sidewalks, bikeways, multi-use paths, in addition to the movement of cars and trucks along our roads and highways.

St. Albans adopted the road system shown on **Map 4.1** to provide a basis for the land use and transportation policies of this plan. The adopted road system has points out that I-89 is a major national interstate highway and other state highways serve as principle arterials and major collectors (their official federal classification). This reality should be respected in project planning and improvement design phases.

Map 4.1 shows the functional classification of existing and proposed roads in St. Albans. The legend on **Map 4.1** explains the function of each road type within the community. Functional classification helps decision makers set priorities for road maintenance and improvements. It also provides a basis for town development review and requirements for access management.

Policy: St. Albans is committed to building "Complete Streets" along our main roads and state highways. Complete Streets are those that include design features for all modes of transportation not just cars and trucks. Major road reconstruction projects along existing roads and new roads should incorporate complete street design principles to the maximum extent possible and should incorporate appropriate facilities for non-motorized transportation modes.

Policy: St. Albans will seek funding for improvements that are needed to provide pedestrian and bicycle circulation throughout town and to enhance bicyclist and pedestrian safety.

Policy: Where reasonable and logical during other road improvements or major projects add paved shoulders along both sides of public streets wide enough to meet the A-76 design standard for bicyclists and pedestrians. The 2018 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan recognized that sidewalks and bikeways are not feasible or necessary along most rural and or low traffic roads. The 2018 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan suggested a "decision tree" model to require new development provide widened shoulder construction along certain roads. However, to prevent a future need to fill gaps in a bikeway system, St. Albans will use an impact fee structure with the town constructing most paved shoulders at a future date along appropriate town-maintained roads and recreation routes.

Policy: Maintain the Public Works specifications. St. Albans adopted and revised regulations related to roads and driveways in 1988 and again 2006. Lastly, on February 11 2013, St. Albans adopted of the VTrans A-76 Standards for Town and Development Roads under 19 V.S.A. Section 1111, and B-71 Standards for Residential and Commercial Drives. Our current road standards provide the minimum construction standards by which all roads, driveways, entrances, culverts, bridges, and other road items should be constructed within the Town of St. Albans.

4.2. Goal - Facilitate the movement of people by walking and bicycling along sidewalks, bikeways, and multi-use paths as an element of the town's future transportation system.

Currently, St. Albans has a limited sidewalk network and does not provide any maintenance. Our limited sidewalk network was typically constructed as a part of neighborhood developments. The town's existing network of sidewalks, bikeways, and multi-use paths are highly valued in the community and often mentioned as the type of facility the town's people would like to see more of. Improvements to the town's network of sidewalks, bikeways, and multi-use paths should include providing safe and effective links between St. Albans and neighboring communities. These projects would be funded by supplementing local funds with outside grants, developer construction, and impact fees which can help accelerate the construction of sidewalks, bikeways, and multi-use paths, especially in filling in missing links in the network.

St. Albans does have official and informal trails, which are low-maintenance and primitive in nature. While they may serve a transportation function they are primarily used for recreation. Recreational trails are described in more detail in Chapter 11 - Recreation.

Policy: St. Albans recently completed a sidewalk master plan and has a renewed focus on non-motorized transportation. The sidewalk master plan recommended a functional and attractive network with connections to the City's existing network to encourage more widespread walking. This plan included an assessment of the needs and suggested a regulatory model to require new development provide sidewalks construction. However, to prevent a future need to fill gaps in a sidewalk system, St. Albans will use an impact fee structure with the town constructing most sidewalks at some future date along prioritized transportation and recreation routes.

Policy: Build Multi-Use Pathways Supported by Adequate Study. The provision of multi-use paths in new construction, in certain locations, may be the responsibility of the developer, but the town may need to fill other gaps in its bicycle and pedestrian system. Multi-use paths that link neighborhoods and provide transportation and recreation routes along or near heavily traveled roadways should be prioritized. Pedestrian and non-motorized facility priorities include:

- connecting Bellows Free Academy and the St. Albans Town Education Center to the Collins-Perley Sports and Fitness Center;
- along US Route 7 (North Main Street and Swanton Road) from the City line and the Missisquoi Rail-Trail to Tucker Drive; and,
- along VT Route 104 (Fairfax Road and Fisher Pond Road) from the Collins-Perley Sports and Fitness Center to the Hard'ack Recreation Area;

Policy: Build multi-use paths in larger new developments. Large new development projects, especially those in the town's growth centers, should continue to include requirements for pedestrian and non-motorized transportation facilities within these projects.

Policy: Provide amenities along sidewalks, paths, and trails. Simple improvements can enhance the experience of walking or bicycling in St. Albans. Benches should be provided, especially near elder housing projects. Bike racks should be provided near logical destinations for bicyclists.

Policy: Link sidewalks, bikeways, multi-use pathways, and recreational trails to form a comprehensive network: The town's sidewalks, bikeways, multi-use paths, and recreation trails should be tied together within the town and out to the City and region.

4.3. Goal - Support Green Mountain Transit (GMT) in providing services to St. Albans.

St. Albans has limited fixed-route bus service provided by Green Mountain Transit (GMT). GMT operates the public transit bus system, in addition to elderly, disabled, and Medicaid non-emergency transportation services throughout the St. Albans area. Use of all of GMT's routes is generally stable and most changes correlate directly to fluctuations in gasoline prices.

St. Albans also has several commuter routes that connect it with other areas in Franklin County and into downtown Burlington. The GMT Alburgh to Georgia Commuter Shuttle runs weekdays and stops at several locations taking riders to the Industrial Park off US Route 7 and, during the school year, a stop at BFA. The GMT Richford to St. Albans Shuttle runs Monday to Friday taking riders from Richford and other locations along VT Route 105 into St. Albans. The GMT operates the LINK Express, a St. Albans to Burlington commuter bus route. It picks up passengers in the early morning and drops off passengers in the evening after work from Monday through Friday at the Collins-Perley Sport Center. Ridership on GMT's commuter routes is relatively stable and correlates directly to high fuel prices.

Policy: Continue to support public transit through an annual budget appropriation. St. Albans has supported GMT's public transit services for many years.

Policy: Explore public transit busing options to provide student transportation from towns surrounding St. Albans. Currently, many students from neighboring towns choose to attend schools outside of the Maple Run School District solely based on the other districts provision of student busing. This policy recommendation is repeated in the Education chapter.

Policy: Continue to promote the use of carpooling and ridesharing facilities. The park-and-ride are an affordable and viable transportation alternative for some in St. Albans. GMT should develop a

plan for providing regular transit service to the park-and-ride lot at the VT Route 104 / VT Route 36 intersection, so that users of this facility will have safe and convenient access to regional and local transit services.

Policy: Consider adding a small transit center as part of a new Town Hall. St. Albans is served by a downtown shuttle, multiple commuter bus routes, and is anticipating construction of a municipal center along existing bus routes. The planned Town Hall could serve as a transit center for local buses, regional commuter bus services, and interstate buses. Links and transferring between these routes is presently dispersed among various locations throughout town. Ridership would likely increase by centralized transfer stations that allow riders to more easily connect between various bus lines, provide options and facilities for riders from all transportation modes to access the bus, and provide shelter for users during waiting periods. A transit center such as this would best be located in the town's designated Growth Center in the I-89 exit 19 area where high intensity development already exists and is anticipated in the future, and where the existing bus lines through St. Albans intersect.

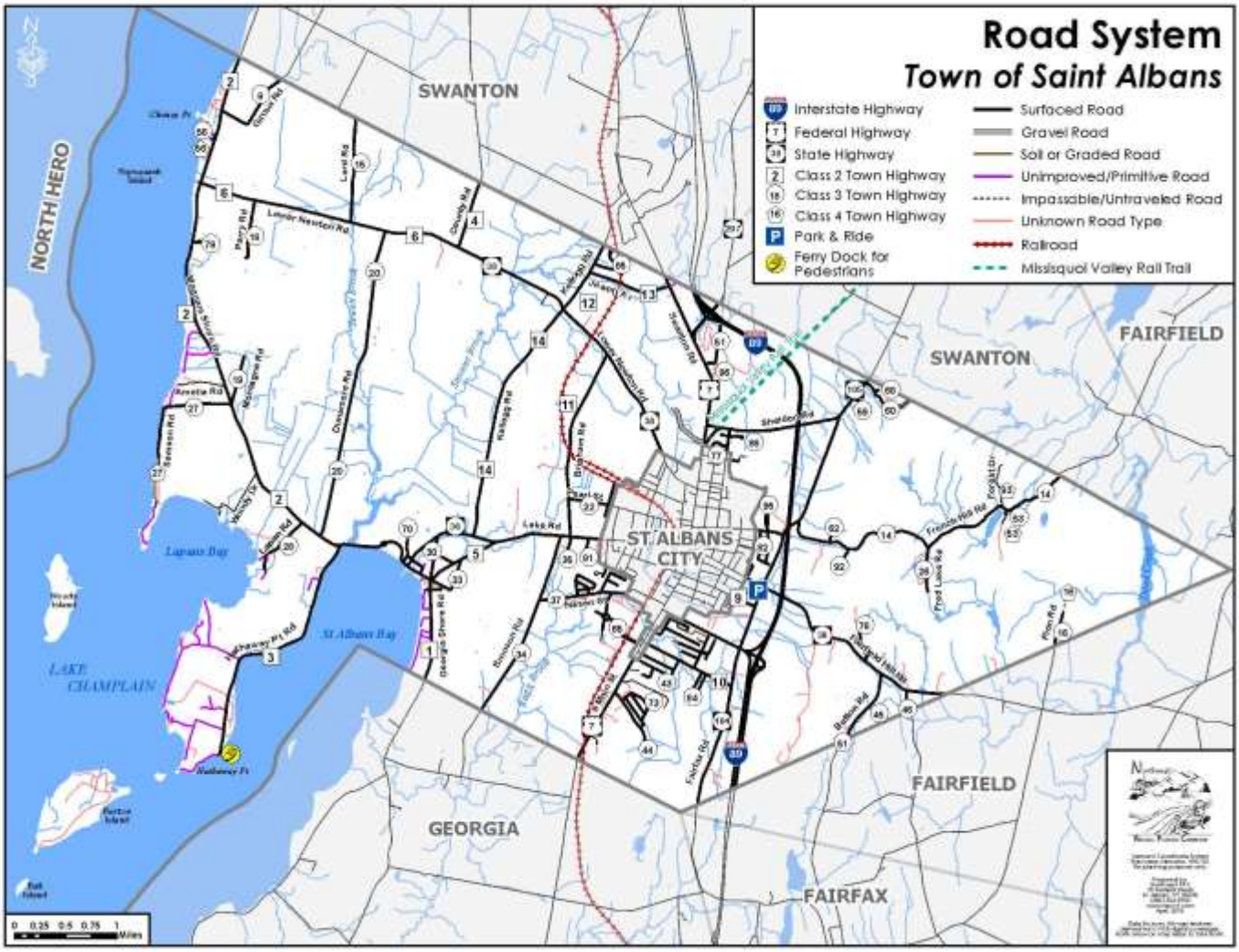
Policy: Build bus stop pull offs. The St. Albans Downtown Shuttle lacks many locations where there are adequate places for bus passengers to get on and off along the major roads in St. Albans, especially US Route 7 and Industrial Park Drive. The town will work with GMT and others to identify and build appropriate locations for bus stop pull off locations along these main routes.

Policy: Encourage multiple access points and connectivity between most developments. St. Albans should continue to encourage multiple access points and connectivity between most developments to facilitate safe, direct, and functional connections among neighborhoods, commercial areas, and public places.

Some benefits of encouraging safe, direct, and functional connections between neighborhoods and other adjoining areas via roads, sidewalks, bikeways, and multi-use paths include those listed here:

- Having multiple points of access to a neighborhood and other areas can be important during emergencies and major infrastructure repairs;
- Facilitating movement from one part of the community to another via local roads, sidewalks, bikeways, and multi-use paths can reduce congestion on arterial roads and major collectors. It also encourages walking and bicycling; and,
- Connecting neighborhoods promotes a sense of community throughout town.

Map 4.1 – Town of St. Albans Road Network



4.4. Goal - Enforce access management standards that protect public safety, access to existing and future uses, and the public investment in town roads and state highways.

Access management is the control of driveway and street connections to public roads. Access to state highways is controlled by the VTrans. Access to town roads is controlled by the town. Both agencies require a permit for a new point of access, as authorized by state law (see 19 V.S.A. § 1111). Our driveway permit regulation and access management policy have many benefits.

- Can reduce the need for additional public expenditures on road improvements by maintaining the capacity of existing roads;
- Can improve traffic safety and limit potential conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists; and,
- Can reduce congestion and delays, while providing safe access to public roads.

Policy: Limit future new access points. Access to our arterial roads should be from local roads, either public or privately maintained, not directly from adjoining properties. Access to collector roads will

be encouraged via local roads or, where practical, via shared driveways. The town may also require shared driveways for access to local roads.

Policy: New and substantially improved parking. New and substantially improved parking areas must be designed, so that vehicles do not back directly out onto any town road. Also, parking areas must not rely on adjoining town roads as part of their internal circulation pattern.

Policy: Consolidate existing access points. Existing access points to state highways and town maintained arterials and collector roads must, where practical, be consolidated when the uses they serve are substantially changed or have an expansion in the intensity of use.

Policy: Locate access points to protect public safety and minimize congestion. Points of access to town-maintained roads, including both driveways and new streets, must be properly aligned and separated from each other, and from nearby intersections. Specific alignment and spacing standards are in the town's bylaws or public works specifications.

Policy: Require turning lanes, medians, and other access management improvements. St. Albans may require developers to provide acceleration, deceleration, turning lanes, medians, and other access improvements, where needed and appropriate. The need for these improvements may be established by a corridor study prepared by the town, or VTrans, or by traffic studies required by the Development Review Board for a proposed development.

Policy: Protect pedestrians and bicyclists. Access for pedestrians and bicyclists will be separated from access for vehicles, where possible. The potential for conflict between pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles can be minimized through the use of pavement markings, road surface texturing, signing, wider paved shoulders, and other similar techniques.

4.5. Goal - Transportation Improvements - VTrans: Support and encourage VTrans to make all improvements needed to enhance traffic safety, traffic flow, and to safely provide for bicycle and pedestrian circulation.

VTrans plays a critical role ensuring that the improvements listed under this Goal are made in a timely and thoughtful manner.

Policy: Improve the I-89 exit 19 / VT Route 104 / St. Albans State Highway intersection. St. Albans will support and encourage VTrans to make improvements that are needed to enhance traffic safety, traffic flow, reduce congestion, and to safely provide for bicycle and pedestrian circulation at the I-89 exit 19 / VT Route 104 / St. Albans State Highway intersection. The I-89 Exit 19, St. Albans State Highway, and VT Route 104 Intersection Feasibility Study Update (2009) had several findings and made key recommendations for the intersection that are summarized below.

- the intersection is congested during peak commuting times.
- the intersection provides no accommodation for pedestrians or bicyclists.
- the intersection has been identified by VTrans as a High Crash Location.
- the intersection is located in the regionally and locally designated growth center but new development is limited because of improvements needed at the intersection.

- the preferred alternative is an 180-foot diameter multi-lane roundabout with landscaped and stormwater retention pond center island .
- the preferred alternative has a 14-foot wide truck apron to conform to intersection's the high truck traffic volume and its close proximity to I-89.

Policy: Explore options to calm traffic and slow vehicle speeds along state highways in St. Albans. Traffic calming uses physical design and other measures to improve safety for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. It aims to encourage safer, more responsible driving, lessen traffic speeds, and potentially reduce traffic. Most strategies for traffic calming, include narrowed roads, roundabouts, and speed humps.

4.6. Goal - Transportation Improvements – Town: Seek funding and make improvements that are needed to enhance traffic safety and vehicular circulation.

Policy: Improve the VT Route 36 / Georgia Shore Road intersection. St. Albans will pursue funding for improvements to enhance traffic safety, traffic flow, and to safely provide for bicycle and pedestrian circulation at the VT Route 36 / Georgia Shore Road intersection. The VT Route 36 / Georgia Shore Road intersection was studied in 2015 as part of a Road Safety Audit Review (RSAR) that had several findings and made key recommendations for the intersection that are summarized below.

- the intersection is poorly aligned and confusing.
- the intersection provides no accommodation for pedestrians or bicyclists.
- the intersection has a relatively high crash rate based on 2008-2012 data.
- realign and reorient the intersection in a standard 4-way stop controlled intersection.
- Add curbing within 250 feet of the intersection to further define the traveled ways.
- Add 12 on-street parking spaces along VT Route 36 approximately 350 feet west of the intersection.

Policy: Explore options for calming traffic along town roads to encourage safer, slower, more responsible driving, and potentially reduce traffic volume. Key locations for additional study with VTrans, NRPC, and the City are:

- Fairfax Street near Parsons Way
- Fairfax Street near Thorpe Avenue extension
- Nason Street at City Line
- Nason Street near Michelle Drive
- Brigham Road
- Church Road
- Little County Road
- Georgia Shore Road
- High Street

Policy: Maintain a Capital Improvement Program which shall be updated annually per the Capital Improvement Program Policy.

Policy: Maintain the current roadway network that the Town owns and provides service to the residents, business and industry.

4.7. Goal - Freight and Rail: Consider freight movement in its planning, public investment, and development review decisions.

The New England Central Railroad passes through St. Albans, but provides little service to businesses located in the town.

Policy: Designate truck routes. St. Albans will consider designating truck routes to supplement the functional classification system as a basis for improvements and land use decisions.

Policy: Promote investment in rail services. St. Albans supports implementation of the 2015 Vermont State Rail Plan that would provide better freight and passenger services in Vermont and St. Albans.

4.8. Goal – Provision of local streets, sidewalks, bikeways, and multi-use paths will continue to be the developer's responsibility for items internal to their proposal.

The roads serving St. Albans represent a major public investment. The town currently spends somewhat more than $500,000 per year to maintain its roads. Along existing roads St. Albans will collect impact fees to help fund sidewalks, bikeways, and multi-use paths, and other improvements that benefit the entire community

Policy: Continue to require developers to provide local streets and "Complete Streets". Albans will continue to require developers to provide local streets, sidewalks or multi-use paths, and primitive trails that serve their projects. Developers may also be required to make off-site improvements to existing town, state, and federal highways. Where the development itself will generate or attract bicycle and pedestrian traffic, the developer will be required to build the paths and trails. Developers may also be required to provide bike racks.

Policy: Monitor and evaluate the Impact Fees. St. Albans has charged impact fees since 1987 and will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the impact fee program and consider revising it to reflect current costs and to match the priorities for improvements adopted in this plan and as specified by state law.

Policy: Pursue additional funding for transportation improvements. The town has been successful in obtaining grants in the past several years for the design and construction of paths and sidewalks that have helped the town to leverage its own funds. Town staff will continue to pursue grants and other funding sources for transportation improvements.

Policy: Develop sidewalks, bike lanes, and multi-use paths that will provide connectivity between housing developments, recreational facilities, businesses, and shopping facilities.

4.9. Goal - Participate in the regional transportation planning program of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission, including the commission's Transportation Advisory Committee and other committees.

St. Albans is an active member of the NRPC, the regional planning and transportation planning agency. NRPC prepares a regional transportation plan and a schedule of improvements that will be built with state and federal funds which is approved by the NRPC's board. Representation on the NRPC's board is presently based on the population of the participating jurisdictions. St. Albans will advocate a formula that reflects traffic volumes, employment, or other indicators that better reflect jurisdictions' relative needs for transportation improvements.

5. SCENIC AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the community's commitment to stewardship of the natural environment and to provide a basis for policies that guide the Town's decisions that will affect the natural environment. The environment is a complex system of interrelated components upon which the Town depends including air, water, soils, plants, and animals. Finding a balance between the preservation, protection, and transformation of natural resources with other community needs is vitally important to ensuring the continued viability of natural systems and the continued high quality of life for St. Albans.

5.1. Goal - Identify, protect, preserve, and transform important natural and scenic features of St. Albans' landscape.

Policy: Protect and preserve natural resources including surface waters, groundwater, floodplains, river corridors, agricultural soils, wetlands, steep slopes, forest blocks, habitat connectors, and endangered wildlife habitats.

Surface Water, Groundwater, and Floodplain. Water quality and the condition of surface waters in St. Albans has been an important issue for many years, particularly in regards to Lake Champlain and St. Albans Bay. Water quality and issued related to surface water quality are discussed in more depth in Chapter 10 – Stormwater and Flood Resilience. Issues surrounding the regulation of floodplain and state-designated river corridors are also discussed in Chapter 10.

Public water service is currently supplied by the City of St. Albans Water and Sewer Department 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 Reservoirs are located in the Town of Fairfax, the Town of Fairfield and in a small southeastern portion of the Town. These recharge areas are to be protected from any activities and or

Natural Resources – Statutory Goals

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(5) To identify, protect, and preserve important natural and historic features of the Vermont landscape, including:

(A) significant natural and fragile areas;

(B) outstanding water resources, including lakes, rivers, aquifers, shorelands, and wetlands;

(C) significant scenic roads, waterways, and views;

(6) To maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, forests, and other land resources.

(A) Vermont's air, water, wildlife, mineral, and land resources should be planned for use and development according to the principles set forth in 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a).

(B) Vermont's water quality should be maintained and improved according to the policies and actions developed in the basin plans established by the Secretary of Natural Resources under 10 V.S.A. § 1253.

(C) Vermont's forestlands should be managed so as to maintain and improve forest blocks and habitat connectors.

(10) To provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont's natural resources and to facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources and the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the area.

businesses that would harm the potability of existing water supplies.

Protecting groundwater is also of interest to St. Albans, because groundwater is the primary source of drinking water for the majority of St. Albans households. A majority 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.

Agricultural 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. The majority of soils in Town are members of Covington, Farmington, Kinsbury, Georgia, and Massena classes, which are all either clays or stony loams which 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.

Agricultural soils are specifically classified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service as being "prime," of "statewide importance," or of "local importance." Prime soils have very high agricultural potential and few limitations for farming. Soils of statewide importance have good agricultural potential but one or more limitations requiring more careful management.

St. Albans encourages the responsible management of all agricultural soils in an effort to protect and preserve these soils for continued agricultural use, particularly in land use districts that are intended to retain a rural and agriculture-based character.

Natural Resources – Statutory Elements

Plan Elements – 24 V.S.A. 4382

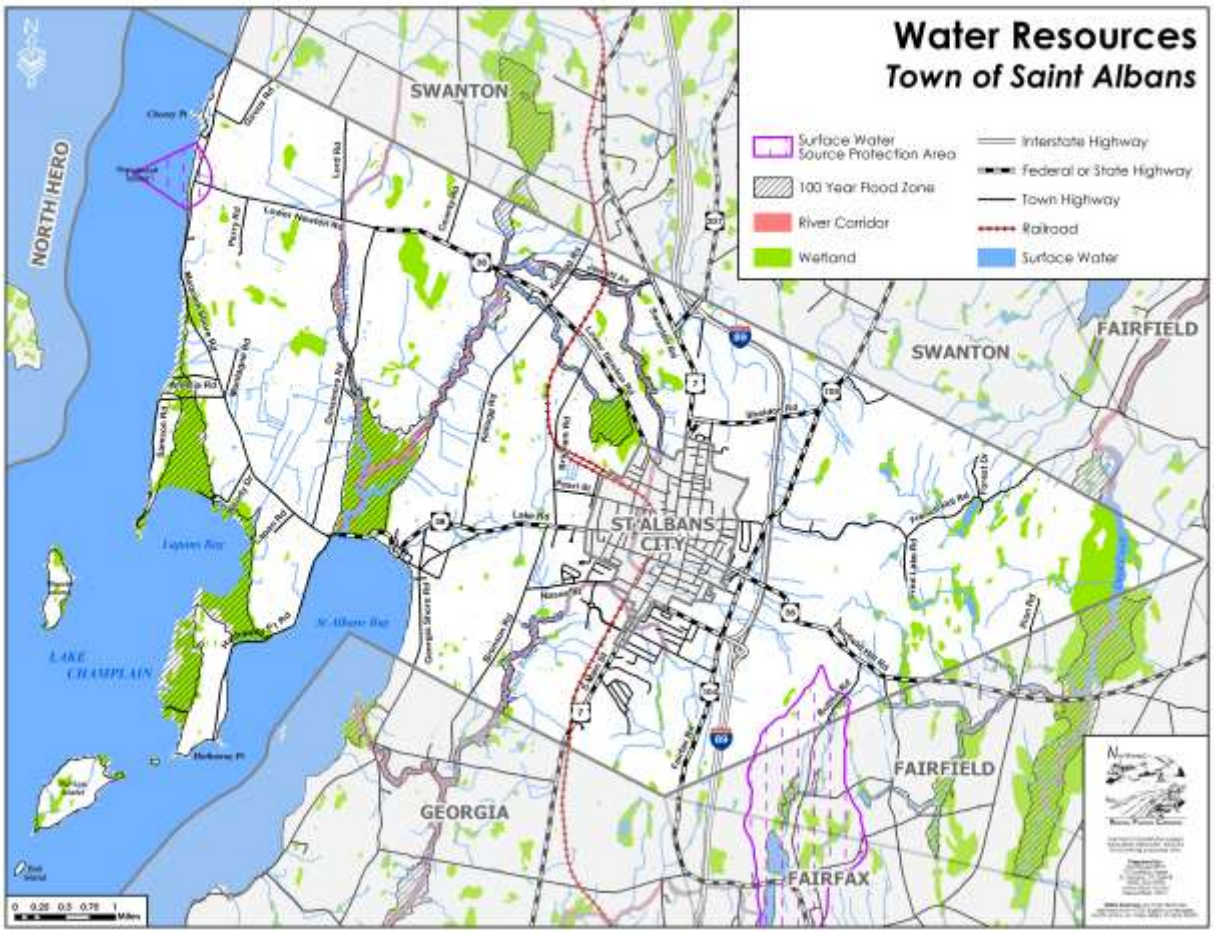
(2) A land use plan, which shall consist of a map and statement of present and prospective land uses, that:

(A) Indicates 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, areas reserved for flood plain, and areas identified by the State, the regional planning commission, or the municipality that require special consideration for aquifer protection; for wetland protection; for the maintenance of forest blocks, wildlife habitat, and habitat connectors; or for other conservation purposes.

(D) Indicates those areas that are important as forest blocks and habitat connectors and plans for land development in those areas to minimize forest fragmentation and promote the health, viability, and ecological function of forests. A plan may include specific policies to encourage the active management of those areas for wildlife habitat, water quality, timber production, recreation, or other values or functions identified by the municipality (5) A statement of policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic and historic features and resources.

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

Map 5.1 - St. Albans Town Water Resources



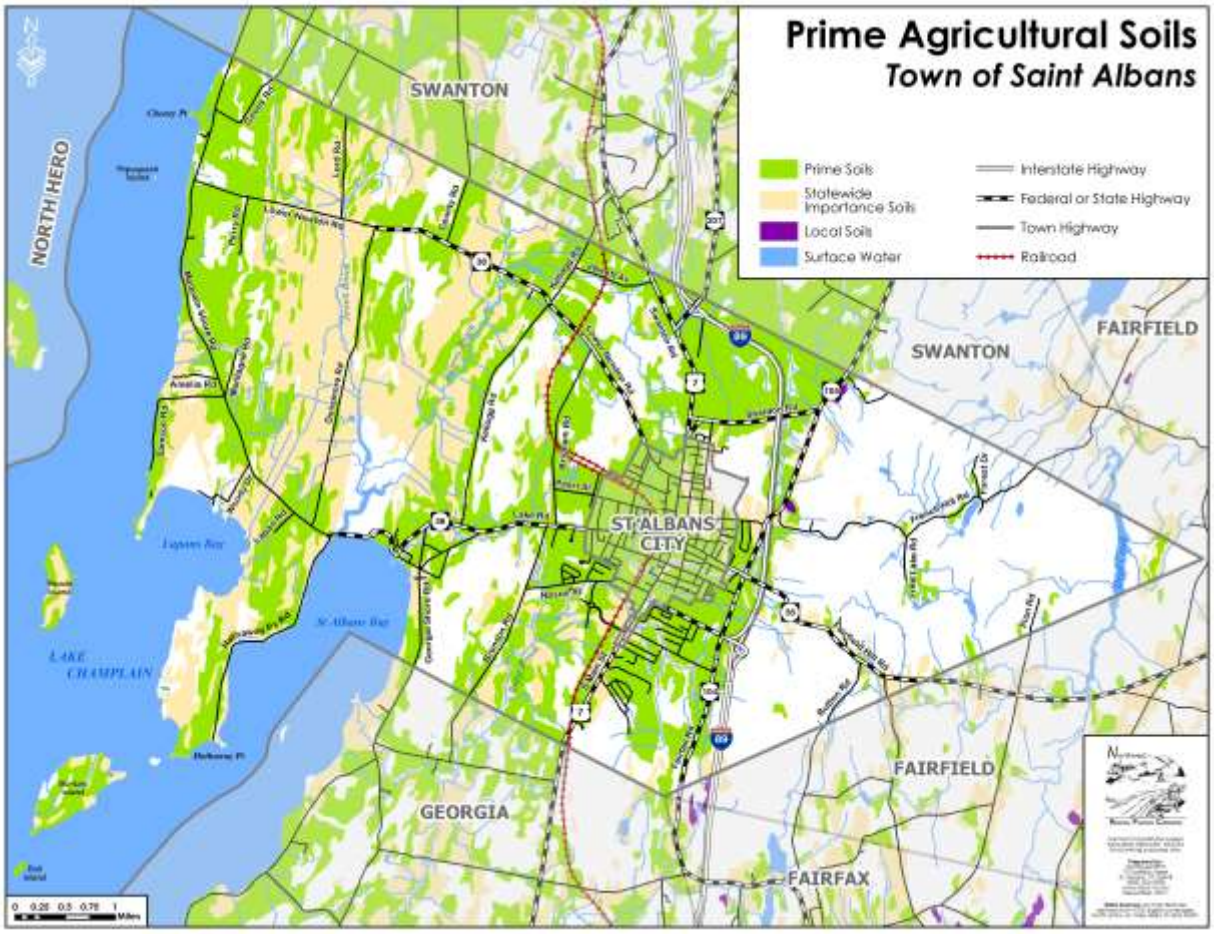
Wetlands. There are numerous wetlands within St. Albans. Wetlands are an integral component to the health of a watershed. Wetlands provide a number of critical functions including filtering out nutrients and pollutants, storing flood waters, dissipating wave energy at the shoreline, and serving as important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

Development located within wetlands and in proximity to wetlands is regulated by Federal and State governments. Local governments are enabled to regulate wetlands, but St. Albans does not have additional local wetland regulations.

In 2007, the Agency of Natural Resources published "The Lake Champlain Basin Wetlands Restoration Plan." This plan identified 149 potential wetland restoration projects in the St. Albans, totaling approximately 1,745 acres. Generally, St. Albans works with state agencies involved in implementing this plan to ensure that progress is made to complete these projects.

Steep Slopes. Steep slopes are evidence of the past geological epochs that form this area and are characteristically covered by shallow soils that can present challenges to most 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 landslides unless properly designed. Development on steep slopes in St. Albans is regulated to address these impacts for areas with slope of equal to or greater than 15%. However, this regulation of steep slopes does not totally prevent any properly-designed development on steep slopes.

Map 5.2- Town of St. Albans Agricultural Soils



Forest Blocks, Habitat Connectors, and Endangered Wildlife Habitat.

As of January 1, 2018, all municipal plans must address how "Vermont's forest lands should be managed, so as to maintain and improve forest blocks and habitat connectors." St. Albans contains two large, significant forest blocks located on French Hill. These three forest blocks are over in 1,000 acres in size and extend into the surrounding towns of Fairfield and Swanton. They are the three largest forest blocks in eastern Franklin County with the exception of Missisquoi Wildlife

Refuge in Swanton and provide habitat connection between habitat blocks located in the Green Mountains and the northern portions of the Champlain Valley. There are additional forest blocks located in other areas of town, but these forest blocks tend to be much smaller and fragmented by roads, development, and agriculture.

According to the Agency of Natural Resources Atlas, St. Albans contains several areas likely to contain rare, threatened, or endangered species. These areas include surface water and shorelines around St. Albans Bay, Lapans Bay, Woods Island, and Burton Island. It also includes an area near the VT Route 104 / VT Route 105 intersection near the border with Swanton and portions of Fairfield Swamp.

St. Albans also contains two "Significant Natural Communities." These are areas with rare and high quality "interacting assemblage of plants and animals, their physical environment, and the natural processes that affect them." These areas include a rare Buttonbush Swamp north of Lapans Bay and a Red Maple-Northern White Cedar Swamp community located in Fairfield Swamp.

The Town Forest is located on French Hill and is 162 acres. It is a recreational area and wildlife habitat area. St. Albans adopted a Town Forest Management Plan and is actively managing the forest. In the past, St. Albans logged the forest using low impact sustainable harvesting techniques. Marketable timber was sold by the Town and remaining unsold wood was given to residents for fuel assistance.

Policy: Proactively work to understand the impacts of increasingly severe weather on St. Albans and support efforts to combat and or adapt to the new climate realities.

Meteorological data shows that Vermont is experiencing warmer and short winters combined with experiencing warmer summer days and more severe or significant weather events. These are current realities in Vermont and many scientists believe that these trends may become more noticeable in the near future.

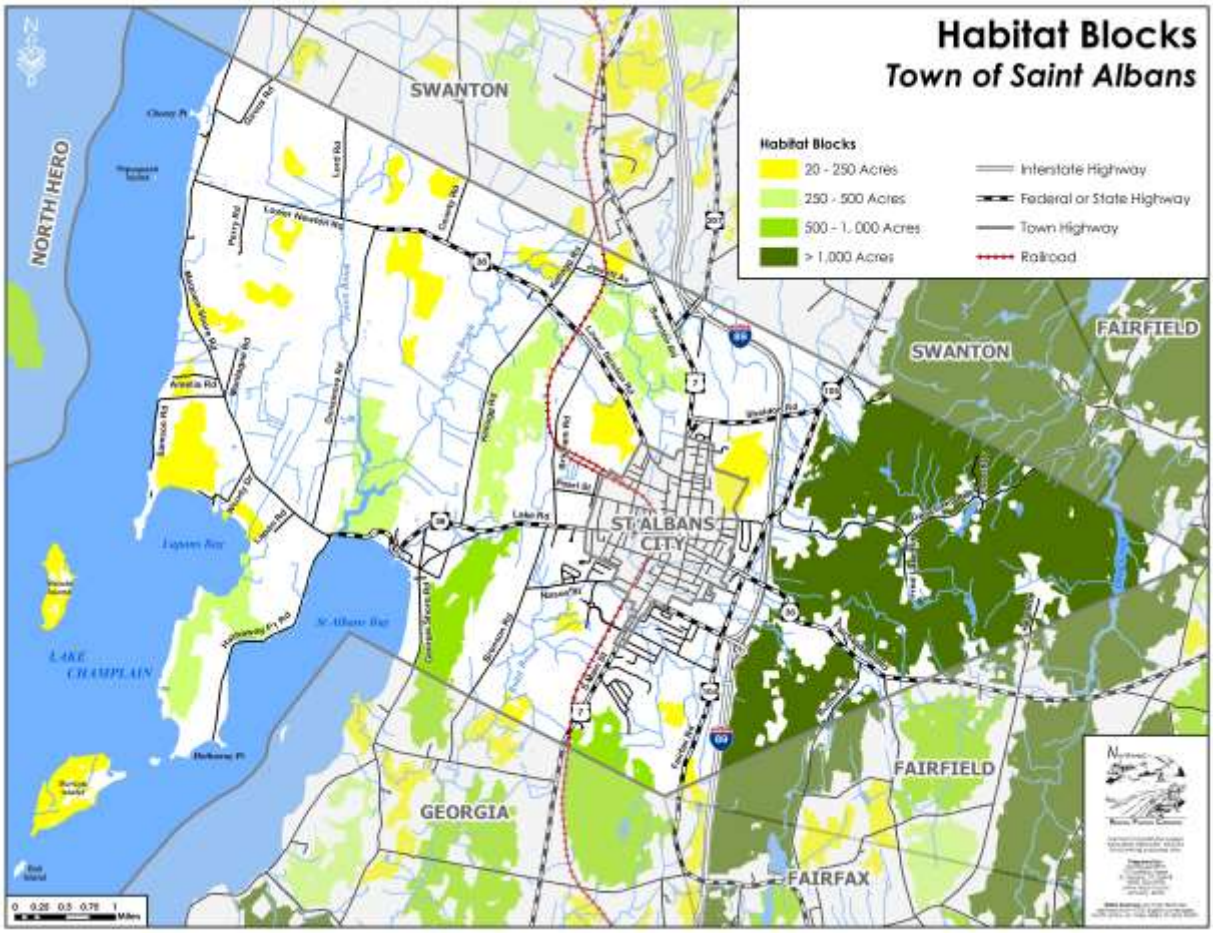
It is important that St. Albans continue to discuss how increasingly severe weather impacts the function of municipal government and the lives of residents regardless of the reasons for these changes. This may include discussing topics as diverse as agriculture, tourism, solar electricity generation, and stormwater infrastructure. The Implementation section contains several actions that the Town can take to combat the impacts from severe weather. These actions pertain to how land and natural resources are used, transportation choices citizens make, and how energy is created and used. All these actions reduce greenhouse gas emissions. St. Albans should continue to monitor climate in Vermont and refine the municipality's role in dealing with severe weather through 2025.

Policy: Protect and preserve scenic locations and scenic roads.

St. Albans is a scenic place. The Town's working landscape and agricultural heritage with rolling fields, tree lines, and farm buildings are a critical component of this beauty. 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.

The Town should work to specifically identify scenic locations and scenic roads in St. Albans in the future. The Town should then decide if there should be regulatory protection of the identified scenic locations and scenic roads.

Map 5.3 – Town of St. Albans Habitat Blocks



<u>Policy</u>: Regulate natural resource extraction to ensure extraction does not have an undue adverse effect upon the environment or upon the surrounding homes and neighborhoods.

There are little to no known underground natural resources in St. Albans that have commercial value. Any future natural resource extraction or processing shall be regulated to meet this policy. In addition, any proposal shall include a plan for the rehabilitation of the site at the conclusion of extraction or processing activities.

6. HOUSING

The foundation of a socially and economically healthy St. Albans is safe, affordable, and quality housing. The following chapter will document the existing housing stock in St. Albans, outline outstanding housing needs, and create a program for addressing low and moderate-income housing needs.

6.1. Goal – Facilitate a diverse range of residential dwellings that provide safe and affordable housing for all residents including ownership opportunities for low and moderate income people.

Policy: The Unified Development Bylaws shall continue to allow a diversity of housing types and sizes including accessory apartments.

The housing needs of St. Albans residents are varied by income, age, and household size. This is evident by analyzing our existing housing stock (see Table 5.1). There are 2,870 housing units in St. Albans. The majority of these housing units are detached single family homes (62%). There are also condominiums, duplexes, and apartment-type housing units available in St. Albans. Finally, St. Albans' housing stock is newer than the rest of Franklin County, according to the American Community Survey, with almost 25% of housing built since 2000 and has a 10% higher median sales price than the remainder Franklin County.

The State Housing Needs Assessment, completed by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development in 2015, analyzed Franklin County demographics and housing stock and not specifically St. Albans. The Housing Needs Assessment found that the greatest "housing gaps," an estimate of housing needs based on population growth, households living in substandard housing, and new units in the development pipeline, appear to exist for some renters and homeowners. This means that the greatest unmet need for rental and ownership housing is for middle class households. St. Albans takes meaningful efforts through the Unified Development Bylaws to allow for a diverse housing types, sizes, and prices to meet the needs and cost concerns outlined by the State's Housing Needs

Housing – Statutory Goals and Elements

Planning Goals – 24 V.S.A. 4302

(11) To ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing for all Vermonters.

(A) Housing should be encouraged to meet the needs of a diversity of social and income groups in each Vermont community, particularly for those citizens of low and moderate income.

(B) New and rehabilitated housing should be safe, sanitary, located conveniently to employment and commercial centers, and coordinated with the provision of necessary public facilities and utilities.

(C) Sites for multi-family and manufactured housing should be readily available in locations similar to those generally used for single-family conventional dwellings.

(D) Accessory apartments within or attached to single-family residences which provide affordable housing in close proximity to cost-effective care and supervision for relatives, elders, or persons who have a disability should be allowed.

Plan Elements – 24 V.S.A. 4382

(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.

Assessment. Ideally, the creation of a diverse housing stock permits current residents to find an affordable home in St. Albans.

Please note that although the information used by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development in 2015 is from the Census Bureau. However, there are reasons to believe that housing prices may be skewed artificially higher and price appreciation greater by home owners. The Census Bureau's data are just estimates and those estimates are based on homeowners' opinion of how much they might receive if they sold their house today.

Table 6.1 - Housing Units in Town of St. Albans

UNITS IN STRUCTURE	Units	Percentage of Total
1-unit, detached	1,793	62.5%
1-unit, attached (condo)	162	5.6%
2 units	229	8.0%
3 or 4 units	24	0.8%
5 to 9 units	121	4.2%
10 to 19 units	40	1.4%
20 or more units	150	5.2%
Mobile home	351	12.2%
Total Housing Units	**2,870**	**100%**
Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey		

Policy: The Unified Development Bylaws shall continue to allow the creation of housing in neighborhoods that reflect historic development patterns, reasonable densities, and the historic average annual growth rate in dwelling units.

The Unified Development Bylaws allow the creation of new housing in developments that are compact and reflect our historic development patterns. St. Albans has approximately 400 empty lots ready for home construction as of December 2017. The Unified Development Bylaws also allow greater density when provided with a public water supply and a community sewer system. Large minimum lot sizes, large minimum setbacks, and low residential density standards can inhibit development of traditional neighborhoods that reflect compact, historic development patterns. These standards can affect housing affordability and the cost maintain public infrastructure. Our Unified Development Bylaws support the development of neighborhoods that reflect historical and compact development patterns in appropriate locations.

Policy: Support the development of compact and perpetually affordable housing.

This type of housing may be developed using either ownership or rental models. Perpetually affordable housing can also be developed specifically for senior citizens, disabled persons, and to income-qualifying persons depending on the funding programs associated with the development. This type of housing should generally be located in areas of compact development with access to

public transit and services. Having perpetually affordable housing ensures that there are always affordable housing options available in our community. Our Unified Development Bylaws support this type neighborhood development, but few developers have taken advantage of the opportunity.

6.2 Goal – Permit new residential development at a rate which does not overburden community public facilities, services, and infrastructure.

Policy: The Unified Development Bylaws shall allow for the phasing of large development projects, particularly residential projects.

While not a recent issue in St. Albans, the rate of residential growth in the community shall not outstrip the ability of the community to provide services and shall not overburden community public facilities (e.g. schools, fire department, etc.). It is important that the Unified Development Bylaws continue to enable the Development Review Board with the ability to condition the approval of large development projects upon the use of a phasing schedule. This will ensure that the community will have time to properly establish a capital budget and plan for an increase in demand for services and use of public facilities.

6.3 Goal - Retain existing housing stock through upgrades to substandard housing and conversion of seasonal housing for year-round use.

Policy: St. Albans supports the retention of existing housing stock and conversion of seasonal housing to year-round housing.

As noted earlier, the State's Housing Needs Assessment finds that there is a general housing shortage in the region and in the State. Existing housing shall be retained to the greatest extent possible. St. Albans may want to track whether or not it is losing existing housing stock to other non-residential uses.

7. FACILITIES, UTILITIES, AND SERVICES

A municipality is to "plan for, finance and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet future needs" according to Title 24 V.S.A. 4302. To achieve this planning goal, St. Albans Town must assess current needs and plan for future demands. This is especially important given that funding for municipal facilities and services is largely dependent on local property taxes.

Community educational facilities are addressed in Chapter 6 – Education. Community recreation facilities are addressed in Chapter 8 – Recreation.

7.1 Goal - Plan for, finance, and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet future needs use.

Policy: St. Albans will provide municipal services and emergency services to meet current and future community needs.

Municipal Facilities and Property. St. Albans Town Hall is the only building in Town that is on the National Historic Register. While historically important, 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 future of this structure is uncertain.

The Public Works Department (DPW) operates out of facilities located on along Georgia Shore Road on St. Albans Bay. The Town continues to assess moving the DPW to a larger and much more suitable location. The DPW is responsible for road and drainage system maintenance along town-owned highways. Also, the DPW maintains both the US Route 7 sewer system and a pump station in the Industrial Park. Town roads are on a minimum 10-year re-paving schedule. Culverts and bridges are on a 20-year replacement schedule. Ditches are maintained annually on an as needed basis.

Municipally owned and operated recreational resources are covered in Chapter 8 – Recreation.

Police Services. The Town currently has a contract with the City of St. Albans Police Department for law enforcement services. It is anticipated that as the Town grows and continues to develop with expanding commerce and new residential neighborhoods, there may be greater demand for police protection. The level of law enforcement provided should keep pace with the growth of the Town.

Fire Department. 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 over 30 members, one tanker truck, one engine truck, one ladder truck, two rescue trucks, an ATV, and one marine rescue boat. St. Albans should conduct an independent analysis of what level of fire suppression services are required in the Town including an analysis of whether the Town should move towards full-time staff and if so, how many may 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 City and Swanton could be warranted.

Emergency Medical Services. Amcare is a private medical emergency response company located in along South Main Street in St. Albans. The Town contracts with Amcare to respond to medical emergencies. Amcare provides service to Fairfield, Georgia and the City. Each town contributes a per capita fee to Amcare in order to receive emergency medical services. The company has 5 ambulances and a staff of 23 employees. Their offices are centrally located making their response to emergencies timely and effective for the Town and the surrounding area.

Health and Human Services. St. Albans has 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 health and human services can be found at Northwestern Counseling and Support Services. There are numerous doctor offices and health clinics throughout the Town. Emergency help is obtained by dialing 911.

7.2 Goal - Cooperate with other regional and municipal stakeholders to properly plan and finance the expansion of public water, wastewater, stormwater, electricity transmission, electricity distribution, solid waste infrastructure, and telecommunications for the mutual benefit of all participants.

Policy: St. Albans will be an active participant in any effort pertaining to the expansion of public infrastructure and services within the Town and will communicate to appropriate stakeholders regarding any deficiency of public infrastructure and services that exists within the Town.

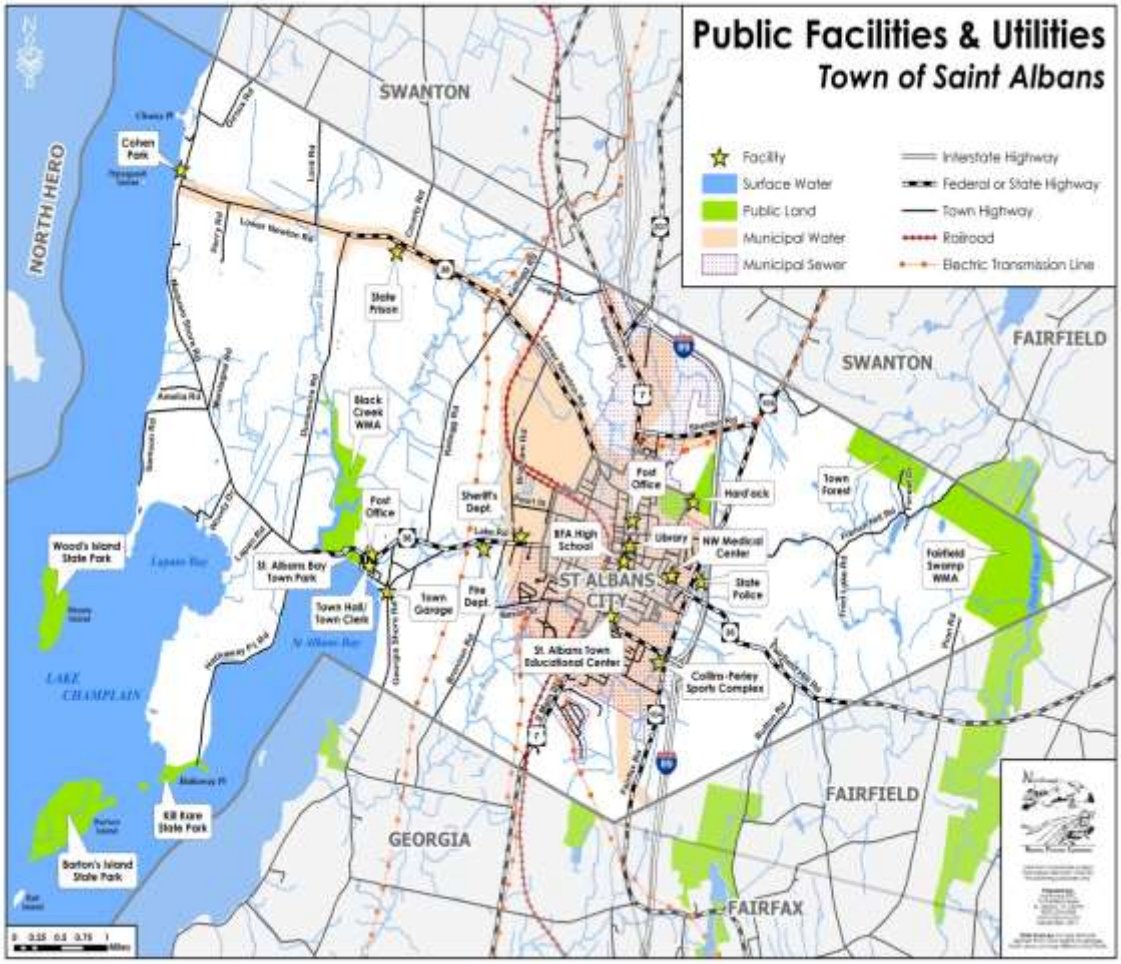
Water and Wastewater Service. The majority of residents in St. Albans rely on privately drilled wells and septic systems for their water and wastewater service. The Town does not have a municipally operated water supply system or wastewater system. The City of St. Albans Water and Sewer Department is to limited areas of Town, which is generally immediately surrounding the City existing service areas.

Water and wastewater systems are under the jurisdiction of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection. Individuals wanting to install a septic system, work on their leach field, or drill a well need to obtain a Wastewater and Potable Water Supply Permit from the State. Any complaint or discovery of a failing septic system may be referred to State by the Town Health Officer.

Stormwater. Stormwater infrastructure and management is discussed in Chapter 10 – Stormwater and Flood Resilience.

Solid Waste. St. Albans is a member of Northwest Vermont Solid Waste Management District (NWSWD) and has a representative on the organization's Board of Supervisors. NWSWD operates a transfer station on Rewes Drive in St. Albans that accepts trash and recycling. Individual households may also contract with a private solid waste hauler for curbside trash pick-up.

Map 7.1 – Town of St. Albans Public Facilities and Utilities



Electricity Transmission and Distribution. Electricity transmission and distribution is discussed in Chapter 8 – Energy.

7.3 Goal - Explore with other regional and municipal stakeholders the expansion of high-speed broadband, gigabit-speed internet, and fiber optic service in Franklin County.

Policy: St. Albans will explore reasonable efforts pertaining to the expansion of high-speed broadband, gigabit-speed internet, and fiber optic service within the Town and will communicate to the appropriate stakeholders regarding any deficiencies that exist within the Town.

Telecommunications. High-speed broadband, gigabit-speed internet, fiber optic service, reliable cellular phone service can have a substantial impact on the economy in rural communities such as St. Albans. Cable, DSL, and wireless internet service are available throughout most of St. Albans. The closest available fiber optic internet service is in the Burlington area. Residents and businesses have a number of options for service providers and can determine what is optimal for their needs.

8. ENERGY

Energy is needed to heat homes, operate transportation systems, and utilize the appliances and electronic devices that we rely on daily. Vermont has established ambitious energy goals that focus not only on the development of new, local energy resources, but also on conservation of energy and the transition away from traditional fossil fuel use St. Albans supports these goals and the transition to a self-reliant, efficient, and affordable energy future.

Figure 9.1 - Energy vs. Electricity

Energy is a term used in this chapter to encompass all types of power used to conduct work.

Electricity is a form of **energy** resulting from the existence of charged particles either statically as an accumulation of charge or dynamically as a current.

8.1 Goal - Aid the State of Vermont in achieving the goals of the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan to have 90% of total energy needs in Vermont supplied by sustainable energy sources by 2050.

The Vermont Department of Public Service created the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan in 2016. This plan discusses all aspects of energy use in the state and provides strategies for reducing energy demand, transitioning alternative, sustainable fuels, and ensuring affordable energy costs. St. Albans supports the general goals of this plan.

Policy: St. Albans supports the development and siting of sustainable energy resources in our community that are in conformance with this plan. Development of generation in identified preferred locations shall be favored over the development of other sites.

Development of new sustainable energy sources, most notably renewable electricity sources will be essential to meeting the goals of the Comprehensive Energy Plan. St. Albans is home to 4.8 MW of sustainable electricity generation capacity as of November 2017 (Table 8.1).

Energy – Statutory Goals and Elements

Planning Goals – 24 V.S.A. 4302

(4) To provide for safe, convenient, economic and energy efficient transportation systems that respect the integrity of the natural environment, including public transit options and paths for pedestrians and bicyclers.

(7) To make efficient use of energy, provide for the development of renewable energy resources, and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

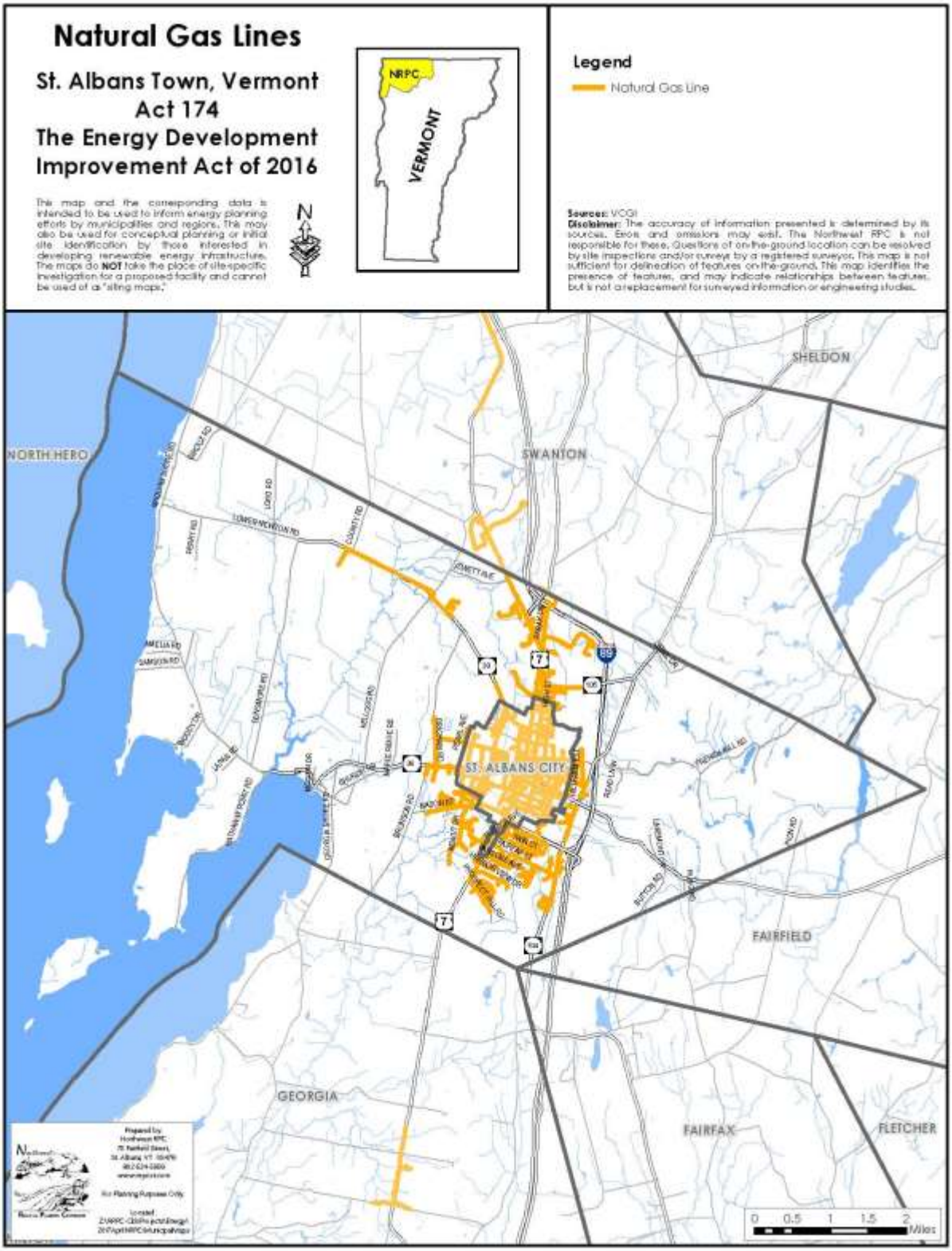
(A) General strategies for achieving these goals include increasing the energy efficiency of new and existing buildings; identifying areas suitable for renewable energy generation; encouraging the use and development of renewable or lower emission energy sources for electricity, heat, and transportation; and reducing transportation energy demand and single occupancy vehicle use.

(B) Specific strategies and recommendations for achieving these goals are identified in the State energy plans prepared under 30 V.S.A. §§ 202 and 202b.

Plan Elements – 24 V.S.A. 4382

(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.

Map 8.1- Natural Gas Line Infrastructure



St. Albans generally supports the development of new sustainable energy sources. The Town intends to develop a municipal "enhanced energy plan," as enabled in 24 V.S.A. 4352 in the near future to clearly explain community preferences regarding the type, location, and scale of sustainable energy generation facilities. The Town does support net-metering projects for local citizens and businesses, especially rooftop solar net-metering. In the near future, the Town intends to develop a screening ordinance for ground-mounted solar facilities as enabled by 24 V.S.A. 4414. The ordinance will ensure that future solar facilities are located and properly screened from roads and adjacent land.

Table 8.1 - Existing Sustainable Electricity Generation Facilities within St. Albans (Nov 2017)

Resource	**MW**	**MWh (approximate)**
Solar	4.49	1,226.40
Wind	0.01	3,066.00
Hydro	0.00	0.00
Biomass	0.30	3,504.00
Other	0.00	0.00
Total Existing Generation	4.80	5,353.24
Source: Vermont Department of Public Service and Energy Information Administration		

It is difficult to accurately estimate future sustainable electricity needs on a municipal level. The most straightforward method is to use data from the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan and disaggregate data to a municipal level. NRPC used this method and provided a rough estimate for future sustainable electricity needs for town in the 2017 Regional Energy Plan. Future electricity needs for St. Albans were estimated to be approximately 23,000 MWh in 2050. This is about 5 times the amount of current sustainable electricity generation in St. Albans.

Table 8.2 - New Sustainable Electricity Generation Target

	2025	**2035**	**2050**
Total Sustainable Generation Target (in MWh)	7,524.93	15,049.86	22,802.82
Source: Northwest Regional Planning Commission			

8.2 Goal - Make efficient use of energy, provide for the development of sustainable energy sources, and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

Policy: St. Albans supports energy conservation efforts and the efficient use of energy across all sectors.

Energy conservation efforts reduce energy costs and the volume of use. This in turn will reduce reliance on external energy sources from abroad and keep money spent on energy cost local. Tables 8.3, 8.4, and 8.5 estimate the current thermal, transportation, and electricity energy use and costs in St. Albans. This serves as baseline by which to measure future energy use, costs, and savings.

Table 8.3 estimates primary residential heating energy use for households located in St. Albans. Fuel oil and natural gas are the most popular heating sources in Town. Combined, fuel oil, and natural gas are the primary heating source for almost 80% of households in St. Albans. Propane and wood heating are also used by a combined 20% of households in St. Albans. Backup heating systems are not considered in Table 8.3. Neither are commercial and industrial heating sources because of the lack of available information. Total residential heating costs in St. Albans, as estimated by NRPC, are about $3.6 million per year. This estimate is based on market prices in early 2017.

Table 8.3 - Estimated Residential Heating Energy Use in St. Albans

Fuel Source	Municipal Households	Municipal % of Households	Municipal Square Footage Heated	Municipal BTU (in Billions)
Natural Gas	892	38.8%	1,499,136	90
Propane	196	8.5%	373,184	22
Electricity	0	0.0%	0	0
Fuel Oil	902	39.2%	1,590,688	95
Coal	0	0.0%	0	0
Wood	279	12.1%	531,216	32
Solar	0	0.0%	0	0
Other	32	1.4%	38,400	2
No Fuel	0	0.0%	0	0
Total	2301	100.0%	4,032,624	242
Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015 and Energy Information Administration				

It is assumed that most commercial and industrial establishments in St. Albans utilize natural gas given that these establishments are generally located in areas that have supply lines.

Policy: St. Albans supports the conversion of fossil fuel heating to advanced sustainable biomass heating systems or electric heat pumps in private homes and businesses as a means to lower heating and energy costs. Conversion to advanced sustainable biomass heating and some electric heat pump systems can marginally decrease total energy use and thus slightly decrease heating costs for residents and businesses through their greater energy efficiency.

Current electricity use data from Efficiency Vermont is combined with data from the City. This is due how electricity use is tracked by Green Mountain Power and Vermont Electric Cooperative. Table 8.4 shows an estimate of electricity use in St. Albans based on rough estimates from NRPC. The combined City and Town energy use has, likely, the highest electricity use in Franklin County. Exact electricity costs for St. Albans residents and businesses are unavailable. Using rate data from Green Mountain Power, it can be estimated that residential accounts in St. Albans spend at least $3.1 million per year (.14840/kWh) and business accounts spend at least $8.2 million per year (.14203 /kWh) on electricity. Future total electricity demand will likely grow due to increased use of electric vehicles, electric heat pumps, and a flourishing town economy.

Table 8.4 - Estimated Electricity Use in St. Albans

Use Sector	2014	2015	2016
Commercial and Industrial (kWh)	54,723,014	58,039,545	58,112,885
Residential (kWh)	20,773,397	21,427,325	21,419,116
Total (kWh)	**75,496,411**	**79,466,870**	**79,532,001**
Source: Efficiency Vermont and NRPC			

St. Albans supports the conservation and weatherization programs administered by Efficiency Vermont, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, Green Mountain Power, Vermont Electric Cooperative, and Vermont Gas that citizens and businesses can use to reduce their energy use and costs. This may include programs that conduct energy audits, subsidize utility upgrades, and help homeowners find contractors for home energy retrofits.

Policy: St. Albans supports the reduction in transportation energy demand, reduction of single-occupancy vehicle use, and the transition to sustainable and lower-emission energy sources to meet personal transportation needs.

It is estimated that St. Albans residents spend approximately $6.2 million each year on gasoline (the NRPC used $2.31 per gallon). It is estimated that transportation energy use in St. Albans exceeds energy used to heat residential households (326 Billion BTUs per year versus 242 Billion BTUs per year). This estimate of transportation energy use only factors in personal vehicles owned by residential households. It does not factor in the use of vehicles by businesses in St. Albans.

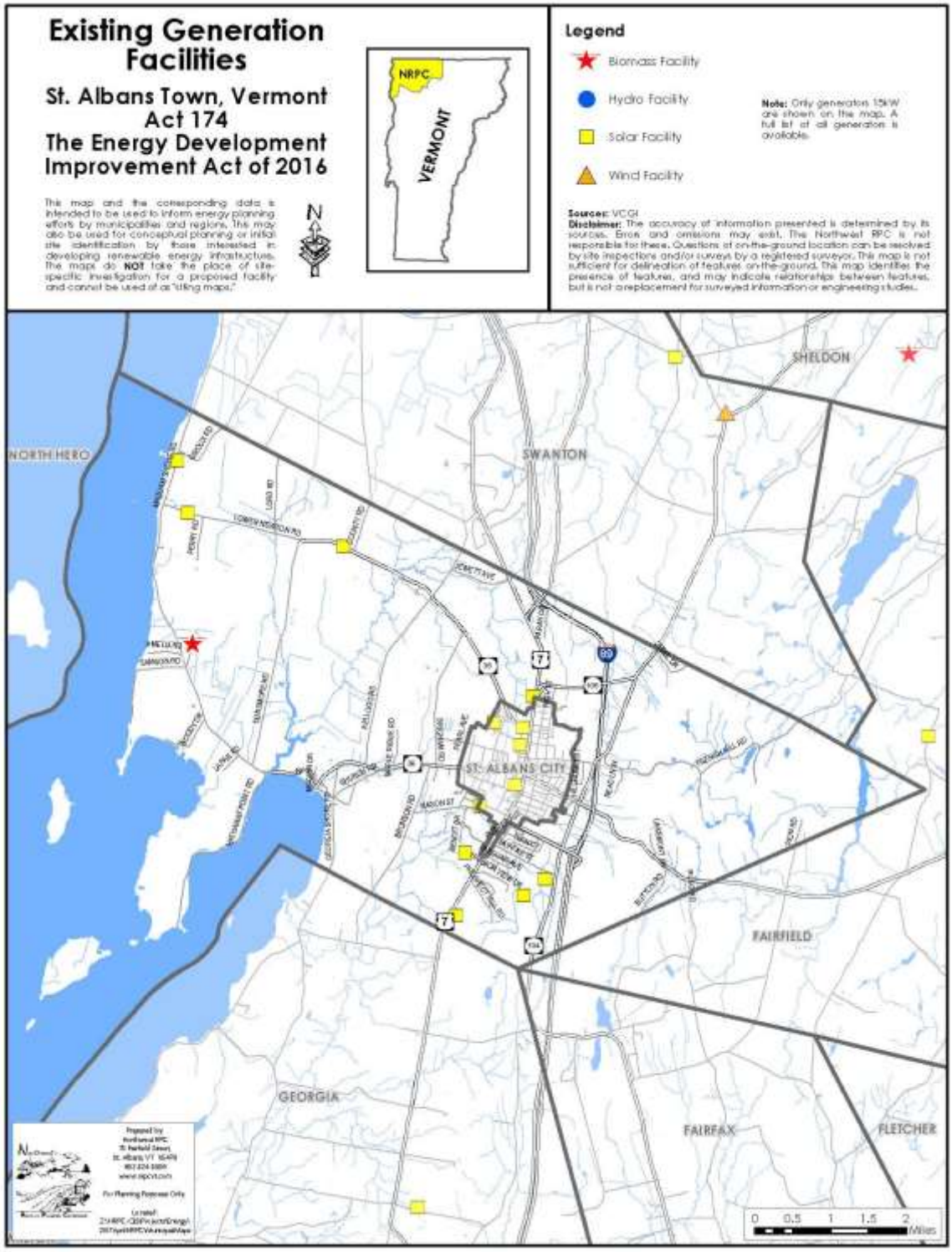
Transportation energy use may require a transformation to reach the state's energy goals. Shifting from fossil fuel-powered vehicles to electric-powered vehicles appears to be the most probable way to reduce transportation energy use according to the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan. This is because electric motors use energy more efficiently than fossil fuel motors. The transition to electric vehicles will also likely result in reductions in transportation costs and greenhouse gas emissions. In addition to supporting the transition to electric vehicles, St. Albans also support transitioning vehicles to other alternative fuel sources, if those sources aid the town and state in achieving their energy goals. Other alternatives fuels include compressed natural gas, hydrogen, or biodiesel.

Table 8.5 - Current Transportation Energy Use in St. Albans Town

Transportation Data	Municipal Data
Total # of Passenger Vehicles	4,433
Estimate Average Miles per Vehicle per Year	11,356
Total Miles Traveled	50,341,148
Realized MPG (2013 - VTrans 2015 Energy Profile)	18.6
Total Gasoline Gallons Use per Year	2,706,513
Transportation BTUs (in Billions)	$326
Average Cost per Gallon of Gasoline (RPC)	$2.31
Gasoline Cost per Year	$6,252,046

Source: American Community Survey 2011-2015, VT Agency of Transportation, and Northwest Regional Planning Commission

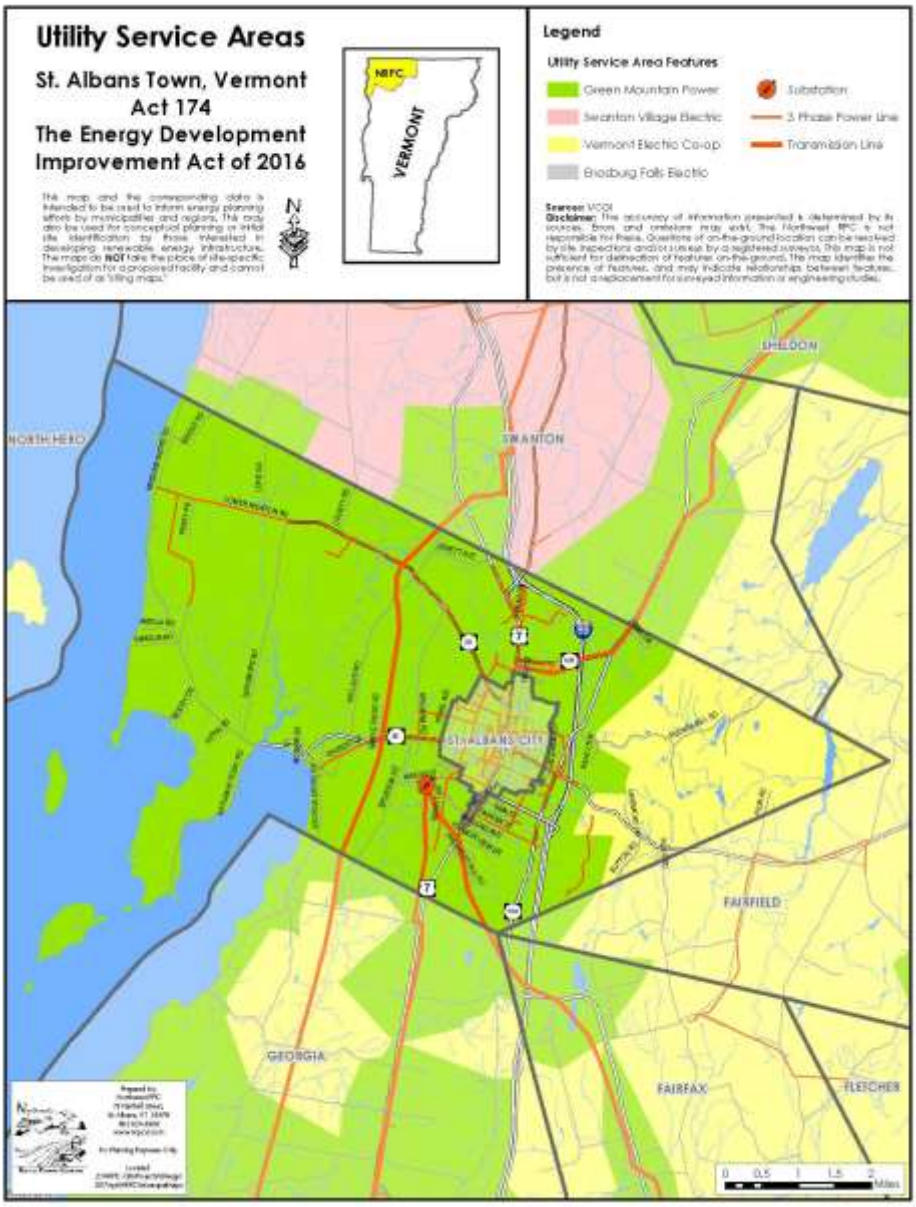
Map 8.2 - Existing Sustainable Electricity Generation Facilities



Policy: St. Albans supports development patterns and housing densities that aid in the conservation of energy. This includes our support of public transit from St. Albans throughout the region.

St. Albans supports development that focuses future growth in the community's two growth centers. Concentration of this growth will allow for greater use of alternatives transportation by residents (walking and biking) and development of further public transit connections within the St. Albans area and to other parts of the region and into Chittenden County. For more information about patterns of growth and transportation, please see the Land Use and Transportation chapters.

Map 8.3 - Existing Utility Service Areas



9. EDUCATION

Public education has been and will continue to be integral to the St. Albans community. Our public schools prepare students to be successful as citizens and a vital part of the State and local workforce. Education is the most powerful tool at our disposal to support a vibrant community and well-trained workforce.

9.1 Goal - Provide a high quality education for students of all ages that creates productive and responsible citizens in cooperation with the Maple Run Unified School District and other local education stakeholders.

Policy: St. Albans will support efforts in the Maple Run Unified School District to continue to provide high quality education to students at an affordable tax rate.

Policy: Explore public transit busing options to provide student transportation from towns surrounding St. Albans. Currently, many students from neighboring towns choose to attend schools outside of the Maple Run School District solely based on the other districts provision of student transportation.

Primary and Secondary Education

Students from St. Albans attend four excellent schools: St. Albans Town Educational Center (SATEC), Bellows Free Academy St. Albans (BFA), and the Northwest Technical Center (NWTC). These 3 schools are part of the Maple Run Unified School District which incorporates Fairfield, St. Albans, and the City. Having a multi-town unified K-12 school district makes strategic and economic sense as the State and Federal funding focuses on efficiencies and results. The schools strive to provide an education that incorporates advanced technology, learning strategies, and subject matter that meets the needs of all students.

Primary education is provided at 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. SATEC's facilities have been renovated and

Education – Statutory Goals and Elements

Planning Goals – 24 V.S.A. 4302
(3) To broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure the full realization of the abilities of all Vermonters.

(12) To plan for, finance and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet future needs.

(B) The rate of growth should not exceed the ability of the community and the area to provide facilities and services.

(13) To ensure the availability of safe and affordable child care and to integrate child care issues into the planning process, including child care financing, infrastructure, business assistance for child care providers, and child care work force development.

Plan Elements – 24 V.S.A. 4382

(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.

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

updated in recent years, and there are no plans currently for any major construction. SATEC is primarily heated by woodchip boilers, which have saved the school significantly on heating costs during spikes in oil prices.

SATEC has a capacity of about 850 students with current enrollment fluctuating around 700 students. A slow increase in enrollment will likely mirror the Town's projected growth.

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. 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 slowly increasing (**Figure 10.1**). Total expenditures have been increasing since 2006, but are still less than the total in 2005 (**Figure 10.2**). There is a persistent perception among residents that our school funding is among the highest per pupil spending, because of its high education tax rate despite the actual data which shows that it is near the statewide averages.

Table 9.1 – FY 2017 per Pupil spending in the St. Albans Town Educational Center and the Maple Run Unified School District

School	FY17 Per Pupil Spending
Elementary	$13,151
Statewide average	$14,680
Secondary	$16,598
Statewide average	$16,299

Secondary education is provided at BFA located on Main Street in the 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. Athletics mostly take place at the Collins Perley Sports and Fitness Complex, which is located about 1.5 miles southeast of BFA.

Approximately 50% of the BFA students come from St. Albans and the City. The balance is from tuition students for Fairfield, Georgia, Sheldon, Bakersfield, and Alburgh. For the past five years school enrollment has fluctuated at just under 1,000 students. The school capacity is good for the enrollment, but administrators are anticipating growth that might require minor expansion of the facilities.

Vocational and technical education is provided at the BFA campus by the NWTC. NWTC's role is to serve 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students from BFA, Missisquoi Valley Union High School, and other interested students from surrounding towns. NWTC offers 10 programs in either a two or three year sequence. All programs stress development of good work habits and desirable on-the-job behavior, in addition to specific training and specialized instruction.

NWTC serves about 200 students and over 1,500 adults through continuing education courses.

Non-Traditional Primary and Secondary Education: The Soar Learning Center is operated by Northwestern Counseling and Support Services. The Soar Learning Center is in its tenth year of operation and has grown from 3 students to 90 students in grades 1 through 12. The goal of the Soar Learning Center is to teach students strategies and techniques to achieve success in school and life.

Cost of Primary and Secondary Education: St. Albans residents have historically demanded high quality education and have provided sufficient funding to furnish a high quality education. However, local education tax rates are primarily driven by state-level funding of education followed by local education spending. Act 60, enacted in 1997, found that all children in Vermont must have equal access to educational opportunities. Act 60 accomplished this by instituting a statewide property tax to fund block grants that would share funding resources on a per pupil basis.

In 2013 under Act 68, adjusted Act 60 and set a Basic Educational Support per pupil number (BESA). Act 68 made local town residential tax rates proportional to the amount which a school district spends in excess of the BESA. Currently, the statewide property tax is $1.10 for residential property and $1.59 for non-residential property. This rate is on each $100 of the property's assessed value. When applied to all property statewide, this raises enough to provide a basic education payment of $9,588 for every equalized student in Vermont. However, it takes more than $9,588 to educate a student; how much more is the question that the school board wrestles with as they set their annual budget. When the school budget is final, the education portion of our property tax rate is adjusted to locally raise sufficient funds above the Vermont's BESA block grant.

Policy: St. Albans will support the efforts of residents to be life-long learners and engaged citizens.

Post-Secondary Education: Several opportunities exist for college and continuing education in town. Community College of Vermont has a campus in St. Albans on South Main Street, offering special interest courses, certificate programs, and associate degrees. The University of Vermont has an extension office in St. Albans that also provides opportunities for lifelong learning. Additionally, there are several colleges within a reasonable commuting distance of St. Albans (UVM, St. Michael's College, Champlain College, and Northern Vermont University - Johnson).

9.2 Goal - Ensure the availability of safe and affordable child care and to integrate child care services into the planning process, including child care financing, business assistance for child care providers, and child care work force development.

Policy: St. Albans will support development of additional child care facilities of all sizes in St. Albans and support additional efforts at the state, regional, and local level to present child care providers with access to financing, work force development, and continuing education. Access to qualified and

affordable childcare is key to a productive and stable workforce, making it a strategic element for our economic development strategy.

Quality child care supports school readiness and lowers education costs. Any person providing childcare to more than two families must register in the State. According to Vermont's Building Bright Futures listing, there are approximately 30 registered childcare homes and licensed providers in St. Albans and the City. However, 30 registered childcare centers and licensed providers is insufficient for the area, so when one center or provider closes or changes it causes tremendous turmoil throughout the entire community as families scramble to find a new daycare spot or scramble as waiting-lists at many providers are re-arranged and openings shift or are amended.

10. STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AND FLOOD RESILIENCY

St. Albans lies within the 8,249 square mile Lake Champlain watershed which includes hundreds communities from Vermont, Quebec, and New York. Stormwater from those communities eventually finds its way into Lake Champlain. The Town of St. Albans contains three major streams: Stevens Brook, Jewett Brook, Rugg Brook and a portion that drains into the Missisquoi River.

Stormwater and flood resiliency are inextricably linked topics. Within this chapter, when either if referenced it should be recognized that the other is always being or has been considered within any planning, funding, and actions.

Stormwater runoff is the dominant source of phosphorus and other polluting nutrients in rivers, brooks, and streams St. Albans Bay. Agricultural lands followed by suburban and urban developments are the two main contributors to pollution in the Bay. St. Albans is planning for the restoration of our Bay by taking regulatory actions, installing stormwater infrastructure, and working with partners to provide stormwater flow mitigation.

Stormwater and Flood Resiliency – Statutory Elements

Plan Elements – 24 V.S.A. 4382

(12)(A) A flood resilience plan that:

(i) identifies flood hazard and fluvial erosion hazard areas, based on river corridor maps provided by the Secretary of Natural Resources pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 1428(a) or maps recommended by the Secretary, and designates those areas to be protected, including floodplains, river corridors, land adjacent to streams, wetlands, and upland forests, to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure and improved property; and

(ii) recommends policies and strategies to protect the areas identified and designated under subdivision (12)(A)(i) of this subsection and to mitigate risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures, and municipal investments.

(B) A flood resilience plan may reference an existing local hazard mitigation plan approved under 44 C.F.R. § 201.6.

The Town has received a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit. As part of the permit, the Town has developed a Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) that will guide Town policies and efforts to reduce pollution to state waters. Additionally, St. Albans developed Flow Restoration Plans (FRP) for the Rugg Brook and Stevens Brook watersheds in partnership with the City and VTrans. The plans were developed in accordance with a Municipal Small Separate Stormwater System (MS4) General Permit #3-9014 Subpart IV.C. The purpose of the FRP's is to provide a planning tool for the MS4 communities to implement stormwater BMP's over a 20-year timeframe, in the effort to return Rugg Brook and Stevens Brook to its attainment condition. Both FRP's and the SWMP were approved by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. These plans provide a policy basis for the Town's efforts to maintain and restore the health of its watersheds.

Flooding is a natural and common occurrence in Vermont. Sometimes the results are harmless and sometimes they are severe. Predicting the occurrence of devastating floods is nearly impossible so the best protection against loss of life and property is to not build in areas prone to flooding. Flooding can occur in two ways: inundation and fluvial erosion.

Inundation flooding is when water rises and covers the adjacent low-lying land. The Federal Emergency Management Agency defines a floodplain as land adjacent to lakes and streams that are subject to recurring inundation or high water (please see Map 5.1 on page 35). Development within floodplains

can obstruct the natural flow of water or displace soil and raise base flood elevations. One strategy to mitigate potential encroachment and flood loss is to prohibit development below the base flood elevation or set an elevation from which development is prohibited. The Town of St. Albans has adopted land use regulations for 100-year as defined by FEMA on Flood Insurance Rate Maps, in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents and to allow the community to participate in the National Flood Hazard Insurance Program.

Flooding can also occur through fluvial erosion, a condition that occurs when fast moving flood waters, typically in steep areas, cause erosion of areas surrounding streams and rivers. To identify areas prone to fluvial erosion hazards, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources has mapped River Corridors based on the individual conditions of streams and rivers including topography and the existence of public infrastructure. River Corridors have been mapped in St. Albans along Jewett, Stevens and Rugg Brooks. River Corridors are not mapped for streams that have a watershed of less than 2 square miles. Instead, the Agency advises using a 50 foot setback on each side of a stream with the intention of protecting stream stability and natural flow. The Water Resources Map 5.1 shows all mapped River Corridors in St. Albans.

River Corridor regulations currently apply only to Act 250-related land development and land development not regulated by municipalities (like agriculture). Municipalities may adopt River Corridor maps and regulation as a part of their development regulations. Adoption may provide financial benefits to the Town in the event of a federally declared natural disaster through the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF).

Stormwater and Flood Resiliency – Statutory Goals

Planning Goals – 24 V.S.A. 4302

(6) To maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, forests, and other land resources.

(A) Vermont's air, water, wildlife, mineral, and land resources should be planned for use and development according to the principles set forth in 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a).

(B) Vermont's water quality should be maintained and improved according to the policies and actions developed in the basin plans established by the Secretary of Natural Resources under 10 V.S.A. § 1253.

(14) To encourage flood resilient communities.

(A) New development in identified flood hazard, fluvial erosion, and river corridor protection areas should be avoided. If new development is to be built in such areas, it should not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion.

(B) The protection and restoration of floodplains and upland forested areas that attenuate and moderate flooding and fluvial erosion should be encouraged.

(C) Flood emergency preparedness and response planning should be encouraged.

Planning for future flooding events is important to ensure that a community is flood resilient. Development and adoption of a local hazard mitigation plan can help a community identify potential hazard risks to the community. Local hazard mitigation plans can also identify projects in the community that can decrease the effects of potential hazards, such as the replacement of culverts or buyouts of properties with repetitive flood risk. Approval of local hazard mitigation plans by FEMA may also lead to increased grant opportunities for communities to implement identified projects. St. Albans has a local hazard mitigation plan.

10.1 Goal - Operate as an MS4 within the framework established by the Clean Water Act, under the General Permit 3-9014 issued by the State of Vermont.

Policy: St. Albans will continue to operate as an MS4 within the framework established by the Clean Water Act, under the General Permit 3-9014 issued by the State of Vermont.

Policy: St. Albans will implement the Stormwater Management Plan and the FRP's for the Rugg Brook and Stevens Brook, so long as appropriate other funding sources are available to match local funds.

10.2 Goal - Execute Stormwater Management and Flood Resiliency Measures.

St. Albans updated the Stormwater Management Plan and completed Flow Restoration Plans for Rugg Brook and Stevens Brook in 2107. Each plan reflects the requirements of General Permit 3-9014 by explaining how the town will implement six minimum control measures:

- Public Education and Outreach;
- Public Participation;
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination;
- Construction Site Runoff Control;
- Post-Construction Runoff Control; and,
- Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping.

The Stormwater Management Plan, the Rugg Brook and Stevens Brook Flow Restoration Plans, and subsequent annual reports on implementation efforts can be found on the Town's website. The goals and policy recommendations adopted here support St. Albans' stormwater management efforts.

Policy: St. Albans will continue to participate in the Franklin County Stormwater Collaborative (RSEP) in cooperation with the NRPC and the City. The RSEP formed under requirements put forth in the Vermont Water Quality Act (Act 64). NRPC coordinates the RSEP, which promotes public awareness of stormwater issues through various media campaigns and educational programs.

Policy: St. Albans shall enforce and strengthen regulations that limit the impact of land development on water quality from stormwater.

Policy: St. Albans shall adopt and enforce regulations that limit the impact of excess stormwater on stream geomorphology, streambank erosion, hydric soils, wetlands, and water quality.

Our Unified Development Bylaws have requirements for vegetated buffers between development activity and streams, lakes, hydric soils, and wetlands. They also set performance standards for runoff and erosion control during the construction and occupancy of developments. The Town should continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these standards and consider utilizing new technologies and stormwater management strategies as they are developed. The Town should continue to modify and develop standards to further minimize impervious cover limitations. Further codifying low impact development standards can strengthen regulations and improve the development review process.

Policy: St. Albans will consider managing any existing or planned stormwater facilities. In 2017, the town began developing a stormwater utility program for managing stormwater across the entire town as

part of the MS4. The stormwater utility calls for the town to work with the land owners of existing or planned stormwater facilities to bring those facilities into compliance with the state's and the Town's regulations. Once these facilities have been upgraded to the new standards, the town may take over maintenance of these facilities.

Policy: St. Albans shall implement flow restoration plans for Stevens Brook and Rugg Brook. As an MS4 community containing a stormwater impaired waterbody St. Albans is required to implement FRP's. The FRP's identified stormwater treatment practices including retrofits to existing structures and facilities. When implemented the FRP's will work towards removing Stevens Brook and Rugg Brook from the State's List of Impaired Waters.

Policy: St. Albans shall plan and implement stormwater improvements using various state and federal stormwater funding sources and only using local capital sources as a match to those funds. As stated earlier, St. Albans is considering a stormwater utility to facilitate the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the stormwater infrastructure and drainage network, to address increasingly stringent permitting requirements, and to support St. Albans Bay water quality initiatives.

Policy: St. Albans shall regularly update its stormwater management plan. The Stormwater Management Plan was updated in 2017 to reflect St. Albans' active role in stream restoration. The Stormwater Management Plan adopted by reference to this comprehensive plan.

Policy: St. Albans shall consider snow management. The Town does regulate snow, including plowed snow and stored snow via the Unified Development Bylaws and the development review process. Snow melt would be regulated through a stormwater utility under consideration. Now, landscaping plans for a proposed development project would continue to illustrate how snow will be managed on-site. In the future, landscaping plans would be combined with stormwater management plans for a proposed development project to illustrate how snow and snow melt will be managed on-site.

Policy: St. Albans will explore stormwater issues concerning older residential developments. Most development in St. Albans included a State permit and a State-permitted stormwater management system. However, only a few older developments still have fully function stormwater facilities and structures. Untreated stormwater from these subdivisions reaches receiving water bodies and accelerated runoff is causing erosion. To address these issues the town will work with affected landowners, homeowners associations, and other partners to address erosion and provide an appropriate amount of stormwater management.

Policy: St. Albans will encourage residents to disconnect roof runoff from all public stormwater systems unless fully justified with no other options. Disconnecting gutters and downspouts from stormwater systems is a relatively easy way to reduce the amount of stormwater that reaches our streams is to educate homeowners on the harmful effect of roof runoff.

In partnership with the RSEP, St. Albans raised awareness in town and in Franklin County on the importance of capturing and reusing roof top runoff through the use of rain barrels. St. Albans is

developing a volunteer group to help fellow residents to redirect rooftop downspouts in residential developments from pavement to lawn, install rain barrels, and assist in constructing rain gardens.

10.3 Goal - Construct the Stormwater Management Projects Recommended in the Flow Restoration Plans by December 2032.

Specific stormwater management projects were approved in the FRP's for Stevens Brook and Rugg Brook. The FRP's outlined plans for retrofitting existing and previous impervious cover permits with present best management practices. These practices will include detention basins, bio-retention filters, underground storage, and others systems to mitigation stormwater flows in both watersheds. The primary goal is to reduce high flow discharges and increase normal base flow in order to restore degraded water quality and achieve compliance with the Vermont Water Quality Standards in both watersheds prior to 2032.

Policy: St. Albans will continue restoration projects and other efforts to remove Rugg Brook and Stevens Brook from Vermont's 303(d) list of impaired waters. St. Albans, as an MS4 community, has responsibility to restore both streams to their attainment levels. Restoration projects have begun in several locations. Planning, engineering, and designs to address the toxics, nutrients, and temperature impairments were completed through the FRP's.

Policy: St. Albans will explore other stormwater mitigation and management projects outside of the Rugg Brook and Stevens Brook watersheds as a means to improve the water quality in Lake Champlain and St. Albans Bay.

Policy: St. Albans will investigate corridor protection and restoration efforts in the Rugg Brook and Stevens Brook watersheds. The stormwater impairment on both brooks is due to accelerated runoff causing erosion of phosphorus laden of sediment associated with increased acreage of impervious surfaces within the watersheds. To address this issue, St. Albans will consider developing a strategy of acquiring and reforesting portions of the riparian corridor along the Rugg Brook, Stevens Brook, and their tributaries. Widen forest buffers would intercept, detain, and treat stormwater flows in each watershed. A comprehensive decision matrix will be developed to assess and identify properties where restoration efforts would be expected to have the greatest impact. Steep and erosive stream banks will be strategically reviewed in order to provide a comprehensive protection strategy within Rugg Brook, Stevens Brook, and their tributary watersheds.

10.4 Goal - Monitor the effectiveness of all stormwater mitigation projects.

Policy: Water Quality Monitoring - St. Albans will explore additional water quality monitoring locations in St. Albans' and use that data to inform stormwater mitigation efforts and local best management practices.

Policy: Analyze Existing Water Quality Monitoring Data to Prioritize Implementation Efforts - St. Albans and other partners will regularly analyze existing water quality monitoring data collected by others and use that data to inform stormwater mitigation and best management practices.

10.5 Goal – Verify results and implementation the St. Albans Stormwater Management Plan.

Policy: Stewardship – St. Albans will with State and Federal government entities, whom are ultimately responsible for protecting our local waterways, strive to keep local waterways free and clear of contamination.

Quality of life and our local economy are linked to water quality in Lake Champlain. In recognizing this, the Town will strive to become a sustainable community of citizens and businesses motivated to conserve and enhance natural resources through policies, programs, and outreach activities. The Town's stewardship objective is intended to create long-term environmental benefits, to conserve natural resources, and aid the local economy.

Policy: St. Albans will develop and adopt a protocol for addressing potentially hazardous land use activities in the MS4 areas. The goal of this policy is to address potentially hazardous land use activities could contribute to watershed contamination and pose a potential risk or potential of becoming a public nuisance. The Town's strategy will identify risks and encourage the landowner or operator to develop, implement, and monitor best management practices to assure good stewardship and reduce risk of contamination.

Policy: St. Albans will develop and adopt protocols for addressing potentially adverse stormwater activities in the MS4 areas.

Policy: St. Albans will continue to omit wetlands, hydric soils, and flood prone areas from consideration as locations for stormwater retention and mitigation facilities.

Policy: St. Albans will encourage smart use of phosphorous fertilizer with soil testing prior to application. Phosphorous loading is the number one threat to the health and stability of Lake Champlain. The primary sources of phosphorous are from fecal matter, fertilizers, and erosion of previously contaminated soil. For many years the Town has committed to using phosphorous-free fertilizers on Town-owned land in an effort to minimize the amount of phosphorous that enters our waterways. In 2012, Vermont banned the use of phosphorus fertilizer on lawns.

10.6 Goal – Maintain the current level of protection within the Unified Development Bylaws for areas within the 100-year floodplains and within the state's defined River Corridors.

Our Unified Development Bylaws contain a Flood Hazard Overlay district. The purpose of the Flood Hazard Overlay is to assure compliance with the minimum National Flood Insurance Program standards, which limits increases in flood damage caused by development in the flood hazard areas, to minimize future public and private losses due to floods, and promotes the public health, safety, and general. The flood hazard Overlay overlaps other zoning districts and requires specific development and construction criteria designed to maintain and improve flood resiliency and further protect state designated River Corridors.

Policy: Encourage a flood resilient community by avoiding new development in the flood hazard and river corridor protection areas combined with protection and restoration of flood attenuation areas and engaging in flood emergency preparedness and response measures.

Policy: Engage in planning efforts to implement flood resiliency along with annually readopting our Local Emergency Operations Plan to address and meet the requirements of state law.

Policy: Maintain the Conservation District with our Unified Development Bylaws as an area that helps protect and restore floodplains, upland forestland, and to meet the requirements of state law.

11. RECREATION

St. Albans is an ideal location for recreational and outdoor enthusiasts by its location on Lake Champlain and numerous nearby high-quality parks and surrounding forest land.

11.1 Goal - Continue to provide access to high quality recreational facilities, parks, and beaches.

Policy: St. Albans will maintain the existing municipal parks, explore ways to enhance existing municipal parks to better suit the future needs of citizens, work with the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation to integrate the State-controlled parks as better assets to town citizens, and explore trail connections between the Town Forest and other trail systems within Franklin County.

Municipal Parks: St. Albans provides residents with many opportunities to enjoy outdoor activities. The Town maintains three parks along with their facilities (See Table 8.1). Operation and maintenance of municipal parks are funded through general funds. Also, the Town has a representative on the governing body of Collins Perley Sports and Fitness Center, a large recreational facility owned and operated as a non-profit corporation.

State Parks: There are several parks in town owned by the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation that offer excellent recreational opportunities. These areas are easily available assets to St. Albans residents although there is small charge for daily use.

Policy: St. Albans will explore if there are additional community recreational needs and determine if there are requirements for additional municipal recreational facilities before 2025 and the next town plan update. Current slow population growth should not significantly diminish the value and availability of outdoor recreational activities in St. Albans over the next decade.

Recreation – Statutory Goals and Elements

Planning Goals – 24 V.S.A. 4302

(8) To maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for Vermont residents and visitors.

(A) Growth should not significantly diminish the value and availability of outdoor recreational activities.

(B) Public access to noncommercial outdoor recreational opportunities, such as lakes and hiking trails, should be identified, provided, and protected wherever appropriate.

Plan Elements – 24 V.S.A. 4382

(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.

Table 8.1 – Parks and Recreational Areas		
Parks and Facilities	**Ownership**	**Description**
St. Albans Town Forest	Town of St. Albans	The St. Albans Town Forest contains 119 acres of wooded land on French Hill. This area is an excellent place for family day trips and other educational programs. Recreational opportunities include trails for hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and mountain biking.
Cohen Park	Town of St. Albans	Along Maquam Shore Road is a 4 acre park that has open lawns, 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.
Bay Park and Pier	Town of St. Albans	St. Albans Bay Park is the 19 acre park at the north end of the bay. 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 Town completed a land swap that gave the Town ownership of Bay Park along with the pier. 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 2,000 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 a summer concert series. The pier needs to be repaired and elevated in the future. Options for repairing the sea wall in front of the historic stone bath house also need to be evaluated.
Aldis Hill park and Hard'ack Recreation Area		Aldis Hill Park and Hard'ack Recreation Area contain over 225 acres with it's nearly 700 feet of rope tow, combines affordability with great local access for families to enjoy a Vermont tradition. Downhill skiing, snowboarding, skating, sliding, hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing can all be enjoyed at Hard'ack. These areas are an excellent place for family day trips and other educational programs. In addition to downhill skiing, recreational opportunities include trails for hiking, running, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and mountain biking.
Collins Perley Sports Center	Non-profit Corporation	Located on 53 acres near Exit 19, this facility is operated by a non-profit corporation with a board composed of local citizens including a representative from St. Albans Town. Collins Perley has both indoor and outdoor recreational facilities. Indoor facilities include tennis courts, a gym, and a hockey rink. Outdoor facilities include a track, walking paths, and multiple playing fields. St. Albans Town has a representative on the board that operates the facility.
Kill Kare State Park	State of Vermont	Previously owned and operated as a summer resort and boys' camp, was purchased by Vermont 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.

Burton and Woods Island State Parks	State of Vermont	Burton Island is a 253 acre park in Lake Champlain accessible only by boat. A ferry runs from Kill Kare State Park on Hathaway Point 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 Areas	State of Vermont	The Fairfield Swamp is located on the east side of Town, extending into Fairfield and Swanton. This area, which contains Dead Creek, acres of forested land, and wetlands, is owned and managed by the 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.
Mississquoi Valley Rail Train	State of Vermont	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 a VT Association of Snow Travelers (VAST) trail in the winter.

12. PLANNING WITH ADJACENT COMMUNITIES AND THE REGION

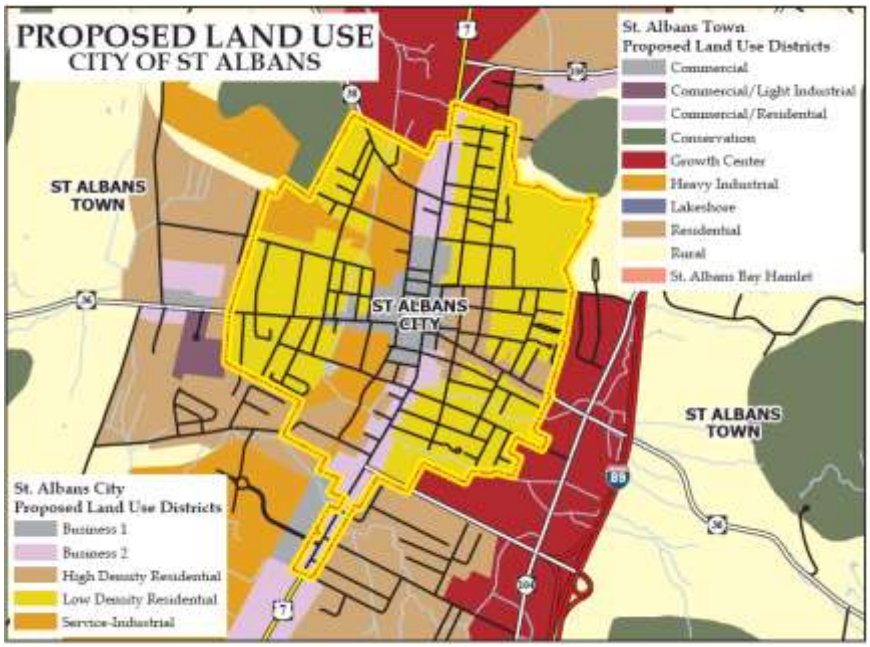
Municipalities do not exist apart from one another and land use planning in one community can affect land use in neighboring communities. This Chapter considers the compatibility of proposed land use in this Town Plan with land use in adjacent communities.

12.1 Consideration of Land Use Planning in Adjacent Communities

<u>City of St. Albans</u>

The City adopted its most recent Municipal Plan in 2017. The City has used planning and direct engagement in order to increase private investment, property development and job growth within the commercial axis. The goals of these efforts are to grow the City's grand list while increasing options for residents and visitors to live, work, and play in the community, in a manner compatible with its existing character and form. The City's strategy is to use public funds and other resources to "level the playing field" for private development inside their community. Additionally, the City has tried to remove the barriers to development that typically exists in historic downtown centers and not in other areas where the private market may be more interested in investing.

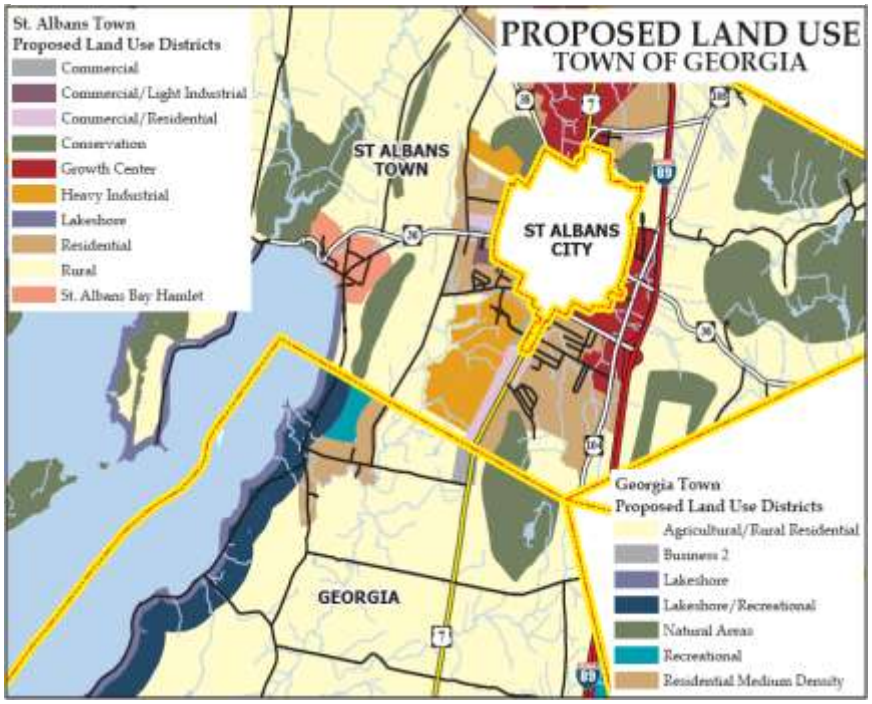
Map 12.1 –Proposed Land Use in City of St.



Correctly, our growth centers abuts the City's growth areas creating a concentrated growth area for the benefit of the entire region. There may be opportunities where the Town and the City can work together to provide services more efficiently and economically. Examples include water and sewer service, public safety, and recreation.

Georgia

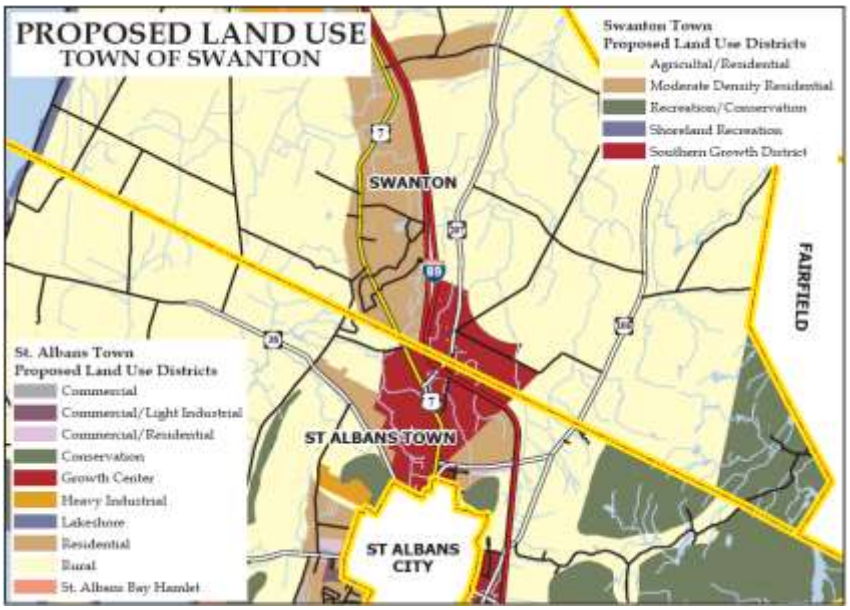
Map 12.2 – Proposed Land Use in the Town of Georgia



Georgia adopted its most recent municipal plan in September 2011. The Plan identifies 11 proposed land use districts, which have been adopted as zoning districts in their land use regulations. Georgia's B-2 (Business, medium density) District borders the St. Albans Residential District in the area where US Route 7 crosses the town line. While residential land use proposed for these areas are compatible, it is important that Georgia ensures that businesses sited immediately along US Route 7 with appropriate buffers from adjacent residential uses. However, the area around I-89 exit 18 is competitive with I-89 exit 19 in St. Albans and could potentially draw development away from this Growth Center. St. Albans should monitor development activity in this area and in the business zone along US Route 7 and just south of the town line.

The two towns also share the shore of Lake Champlain to the west and both have designated a Lakeshore District. The remaining boundary of St. Albans is similarly designated in Georgia.

Map 12.2 – Proposed Land Use in the Town of Swanton



Swanton

Swanton is in the process of updating and adopting a revised Town Plan. Swanton is a suburban and rural community similar to St. Albans. Swanton's Southern Growth District, also part of the Regional Growth Center, abuts our Northern Growth Center. Swanton's proposed land uses along out shared border are compatible. Similarly to the City, there also may be opportunities for Swanton and St. Albans to collaborate on providing services, such as water, sewer, public safety and public works.

Fairfield
Fairfield adopted its most recent Town Plan in 2009. Land uses on the St. Albans/Fairfield border are planned to be compatible.

Across the Lake
North Hero and Grand Isle are located across Lake Champlain from the Town. It is important for all lakeshore towns to ensure land development does not pollute the waters of Lake Champlain and to work together in improving the Lake's water quality.

12.2 Consideration of Policies, Goals and Implementation

From the transportation to land use to water quality, planning cannot happen independently from adjacent communities and the region. St. Albans is a member municipality of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC), which provides a forum for municipalities in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties to act on behalf of the region. All communities, including St. Albans, are entitled to equal voting representation by two locally appointed members of the governing Board of Commissioners.

The most recently adopted Northwest Regional Plan proposes land use planning areas to encourage the conservation of valued resources and development pattern that will maintain the character and quality of life important to this region. Planning areas in St. Albans include agricultural resource lands, conservation and forest resource lands, and rural lands. Also, the regional plan designates a regional growth center including parts our Northern Growth Center, the City, and Swanton. While the planning areas differ slightly from the Town's zoning districts, the planning areas are compatible with the Town's land use plan.

St. Albans is active on several subcommittees and advisory committees of the NRPC. Participation on the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) is particularly important so the Town has a role in overseeing the Regional Commission's transportation planning program and has the opportunity to provide local input regarding transportation issues important to the region. St. Albans participates in the NRPC Policy/Project Review Committee, which reviews and comments on all Act 250 applications as they relate to the Northwest Regional Plan.

12.3 Regional Policy Recommendations

The Town shall:

- Participate in the NRPC and its associated regional committees.
- Review and analyze information to be shared with adjacent communities and the region.
- Explore opportunities to collaborate with other municipalities and regional organizations to address important regional issues and improving water quality in Lake Champlain.
- Review, analyze, and consider the impact of land use decisions on adjacent municipalities.

13. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

The St. Albans Town Plan is a living document. St. Albans should be actively using this plan to guide the planning process and enhance decision making. Each chapter has at least one goal and several policy recommendations to fulfill the goal. Some of these will require updating of our ordinances; some are through capital improvements, and some can be accomplished as part of the annual Town budget. All require communication amongst the various constituents and by doing so we will raise public awareness and advance these ideas so they will help St. Albans flourish.

St. Albans is fortunate to have a large number of actively engaged citizens that are eager to make St. Albans an even better place to live. To that end, the Planning Commission will take on the task of evaluating and prioritizing Town Plan goals and policy recommendations. In some cases the Selectboard may create new committees, if one does not already exist, to further reach to goals and policy recommendations in the Town Plan. All meetings will adhere to the open meeting law and minutes will be kept and made public.

13.1 Priority Goals

A goal has been selected from each chapter in the Town Plan, which is listed below to be targeted as a priority. The intent is to draw upon community members that are already in place to help prioritize and implement this plan. The Planning Commission will be charged with overseeing and coordinating this effort. The Chair of the Planning Commission will meet with the Chair of the Selectboard each year in April to determine if the Selectboard would like periodic updates of specific activities of the Planning Commission and to establish a schedule. This is an 8-year plan, so there will be updates several times each year delineating progress and allowing for discussion about the management of planning and implementation process. At those meetings, discussions will be held on this Plan's conformity, address subsequent questions, permit citizens to express concerns about the Plan's implementation, and suggest changes with implementation.

Land Use: Continue to encourage new development in a manner that will promote the public health, safety, prosperity, convenience, efficiency, and the economy of St. Albans.

Transportation: Develop a comprehensive approach to our transportation system that emphasizes the safe and efficient movement of people and goods utilizing a variety of transportation modes that includes public transit, sidewalks, bikeways, multi-use paths, in addition to the movement of cars and trucks along our roads and highways.

Scenic and Natural Resources: Identify, protect, preserve, and transform important natural and scenic features of St. Albans' landscape.

Housing: Facilitate a diverse range of residential dwellings that provide safe and affordable housing for all residents with ownership opportunities for low and moderate income people.

Facilities, Utilities, and Services: Plan for, finance, and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet future needs use.

Energy: Make efficient use of energy, provide for the development of sustainable energy sources, and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

Education: Provide a high quality education for students of all ages that creates productive and responsible citizens in cooperation with the Maple Run Unified School District and other local education stakeholders.

Stormwater Management and Flood Resiliency: Operate as an MS4 within the framework established by the Clean Water Act, under the General Permit 3-9014 issued by the State of Vermont.

Recreation: Continue to provide access to high quality recreational facilities, parks, and beaches.

13.2 Coordination and Staffing

The process of good local planning with public involvement is the most important thing and we hope to achieve this through this implementation of this Town Plan. 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 plan implementation.

13.3 Policy Recommendations

The Town of St. Albans should implement goals and policy recommendations found in the 2020 Town Plan to achieve the vision of the community.

14. OTHER PLANS AND STUDIES ADOPTED BY REFERENCE

In addition to this Town Plan update, St. Albans has undertaken a number of other studies, analyses, and reports that have guided our planning and development activities, and are incorporated into this Town Plan by reference. Those studies, analyses, and reports are listed below in no particular order.

- VTrans Standards for Town and Development Roads, Standard A-76.
- VTrans Standards for Town and Development Roads, Standard B-71.
- Vermont Road Design Manual.
- Town of St Albans Road Standards Ordinance.
- St. Albans Traffic and Circulation Study, Lamoureux & Dickinson - 2002.
- Sidewalk Master Plan, Engineering Solutions - 2003.
- VT Route 104 Corridor Study, Wilbur Smith Associates - 2005.
- Federal Street Corridor Study, Resource Systems Group - 2005 update.
- I-89 Exit 20 Transportation Financing Plan, Resource Systems Group - 2006.
- I-89 Exit 19, St. Albans State Highway, and VT Route 104 - Draft Intersection Scoping Study Update, Lamoureux & Dickinson - 2009
- VT Route 207 bypass concept plans, Ruggiano Engineering - 2009.
- St. Albans Town Municipal Facilities Analysis, Scott and Partners - 2013.
- St. Albans Town Educational Center Safe Routes to School Travel Plan, VT SRTS Resource Center - 2014
- Conceptual Planning and Feasibility Study for Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities, Broadreach Planning and Design - 2015.
- Stormwater Management Plan for St. Albans Town, Stone Environmental - 2015
- St. Albans Town Forest Comprehensive Trail Plan, Sinousity - 2015.
- Town of St. Albans, Vermont Hazard Mitigation Plan - 2015
- Stevens Brook Flow Restoration Plan, Watershed Consulting Associates - 2017
- Rugg Brook Flow Restoration Plan, Watershed Consulting Associates - 2017

The above studies, analyses, and reports are available for review during regular business hour on the second floor of the St. Albans Town Hall at 579 Lake Road in St. Albans Bay.