

Town of St. George

Notice of Planning Commission Public Hearing:

Proposed 2017 St. George Town Plan

Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 4444, the St. George Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, November 28, 2017, 7:00 pm, at the St. George Town Office, 21 Barber Road, to receive comments on a new draft comprehensive plan for the Town of St. George. The 2017 town plan is intended to update and replace the 2012 St. George Town Plan, and will remain in effect through 2025. The draft plan affects all land, property and public facilities in town, as shown on accompanying maps.

Table of Contents: 1. Introduction (General Description, Vision Statement, Authority and Purpose, Resources and References, Town History); 2. Our People (Demographic Profile, Housing Profile, Economic Profile); 3. Our Community (Historic and Archaeological Resources, Town Facilities, Lands & Fiscal Condition, Economy, Education and Childcare, Recreation, Transportation, Utilities and Energy, Public Health and Safety); 4. Our Environment (Air, Land, Water, Land, Special Areas and Resources, Resilience); 5. Our Town's Future (Natural and Historic Resources, Agriculture and Forestry, Extraction of Earth Resources, Recreation, Transportation, Public Facilities and Services, Energy, Economic Development, Education and Childcare, Housing, Land Use Plan, Implementation, Compatibility).

Plan Maps: Septic Suitability, Utilities, Hinesburg Thrust, Lake Vermont and the Champlain Sea, Steep Slopes, Important Soils, Land Cover, Class II Wetlands, Lake Iroquois Watershed, Deer Wintering Areas, Land Use Planning Areas.

Copies of the draft 2017 St. George Town Plan, maps and Planning Commission report are available for review at the St. George Town Office, 21 Barber Road, during normal business hours. Contact: Maggie Kerrin, Town Administrator, 482-5272, stgeorgevtta@gmail.com.

Scott Baker, Chair
St. George Planning Commission

Planning Commission Report

2017 Revisions to the St. George Town Plan

1. The St. George Town Plan as proposed is consistent with the goals established in 24 V.S.A. §4302.

4302(c)(1)	Maintain the historic settlement pattern	Page 60
4302(c)(2)	Provide a strong and diverse economy	Page 53
4302(c)(3)	Broaden access to education	Page 54
4302(c)(4)	Transportation systems	Page 50-51
4302(c)(5)	Identify important natural and historic features	Page 47-48
4302(c)(6)	Quality of air, water, wildlife, and land	Page 47-48
4302(c)(7)	Encourage the efficient use of energy	Page 53
4302(c)(8)	Enhance recreational opportunities	Page 49-50
4302(c)(9)	Strengthen agriculture	Page 48-49
4302(c)(10)	Wise and efficient use of natural resources	Page 49
4302(c)(11)	Safe and affordable housing	Page 54
4302(c)(12)	Efficient system of public facilities	Page 51-52
4302(c)(13)	Availability of safe and affordable childcare	Page 54
4302(c)(14)	Encourage flood resilience	Page 47-48

2. The St. George Town Plan as proposed does not alter the designation of any land area.

The future land use plan and map in the St. George Town Plan was revised in 2007. Subsequently, the town's land use regulations were extensively revised to implement the policies of the Town Plan. The Town Plan was re-adopted in 2012. This 2017 update to the Town Plan does not propose any substantive changes to the future land use plan and map, or the implementing land use regulations.



ST. GEORGE

TOWN PLAN

DRAFT

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.01 General Description	1
1.02 Vision Statement	2
1.03 Authority and Purpose	3
1.03-A Statutory Framework	3
1.03-B Purpose	3
1.04 Resources and References	4
1.05 Town History	5
2 OUR PEOPLE	7
2.01 Demographic Profile	7
2.01-A Population Dynamics	7
2.01-B Age Distribution	9
2.01-C Household Characteristics	9
2.02 Housing Profile	10
2.02-A Housing Stock	10
2.02-B Residential Neighborhoods	10
2.02-C Housing Values	10
2.02-D Residency Patterns	11
2.02-E Affordable Housing	11
2.03 Economic Profile	12
2.03-A Labor Force	12
2.03-B Income and Wages	13
3 OUR COMMUNITY	14
3.01 Historic and Archaeological Resources	14
3.02 3.2. Town Facilities, Lands & Fiscal Condition	14
3.02-A Town Office	14
3.02-B Little Red Schoolhouse	15
3.02-C Town Center Property	15
3.02-D St. George Cemetery	17
3.02-E Fiscal Condition	17
3.03 Economy	17
3.03-A Agriculture	17
3.03-B Non-Farm Businesses	18

3.03-C	Home-Based Businesses	18
3.04	Education and Childcare	18
3.04-A	Elementary and Secondary Education	18
3.04-B	Vocational, Post-Secondary & Continuing Education	19
3.04-C	Childcare	20
3.05	Recreation	20
3.06	Transportation	20
3.06-A	State Highways	20
3.06-B	Town Roads	22
3.06-C	Private Roads	22
3.06-D	Road Safety	22
3.06-E	Road Design	23
3.06-F	Municipal Roads General Permit	23
3.06-G	Other Transportation Facilities	23
3.07	Utilities and Energy	24
3.07-A	Water and Wastewater	24
3.07-B	Solid Waste	26
3.07-C	Telecommunications	26
3.07-D	Natural Gas	27
3.07-E	Electricity	27
3.07-F	Utility, Energy and Telecommunications Projects	28
3.07-G	Energy	30
3.08	Public Health and Safety	31

4 | OUR ENVIRONMENT **32**

4.01	Air	32
4.01-A	Climate	32
4.01-B	Air Quality	32
4.02	Land	33
4.02-A	Geology and Land Form	33
4.02-B	Soils and Earth Resources	35
4.02-C	Land Cover	37
4.03	Water	37
4.03-A	Groundwater	37
4.03-B	Wetlands	39
4.03-C	Surface Water	39
4.03-D	Lake Iroquois	40
4.03-E	Shelburne Pond	41

4.04	Land	41
4.04-A	Natural Communities	41
4.04-B	Wildlife Habitat and Corridors	42
4.05	Special Areas and Resources	43
4.05-A	Town Center Property	43
4.05-B	Hilltops and Ridgelines	43
4.05-C	Natural Areas and Important Resources	44
4.06	Resilience	45
4.06-A	Town Actions	45
4.06-B	Floodplains	45
4.06-C	River Corridors	45
4.06-D	Stormwater Runoff	46
5	OUR TOWN'S FUTURE	47
5.01	Natural and Historic Resources	47
5.01-A	Goals	47
5.01-B	Policies	47
5.02	Agriculture and Forestry	48
5.02-A	Goals	48
5.02-B	Policies	48
5.03	Extraction of Earth Resources	49
5.03-A	Goals	49
5.03-B	Policies	49
5.04	Recreation	49
5.04-A	Goals	49
5.04-B	Policies	50
5.05	Transportation	50
5.05-A	Goals	50
5.05-B	Policies	50
5.06	Public Facilities and Services	51
5.06-A	Goals	51
5.06-B	Policies	51
5.07	Energy	53
5.07-A	Goals	53
5.07-B	Policies	53
5.08	Economic Development	53
5.08-A	Goals	53
5.08-B	Policies	53

5.09	Education and Childcare	54
5.09-A	Goals	54
5.09-B	Policies	54
5.10	Housing	54
5.10-A	Goals	54
5.10-B	Policies	54
5.11	Land Use Plan	55
5.11-A	St. George Village	55
5.11-B	West Residential	57
5.11-C	East Residential	59
5.11-D	Rural	59
5.11-E	Forested Uplands	59
5.11-F	Goals	60
5.11-G	Policies	60
5.12	Implementation	61
5.12-A	The Past Five Years	61
5.12-B	The Next Five Years	61
5.12-C	Over the Long-Term	62
5.13	Compatibility	62
5.13-A	With Our Neighbors	62
5.13-B	With Our Region	63
5.13-C	With State Law	64

1 | INTRODUCTION

1.01 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

St. George, at less than 3.6 square miles in area, is Vermont's smallest town. Located in Chittenden County, St. George is on the fringe of the greater Burlington metropolitan area. The Champlain Valley to the west and the Green Mountains to the east come together in St. George where two north-south ridgelines divide the town. State highways, Routes 116 and 2A, run through the valleys between the ridgelines carrying ever-increasing numbers of commuters and commercial vehicles between the booming communities that adjoin the town. The terrain, small geographic area of the town and proximity to larger communities, resulted in St. George never establishing a civic or commercial center. Through the 1960s, the town consisted of little more than a handful of farms and a few dozen homes.

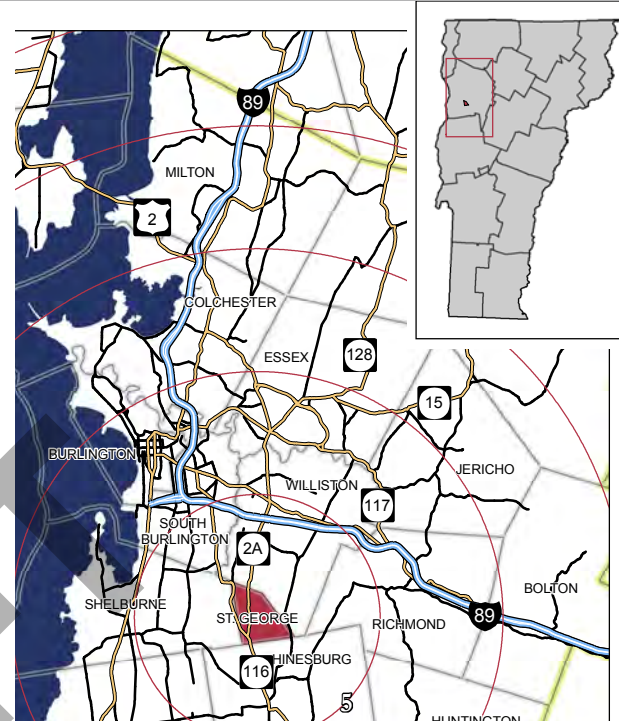


FIGURE 1. LOCATION MAP

Change came to St. George in 1966, when a 130-unit mobile home park was established. Other residential subdivisions followed resulting in the town's population more than tripling between 1960 and 1980. Seeing how the community was changing, in the 1970s town residents came together to acquire property and plan for the development of a mixed-use town center for St. George. The town was in the forefront of community planning as a transfer of development rights program was considered for St. George that would have directed growth into the town center while conserving productive farm and forest lands outside the center. Despite considerable effort and public support, the town center project encountered multiple hurdles and never materialized. The plans for the center went dormant and development in the town slowed in the 1980s and early '90s.

In 1994, some of the town center land was sold for construction of a manufacturing facility. The resulting income allowed the town to complete installation of road, water and septic infrastructure, and a town office was established in the center. Over the past decade, growth pressure in Chittenden County has surged again and St. George has been watching the quickening pace of development in neighboring communities. Demand for homes near Lake Iroquois has started to generate new construction on the east side of town. Recent decades have also seen the loss of the town's dairy farms leaving a significant amount of open agricultural land underutilized, increasing the likelihood that it will be sold and developed. It is in this environment that we in St. George are revisiting the vision for our town that was first expressed by residents in the 1970s.

1.02 VISION STATEMENT

We envision a future for St. George that balances opportunities for growth with the preservation of important natural areas and working agricultural land. The town center will evolve into an identifiable, pedestrian-oriented village offering vibrant streets and public gathering places. Surrounding this core, a greenbelt of open space and forest will endure. Together, these assets will form a foundation for sustainable growth and a continuation of the high quality of life enjoyed by current residents.

We should strive to make the dream of St. George's village center into a real place that can accommodate much of the town's expected growth while knitting the community together by providing places where residents can meet and interact. A master plan for the town center property should be implemented that will gracefully integrate nearby, existing residential neighborhoods with new mixed-use development. With support of residents, town officials should seek innovative solutions to the challenge of providing the infrastructure needed to support such a center.

Outside the center, we envision pockets of development located and clustered in a manner that results in housing that feels like it is part of a small neighborhood while providing the rural amenities cherished by many residents. As our town grows and changes over time, St. George should provide range of quality housing options needed to support a diverse population through development of new neighborhoods and ongoing improvements to the town's existing housing stock.

We would like to see St. George's local economy grow at a scale appropriate to our small town, bringing more quality jobs here that will allow people to both live and work in this community. Our village center should become home to small businesses, in addition to residences, which will provide residents with the basic goods and services typical of traditional downtowns.

The convenient access to urban amenities in the greater Burlington area we currently enjoy should be improved through upgrades to the regional transportation system and projects that will offer town residents attractive alternatives to our present dependence on private automobiles. We also hope that ways will be found to improve connectivity within our town, which is currently divided by highways and topography, to further strengthen the sense of community among residents. For the village center to flourish, issues associated with Route 2A will need to be addressed so that this section of road will function as a village street for St. George rather than a highway between Hinesburg and Williston.

We want the natural beauty of St. George to be enjoyed by future generations, so it is critical that development does not degrade our environment. While we recognize that the town will continue to grow, we envision a development pattern that conserves blocks of open space and forested habitat, maintaining the rural character cherished by residents. Agriculture is key to retaining the rural character of our community, so we must find ways to support farm businesses that will be economically viable in the 21st century.

In order to achieve this vision, St. George will need the active participation of all its residents. As was expressed in the visioning session that led to the writing of this statement, St. George is a unique town because of its size and its location between larger, more developed towns. In such a small place, new development can have a great impact and given the town's location, changes are likely to occur. Yet, in a community of 700 people, individuals can make a big difference if they are willing to get involved.

Only through thoughtful and careful planning will the town be successful at minimizing the negative impacts of growth. This plan charts a direction for our town's future that, with residents' support, can result in our town accommodating change in a manner that benefits the community as a whole and preserves the qualities that make St. George a place we are proud to call home.

1.03 **AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE**

Planning is the process by which the goals and needs of our community are discussed, directions are chosen, and policies set down. It is a process of identifying natural and human constraints, increasing awareness of our heritage and present condition, anticipating future needs and desired outcomes, and balancing individual, town and regional interests. Our planning efforts are a continuation of the process first begun by residents in the 1960s and '70s with the adoption of St. George's first comprehensive plan and land use regulations.



FIGURE 2. ST. GEORGE TOWN OFFICE

1.03-A **Statutory Framework**

The St. George Selectboard has the authority under the Vermont Planning and Development Act, Title 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117, to adopt a town plan. The first plan was adopted on September 13, 1971 and has been regularly updated over the past 35 years. According to law, the town plan must be consistent with the 13 state planning goals and include the 10 required elements listed in statute.

This 2017 plan and previous plans have been established by the town as frameworks for future growth and are implemented through the adoption of land use regulations by a majority vote of the Selectboard following public hearings held by the Planning Commission and Selectboard. Land use regulations legally require the policy and data foundation of a town plan. So that town plans may accommodate changing conditions, state law requires that municipalities review, amend, and readopt their town plan at least every eight years. The St. George Planning Commission, with public input, has reviewed the town's conditions and facilities, and has stated St. George's public goals and objectives in the following 2017 Town Plan.

1.03-B **Purpose**

This Town Plan is the principal statement of policy for the Town of St. George. It presents our vision for the town's future, along with series of policies to move us closer to achieving that vision. This plan will guide the town's efforts in land use planning, the provision of public facilities and services, environmental protection, economic development and land conservation. It will be implemented through town ordinances and regulations, town

participation in state and federal regulatory processes and the town's approach to raising and spending public funds. We have endeavored to state the town's aims in terms broad enough to allow application to a wide range of situations, yet with sufficient detail to serve as a strong foundation for land use regulations and other implementation tools.

Our town's unique sense of place and the quality of life we enjoy is created through the interaction of many elements. The plan provides a central theme that unites these elements, yet it also recognizes that efforts to enhance the various factors may come into conflict. The plan allows for flexibility and creativity in how we apply it in order to achieve an appropriate balance between competing objectives. We would not want St. George to become a static, lifeless place, so our plan recognizes the need to accommodate future change in a manner that protects those aspects of the town we value most.

Our plan is the result of a cooperative effort that over the years has relied on the dedication, knowledge and skills of many residents. The underlying vision expressed in this plan can be traced back to the 1978 plan to develop a sense of place for St. George through creation of a village center along with conservation of outlying lands and natural resources.

This plan is based on a long-term vision for the future of the town. Our vision will not be achieved in the next eight years; rather, it is something for which we as a community will strive for several decades. For this reason, when working on the plan we considered at least a 20-year time horizon, even though this plan is only in effect for eight years and will need to be updated to reflect changing conditions. By taking this long view, we in the Town of St. George will be able to pursue strategies that over time will achieve our vision.

1.04 **RESOURCES AND REFERENCES**

The Roadscape Guide: Tools to Preserve Scenic Road Corridors; Champlain Valley Greenbelt Alliance and Vermont Forum on Sprawl, 2006.

State of Vermont 2006 Water Quality Assessment Report; Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, 2006.

Wetland, Woodland, Wildland: A Guide to the Natural Communities of Vermont; Elizabeth H. Thompson and Eric R. Sorenson, 2005.

Conserving Vermont's Natural Heritage: A Guide to Community-Based Planning for the Conservation of Vermont's Fish, Wildlife, and Biological Diversity; Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, 2004.

Crossroads, Hamlet, Village, Town: Design Characteristics of Traditional Neighborhoods, Old and New; Randall Arendt, 2004.

Community Rules: A New England Guide to Smart Growth Strategies; Bennet Heart et al, 2002.

Champlain Valley Clayplain Forest Natural History and Stewardship; Champlain Valley Clayplain Forest Project, 2000

Community Planning for Flood Hazards; Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs, 1998.

Our Town: Williston Vermont; Richard H. Allen, 1986.

St. George, 1763; Champlain Valley League of Women Voters, 1975.

1.05 TOWN HISTORY

St. George has the smallest area of any town in Vermont. It was chartered by Governor Benning Wentworth of New Hampshire on August 18, 1763. At that time the grantees were under the impression that they had a full-sized town of six miles square, but Williston and Burlington had been chartered earlier and their northern boundaries were undisputedly the Winooski River. This left Shelburne and St. George, both chartered the same day, with a piece of land six to seven miles wide at Lake Champlain but narrowing in a triangular fashion as it moved inland. St. George was left with only 2,200 acres, not the 23,040 originally called for.

The town was named after King George of England. The town's first settlers, Joshua Isham and family, arrived in 1784 from Colchester, Connecticut. The next year more settlers arrived in St. George including Elnathan Higbee and family. The town's first school, a simple log structure, was built shortly after their arrival. The town was organized and the first town meeting held on March 9, 1813.

From 1838 to 1901, St. George had its own post office. The Little Red Schoolhouse, built in 1852, had students in it until 1965. It has seen town dances, church services, and even the fabrication of mattresses for town residents by the Home Demonstration Group during World War II. The schoolhouse was also used for town meetings, public hearings, and as a polling place through the 1990s.



FIGURE 3. SUNRISE TAVERN

Historically, St. George was solely an agricultural town; there were no mills or industry of any significance. In 1890, a railroad was planned that would have passed through St. George along the east side of Route 116, but the Chittenden County Railroad Company never completed the line. A number of small businesses have operated in St. George over the years including:

- A grocery store operated by George Peet in the 1920s and '30s from the present Elizabeth Ayer residence.
- A lumber camp operated on Mt. Pritchard in the 1940s. Ruins of the buildings can still be seen.
- A lunch stand operated by Dorothy Thompson and her mother, Lucinda William, in the 1940s across from the Thompson home.
- A cedar mill that produced cedar oil, which operated by waterpower on the Anson Peet property, was operated by Donald and Elizabeth Ayer in the late 1940s.
- The Rocky Ridge Golf Course, which opened in 1963, on 150 acres of farmland once owned by Anson and Dorothy Peet.

The town adopted its first zoning ordinance in 1967, which established a two-acre minimum lot size for homes with onsite septic systems and a half-acre minimum for residences served by community water and sewage systems. The 1971 Town Plan envisioned that St. George would reach a population of 3,000 by 2010.



FIGURE 4. ST. GEORGE HOME, C. 1830

2 | OUR PEOPLE

2.01 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

2.01-A Population Dynamics

For most of its history, St. George's population dynamics followed a pattern typical of agrarian towns throughout New England. By 1830, the town's population had reached 135 people, a number that slowly declined over the next 100 years as families migrated from rural communities like St. George to the nation's expanding western frontier drawn by the promise of better land, or to booming industrial cities seeking factory jobs (see Figure 5).

FIGURE 5. ST. GEORGE'S POPULATION, 1791 TO 2010

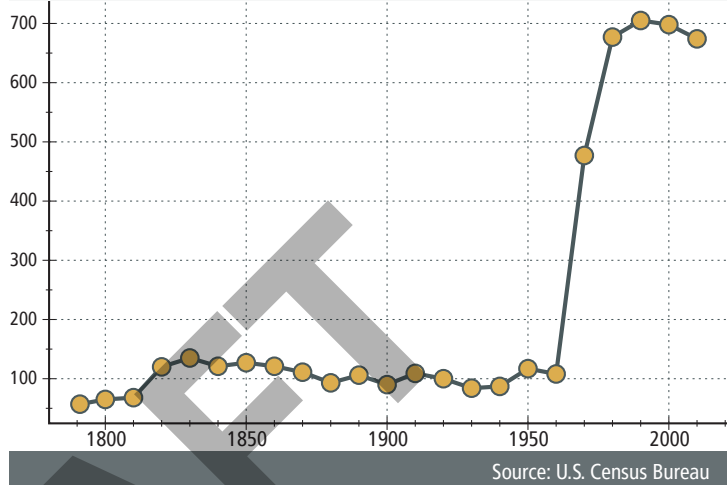
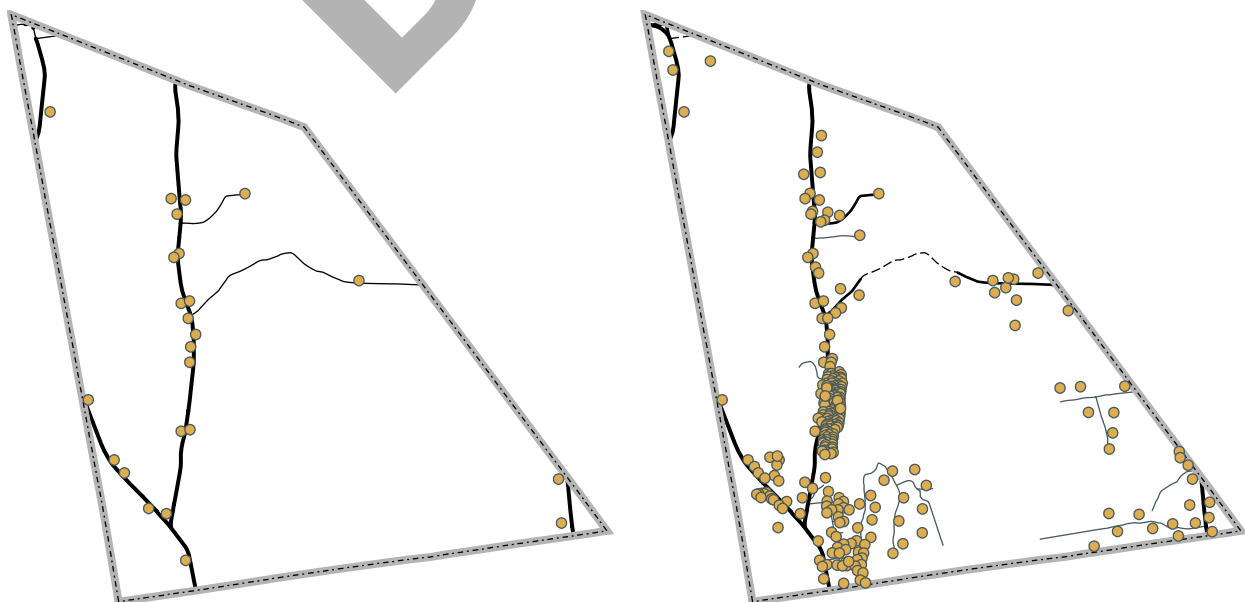
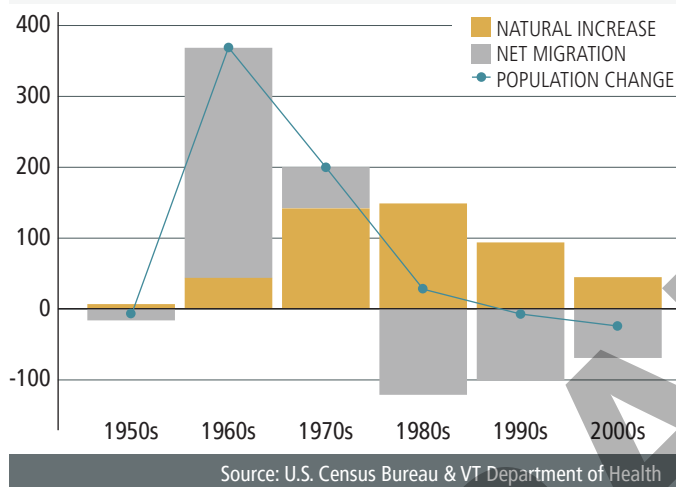


FIGURE 6. ST. GEORGE SETTLEMENT PATTERN, 1906 AND 2006



In 1966, however, St. George began a new era when the town of around 30 homes added nearly 130 residences in the St. George Villa mobile home park. Other housing developments, St. George Estates and Rocky Ridge Estates, and then the smaller Forest subdivision also went in, which resulted in the town's population growing from 117 people in 1950 to 677 in 1980 (see Figures 5 and 6). St. George's population has remained stable at around 700 people since 1980 and the Census Bureau estimated the town's population to be 764 in 2015.

FIGURE 7. SOURCE OF ST. GEORGE'S POPULATION CHANGE



Since 1980, population growth in St. George has been modest (see Figure 8). Residents who moved into town in the 1960s and '70s were largely younger couples ready to start families, resulting in more than 420 children being born to town residents over the past 35 years. The town's total population has not grown at the same rate as births due to the number of residents who have moved out of town since 1980 (see Figure 7). The number of births in town appears to have peaked in the early-1990s, although the actual number each year is highly variable due to the town's small population (see Figure 9).

FIGURE 8. COMPARISON OF REAL AND AVERAGE ANNUAL POPULATION CHANGE, 1950 TO 2010

	1950 - 1960		1960 - 1970		1970 - 1980		1980 - 1990		1990 - 2000		2000 - 2010	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
St. George	-9	-0.8%	369	16.0%	200	3.6%	28	0.4%	-7	-0.1%	-24	-0.3%
Hinesburg	60	0.5%	60	4.2%	915	4.2%	1,090	3.5%	560	1.4%	56	0.1%
Shelburne	440	2.8%	1,923	7.5%	1,272	3.0%	871	1.6%	1,073	1.7%	200	0.3%
Williston	302	2.3%	1,703	7.9%	656	1.9%	1,044	2.4%	2,763	4.6%	1,048	1.3%
Chittenden Co.	11,855	1.8%	24,706	2.9%	16,403	1.5%	16,227	1.3%	14,810	1.1%	10,191	0.7%
Vermont	12,143	0.3%	54,850	1.3%	66,725	1.4%	51,302	1.0%	46,069	0.8%	17,133	0.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

FIGURE 9. ST. GEORGE VITAL STATISTICS, 1989 TO 2014

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Births	17	17	10	18	10	13	11	9	6	11	6	11	7	7	6	10	6	6	10	9	2	5	5	3	7	10
Deaths	2	5	2	1	0	1	0	3	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	7	3	4	3	4	3	2	2	5	9	5

Source: VT Department of Health

2.01-B Age Distribution

St. George is a community that continues to attract younger residents and the median age of residents is consistently lower than county or state averages (40.8 in 2010 compared to a state average of 41.5). Married couples with children living at home continued to be the predominate household type in St. George according to the 2000 Census, but there was a nearly equal number of couples without children and a significant number of single-person households in town (see Figure 10).

The aging population trend visible throughout the state can be detected in St. George, as one of the town's largest population segments is composed of baby-boomers who are moving out of their childbearing years and nearing retirement (see Figure 11). However, St. George still had a smaller percentage of residents age 65 or older and a larger percentage of children under age 18 than Chittenden County or the state as a whole in 2010.

2.01-C Household Characteristics

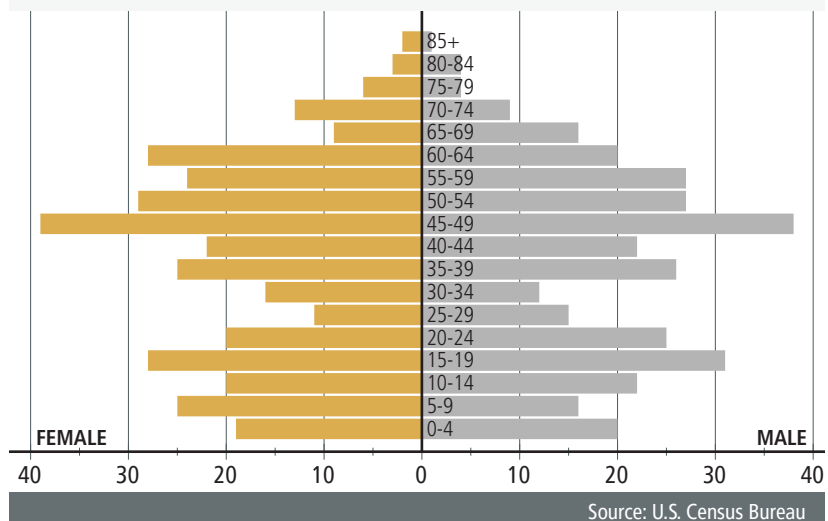
Average household size in St. George has consistently been greater than county or state averages, which reflects the town's younger population and predominance of families with children. Over the past 40 years, average household size has declined by more than one person – from 3.72 in 1960 to 2.45 in 2010. Declines in household size amplify the effects of population growth as the number of households then increases at a greater rate than the number of residents, and households drive demand for housing and services.

FIGURE 10. ST. GEORGE HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

	1990	2000	2010
Non-Family Households			
Single-Person	44	49	58
Multi-Person	25	15	28
Family Households			
Married Couples w/ Children	94	78	54
Married Couples w/o Children	72	75	82
Female Single Parent	16	21	18
Male Single Parent	4	16	15
Other	10	10	20

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

FIGURE 11. ST. GEORGE POPULATION PYRAMID, 2010



2.02 HOUSING PROFILE

2.02-A Housing Stock

The first Census of housing units in 1940 counted 23 homes in St. George. As described above, that number skyrocketed to 167 by 1970 and reached 292 in 2010.

A build-out analysis conducted by Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission in 2005 determined that there were approximately 2,000 developable acres in St. George. The study estimated that the maximum number of homes that could be built based on the minimum lot sizes of the town's zoning regulations at the time was around 500. Taking into consideration the PUD provisions of the regulations, that number could be as high as 2,100. Changes to the zoning regulations since then have reduced the town's maximum build-out potential, there still remains the opportunity for significant growth. The underlying point of the study - the need for this plan and the town's regulations to shape and manage the changes that will inevitably occur - remains valid and relevant.

As with most Vermont municipalities, St. George's homes are largely owner-occupied (81% according to 2010 Census). There has been an increase in the number of rental units in town since 1990, which appears to be a result of conversions of existing owner-occupied homes to rentals. There is virtually no attached or multi-family housing in town. St. George's housing stock is newer than most communities in Vermont, since most of the homes have been built since 1970.

2.02-B Residential Neighborhoods

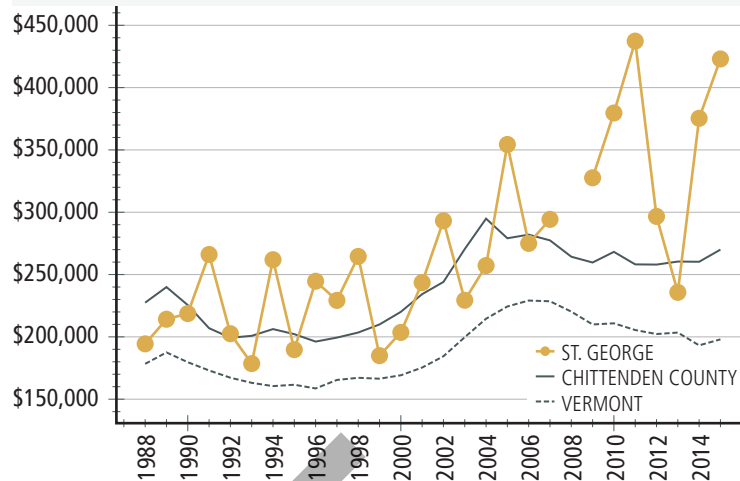
St. George is unusual among Vermont towns in that its housing stock is evenly divided between single-family homes and mobile homes. There are now approximately 125 homes in the St. George Villa mobile home park, although the park was originally laid out for more and was to be limited to adults only. The park's residents generally own their mobile homes and pay rent for their site, which includes water and sewer service. Mort Kaufman, then a local real estate developer, built the park in 1966 and remains its owner. Other housing developments in town include the 25-home, St. George Estates, the 18-home Rocky Ridge Estates and the 12-home Forest subdivision. The rest of St. George's homes are generally on large lots and most of the recent construction has been occurring on the eastern side of town along the hillside overlooking Lake Iroquois.

2.02-C Housing Values

St. George Villa is one of the largest mobile home parks in Chittenden County, making the town a key provider of affordable housing in the area. The average assessed value of a mobile home within the park is approximately \$20,500. The average home on a lot less than six acres in size is assessed at around \$275,000 and those on larger properties are valued at more than \$465,000.

The town has a limited influence on the real estate market and housing prices. St. George, however, can enact regulations that allow for a variety of housing types – including multi-family homes, attached single-family homes and apartments – while ensuring new homes are in keeping with the character of their surroundings.

FIGURE 12. COMPARISON OF HOUSING SALES PRICES



Source: VT Department of Taxes
Adjusted to 2015\$ using the CPI. Based on sales of primary residences not including mobile homes.

FIGURE 13. ST. GEORGE GRAND LIST, 2016

	Parcels		Acres		Real Value			
	2016	Change from 2004	Total	%	Total	%	Per Parcel	Per Acre
Commercial	10	+6	163	7%	\$6,841,500	9%	\$684,150	\$41,972
Mobile home (unlanded)	128	0			\$2,628,800	4%	\$20,538	
Mobile home (landed)	5	0	21	1%	\$649,900	1%	\$129,980	\$30,948
Residential (<6 acres)	127	+15	239	10%	\$35,087,100	48%	\$276,276	\$146,808
Residential (>6 acres)	44	+5	980	42%	\$20,508,100	28%	\$466,093	\$20,927
Farm	0	-1						
Woodland	2	0	362	16%	\$1,004,200	1%	\$502,100	\$2,774
Utilities	4	-2			\$2,297,900	3%	\$574,475	
Town-owned	5	+2	80	3%	\$749,700	1%	\$149,940	\$9,371
Other	22	-1	464	20%	\$3,792,500	5%	\$172,386	\$8,173
Total	347	+24	2,308		\$73,559,700		\$211,988	\$31,854

Source: VT Department of Taxes

2.02-D Residency Patterns

According to the 2015 American Community Survey, approximately 10% of St. George's residents had moved within the previous year. Of those people who had moved into town during the prior year, approximately 80% moved from another community in Chittenden County.

2.02-E Affordable Housing

The State of Vermont defines affordable housing as housing that does not cost more than 30% of the gross income of a household earning 80% of the county's median family income. Housing costs for homeowners include mortgage, tax and insurance payments. For renters, costs include rent and utilities.

In Chittenden County, the 2017 median income for a family of four was \$82,400 and 80% of that is \$65,900. The median family income level is calculated annually by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This median income level is used by HUD to calculate the income limits of its major affordable housing programs. It is adjusted based on household size and other program regulations. Those households with income below 50% of the median meet the HUD definition of low income, while those between 50% and 80% are considered moderate income.

Based on the formula above, affordable housing in Chittenden County cannot cost a four-person household more than \$19,770 per year or \$1,648 per month. An affordable home in Chittenden County would sell for not more than \$281,000, although factors like the amount of down payment, household debt, interest rates and local tax rates can greatly affect this calculation. The HUD 2017 fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in St. George was set at \$1,395/month, which would be affordable for a household earning at least \$55,800 per year.

The median assessed value of a primary residence (not including mobile homes) on St. George's 2016 Grand List was around \$275,500, which is just below the county's affordability limit. However, homes in St. George have been selling for prices greater than their assessed value. The median sale price for a primary residence (not including mobile homes) was about \$423,000 in 2015 and \$375,000 in 2014. Mobile homes (not on their own lot) in St. George had a median assessed value in 2016 of around \$17,000, which would clearly qualify them as affordable. Monthly costs (site rent, water and sewer) at St. George Villa were \$376 in 2016.

It is likely that more than 50% of St. George's households have incomes below 80% of the county median family income. The 2015 American Community Survey estimated that one-third of the town's households paid more than 30% of their income towards housing costs.

Further information about affordable housing, as well as housing-related statistics, is available from the Vermont Housing Awareness Campaign (www.housingawareness.org) and the Vermont Housing Databank (www.housingdata.org).

2.03 **ECONOMIC PROFILE**

2.03-A **Labor Force**

St. George has a labor force of around 500 people, 75% of whom work in the greater Burlington area (see Figure 15). About one-third of adult residents have a college degree, as compared to county and state rates of 41% and 34% respectively. Most St. George residents work in one of the following industries: retail trade (20%), manufacturing (15%),

education (10%), healthcare and social services (10%), accommodation and food services (10%), wholesale trade (10%), or construction (10%).

2.03-B **Income and Wages**

The median household income in St. George was around \$44,000 a year according to the 2000 Census, which was about \$3,000 higher than the state median and \$3,000 lower than the county median. Median household income in St. George increased by about \$8,000 between 1980 and 2000 after adjusting for inflation (see Figure 14).

The average annual wage paid by Chittenden County employers in 2004 was approximately \$38,000 per year according to the Vermont Department of Labor (see Figure 16). However, the median wage reported by county residents on the 2000 Census was around \$23,000. Some of that difference may be attributable to factors such as the number of people who are not working in jobs that are covered by unemployment insurance, which is how the Department of Labor arrives at its figures. Around 20% of St. George households reported some self-employment income on the 2000 Census. Additionally, many people work less than full-time, year-round, which may not be reflected in the Department of Labor statistics. According to the 2000 Census, 25% of St. George's male workers and 50% of female workers worked less than full-time, year-round. The difference between household income and wages suggest that more than one worker supports most St. George households.

Nearly 20% of St. George's households could have been classified as low income according to HUD definitions based on 2000 Census data. Another 25% would have been considered moderate income. According to the 2000 Census, approximately nine percent of St. George residents were living at or below the poverty line. Another 13%, had household incomes that were between the poverty lines and 200% of poverty level. On the 2000 Census, a three-person household with an annual income of around \$13,000 would have been considered to be at the poverty line.

Between 1990 and 2000, St. George saw an increase in the number of low- or moderate-income households. Given the composition of the town's housing stock, St. George is likely to remain attractive to households seeking affordable housing and little change is expected in the distribution of household income.

3 | OUR COMMUNITY

3.01 **HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

There are six structures in St. George listed on the State Register of Historic Places: the Higbee-Lawrence house, c. 1795; the Sunrise Tavern built in 1828; the Isham house, c. 1840; the Little Red Schoolhouse, c. 1852; the Lockwood-Smith house, c. 1830; and the Lockwood-Peet house built in 1830. Given the limited number of historic buildings remaining in town, significant modifications of these buildings should be reviewed and their demolition should be strongly discouraged. (See Map 2: Facilities).

There are no locations in St. George listed on the State Archeological Inventory. However, only a few areas of Vermont have been systematically studied to locate and evaluate archeological sites. Under various state and federal laws, many private and state development projects and all federally funded, assisted, licensed or permitted projects must consider and, if warranted, locate archeological sites during project planning. Project impacts to sites must be mitigated.

Although most archeological sites have not yet been found, it is possible to predict where certain kinds of prehistoric Native American sites would be more likely to be found based on environmental characteristics. Results from archeological investigations in Vermont over the last decade suggest that prehistoric sites are typically located within 300 to 500 feet from an existing or relict water source, on gently sloping landforms having moderately/poor to well-drained soil, and often have a southeast-south-southwest exposure. These lands provided essential resources that attracted human populations. People exploited these resources and left behind archeological remains of their activities at these locations.

3.02 **3.2. TOWN FACILITIES, LANDS & FISCAL CONDITION**

St. George is a town with few community facilities; we have no post office, library, emergency services, school or large community meeting space of our own. In recent years, the annual Town Meeting has been held at either the Little Red Schoolhouse, CVU High School, Rocky Ridge Golf Club or the VermontWare building.

3.02-A **Town Office**

In 1995, the town bought a private home adjacent to the town center property and renovated it into a municipal office. This is St. George's first office, as previously the clerk worked from home and kept the town's records there as well. The small, one-story building provides office space for the town administrator, town clerk, zoning administrator and

listers, as well as a concrete vault for record storage. The town office also has a meeting room, which can accommodate around 20 people comfortably. (See Map 2: Facilities)

3.02-B **Little Red Schoolhouse**

The other structure owned by the town is the historic 'Little Red Schoolhouse', which was built in 1852 and renovated in 1929. After being used as a one-room schoolhouse through 1966, the building became a community center where all town board meetings were held until 1995. In the late 1990s the building was again in disrepair and Jean Ankeney spearheaded an effort to restore and relocate the schoolhouse to the town center property. Although that project was abandoned, its spirit persisted. In 2012, the St. George Historic and Conservation Trust succeeded in securing the permits and funding to complete Jean Ankeney's mission. The schoolhouse, now owned by the town, anchors Barber Road and complements a growing collection of civic facilities, including the Town Offices, Pavilion, Community Gardens, and Connie's Park. It is the town's intent for the schoolhouse to be adaptively reused as a building with special significance for our community.

3.02-C **Town Center Property**

St. George's most significant municipal asset is the 80-acre town center property, most of which was purchased in 1974 with the purpose of establishing a village. The town held a design competition seeking plans for this property and selected the vision offered by landscape architect and planner, Robert Burley of Waitsfield (see Figures 19 and 20). The 'Burley Plan' set forth the following goal, "The new town of St.

The new town of St. George is an attempt by the people of St. George to manage the growth of their town, including the creation of a totally new town center with commercial, residential and public facilities sufficient to accommodate the anticipated expansion of the town's population.

George is an attempt by the people of St. George to manage the growth of their town, including the creation of a totally new town center with commercial, residential and public facilities sufficient to accommodate the anticipated expansion of the town's population." Areas were delineated for residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, industrial uses, and public spaces including a school and play fields. The town received grant funding and with a private developer began implementing the plan with construction of the water system and service roads. St. George also obtained an Act 250 and state subdivision permit for a community septic system, but due to economic circumstances, construction did not proceed.

In 1984, residents approved scaled-down plans for the town center property; funding was again sought to complete the infrastructure needed to support future development. Implementation of the revised plan also stalled and the town center project then lay dormant until the early 1990s.

FIGURE 14. BURLEY PLAN FOR ST. GEORGE NEW TOWN

The original plan for a 'new town' in St. George laid out a conceptual plan for a village that would accommodate around 750 dwellings with about 14 acres used primarily for mixed or non-residential uses and 15 acres of park and recreation land.

- 1: Town center (retail businesses, professional offices, housing, civic, educational and religious facilities)
- 2: Highway commercial
- 3: Residential (12-15 units per acre)
- 4: Residential (10-12 units per acre)
- 5: Residential (6-8 units per acre)
- 6: Residential (2-4 units per acre)
- 7: Industrial
- 8: Park
- 9: Town green and recreation fields
- 10: Agricultural

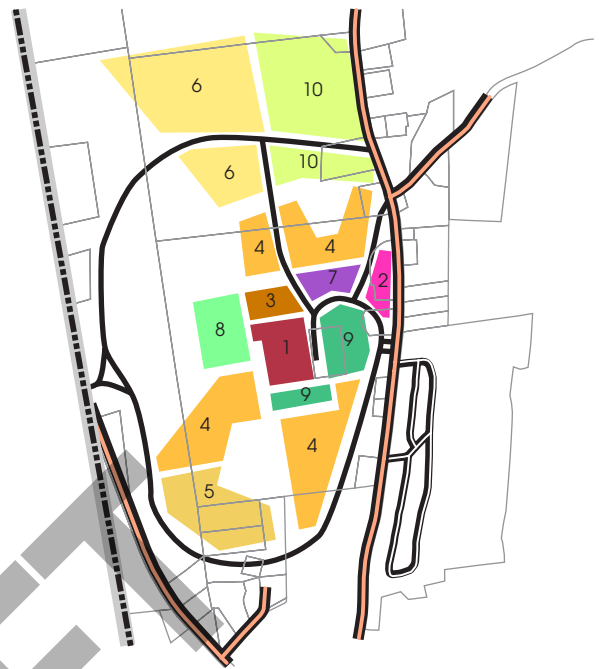
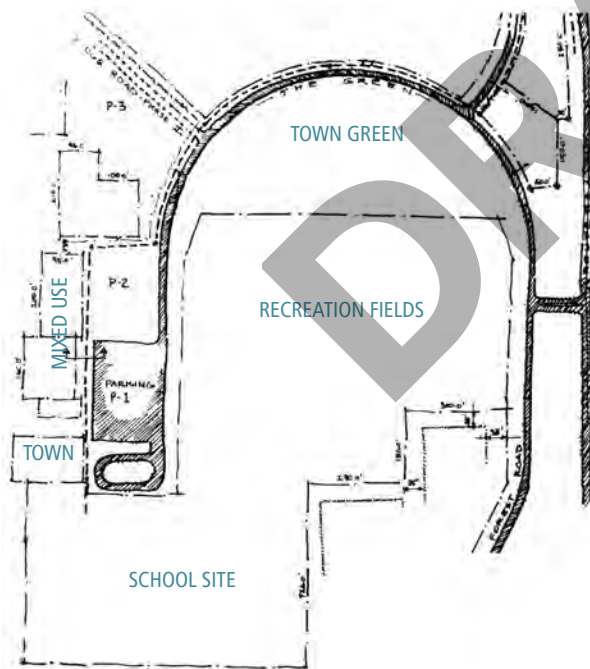


FIGURE 15. BURLEY PLAN TOWN CENTER DETAIL



In 1992, there was interest in the town center property as a site for a manufacturing facility. The town updated the property's Act 250 permits for a 10-lot commercial and industrial subdivision on 15 acres. In 1995, some lands were sold – including the 'convenience-store lot' – and the proceeds were used for development of the town office. Seven of the lots created in the 1990s have been sold, leaving more than 80 acres of town-owned land intact.

From the sale of property in the '90s, the town was able to construct the current paved road and install a community septic system. The town center property currently has a well that provides 80 to 90 gallons of water per minute and a community septic system with 2,250 gallons per day of excess capacity with the

potential for an additional 1,000 gallons per day if the system were to be expanded. The total excess capacity would allow for up to 11 single-family residences to connect to the system.

3.02-D **St. George Cemetery**

St. George also owns the approximately one-acre St. George Cemetery. In 2017, the Cemetery Commission reported that there were 40 single plots for casket burials and 34 plots for cremated remains available. Further expansion to adjoining lands would require purchase of property and may be difficult due to dense tree cover.

3.02-E **Fiscal Condition**

Given that St. George provides limited services, town expenses are low (see Figures 22 and 23). St. George's annual municipal budget in recent years has been approximately \$250,000, roughly 80% of which has been raised through property taxes (see Figure 24). St. George currently has approximately \$20,000 in outstanding municipal debt related to the purchase of the Town Office.

St. George has generally had one of the lowest municipal tax rates in Chittenden County, ranging from 12 to 18 cent per \$100 of value. As shown in Figure 13, the town's Grand List is around \$75 million; more than 80% of that total is the value of homes and residential properties.

3.03 **ECONOMY**

3.03-A **Agriculture**

Historically, St. George's economy was based almost entirely on agriculture. While open farmland remains an important component of the community's visual character, only a small fraction of the income generated in town is earned through agricultural activities. Dairy farming came to dominate Vermont's agrarian communities after the Civil War and milk, along with related products, remains the state's main agricultural commodity. In the 1950s, St. George had seven dairy farms and there were almost three times as many cows living in town than people. Five farms closed during the 1960s – largely due to the requirement to install bulk tanks, which were unaffordable for many small operations – and only one dairy farm, the Pillsbury Farm, remained in St. George by 1980. That farm sold off the last of its herd in 2006.

Other types of small-scale farming and agricultural activities continue in St. George. Goose Creek Farm produced 28 acres of organic vegetables and Christmas trees from 1984 through 2009. Today, Lakeview Farms and a few homeowners grow and sell Christmas trees. A number of town residents plant gardens or keep livestock such as horses, alpacas, chickens or bees. The town has a community garden at the town center property. Additionally, some of the town's farmland is rented to or owned by farmers from neighboring towns.

3.03-B **Non-Farm Businesses**

Over the past several decades, St. George's economy has diversified. In 2004, the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) reported that a total of 55 people worked in the 11 businesses located in St. George. The number of people working in St. George has fluctuated greatly from a high of 91 people in 1982 to less than 20 in the early 1990s (see Figure 25). The VDOL figures may not fully capture the amount of economic activity occurring in town, since they do not include the self-employed. According to the 2000 Census, 48 people listed St. George as their place of work, 37 of whom lived in town; 32 people stated that they worked from home. Nearly 20% of St. George's households reported some self-employment income on the 2000 Census.

In 1995, a manufacturing facility was constructed in the town center. That facility is now home to VermontWare, a company that provides powder coating of metal products, as well as dealing in lawn and garden furniture and equipment, and Planet Hardwood, a retailer of hardwood flooring. VermontWare is the town's largest employer with around seven people in St. George. The remaining businesses in town are very small and are generally based from their owner's residential property.

3.03-C **Home-Based Businesses**

The number of people working from home is increasing in St. George, likely due to a combination of telecommuting and self-employment. Home businesses offer their operators and the community as a whole many benefits including a positive impact on the environment, eliminating the need to commute, promoting a sense of community as residents do not leave town for work each day, providing alternatives for working parents, and increasing economic activity in town. However, home businesses can have an impact on their neighbors especially if they are located in a compact residential area or involve activities that increase noise, traffic, etc. It is also important to recognize that a successful home business can outgrow its location in a residential setting over time. To ensure that businesses can be carried on in a manner that is compatible with the area in which they are located, St. George needs regulations that support the ability of residents to work from home while protecting neighbors from potential adverse impacts.

3.04 **EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE**

3.04-A **Elementary and Secondary Education**

Since the closure of the one-room Little Red Schoolhouse in 1966, all of St. George's students have traveled outside town to attend school. Until 2003, parents could choose from among schools in neighboring communities. A 10-year agreement signed that year has resulted in all new students from St. George entering elementary or middle school

attending the Williston Central School (although at this time, there are still students attending other schools as previously enrolled students were not required to change schools). St. George's high school students are still tuitioned to the school of their choice. According to the 2000 Census, more than one-third of St. George's K-12 students were enrolled in a private school.

According to the 2006 Williston Town Plan, Williston's public schools are operating near their physical capacity, which has been set by the school board at 1,250 students. Enrollment projections indicate that the number of students should remain stable and not exceed capacity in the near future. Therefore, the school board is not proposing any new or expanded facilities at this time, although it may pursue renovations at the Central School.

In addition to students from St. George, the Champlain Valley Union High School in Hinesburg serves public school students in grades 9-12 from Charlotte, Hinesburg, Shelburne and Williston. The school was most recently renovated and expanded in 2002. It is currently operating at close to its capacity of 1,410 students.

St. George's student enrollment peaked in the 2000-01 school year at 171 students. Enrollment during the 2005-06 school year was 126 - 69 in grades K-8 and 57 high school students. In recent years, there have been approximately seven births per year in St. George, ten less than the average from the late '80s and early '90s. The school directors anticipate that enrollment levels will remain stable with approximately 65 K-8 students attending Williston Central School and around 45 high school students enrolled in the school of their choice. That projection could change, however, if there is significant development in town that would attract families.

When it appeared that their schools would be over capacity around the 2000-01 school year, Williston considered the option of not accepting out-of-town students. At that time, St. George began exploring the possibility of constructing a school on the town center property, which was abandoned when the towns negotiated the current arrangement. Summit Engineering undertook preliminary engineering work and identified several suitable locations. The potential need for a local elementary school in St. George could resurface at some future time, however, especially if there are significant increases in the town's student population. Consideration should be given to setting aside part of town center property to accommodate a school, if the need should arise.

3.04-B **Vocational, Post-Secondary & Continuing Education**

Chittenden County provides a variety of vocational, post-secondary and continuing education opportunities that are conveniently located for St. George residents. Vocational education is available to secondary students and adults in Chittenden County through the Burlington Technical Center and the Vermont Technical College. Residents may also enroll

in a wide variety of evening classes offered at Champlain Valley Union High School in Hinesburg. Burlington is also home to the Community College of Vermont, University of Vermont, Champlain College and Burlington College.

3.04-C **Childcare**

A daycare center, Kinderhaus, operated for many years in St. George, but it has been closed for a number of years. There are currently no licensed or registered childcare providers located in town. The vast majority of St. George's parents are working outside the home. As indicated in Figure 27, more than 90% of St. George's preschoolers and up to 80% of school-age children likely require childcare services. There are a number of accredited childcare centers and registered childcare homes in neighboring communities. However, a daycare facility in St. George would be desirable and could potentially be incorporated into plans for the town center property.

3.05 **RECREATION**

St. George's town center property has hosted a variety of recreational facilities and activities over the years, including a basketball court, baseball field, walking trails and bike paths. The town is presently in the process of establishing a community playground, as well as a temporary basketball court until a permanent location is decided upon. An 18-hole golf course, the Rocky Ridge Golf Club, is located in the southwest corner of town. In addition to golf, the course informally offers a place for cross-country skiing and an excellent hill for winter sledding. There is a rich array of recreation resources in neighboring communities and the greater Burlington area:

- Through the town's membership in the Lake Iroquois Recreation District, St. George residents can use beach area and park area, which consists of 153 acres of open space with a swimming beach, playground equipment, picnic area and walking trails. The beach and park are located in Williston on the north shore of Lake Iroquois and are accessed from Oak Hill Road. As a member, the town pays an annual assessment to the district.
- There is also a state boat launch on Lake Iroquois.
- The St. George School Board initiated a summer recreation program in 2006 that continues to provide full scholarships and transportation for eligible children from St. George to attend the Williston Recreation Department's Summer Recreation Program for three weeks.

3.06 **TRANSPORTATION**

3.06-A **State Highways**

St. George's major transportation corridors are two state highways – Route 116, classified as a minor arterial, and Route 2A, classified as a major collector. These roads run north-south, cutting between the ridges of Mt. Pritchard and Brownell Mountain. Route 2A begins in St.

Arterials link communities and carry major traffic flows within urbanized areas, such as between the central business district and outlying areas or between suburban centers.

Major collectors take traffic from local streets and collectors and channels it to arterials or destinations that are not well served by the arterial system. They provide both land access and traffic circulation in residential, commercial, and industrial areas.

Sufficiency ratings are measurable standards for the adequacy of each highway section based on the structural condition, efficient movement of traffic, and safety.

Access management is the control of driveway and street connections to public roads.

George at the intersection with Route 116 and travels 1.98 miles to the Williston town line. Route 116 begins at the Hinesburg line and travels 1.08 miles in St. George, although it passes in and out of town at the Shelburne line.

Traditionally, Vermont Routes 116 and 2A carried commuter traffic to South Burlington, Burlington and Essex from the residential communities of northern Addison County, Hinesburg and

Huntington. In recent years, additional commuters are traveling from their homes north of St. George to Hinesburg and other communities to the south. Increased commercial and industrial development to the north and south has also increased the amount of truck traffic on the highways.

Between 1986 and 2004, traffic on 2A and on Route 116 south of the Route 2A intersection in St. George has increased more than 60%. On Route 116 between Hinesburg and the Route 2A intersection, the average daily traffic is approximately 10,000 vehicles; north of the intersection the average daily traffic on Route 116 is approximately 6,000 vehicles. Route 2A carries around 5,500 vehicles in each day through St. George. According to the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), Route 2A has a sufficiency rating of less than 45 out of 100 in St. George, while Route 116 scored closer to 65 out of 100.

While the 2A-116 intersection is not classified as a high crash location, highway accidents in St. George appear to be on the rise although the numbers each year are small and highly variable. Access management techniques should be used to reduce congestion and maintain safety levels on heavily traveled roads as adjacent lands are developed. The Vermont Agency of Transportation controls access to state highways and requires permits for new access points. St. George will support the state's access management efforts by promoting use of shared drives and carefully reviewing the traffic patterns, access points and parking areas proposed for new development near the highways.

Route 2A also serves as a 'village street' for St. George's town center property. The speed limit on the highway in this area is 35 miles per hour, but traffic regularly moves at higher speeds. Busy highways are both a blessing and a curse for downtowns and village centers. The traffic may help support a vital commercial area, but it can also bring unwanted noise, dirt and pollution, compromise pedestrian safety and comfort, and discourage people from parking their cars and walking. St. George's neighboring communities, Hinesburg and

Shelburne, have struggled with controlling the traffic that passes through their downtowns on congested highways. In order for our vision for the town center property to become a reality, traffic calming will be needed on Route 2A. With construction of the gas station and convenience store, as well as the development of additional recreational activities, both vehicular and pedestrian traffic near the town center property will increase. The town should continue to work with VTrans to assess how to calm traffic in order to create a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment as our village center develops.

3.06-B **Town Roads**

St. George also has 1.87 miles of town roads including the 1.6-mile Ayer Road (or Willow Brook Lane on the east end), which provides the only east-west connection in town. The middle section of Ayer Road is a Class 4 road that is not maintained during the winter. Many residents traveling between the eastern side of the mountain and the town center drive through neighboring Hinesburg or Williston. Provisions should be made to enhance the recreational use of Ayer Road, which is currently a popular walking and biking route. The center section of Ayer Road should continue as a Class 4 road in order to prevent significant increases in traffic and require drivers to proceed at reasonable speeds. The quality of Ayer Road should be improved, however, to provide a better surface and drainage without changing its character as it serves as an important connector between the west and east sides of town.

The remaining town roads are short segments that continue into adjacent towns or dead-end. St. George contracts out its road maintenance, including snow plowing, and owns no road equipment (see Map 3: Transportation).

3.06-C **Private Roads**

Most of St. George's residences are accessed by private roads and it should be anticipated that most of the roads built in town in the future will be private as well. It is unlikely that the town will change its policy on accepting development roads, as long as doing so is a financial liability for the town. Whether new roads are public or private, it is critical that all roads are built to basic standards appropriate for our climate in order to protect public safety, infrastructure and the environment. Roads and drives should be designed to allow for reasonable emergency access in all seasons including consideration of slope, turnaround area, length, cleared width and need for pull-offs.

3.06-D **Road Safety**

Residents are concerned about the safety of St. George's roads for drivers, property owners along the highways, and those walking or biking. Safety concerns on Route 2A in the vicinity of the town center property and St. George Villa are discussed elsewhere in this plan.

While not deemed a high-crash location by VTrans, conditions and traffic levels at the non-signalized Route 116-2A intersection should be monitored on an ongoing basis. If congestion or accidents increase, the town should work with the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization and the state to implement measures aimed at maintaining traffic flow and safety for the traveling public.

St. George should also consider non-motorized use of local roads, especially Oak Hill Road and Ayer Road, which are popular with walkers and bicyclists. The feasibility of constructing shoulders, bike lanes or adjacent paths should be explored. Any plans to widen roads to accommodate non-motorized traffic should address the likely effects on vehicle speed.

3.06-E **Road Design**

The design of a road – its surface, width, grade, curvature, turning radius at intersections – greatly influences people’s driving behavior. Fast moving traffic is not appropriate in compact village centers and residential neighborhoods. It creates unsafe conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists and children, and discourages people from using non-vehicular modes of transportation and enjoying many types of outdoor recreation. As new residential streets and access roads are built in town, they should be constructed to standards based on design speeds of 35 miles per hour. Within the village center, road design should be based on a speed of 25 miles per hour. Future streets in the village center should also enforce slow movement of vehicles through their design and provide ample public space for sidewalks, landscaping, street lighting, etc. Outside the center, new roads should be narrow, gently winding country lanes that follow the contours of the land and may be without curbs and unpaved.

3.06-F **Municipal Roads General Permit**

To address federal requirements to reduce pollution in Lake Champlain, the state established a the new Municipal Roads General Permit that will affect St. George’s municipal roads. Road erosion is a source of phosphorous and other contaminants, and all Vermont municipalities will be required to establish standards for road maintenance and upgrades that will reduce road erosion. The permit is still in development as of the writing of this plan and will be released in 2019. However, it is anticipated to require inventories of road erosion on all sections of road that drain into bodies of water, and a schedule to bring non-complying segments up to standards over 20 years. To receive a permit, the town will also have to pay annual permit fees.

3.06-G **Other Transportation Facilities**

There are no public transportation facilities located in St. George, although there is public transit available in the greater Burlington area through the Chittenden County

Transportation Authority (CCTA). CCTA's bus routes extend to Williston, but there is currently no transit connection between Williston and St. George. CCTA does offer a carpooling service that helps match county residents interested in carpooling (information available at www.cctaride.org). As development proceeds, a transit stop in St. George may become desirable. Any future transit links between Williston and Hinesburg should provide service to St. George. There may also be demand for a park-and-ride location in town, especially in the vicinity of the Route 2A – 116 intersection and the town center property. In 2000, 80% of St. George's workers drove alone to work, while only 10% carpooled; the average commute was 17 minutes.

In addition to CCTA's programs, human service agencies serving St. George residents provide rides and vanpools for their clients. Private taxi service is also available in the area. St. George is conveniently located only nine miles from Burlington International Airport, which is served by USAirways, United, JetBlue, Northwest and Continental with service to Chicago, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York City, Boston, Cleveland, Washington D.C. and Detroit. The nearest Amtrak station is located in Essex Junction and offers service on the Vermonter, which travels once daily in each direction between St. Albans and Washington D.C. with stops throughout Vermont as well as in New York City, Philadelphia and Baltimore.

3.07 UTILITIES AND ENERGY

3.07-A Water and Wastewater

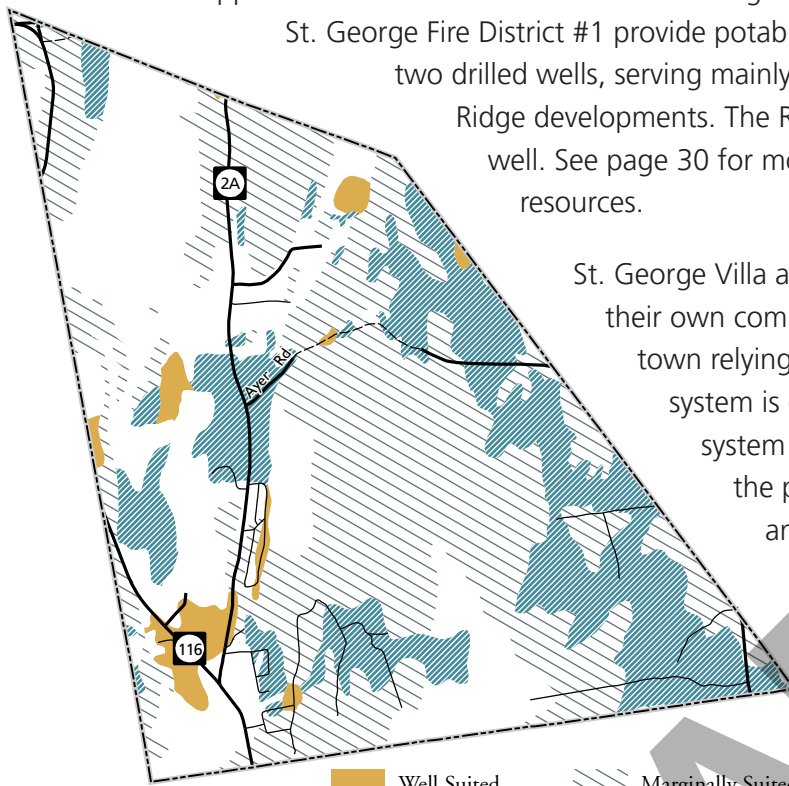
Currently, there is no municipal water or sewer service in St. George. The town center property is served by community water and septic systems that are controlled by the town. The St. George Town Center system serves the town center property, the VermontWare facility, and several adjoining residences from a drilled well located on the town center property. The capacity of the town center property's infrastructure is described in greater detail on page 12.

There are four additional community water supplies, as defined by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, in St. George, which serve St. George Villa, St. George Estates, the Rocky Ridge Development and the Rocky Ridge Golf Club. St. George Villa's public water system, which serves approximately 120 homes, is

An **onsite septic system** is used to collect, treat, and discharge or reclaim wastewater from an individual dwelling without the use of community-wide sewers or a centralized treatment facility. A conventional onsite system includes a septic tank and a leach field. Other types of alternative onsite systems include at-grade systems, mound systems, media filters, small aerobic units and pressure distribution systems.

A **community (or cluster) septic system** is a wastewater collection and treatment system that serves multiple dwellings, but less than an entire community. Vermont's wastewater rules provide incentives for use of community septic systems.

supplied from two drilled wells. The St. George Estates Cooperative Water Association and St. George Fire District #1 provide potable water to approximately 50 homes from two drilled wells, serving mainly homes in the St. George Estates and Rocky Ridge developments. The Rocky Ridge Golf Course also has an onsite well. See page 30 for more information on the town's groundwater resources.



Well Suited
Moderately Suited
Marginally Suited
Not Suited/Rated

St. George Villa and the town center property each have their own community septic systems with the rest of the town relying on onsite septic systems. The town center system is discussed further on page 12. The septic system that serves St. George Villa has failed in the past and its leach fields have been relocated and/or rebuilt several times. Questions remain as to whether the system meets current state standards along with concerns over the implication of its failure on park residents and the town as a whole. It is critical that this and all septic systems in town function adequately to protect public health and the environment.

Vermont's Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Rules were revised in 2005, significantly changing how the state regulates the construction of new or upgrading of existing on-site or cluster septic systems. The 10-acre exemption was eliminated so new development and substantial modifications to existing buildings require state permits regardless of lot size.

Soil-based septic systems require specific soil conditions to adequately treat wastewater. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources has rated soil types based their suitability for such septic systems and on state rules resulting in four major classifications – well suited, moderately suited, marginally suited and unsuited/unrated (see Figure 30). The county soil maps prepared by the Natural Resources Conservation Service indicate that 45% of St. George's soils are marginally suited for onsite septic systems and another 29% are unsuited. Only three percent are well suited and the remaining 23% are moderately suited. While this soil information is not site specific, it does generally indicate the constraints to development dependent on onsite septic systems in St. George. (See page 27 for further discussion of the town's soils.)

The town's highest priority with respect to water and wastewater infrastructure is to provide service within the planned village center. However, the town should be open to exploring

opportunities to provide public water or sewer not only for the village center, but to existing neighborhoods outside the center. Financing of public water or sewer systems should be borne by those using or benefiting from the systems to the greatest extent feasible. Although the potential for indirect benefits of such facilities should also be taken into consideration when determining a fair means of funding public infrastructure.

Over the years, there have been various proposals for connecting to the public water or sewer systems that serve neighboring communities. St. George, at some future point, may again be in the path of proposed expansions to or interconnections between systems in neighboring communities. While it would be desirable to provide infrastructure that would support creation of a dense, compact village center and ensure that existing neighborhoods have safe, adequate water and wastewater, these benefits would need to be weighed against the demand for development that would follow the entire length of the line.

An alternative option to either individual on-site treatment or a municipal wastewater treatment facility is decentralized treatment. Decentralized wastewater treatment systems employ a combination of onsite and/or community septic systems, and are used to treat and dispose of wastewater from dwellings and businesses close to the source. Decentralized wastewater systems allow for flexibility in wastewater management. Managed decentralized wastewater systems are viable, long-term alternatives to centralized wastewater treatment facilities, particularly in small and rural communities where they are often more cost-effective.

3.07-B **Solid Waste**

There are no solid waste management facilities in St. George and the town does not provide trash collection or disposal. These services are provided by private haulers and the Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD), of which the town is a member. CSWD is considering construction of a regional landfill at the site of the former Williston town landfill; currently, the district trucks its waste out of the county to sanitary landfills in Vermont or New York. Recycling is mandatory and the burning of household trash is illegal in St. George. There are drop-off centers in Williston and Hinesburg for those residents who do not contract with a private hauler for trash pick-up.

3.07-C **Telecommunications**

Telecommunication services in St. George include land-line phone service provided by Waitsfield – Champlain Valley Telecom, which also offers high-speed internet access over DSL. Cellular phone service is provided by a number of national companies and service is very good due to the tower located on Mt. Pritchard, which hosts antennae for multiple carriers and provides coverage for the entire town. There is cable television service, and high-speed internet service, along the state highways and Oak Hill Road (see Figure 31).

3.07-D Natural Gas

In 2016 Vermont Gas Systems (VGS) completed installation of the St. George portion of its natural gas transmission line to Addison County. In order to benefit from the transmission line passing through St. George, the Planning Commission demonstrated to VGS that the town meets the minimum threshold density required for VGS to provide local natural gas service. It is unlikely that a new gate station will be constructed in St. George to provide local distribution. Instead, VGS plans to extend the existing distribution line southward along Route 2A from Old Creamery Road in Williston. The current timeline for this project is approximately 2020.

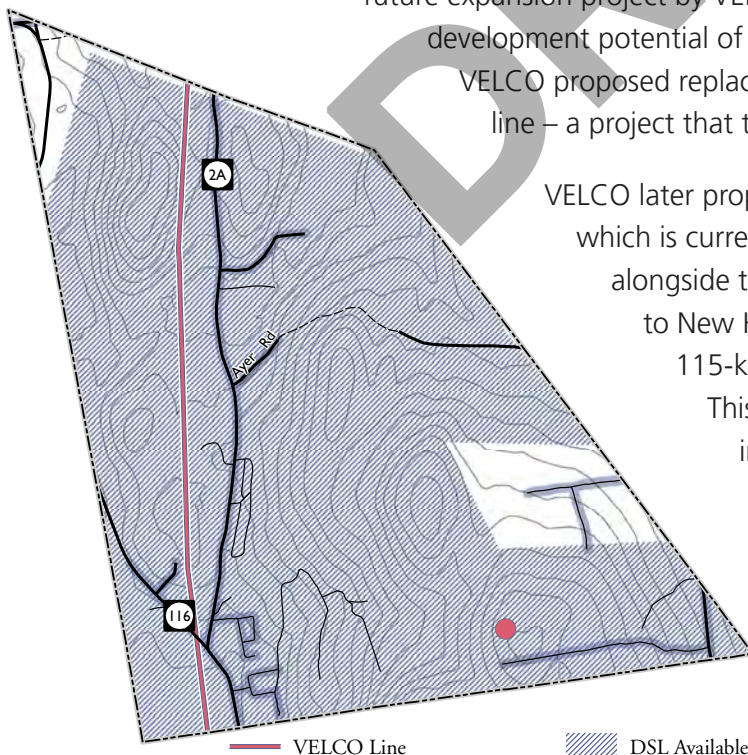
3.07-E Electricity

Vermont Electric Co-operative (VEC) supplies electricity in St. George. As new and/or replacement electric distribution and telecommunications lines are required in town, they should be installed underground. This will promote aesthetically pleasing development and increase the reliability of the infrastructure.

There are no electrical substations in St. George, but currently a 115-kV VELCO transmission line passes through town running north-south between the New Haven and Williston substations. VELCO controls an approximately 250-foot right-of-way through St. George, which it currently maintains at a cleared width of around 100 feet. The existing line is supported by wooden 'H-frame' poles that are approximately 50 feet tall. The transmission line right-of-way bisects St. George's town center property and the likelihood of a future expansion project by VELCO would seriously affect the aesthetics and development potential of the town center property. In the late 1990s, VELCO proposed replacing the existing 115-kV line with a 345-kV line – a project that the company dropped.

VELCO later proposed the Northwest Reliability Project (NRP), which is currently under construction, to run a 345-kV line alongside the existing 115-kV line from West Rutland to New Haven and to replace a 46-kV line with a 115-kV line from New Haven to South Burlington.

This, however, results in more power coming into the New Haven substation from the south than leaves it to the north, a clear indication that the corridor through St. George to Williston will either see a proposal from VELCO to replace its existing line with a larger one or to run a second line alongside the existing line. Either proposal would



require extensive clearing within the right-of-way, thus increasing the visual intrusion of the line. Additional or higher voltage lines also have the potential to increase the electric and magnetic fields associated with power transmission, which may be harmful to human health. Higher voltage lines would require taller towers that would be above the tree line. VELCO has projected that the NRP will meet the transmission needs for a statewide load of 1,200 megawatts; however, the Vermont Department of Public Service predicts that the state will reach that load in 2011.

3.07-F **Utility, Energy and Telecommunications Projects**

The Town of St. George finds large-scale utility, energy or telecommunications infrastructure that is located in or impacts the view of identified special areas to be out of character with its surroundings and to pose an undue adverse impact on the aesthetic qualities of these areas (see page * for a list of special areas). Such infrastructure is generally industrial in character due to its height, materials and construction. Utility or telecommunications infrastructure that is taller than surrounding vegetation, is skylined and is visible from public vantage points does not fit into St. George's scenic character.

In St. George, the approximately 50-foot high VELCO electric transmission poles pass through open fields and wooded areas, divide the town center property, and are visible in the mid-ground of the public view from Route 2A throughout most of town. The line cannot be hidden from view when traversing open, agricultural lands. Where it is located in wooded areas, the required cleared width can cause the corridor to appear as an unsightly wound cutting through the forest if the terrain makes it visible or if there is an inadequate buffer of mature vegetation in the foreground. If the lines were to be placed on higher poles above the tree line or the cleared corridor width were to be increased, the visibility of line would increase significantly. Additionally, the existing 135-foot high telecommunications tower on Mt. Pritchard is highly visible from public vantage points in St. George and neighboring communities.

The Town of St. George has been planning for development of a village center for more than 40 years. The VELCO / VGS right-of-way divides the town-owned village center property, which was acquired for development of a compact, mixed-use village center. The town worked with VGS to map four future roads crossing of their pipeline within the village center (at these points, the line was buried at a lower level using appropriate materials for road crossings).

Nevertheless, the above ground electric transmission lines and below ground natural gas pipeline pose major constraints to building the small, traditional New England village first envisioned by town planners in the 1970s and reasserted in this Town Plan. The

signature component of traditional New England villages is the human-scale of their built environment. This plan and the town's implementing land use regulations call for development within the village center of a scale and pattern typical of a traditional New England village. Large-scale utility infrastructure is not in keeping with the vision set forth by St. George residents for their village center and as such it poses an undue adverse impact on the aesthetics of the area.

This plan also recognizes the important scenic character of the town's hillsides and ridgelines, which are visible from many public vantage points within the town and beyond its borders. Large-scale utility or telecommunications infrastructure, which is located atop our hills and ridgelines, also causes an undue adverse impact on the aesthetics of those special areas. Towers of a height that would require air navigation warning lights would detract from the aesthetic character of the town and residents' view of the night sky, which is relatively free from light pollution and other manmade impacts at the present time. The town has enacted land use regulations that would restrict development on the town's hillsides and ridgelines, both to prevent environmental degradation and to preserve the scenic qualities of the town's rugged terrain.

St. George actively participated in the Act 248 process related to the extension of the natural gas transmission line through the village center. The town recognizes the need to prepare for a future application from VELCO to upgrade its line through town or for other large-scale utility, energy or telecommunications projects that will be subject to state rather than local regulation to ensure that the town's interests and land use policies are considered. It is the stated policy of the Town of St. George that:

Any development in the village center that requires access across the VELCO / VGS right-of-way must adhere to the negotiated road crossing locations (shown on a map dated July 22, 2014) and VELCO and VGS must maintain these potential crossings in a manner that would allow for future road construction at those locations.

Any upgrade, substantial change or reconstruction to VELCO's transmission infrastructure in town must:

- Result in the lines being run underground across the village center as identified in the Land Use Plan.

- Not add additional lines on separate poles within the existing VELCO corridor (in areas not expressly required to be underground) in order to reduce the undue adverse aesthetic impact from multiple lines and the potential need for additional transmission corridors.

- Provide extensive mitigation for transmission lines above ground that includes at a minimum planting and maintenance by the applicant of street trees along all roadsides on the approaches to screen the transmission lines, with similar plantings to effectively screen the lines and pole towers from adjacent residential properties.

The existing, and any future, telecommunications towers on Mount Pritchard must:

- Not increase the physical and aesthetic environmental impact in any way and should reduced their impacts over time by way of new technology.

- Consolidate installations where possible.

- Remove abandoned facilities and equipment when they cease operation.

- Not install additional tower or site lighting.

The town will continue to develop a long-range plan, to the extent practical without disrupting telecommunications and broadcast service, for the elimination of towers on Mount Pritchard.

Utility, energy or telecommunications infrastructure on the town's hillside's and ridgelines that is taller than the surrounding vegetation, requires access roads, power lines and accessory structures, necessitates tree clearing, and/or that may require lighting is not in keeping with the town's scenic character.

Utility, energy or telecommunications project subject to state approval under Section 248 must conform to any landscaping and screening requirements for commercial or industrial development in a similar location as established in the town's land use regulations.

3.07-G **Energy**

Energy consumption is an essential component of our modern way of life; it has affected and will continue to influence land use and development patterns. In the 1970s as St. George residents were first planning for a village center, energy costs were on the rise and so development of a compact center that was designed to be walkable was highly desirable. The lower energy prices of the 1980s and 1990s made energy conservation a less important criterion for people choosing where to live and how to get around. Now, as energy prices appear to be headed higher than the peak prices of the 1970s and with increased public awareness of the impact of energy use on our society and the environment, energy conservation has again become a factor in many personal and community decisions. If they are sustained over time higher energy costs will likely result in changes to our daily lives such as living closer to where we work, using services that are conveniently located, seeking transportation alternatives, living in more efficient homes, and buying more efficient appliances.

In addition to transportation, the other major form of residential energy consumption is heating and cooling; around two-thirds of the energy used in our homes is for space heating/cooling and making hot water. Currently, more than three-quarters of St. George's residents heat their homes with fuel oil. Efficiency Vermont has programs and resources to help customers reduce their monthly electric bills, including information about rebates and tax incentives available for energy-saving purchases (information available at www.efficiencyvermont.com). Income-eligible households in St. George can participate in the Weatherization Assistance Program, as well as the Fuel Assistance Program, offered by the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (information available at www.cvoeo.org).

Vermont has a Residential Building Energy Code that sets a minimum standard of efficiency for new homes and residential additions over 500 square feet. Additionally, simple site planning such as locating buildings to maximize southern exposures and providing windbreaks can reduce the amount energy required to heat and cool structures. As technology costs decline and oil prices climb, there is increased interest in renewable energy sources including residential-scale wind and solar power. St. George should further promote

energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and construction of 'green buildings' through performance standards and incentives.

3.08 **PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY**

St. George does not provide its own fire, rescue and police services. The town contracts with Hinesburg for fire protection. The VermontWare building has a 10,000 gallon underground storage tank and hydrant that may be used in the future to supply fire protection to development within the village center.

The Hinesburg Fire Department and St. Michael's Rescue supply emergency medical services. The Vermont State Police provide police protection from their Williston barracks and the town contracts with the Hinesburg Police Department to provide additional traffic control. The town's crime rates are generally low at about half the county's rate.

There are a number of human service organizations in the county that assist St. George residents, some of which receive financial support from the town as appropriated at town meeting. Around 13% of St. George residents reported some form of disability on the 2000 Census; 21 people reported that their disability made it difficult to care for themselves, 36 stated that they had difficulty leaving their home, and 50 said their disability prevented them from working. While there are no medical facilities in town, residents have convenient access to a full range of medical care in neighboring communities and the UVM Medical Center, a Level I trauma center, is approximately ten miles from town.

4 | OUR ENVIRONMENT

4.01 **AIR**

4.01-A **Climate**

Vermont's climate is best described as variable; temperatures range greatly throughout the year and can change considerably in a given day. There can be significant differences in the weather during the same seasons in different years, and considerable diversity from place-to-place. The local climate in St. George is shaped by the town's location on the eastern edge of the Champlain Valley as it meets the western foothills of the northern Green Mountains.

The Champlain Valley is relatively warm and dry as compared to other regions in Vermont with an average growing season of 130 to 150 days. Average annual temperatures range between 20°F in January and 70°F in July, although periods of significantly lower winter and higher summer temperatures regularly occur. Average annual precipitation ranges from 28 to 38 inches. Given St. George's location at the eastern edge of the valley and its elevation, the town's temperatures are somewhat cooler and precipitation amounts greater than places closer to the lake. Elevation has a significant impact on summer temperatures and the length of the growing season. Summer temperatures on the peaks of the Green Mountains are commonly 20°F cooler than in the Champlain Valley. The mountains also have a strong effect on precipitation, as the prevailing winds from the west are forced upward, cooling the air and causing an abundance of rain, snow, clouds and fog at higher elevations. The average annual rainfall atop Mt. Mansfield (Vermont's highest peak) is 72 inches, which is twice the amount that falls in most of the Champlain Valley.

4.01-B **Air Quality**

While St. George is a rural community, it is located on the fringe of the greater Burlington metropolitan area and air quality is likely reduced by the town's proximity to this urban center. The federal Environmental Protection Agency requires each state to monitor the levels of six "criteria" pollutants: carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, ozone, airborne lead particles, and total atmospheric particles. Of these, levels of ozone and atmospheric particles (dust or fine particulates) are of concern in the Burlington area. The Vermont Air Pollution Control Division monitors these six along with many other pollutants in accordance with the state's Hazardous Ambient Air Standards. In the Burlington area, a number of pollutants exceed the state standards. (More information available from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation Air Pollution Control Division.)

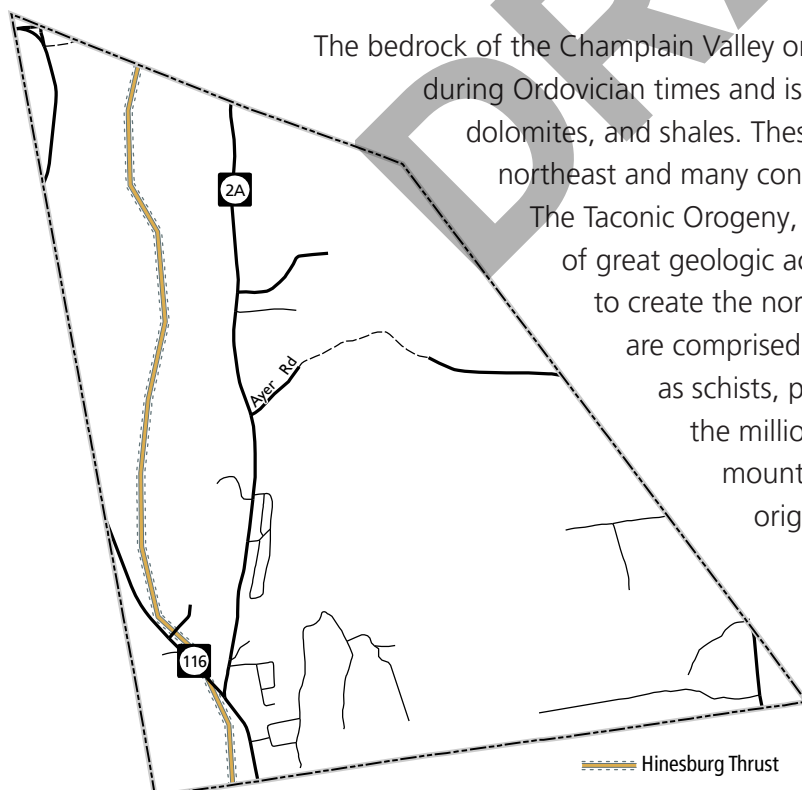
Unlike more industrialized places, motor vehicles are the largest source of air pollution in Vermont; vehicles emit ozone, particulate matter and chemical compounds. While

technology and emission controls have greatly reduced the amount of pollution vehicles produce, the number of vehicle miles driven in Vermont has doubled since 1972. The Federal Highway Administration estimated that the total number of vehicle miles driven in Vermont during 2004 was approximately 7.8 billion or around 12,650 miles per person (in 1950, the average number of miles driven per person in Vermont was around 3,100). The 2000 Census reported that there were about 500 vehicles in St. George or 1.8 vehicles per household. According to the Institute of Traffic Engineers, the average American household generates 10 vehicle trips per day. Places where traffic is congested or vehicles sit idling often have very low air quality. Weather patterns can also influence whether pollutants will disperse or remain concentrated close to the ground. Lower air quality has been linked to human health problems and can impact the natural environment as well.

4.02 LAND

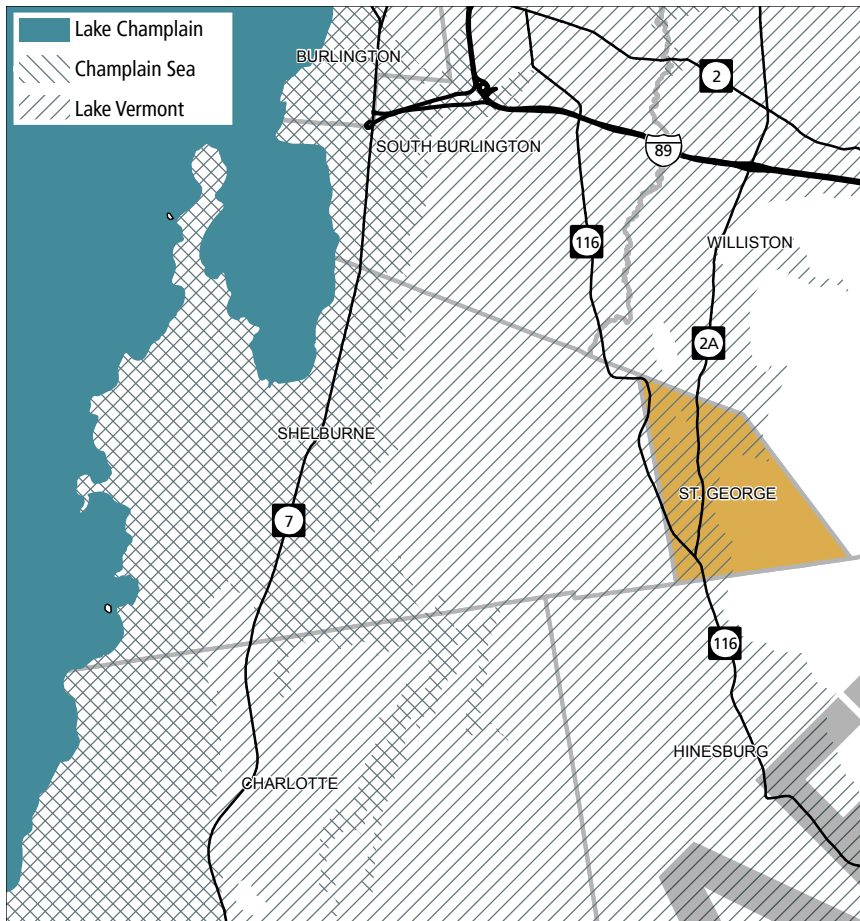
4.02-A Geology and Land Form

St. George sits on the dividing line between the Champlain Valley and the Green Mountain regions of Vermont. The north-south Hinesburg Thrust fault line, which runs through St. George, differentiates the lowlands from the foothills; this feature resulted from a significant geological event that occurred some 350 million years ago as a disturbance in the earth's crust cracked a great layer of bedrock east of Route 2A and forced it over the bedrock west of the highway. (See Figure 32).



The bedrock of the Champlain Valley originated some 500 million years ago during Ordovician times and is largely comprised of limestones, dolomites, and shales. These are some of the oldest rocks in the northeast and many contain fossil evidence of their marine origin. The Taconic Orogeny, about 450 million years ago, was a period of great geologic activity as ancient rocks were transformed to create the northern Green Mountains of today, which are comprised primarily of metamorphic rocks such as schists, phyllites, gneisses and quartzites. Over the millions of years since their formation, the mountains have eroded to a fraction of their original height.

In more recent geologic time, glaciers transformed the town's landscape. The glacial ice advanced and retreated reshaping the surface by scouring some areas and depositing material



(boulders to fine clay particles) in other locations. Approximately 13,000 years ago and up to approximately 650 feet in elevation, the Champlain Valley was filled with the south-flowing Glacial Lake Vermont. After the glaciers receded, between 12,500 and 10,000 years ago, the Atlantic Ocean flowed south into the depression caused by the weight of the ice. Seawater filled the Champlain valley up to an elevation of approximately 300 feet and became the Champlain Sea. (See Figure 33).

Fine-grained clay and silt were deposited on the bottom of Lake Vermont. These clays and silts have low permeability and water

runs rapidly off of them. Sand deposits were created where streams of glacial melt-water flowed into the lake. Sands have higher permeability and infiltration rates, but unlike clay deposits, they are not cohesive and are easily eroded. This geologic history means that the surficial deposits throughout much of St. George are primarily unconsolidated deposits with relatively low infiltration and high runoff potential that are prone to erosion. On the slopes of Mt. Pritchard above the shoreline of Glacial Lake Vermont, the bedrock is blanketed with glacial till, a conglomerate of many different sizes of rock that was laid over the bedrock at the base of the glacier.

Elevation in St. George ranges from approximately 350 feet above sea level in the northwestern corner of town to 1,168 feet atop Mt. Pritchard. The western slopes of Mt. Pritchard are fairly steep, while the mountain falls off somewhat more gently on the east side. An unnamed hill in the northwest corner of town also rises sharply, to a height of approximately 700 feet above sea level. Slope is a significant constraint to development in town; it contributes to the limited capacity of many of the town's soils for treating wastewater, as well the potential for unwanted erosion and stormwater run-off. Most of the town's steepest lands are currently forested, which prevents soil loss (tree leaves slow and disperse rainwater, while root systems hold soil in place). Retaining woody vegetation and limiting the amount of impervious surface on the town's steep slopes will reduce the potential for erosion and associated water pollution.

Soils and Earth Resources

As described above, St. George's soils originate from three sources:

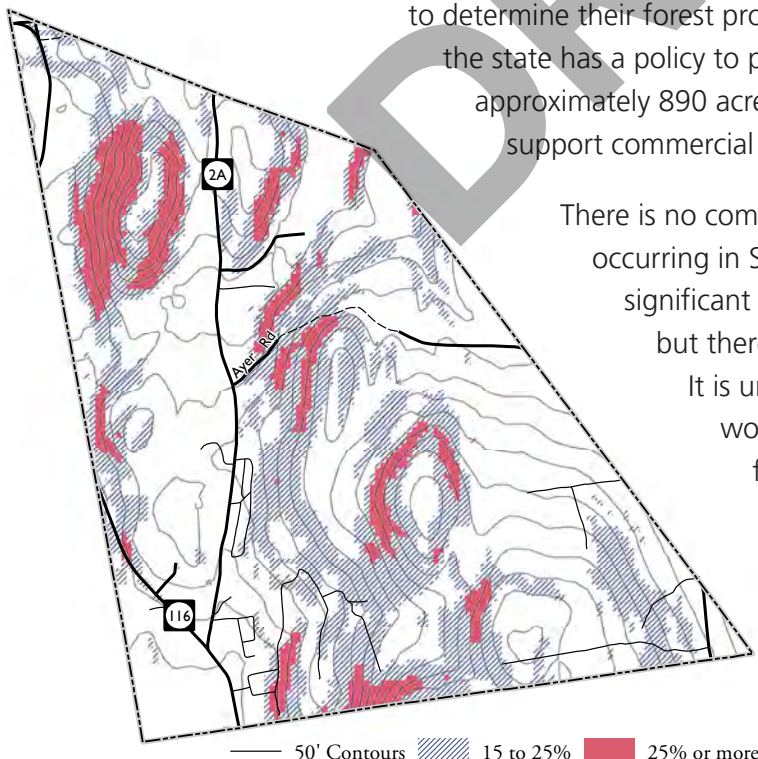
- Materials deposited when the Champlain Valley was underwater,
- Glacial till deposits, and
- Materials deposited by glacial melt-water streams.

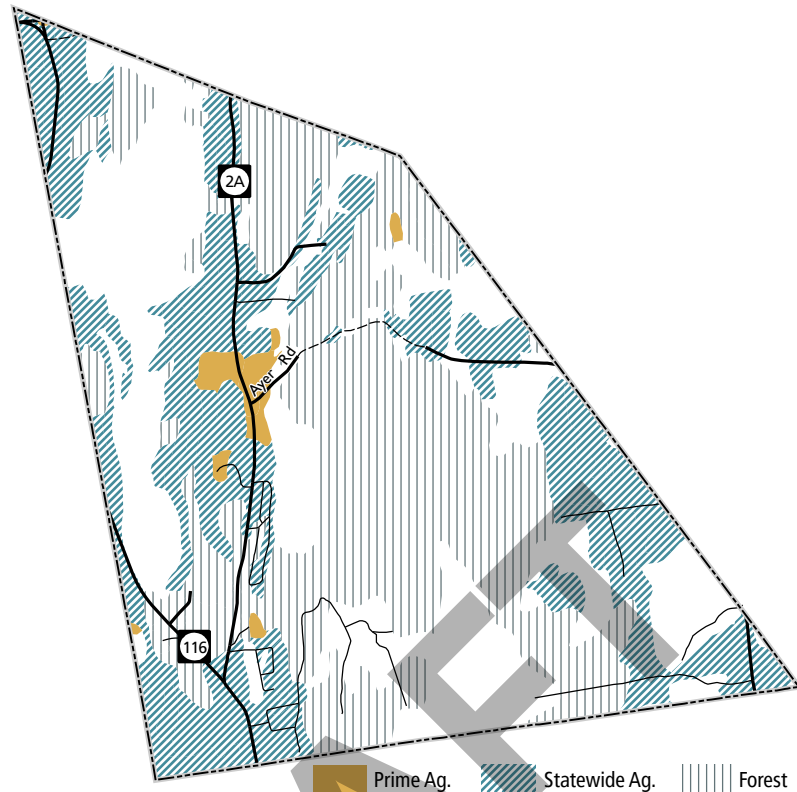
The soils are grouped into associations of major and minor soils with similar characteristics (see page 28). An understanding of the town's soils – their potential for and constraints on agriculture, development and other activities – is an essential component of land use planning. As described on page, St. George has a limited amount of land with soils that are well suited to treating wastewater with conventional, soil-based septic systems. In order for development in St. George to proceed as envisioned in this plan, the constraints posed by the town's soils will need to be addressed.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service has assessed St. George's soils based on their potential for agricultural productivity. There are approximately 35 acres of prime farmland in town, most of which is located in the vicinity of the Ayer Road – Route 2A intersection. There are another 725 acres of land in town with soils of statewide importance. Soils that are generally better suited for onsite septic disposal are often high quality farmland, which has led to the loss of agricultural soils in St. George and around Vermont. Through Act 250's Criteria 9B, the state has a policy to preserve primary agricultural soils.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service has also analyzed St. George's soils to determine their forest productivity. Through Act 250's Criteria 9C, the state has a policy to preserve important forest soils. There are approximately 890 acres of soils assessed as having the potential to support commercial forestry in St. George.

There is no commercial resource extraction currently occurring in St. George. There are no mapped areas with significant rock, gravel or mineral resources in town, but there are two small areas with deposits of sand. It is unlikely that the earth resources in St. George would be considered for extraction other than for onsite, agricultural or local use. Still, the town should strengthen its standards governing resource extraction – a recommendation from earlier town plans that has not been implemented – to ensure that any extraction that





Prime farmland has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. The classification of prime soils in Vermont was based on a national definition.

Statewide soils are defined by their importance for production of food, feed, fiber, forage and oilseed crops in Vermont.

Primary agricultural soils are defined in Act 250 Section 601(15) as soils which have a potential for growing food and forage crops, are sufficiently well drained to allow sowing and harvesting with mechanized equipment, are well supplied with plant nutrients or highly responsive to the use of fertilizer, and have few limitations for crop production or limitation which may be easily overcome. In order to qualify as primary agricultural soils, the average slope of the land containing such soils does not exceed 15%, and such land is of a size capable of supporting or contributing to an economic agricultural operation. If a tract of land includes other than primary agricultural soils, only the primary agricultural soils shall be affected by criteria relating specifically to such soils.

Forest and secondary agricultural soils are defined in Act 250 Section 601(15) as soils which are not primary agricultural soils but which have reasonable potential for commercial forestry or commercial agriculture, and which have not yet been developed. In order to qualify as forest or secondary agricultural soils the land containing such soils shall be characterized by location, natural conditions and ownership patterns capable of supporting or contributing to present or potential commercial forestry or commercial agriculture. If a tract of land includes other than forest or secondary agricultural soils only the forest or secondary agricultural soils shall be affected by criteria relating specifically to such soils.

does occur in the future does not unduly impact environmental quality or the character of the community.

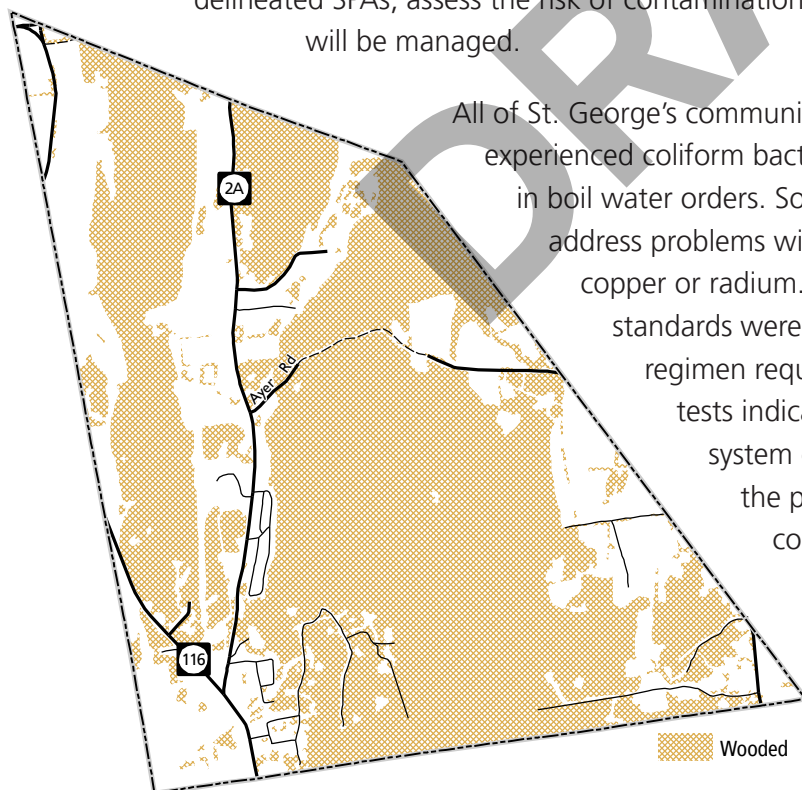
4.02-C **Land Cover**

St. George is largely forested with a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees on most of the town's higher elevation land. The remaining land is largely open farmland or golf course, or residential property. There are approximately 1,500 acres of wooded land in town, including a roughly 800-acre block of unfragmented forest around Mt. Pritchard (see Figure 38).

4.03 **WATER**

4.03-A **Groundwater**

The town's five community water supplies have state-mandated Source Protection Areas and (see page 20 for further information on the community water supplies). The state began regulation of potable water supplies in the 1970s. Beginning in 1982, Wellhead Protection Areas were delineated for public water supplies. A decade later, that program has evolved resulting in the delineation of Public Water Source Protection Areas (SPAs) and development of Source Protection Plans for community water supplies (see Map 5: Hydrography). Source Protection Plans identify potential sources of contamination within delineated SPAs, assess the risk of contamination, and describe how risks and emergencies will be managed.



All of St. George's community water systems have intermittently experienced coliform bacteria levels above legal limits, resulting in boil water orders. Some of the systems have also had to address problems with nitrate, tetrachloroethylene, lead, copper or radium. These violations of drinking water quality standards were discovered during the routine testing regimen required under state and federal law. When tests indicate a violation, users are notified and the system operator takes corrective action to resolve the problem. In order to limit the potential for contamination within the town's SPAs, the St. George should enact regulations within a groundwater protection overlay district to provide additional review of land uses within the SPAs and restrict development that could contaminate the water supplies.

Wetlands are defined as those areas of the state that are inundated by surface or ground water with a frequency sufficient to support plants and animals that depend on saturated or seasonally saturated soil conditions for growth and reproduction. The saturated or seasonally saturated conditions in wetlands create an environment that favors the growth of specifically adapted wetland plants (hydrophytic vegetation) and promotes the development of wetland soils (hydric soils). These three factors (hydrology, vegetation, and soils) are used in the delineation of wetland boundaries.

Wetlands serve a wide variety of functions and values beneficial to the health, safety, and welfare of the general public. It is estimated that less than 5% of Vermont are wetlands and that nearly 50% of Vermont's original wetland area has been lost or severely impaired due to draining, dredging, filling, or excavation activities associated

with industrial and residential development and agriculture. Some of the functions and values that wetlands provide include: flood control, water quality protection, wildlife habitat, recreation and economic benefits, and erosion control.

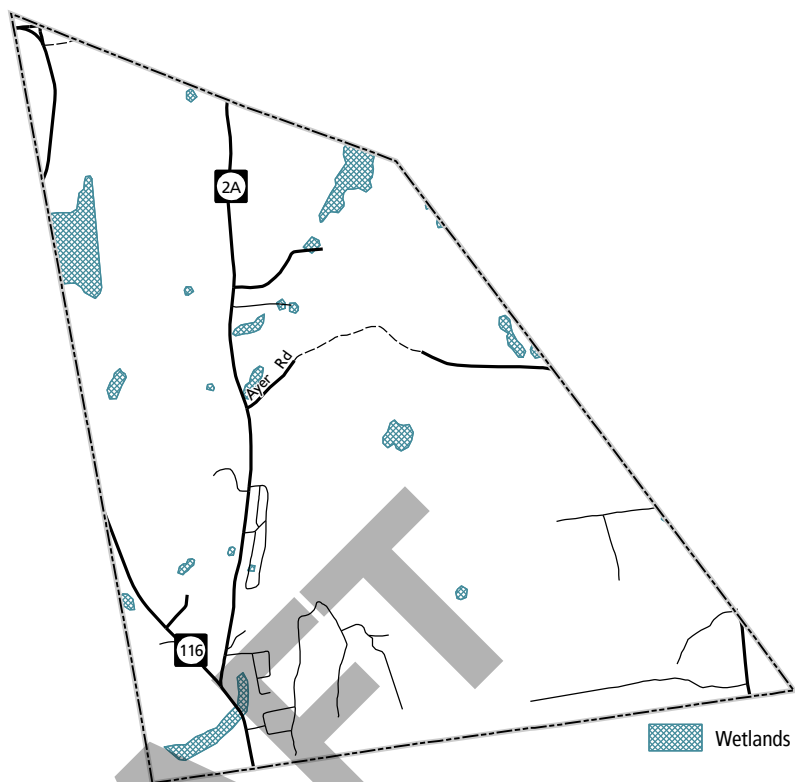
Wetlands are classified into three categories by the Vermont Wetland Rules. Class One and Class Two wetlands are considered "significant" and are protected by the Vermont Wetland Rules.

Class One wetlands are those wetlands which the Board determines are exceptional or irreplaceable in their contribution to Vermont's natural heritage and are therefore so significant that they merit the highest level of protection under the rules. Class One wetlands must be specifically designated by the Board. A 100-foot protected buffer zone is designated adjacent to Class One wetlands which helps protect the functions and values of the wetland.

The rules designate most palustrine wetlands shown on the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps and those wetlands contiguous to mapped wetlands as Class Two wetlands. A contiguous wetland is a wetland which shares a boundary with or touches a mapped wetland. A 50-foot protected buffer zone is designated adjacent to all Class Two wetlands.

Class Three wetlands are those wetlands either considered not significant for providing any wetland functions when last evaluated or that have not been mapped on the NWI maps. Class Three wetlands are not protected under the Vermont Wetland Rules. They may, however, be protected by other federal, state, or local regulations.

More information on Vermont's wetlands is available from the Wetlands Section of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation.



While a majority of the town's homes receive their potable water from a community system, there are approximately 90 private wells in St. George. Property owners with onsite wells typically do not regularly test their drinking water to ensure its quality. The same issues with contamination that affect community supplies, can also endanger individual wells. There has not been an assessment of the St. George's groundwater supply, despite the fact that the entire town relies upon this resource for potable water. More detailed information about the location and quantity of groundwater, as well as groundwater recharge areas, would be beneficial when planning for appropriate growth and development in the town.

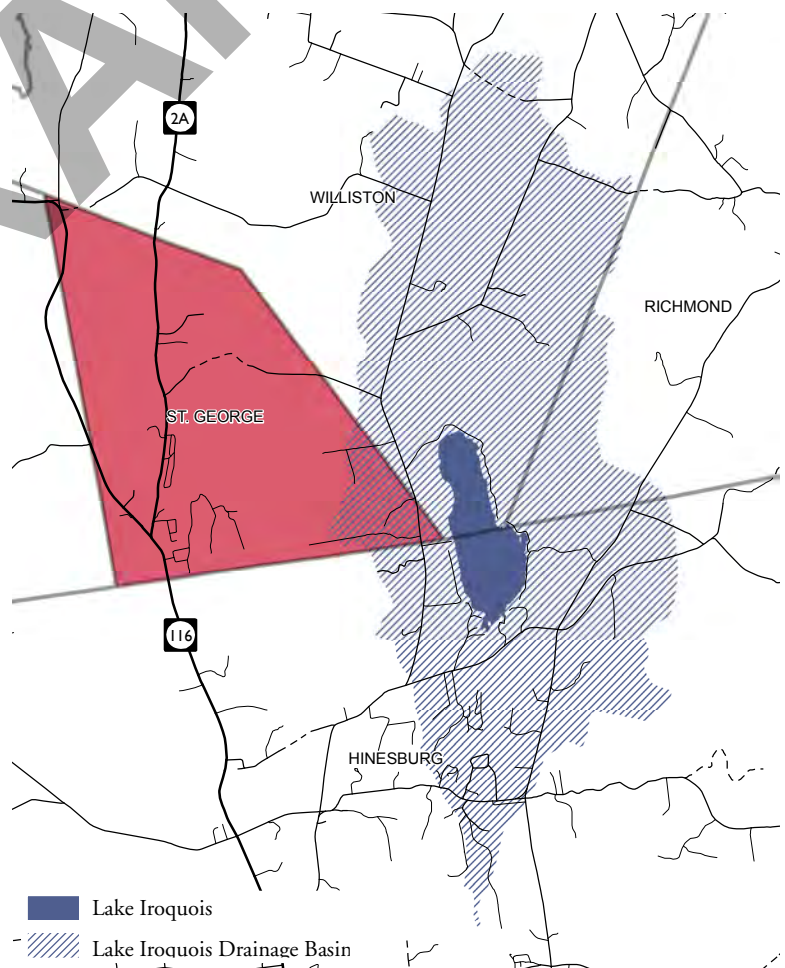
4.03-B **Wetlands**

The 2006 Vermont Significant Wetlands Inventory identified more than 70 acres of Class 2 wetlands in St. George (see Figure 39). Wetlands serve a number of important ecological functions, but for many years their value was not recognized. As a result, wetlands have been drained and filled for development or agricultural use. Currently, both federal (Army Corps of Engineers) and state governments regulate wetlands in order to prevent further loss of these critical environmental areas. St. George should support efforts to protect wetlands by ensuring that adjacent land uses do not impair the important habitat, filtration and flood control functions of the town's wetlands.

4.03-C **Surface Water**

No major streams are located in St. George, but there are a number of smaller creeks and tributaries that originate in the town's higher elevations. The southern section of town is within the Laplatte River Basin and the northern section is within the Winooski River Basin.

In the southwestern corner of town, an unnamed stream runs to the east of Route 2A and crosses beneath Route 116, eventually emptying into the La Platte River in Hinesburg. There is an intermittent stream that is part of a larger wetland area on the town's western boundary that flows into Shelburne Pond. Several tributaries of Sucker Brook



have their headwaters on the eastern side of Mt. Pritchard. These small, intermittent creeks tumble down the slope in a series of pools and waterfalls (see Figure 40).

Sucker Brook flows into Muddy Brook, whose waters empty into the Winooski River. The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation has classified part of Muddy Brook as impaired due to non-point source pollution – largely caused by stormwater run-off from developed land. As described above, St. George's soils are prone to erosion and similar impacts to the town's (or neighboring town's) surface waters could occur if construction site erosion and post-construction stormwater and roadway run-off are not properly managed when land is being developed. The Municipal Roads General Permit, as discussed in the Water Quality section, will require the town to reduce run-off from roads.

There are a number of ponds in town, the largest of which is approximately two acres in area. Some of these are likely former farm ponds, while others occur in conjunction with streams and wetland areas. (See Map 5. Hydrography).

There is a small amount of land identified as floodplains by the Federal Emergency Management Administration. The area is comprised of approximately 20 acres on the western side of town, coincident with and adjacent to the wetland around the unnamed creek that flows into Shelburne Pond.

4.03-D **Lake Iroquois**

While not located in town, Lake Iroquois is a significant natural and recreational resource for St. George residents, especially those living on the east side of town. The lake straddles the boundary of Richmond, Williston and Hinesburg. A dam impounds its waters to create a surface area of 244 acres. Lands in St. George are part of the lake's drainage basin (see Figure 41).

Lake Iroquois supports a range of wildlife and is an excellent place to fish. Up until the early 1940s, Lake Iroquois was abundant with fish such as northern pike, walleyes, large and small mouth bass, rock bass, yellow perch, brown bullhead, white sucker and golden shiner. Since then, the population of northern pike and walleyes has decreased, leading to an increase in the perch population. There is a state fishing and boat access near the beach at the northern end of the lake.

The beach has been closed on occasion because of water pollution largely due to inadequate septic systems of some lakeshore homes; water quality problems from erosion and runoff have also been experienced. In recent years, efforts have been focused on educating watershed property owners about sources of pollution and how to limit their impact on the lake. Tests conducted by the Vermont Department of Water Resources have found that the lake's water is becoming increasingly eutrophic (high nutrient levels). If this process continues, the bottom layers of water will be deprived of dissolved oxygen and will

not be able to support aquatic life. The opposite occurs near the surface, where dissolved oxygen levels are higher and biological productivity is increasing.

Another source of concern for the long-term health of the lake is the presence of Eurasian water milfoil, which is highly invasive aquatic plant that could severely impair recreational use if it continues to spread. (For more information on water quality in Lake Iroquois contact the Lakes and Ponds Section of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation.)

4.03-E **Shelburne Pond**

Shelburne Pond, also outside of town, is a significant component of the larger natural environment in which St. George is located. The roughly 500-acre Shelburne Pond sits in a limestone basin, which results in its waters being highly alkaline, surrounded by large wetlands. It is a protected natural area noted for its scenic qualities, unique plant communities, wildlife habitat and fishery. The shoreline of the pond is undeveloped due to its long-time ownership by the University of Vermont; through a partnership between UVM and the Nature Conservancy over 1,000 acres around the pond have been conserved. The area is open to the public with a fishing access and loop trail at the H. Lawrence Achilles Natural Area located off Pond Road in Shelburne.

4.04 **LAND**

4.04-A **Natural Communities**

The most dominant natural community type in St. George is Northern Hardwood Forest formation, which is common to the lower elevations of the Green Mountains. This formation is part of a broad forest region that ranges from the upper-Midwest states east to Maine and north into southeastern Canada. Beech, sugar maple and yellow birch are the prominent tree species, but hemlock, red oak, red maple and white pine are common as well. The mix of trees varies with climate and soils conditions leading to more evergreens like spruce and fir at higher (cooler) elevations. Brilliant fall color and an abundance of spring wildflowers are some of the distinctive characteristics of the Northern Hardwood Forest.

Over the past 50 years, the amount of woodland in St. George (and throughout much of Vermont) has been increasing as land once cleared for agriculture is no longer maintained and is transitioning back to its natural state. Therefore, some of the town's woodlands are still young and in an early state of succession and do not necessarily reflect the mix of vegetation typical of the Northern Hardwood Forest formation.

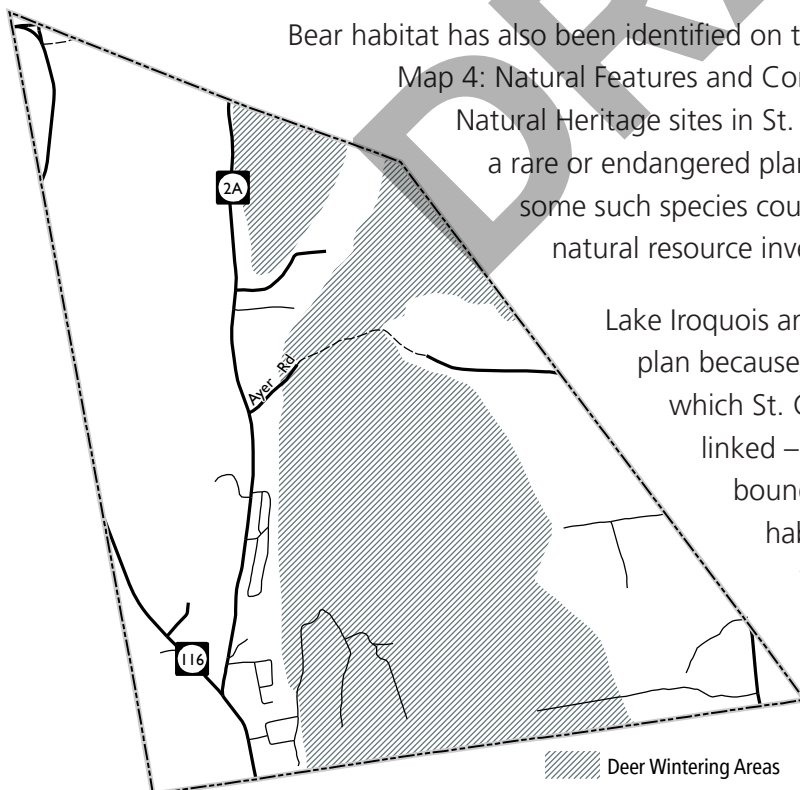
Wildlife Habitat and Corridors

Ecologists have shown that the most diverse environments are the transition areas between adjacent ecological communities – an area known as an ecotone. In many ways, the entire Town of St. George could be seen as an ecotone due to its location where the Champlain Valley and Green Mountains meet.

The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife has identified approximately 950 acres (40% of the town's land area) of deer wintering areas in St. George. Most of this deer habitat is located along the central Mt. Pritchard ridgeline, with a smaller area along the town's northern boundary (see Figure 44). White-tailed deer are found statewide in the mountains, river valleys, agricultural lands, and even in suburban backyards. Known as a species that prefers the forest edge, deer are found in highest numbers in habitats that feature a blend of large woodlots and agricultural openings. Deer wintering areas or deer yards are a critically important habitat type for deer to survive through the cold winter and therefore are deemed a sensitive natural feature. Less than eight percent of Vermont's forests include deer wintering areas. An important part of a deer yard is the evergreen trees that catch snow in their branches, thus reducing snow depth beneath them. The evergreens also provide thermal cover that gives the deer protection from the wind. Within identified deer yards, core areas comprised largely of evergreen forest should be given the highest priority for conservation. Deer may move 10 to 15 miles in search of a deer yard and stay in the protection of that area all winter. St. George encourages the conservation of the town's deer wintering areas, especially the critical core areas.

Bear habitat has also been identified on the eastern slopes of Mt. Pritchard (see Map 4: Natural Features and Conserved Lands). There are no mapped Natural Heritage sites in St. George; these are known locations of a rare or endangered plant or animal species. Still, it is likely that some such species could be found in town if a more thorough natural resource inventory were undertaken.

Lake Iroquois and Shelburne Pond were discussed in this plan because they are significant regional resources to which St. George's natural environment is intrinsically linked – natural systems do not recognize political boundaries. Many species rely on multiple habitat types and move between nearby water-wetland environments and St. George's forested uplands throughout the year or at various points during their lifecycle. Continuing to provide connecting areas of natural land



cover between the valley and the mountains will allow the movement of plants and animals vital to maintaining a diverse, healthy ecosystem.

4.05 **SPECIAL AREAS AND RESOURCES**

The lands, features and structures described below have been identified by residents as special areas or resources and as such require increased attention to their use and the potential impact proposed development may have upon them.

4.05-A **Town Center Property**

St. George's municipally-owned town center property is one of our most valuable assets. In the early 1970s, residents had the foresight to acquire this land and the vision to plan for a mixed-use village in a community that historically never had a town center. While earlier attempts to implement this vision were not realized, the town retained ownership of this key piece of property. With careful planning and public investment, this property has the potential to become the core of a vital village center that would include public spaces and services, offer a location for business that would create local jobs and provide residents with convenient access to basic services and amenities, and accommodate a variety of housing opportunities attracting a diverse population to live in St. George.

The amount of acreage, especially in relation to the small size of the town, the general consensus still held by residents that this property should be used for the purpose it was acquired for, and the fact the town has ultimate control of what can occur on the land makes the town center property a unique and special resource.

4.05-B **Hilltops and Ridgelines**

St. George's landscape is characterized by the Mt. Pritchard and Brownell Mountain ridgelines. In addition to Mt. Pritchard, several other prominent hilltops are highly visible from many points in town. The hill in the northwestern corner of the town center property can be seen from numerous points along the public roads. As a distinguishing natural feature on the property, its high visibility should be considered as planning for the village center proceeds.

Throughout the town, hilltops and ridgelines are special resources due to a combination of their visibility, elevation, scenic beauty, steep slopes and critical habitat. This plan recognizes the uniqueness of these resources with the establishment of a Forested Uplands Planning Area, which encompasses all of the hilltops and ridgelines identified as special resources with the exception of the hill on the town center property. (see page 50 for further discussion).

Ridgeline and hilltop development that would lead to tree clearing would significantly change the visual character of the town. Without woody vegetation to stabilize slopes and disperse rainwater, such development would also increase erosion; this is especially the case during and immediately following construction when soils would be exposed and before groundcover has been established. With such development would come increased amounts of impervious surface – such as roofs, driveways and roads – that would further exacerbate stormwater run-off and erosion problems.

Currently, the town's hilltops and ridgelines are generally forested and recognized for their value as wildlife habitat. Construction in these special areas would result in largely intact blocks of habitat being fragmented, thus reducing the ability of the remaining woodland to support a diversity of native species.

Within this identified special area, development will be reviewed to ensure that it does not adversely impact the environmental quality and aesthetic character of the town's hilltops and ridgelines. Development that requires significant clearing or fragments the existing large blocks of forest habitat within the town will be discouraged.

Large-scale utility or telecommunications infrastructure also has the potential to adversely impact the town's hilltops and ridgelines. Recognizing that the town's policies and regulations may be superseded by state or federal law, this plan encourages all regulatory bodies to duly consider the impacts of any proposed projects on this special resource.

4.05-C **Natural Areas and Important Resources**

St. George is rich in natural beauty. To list every scenic view or environmentally sensitive site would be difficult, but there are a number of important resources that must be specifically recognized and considered for special protection:

- The marshy valley in the north central part of town.
- The wetland extending into St. George from Shelburne Pond.
- The streams that flow down Mt. Pritchard, forming small pools and waterfalls.
- Views of Lake Champlain and Lake Iroquois as visible from public property and travel corridors.
- Core deer wintering areas.
- Structures listed on the State Register of Historic Places.

All of these natural or cultural assets should be protected and preserved. Additionally, the town should establish buffers to prevent development from encroaching on wetlands and streams throughout town.

4.06 RESILIENCE

4.06-A Town Actions

Over the past two years, the governing boards of St. George have made increasing resilience a priority. St. George has taken steps to prevent development in its floodplains, protect its river corridors, and decrease stormwater runoff that erodes roads and other infrastructure. Additionally, the town has adopted the Town of St. George, Vermont All-Hazards Mitigation Plan, which evaluates the hazards facing the town and identifies projects to mitigate against damage from them. Through these actions, St. George is making residents safer, preventing damage to buildings and infrastructure and qualifying the town for increased funding from the State of Vermont's Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund in the case of a disaster.

4.06-B Floodplains

Approximately 20 acres of land in St. George's northwest corner are in the FEMA Special Flood Hazard Area, more commonly known as the floodplain (See Figure 46: Hydrography Map). These floodplains surround a Class II wetlands area and an unnamed stream, both of which connect to Shelburne Pond. In these floodplains, there is a 1% annual chance of flooding.

St. George is fortunate: there is currently no development in the floodplain. Most of the floodplain is part of a wetland, and long-standing provisions in the Town's zoning bylaws preventing development in and around this wetland have also indirectly prevented development in most of the floodplain. As discussed in Section 4.3(B) of this plan, wetlands play an important role in collecting rainwater and regulating water levels.

St. George is presently acting to ensure that the entire floodplain will be protected from future development. The town is in the final stages of FEMA review prior to adoption of a Flood Hazard and River Corridor Overlay and related amendments to the Land Use Regulations to prohibit new development and restrict certain activities in the floodplain. With these regulations in place, the Town will be eligible to apply for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and is in the process of joining.

4.06-C River Corridors

When flooding occurs in the floodplain, water rises, submerges the area, and dissipates. However, most of the flood damage in Vermont is caused by fluvial erosion. Fluvial erosion occurs when streams and rivers erode sediment from segments of their banks and deposit it elsewhere. While this is a natural process that occurs in all rivers, it becomes a hazard when the erosion undermines banks, threatens buildings and washes away infrastructure. Even St. George's small creeks and tributaries can cause fluvial erosion.

Because of this, St. George has drafted a Flood Hazard and River Corridor Overlay and related amendments to the Land Use Regulations and is in the process of adopting them. The regulations will prevent new development within 50 feet from the top of slope for streams and the delineated boundary of a wetland. While some development, such as bridges and culverts, will always be necessary within river corridors, this buffer ensures that the amount of development that is vulnerable to fluvial erosion is minimized.

4.06-D **Stormwater Runoff**

Because of its steep topography, St. George often experiences erosion of roads, driveways and hillsides during rain storms (see Figure 35). It is difficult to predict where these events will occur, but the town has taken several steps to minimize this threat. The town's Land Use Regulations take steps to control stormwater runoff by prohibiting almost all development in areas of very steep slopes and enabling the DRB to require stormwater management plans. The regulations also encourage low impact development for stormwater management. However, even with these measures, the town must continue to prepare for the damage caused by stormwater runoff.

Road erosion inventory work conducted by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission in 2016 identified roads, bridges and culverts that are in danger of erosion and plans for projects to reduce that risk. Based on this inventory, the town intends to apply to the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation for a Municipal Roads General Permit in 2018. St. George intends to submit a Roads Stormwater Management Plan in 2019, identifying the erosion mitigation projects it intends to undertake from 2020-2024 to comply with its permit. Completing the projects identified in this plan, as well as continuing to limit development on steep slopes, will reduce the risks posed by stormwater runoff.

5 | OUR TOWN'S FUTURE

5.01 NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

5.01-A Goals

To identify, protect and preserve important natural and historic features of the St. George landscape, including:

- Significant natural and fragile areas;
- Outstanding water resources, including lakes, rivers, aquifers, shorelands and wetlands;
- Significant scenic roads, waterways and views;
- Important historic structures, sites, or districts, archaeological sites and archaeologically sensitive areas.

To maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife and land resources.

St. George'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).

5.01-B Policies

- 1 Work with the Vermont Agency of Transportation to prevent traffic congestion and vehicle idling in order to reduce transportation-related reductions in air quality.
- 2 Promote carpooling and public transit alternatives that would reduce the number of vehicle miles driven by St. George residents in order to reduce transportation-related pollution.
- 3 Recognize the impacts of home heating systems on air quality and encourage use of cleaner, more efficient technologies.
- 4 Establish performance standards, such as the LEED rating system, for industrial, commercial and large-scale residential development to prevent air, water and land pollution from reducing environmental quality and adversely impacting human health.
- 5 Incorporate provisions, such as Act 250 criteria, into the town's regulations to protect important natural and cultural features.
- 6 Continue to identify, collect information and educate residents about the town's special areas and enact regulations to protect them.
- 7 Identify the public viewsheds valued by residents and explore options to protect their aesthetic character.
- 8 Maintain minimum buffers between development and water bodies or wetlands.
- 9 Require buffers between development and sensitive natural features to be maintained in a natural state.
- 10 Use development envelopes to locate development in order to limit impacts on sensitive natural features and preserve open space.
- 11 Conserve open space as buffers between neighborhoods outside the village center.
- 12 Work cooperatively with Hinesburg, Richmond and Williston to protect and enhance the environmental quality of Lake Iroquois.
- 13 Increase resilience by adopting and enforcing the Flood Hazard and River Corridor Overlay related portions of the Land Use Regulations.
- 14 Review the Town of St. George All-Hazards Mitigation Plan on a regular basis and complete the plan's identified actions.
- 15 Work to decrease erosion by undertaking the necessary actions to apply for the Vermont Municipal Roads General Permit, and complete the projects identified in the Roads Stormwater Management Plan required by that permit.
- 16 Maintain lot coverage and impervious surface standards for new development to

- prevent increases in the quantity and rate of stormwater runoff.
- 17 Limit the post-development rate of stormwater runoff from a property to pre-development levels.
 - 18 Require stormwater management plans for industrial, commercial and large-scale residential development.
 - 19 Require the implementation of erosion control techniques on construction sites.
 - 20 Reduce the density of development on steep slopes.
 - 21 Continue to protect St. George's water quality in a manner consistent with the State of Vermont's Tactical Basin Plans for the Winooski and LaPlatte River Basins.
 - 22 Retain woody vegetation and limit the amount of impervious surface on the town's steep slopes in order to reduce the potential for erosion and associated water pollution.
 - 23 Prohibit the clear-cutting of forest, specifically hemlock stands which provide winter shelter for white-tailed deer, unless approved by the County Forester and Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife.
 - 24 Limit development that fragments existing large blocks of forest habitat.
 - 25 Encourage master planning and use of the town's PUD provisions to cluster development for large-scale projects and major subdivisions.
 - 26 Prohibit development that would disrupt the ecological functions of critical wildlife habitat, such as deer wintering areas and bear mast stands.
 - 27 Promote the conservation of critical wildlife habitat.
 - 28 Work with the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation to update the town's historic structure inventory.
 - 29 Consider a historic district to protect the town's historic structures.
 - 30 Recognize the value of the town's historic structures and encourage property owners to maintain older buildings in a manner that retains their historic character.
 - 31 Establish a review process for projects that would result in substantial exterior modifications to or demolition of structures listed on the Vermont Register of Historic Places.
 - 32 Continue to explore opportunities to adaptively reuse the historic Little Red Schoolhouse.
 - 33 Allow for adaptive reuse of historic structures, including former agricultural buildings.

5.02 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

5.02-A Goals

To encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries

Strategies to protect long-term viability of agricultural and forest lands should be encouraged and should include maintaining low overall density.

The manufacture and marketing of value-added agricultural and forest products should be encouraged.

The use of locally-grown food products should be encouraged.

Sound forest and agricultural management practices should be encouraged.

Public investment should be planned so as to minimize development pressure on agricultural and forest land.

5.02-B Policies

- 34 Seek opportunities, including partnerships with neighboring communities, conservation organizations and private entities, to conserve farm or forest land through permanent easement or transfer of development rights.
- 35 Allow agriculture as a by-right use and provide flexibility for farm-based businesses within the

town's regulations.

- 36 Support small-scale, organic and other alternative agricultural activities to make productive use of the town's farmland.
- 37 Discourage the fragmentation of land parcels appropriately sized for productive farm or forestry use.
- 38 Promote the use of accepted agricultural and best management practices to ensure the sustainable use of productive farm or forest lands.
- 39 Encourage the use of agricultural practices that protect environmental quality.
- 40 Support an operator's right to farm while discouraging new agricultural enterprises from negatively impacting the quality of life of pre-

existing non-farm neighbors.

- 41 Provide incentives to promote use of the town's PUD (planned unit development) provisions to cluster development while preserving large tracts of productive farm or forest land.
- 42 Require the use of cluster development techniques in some areas to maintain a base of open space, farmland and forestland in the town.
- 43 Allow for creative approaches to development that would conserve open land while ensuring current owners of large parcels of a return on their investment.
- 44 Consider the impact of any proposals for the provision of public water or wastewater infrastructure on productive farm or forest lands.

5.03 EXTRACTION OF EARTH RESOURCES

5.03-A Goals

To provide for the wise and efficient use of St. George'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.

5.03-B Policies

- 45 Regulate the extraction of earth resources to ensure that it does not pose undue adverse impacts on the town.
- 46 Allow for the on-site or agricultural use of sand or gravel resources.
- 47 Require a detailed closing plan, phasing of extraction and performance bonds to ensure that depleted areas are properly restored to a safe and aesthetically pleasing condition.
- 48 Establish buffers between incompatible
- uses and performance standards to reduce conflicts between an extraction operation and neighboring uses.
- 49 Ensure that any transport related to the extraction of earth resources does not create a financial liability to the town due to wear and tear on local roads and does not create unsafe road conditions for other travelers.
- 50 Regulate the hours of operation of any heavy equipment that creates noise pollution on neighboring properties.

5.04 RECREATION

5.04-A Goals

To maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for St. George residents and visitors.

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

5.04-B

Policies

- 51 Ensure that recreational uses are included in any master plan developed for the town center property.
- 52 Utilize the town center property for recreation on a temporary basis as village center development proceeds.
- 53 Prepare a trail master plan that would identify opportunities for connecting existing private trail systems within the town to each other and to trail and greenway systems in neighboring communities.
- 54 Seek opportunities to provide public trails while respecting the interests of private property owners.
- 55 Promote creation of trails, greenways, paths and/or sidewalks to serve and/or connect developments, and encourage the opening of existing private trail systems to responsible public use.
- 56 Support the use of Ayer Road and Oak Hill Road by bicyclists and walkers and explore options to enhance bike-pedestrian use of those roads.
- 57 Communicate and work cooperatively with recreation clubs in the area to publicize and enhance the town's recreation resources.
- 58 Include funding and sites for recreation facilities when preparing a capital budget and program or official map.
- 59 Maintain the town's membership in the Lake Iroquois Recreation District.
- 60 Explore participation in the Winooski River Valley Park District.
- 61 Coordinate recreation and open space planning with adjoining communities.
- 62 Continue to support a summer recreation program similar to the one initiated in 2006 for the children of St. George.

5.05

TRANSPORTATION

5.05-A

Goals

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.

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

5.05-B

Policies

- 63 Monitor demand for a transit stop in St. George and seek opportunities to provide services when the demand would make such service feasible.
- 64 Ensure that service is provided in St. George should any future transit links between Williston and Hinesburg be established.
- 65 Promote carpooling and reductions in the number of commuter trips on the town's roads.
- 66 Build new roads to basic standards appropriate for our climate in order to protect public safety, infrastructure and the environment.
- 67 Work with Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission to determine the necessary actions to apply for and comply with the Municipal Roads General Permit.
- 68 Limit the grade of private roads and driveways to allow for safe access by emergency vehicles and to prevent erosion and runoff.
- 69 Establish design standards for all new roads and drives that will allow for safe access by emergency vehicles while not promoting unnecessarily wide streets or large turning radii.
- 70 Enforce slow movement of vehicles through the design of streets within the village center and provide ample public space for sidewalks, landscaping, street lighting, etc.
- 71 Require new residential streets and access roads to be constructed to standards based on design speeds of 35 miles per hour outside the village center or 25 miles per hour within the village center.

- 72 Establish design standards for new roads outside the village center based on standards typical of narrow, gently winding country lanes that follow the contours of the land and may be without curbs and unpaved.
- 73 Work with VTrans to calm traffic in order to create a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment, especially for our village center.
- 74 Support the state's access management efforts by promoting use of shared drives and carefully reviewing the traffic patterns, access points and parking areas proposed for new development near the highways.
- 75 Use access management techniques to reduce congestion and maintain safety levels on heavily traveled roads as adjacent lands are developed.
- 76 Participate in Act 250 and other state review processes for projects that would affect the town's road network, especially development that would result in significant increases in traffic on Route 2A through St. George.
- 77 Monitor transportation studies and proposals prepared by the state or neighboring municipalities that have the potential to impact St. George.
- 78 Continue to participate in the transportation planning efforts of the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization.
- 79 Communicate and cooperate with adjoining towns regarding the ongoing maintenance of and planned improvements to local roads that cross town boundaries.
- 80 The quality of Ayer Road should be maintained to provide adequate surface and drainage without changing its character as it serves as an important connector between the west and east sides of town.

5.06 PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

5.06-A Goals

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

Public facilities and services should include fire and police protection, emergency medical services, schools, water supply and sewage and solid waste disposal.

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

5.06-B Policies

- 81 Enhance St. George's livability by providing or supporting high quality facilities and services and establishing appropriate service levels consistent with the town's population – its characteristics and distribution.
- 82 Prepare and implement a capital budget and program, and consider provisions to phase or levy impact fees on new development as needed, to maintain a rate of growth that does not exceed the ability of the town to provide necessary facilities and services.
- 83 Use public investments to support development within the village center.
- 84 Explore opportunities to share public facilities and services with neighboring communities or the private sector.
- 85 Set aside land on the town center property for a school and other civic buildings to ensure that there is an appropriate location when the town desires to construct such facilities at some point in the future.
- 86 Adopt an official map that includes land set aside for a school and other civic buildings on the town center property.
- 87 Continue to collaborate with neighboring communities to provide public library access to town residents.

- 88 Enact regulations within a groundwater protection overlay district for the town's Source Protection Areas (SPAs) to provide additional review of land uses and restrict development within the SPAs that could contaminate the water supplies.
- 89 Improve the existing community water supply infrastructure on the town center property to enhance fire protection capacity and increase the amount of water available.
- 90 Require the water supply infrastructure within the village center to be constructed to standards adequate for providing fire protection, and require fire ponds and/or dry hydrants within developments not served by public water supplies.
- 91 Explore options to provide adequate, safe wastewater treatment within existing and future neighborhoods including on-site, clustered, decentralized or alternative systems, as well as connections to the municipal wastewater treatment systems of neighboring communities.
- 92 Focus the town's efforts to provide wastewater treatment capacity to serve development and protect water quality primarily within the village center and secondarily outside the center.
- 93 Dispose of solid waste in a safe and economical way with emphasis on recycling and monitoring of new waste disposal technology alternatives.
- 94 Continue to participate in the Chittenden County Solid Waste Management District.
- 95 Explore alternatives for providing space for burials in town as St. George Cemetery is nearing its current capacity.
- 96 Participate as a party in any Act 248/250 proceedings related to large-scale utility or telecommunications projects that are proposed within the town.
- 97 Take an active position in opposition to large-scale utility and telecommunications projects that would adversely impact the special areas and resources defined in this plan.
- 98 Enact regulations to retain local control over the construction of telecommunications structures to the greatest extent allowed under federal and state law.
- 99 Require applicants for telecommunication towers to prove that no existing structure within a reasonable distance from the proposed site can be used to provide adequate service.
- 100 Include provisions within the town's regulations that will allow the town to hire an independent consultant to assist with the review of telecommunications projects to be paid for by the applicant.
- 101 21. Require applicants to provide a bond or other security to cover the costs of decommissioning and removing large-scale utility or telecommunications infrastructure if it is abandoned or taken out of service for a reasonable period of time.
- 102 Work to ensure that any upgrade to VELCO's transmission infrastructure in town results in the lines being run underground across the village center planning area as identified in the Land Use Plan.
- 103 Locate new or expanded public utilities and infrastructure within existing highway or utility rights-of-way, whenever feasible, unless doing so would adversely impact special areas and resources identified in this plan.
- 104 Require new or upgraded electric distribution and telecommunications lines to be installed underground in the village center planning area; require the same elsewhere in town.
- 105 Prohibit any increase to the height of the telecommunications tower on Mt. Pritchard as well as the construction of additional towers in town.

5.07 ENERGY

5.07-A Goals

To encourage the efficient use of energy and the development of renewable energy resources.

5.07-B Policies

- 106 Establish performance standards, such as the LEED rating system, to promote cluster development, alternative energy generation, use of renewable resources, energy efficient-construction and green construction.
- 107 Educate zoning permit applicants about the requirements of the Vermont Residential Energy Code and encourage use of energy-efficient construction methods, materials and appliances.
- 108 Allow for the installation of residential-scale wind, solar, geothermal, biomass or other alternative energy generating systems.
- 109 Establish a land use pattern that concentrates development into mixed-use growth centers in order to reduce the number of vehicle miles that must be traveled to meet a household's basic needs.

5.08 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

5.08-A Goals

To provide a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities and that maintains high environmental standards, and to expand economic opportunities in areas with high unemployment or low per capita incomes.

5.08-B Policies

- 110 Participate in regional economic development efforts and cooperate with regional economic development organizations.
- 111 Support the ability of residents to work from home while protecting neighbors from potential adverse impacts.
- 112 Allow for home occupations as strictly defined in state statute as a by-right use while reviewing and establishing standards for home businesses that will have a larger impact on the character of the area in which they are located.
- 113 Promote small-scale or locally-owned businesses over large-scale or chain businesses.
- 114 Allow agricultural-support businesses and encourage business development that relies on locally grown or harvested farm or forest products.
- 115 Provide flexibility within the town's regulations for the adaptive reuse of existing agricultural structures for commercial or industrial use.
- 116 Provide opportunities for appropriately-scaled business activities within a mixed-use village center.
- 117 Promote mixed-use development within the village center to allow the creation of jobs and housing in close proximity.
- 118 Guide the majority of the town's non-residential development to the village center.
- 119 Limit the total amount of retail square footage allowed in town based on what would be needed to serve the population of the town.
- 120 Establish a maximum square footage for retail stores to ensure that commercial activities are of a scale appropriate to a small town.
- 121 Require buffers between large-scale commercial or industrial and residential uses if the business activity is likely to negatively impact the quality of life of nearby residents.

5.09 EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE

5.09-A Goals

To broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure the full realization of the abilities of all St. George residents.

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.

5.09-B Policies

122 Continue the town's active participation on district school boards in order to promote the interests of St. George's students, parents and taxpayers.

123 Allow for childcare homes as a by-right use of residential property throughout the town.

124 Explore demand and options for providing a childcare facility on the town center property.

5.10 HOUSING

5.10-A Goals

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

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.

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.

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

Accessory apartments within or attached to single family residences which provide affordable housing in close proximity to cost-effective care and supervision for relatives or disabled or elderly persons should be allowed.

5.10-B Policies

125 Support the rights of residents for a safe, adequate place to live through enforcement of local regulations and ordinances, state public health and safety regulations, and state and federal fair housing laws.

126 Seek opportunities and support private and/or non-profit efforts to rehabilitate or upgrade the town's housing stock.

127 Support the efforts of agencies and organizations that provide or assist residents who need affordable, elderly or special needs housing.

128 Allow for a diversity of housing types within the town.

129 Allow for accessory apartments associated with existing homes throughout town.

130 Encourage the provision of a range of housing types that will allow residents to remain living in town as their housing needs change.

131 Explore options to ensure that any housing developments constructed in the town be diverse both in their architectural character and price point.

132 Provide flexibility within the town's regulations for adaptive reuse of existing agricultural structures as residences.

5.11 **LAND USE PLAN**

Uncontrolled or poorly planned development in St. George would have undesirable consequences. Our town would lose its rural character as sprawling development replaced open space, forested habitat and agricultural lands. The demand for and cost of providing services would increase rapidly. The opportunity to create a unique identity and sense of place would be lost.

A desire to prevent unplanned development from overtaking this small town is what led residents to plan for a new town center some 30 years ago. This plan returns to that original vision for development of a village center in St. George. This plan proposes to guide development into the village center area where public facilities are planned, while reducing development pressures on outlying lands where public facilities cannot be provided as efficiently. Rather than controlling the amount or rate of growth, this plan channels demand into a harmonious, efficient pattern consistent with the traditional settlement pattern found in communities throughout Vermont.

This section sets forth a future land use plan for the Town of St. George. The town has been divided into five planning areas (see Map 1: Land Use Planning Areas):

- St. George Village
- West Residential
- East Residential
- Rural
- Forested Uplands

The character, planning issues, development constraints and desired development patterns of each area are discussed below. The planning areas do not represent future zoning districts and their boundaries are approximate. They are a generalized planning tool that will be refined as zoning revisions are considered pursuant to the recommendations and policies of this plan. In regulatory proceedings, this land use plan should be considered concurrently with the specific standards established through the town's land use regulations.

5.11-A **St. George Village**

This planning area is comprised of the town center property and adjacent undeveloped lands. This area has been divided into two sub-areas for planning purposes: Village Center and Village Residential. A Route 2A Corridor overlay runs along the state highway through this area as well.

Village Center

The Village Center planning sub-area is approximately 95 acres in area, roughly 10 acres of which is currently developed with homes, businesses and the town office. The remaining acreage is undeveloped, town-owned property. As described throughout this plan, residents envision the town center property as the nucleus of a densely developed, compact, human-scaled, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use village. Such a village should have a network of interconnected streets with wide sidewalks, steady street tree plantings and buildings set close to the frontages. Mixed-use development will be promoted on the property and civic uses will be directed the Village Center planning sub-area along with a majority of the town's non-residential growth – as is characteristic of traditional downtowns and village centers throughout Vermont.

Village Residential

To the north of the town center property are largely undeveloped, agricultural lands most of which are no longer being actively farmed. These lands form the approximately 150-acre Village Residential planning sub-area. There are about 10 developed residential lots, which comprise about 20 acres; the remaining acreage is part of three large parcels. This plan envisions that over time these lands will be developed into predominately residential neighborhoods extending from the town center property in a manner compatible with the character of a traditional New England village. This planning sub-area should accommodate a wide range of building types, including attached and multi-family housing, at village-scale densities. Interconnected streets, sidewalks, narrow frontages and small- to medium-sized blocks should characterize future development.

Route 2A Corridor

As described on page 18 of this plan, Route 2A is a heavily traveled state highway. As development proceeds within St. George's growth center, it will need to function as village street with neighborhoods (existing and envisioned) on either side. While most of the planned development will occur off the highway with access from a network of secondary and neighborhood streets, over time this section of highway should be redesigned with crosswalks, sidewalks, street trees and other traffic calming measures.

While it is not the intent of this plan to direct most of the town's commercial uses to property with highway frontage, St. George understands that such locations are favored for certain commercial uses, especially those that are automobile-related. The Route 2A Corridor overlay planning area recognizes the unique function of and specific issues related to the frontage property along the highway in the vicinity of the town center property.

Street Network

This plan envisions a village center developing over time in St. George with an interconnected network of streets. The town should plan for at least one loop road that would parallel Route 2A to the west from the town-owned property north to the Ayer Road intersection (or potentially further). As the properties within the designated growth area are developed, their internal roads and drives would have access off this alternative to the state highway.

In concert with developing a master plan for the designated growth area, St. George should consider adoption of an Official Map that would designate the desired alignment of this parallel road (and potentially others as set forth in a Master Plan). As property is developed over time, the town's regulations should require that road stubs or rights-of-way be created that will allow for connecting roads between developments, which will, over time, result in the envisioned interconnected street network.

5.11-B **West Residential**

This planning area consists of existing residential neighborhoods on the west side of town – including St. George Villa, St. George Estates, Rocky Ridge and the Forest – along with largely developed residential properties along Routes 2A and 116. There is limited acreage available for additional infill development and few changes to the current pattern and density of land use is envisioned within this planning area. Two neighborhoods within this planning area, however, have specific development issues as addressed below.

St. George Villa

Recognizing that St. George Villa is a significant provider of affordable housing and the importance of maintaining the existing supply of affordable housing in Chittenden County, the town is willing to continue meeting its obligation to the larger region by providing a fair share of affordable housing. St. George also understands that the desired changes to the property as described below can only occur over the long-term and with the cooperation of the landowner.

This plan encourages diversification of the town's existing stock of affordable housing and improved integration of affordable units into the community over the long-term. Currently, the main type of affordable dwelling in town is a mobile home within St. George Villa. As development proceeds, especially in the village center, St. George would encourage creation of diverse neighborhoods with a variety of housing types at a range of price points.

The 125-unit St. George Villa is located on an approximately 50-acre parcel of land. The developed portion of the mobile home park consumes about half the property, while the back portion is forested hillside. The park property is located across Route 2A from the town center property and as such is a suitable location for high-density housing. Currently, the

property has a density of approximately 2.5 dwelling units per acre. With a greater diversity in housing types, the property might be able to support a higher density of housing while maintaining (or potentially increasing) the supply of affordable housing in town, along with improving the quality of the units. Increased density of development on the property would require increasing the capacity of the water and wastewater systems that currently serve St. George Villa.

An additional planning concern related to St. George Villa is how the property's frontage on Route 2A – which is nearly ½ mile in length – functions as part of the Route 2A Corridor described above. Most homes along the frontage of the park are oriented east-west, so their narrow ends face the highway. While a network of development roads serves the homes in the park's interior, those that front on Route 2A have shared driveways connecting directly to the highway. This has resulted in multiple curb cuts, very close together along this stretch of the road, thus increasing the potential for congestion or collisions as vehicles enter or exit these driveways onto the busy highway. Traffic calming measures that would slow traffic on Route 2A in this part of St. George would help alleviate the potential hazard for vehicles entering or exiting the highway.

One of the goals of this plan is to promote the integration of St. George Villa into the planned village center as an adjoining residential neighborhood. The configuration and character of the park's frontage – especially the northern portion, which is directly across the highway from the town center property – is a critical component of ensuring that St. George Villa will over time function as residential neighborhood of the village center envisioned in this plan. If the St. George Villa property was to be redesigned or redeveloped at a future time, the number of curb cuts from the property onto Route 2A should be reduced and development, especially along the frontage, should support desired village development patterns as described in this plan.

The Forest

The Forest subdivision is another neighborhood within this area with specific planning considerations. This is the most recent of the developments built on the west side of town. Most of its homes are located on lots 10 acres in size or larger. The lots are wooded and are located on the western slope Mt. Pritchard. To some extent, the subdivision did respect its location by limiting the amount of clearing on most lots. Still, this subdivision represents a development pattern that the town does not want to promote in the future. Had these homes been clustered onto even one- or two-acre lots, 100 acres or more of land could have been set aside as open space that would have provided an unfragmented block of forest habitat. The town should not allow additional forest fragmentation by permitting further subdivision of the existing lots in the Forest development and landowners should be encouraged to limit additional clearing.

5.11-C **East Residential**

This planning area is comprised of lands on the eastern side of Mt. Pritchard overlooking Lake Iroquois. There are 30 to 40 homes located in this area, mainly on large lots (10 acres or more); most have been built on former agricultural lands within the past 20 years. Like The Forest development on the west side of the mountain, these subdivisions represent a pattern that the town does not want to promote in the future. Had these homes been clustered onto even one- or two-acre lots, 100 or more acres of land could have been set aside as open space that would have provided forest habitat and/or productive agricultural land.

The developed lots comprise approximately 65% of this planning area, leaving around 150 acres of undeveloped land in several large parcels. Much of the undeveloped land is wooded or abandoned agricultural land that is transitioning back to its natural forested state.

While this plan envisions overall density remaining low on the east side of town, cluster development would be more desirable than a continuation of the current pattern of large-lot development. The town encourages developments in this planning area to locate on open lands over forested lands to the greatest extent feasible. If development will be occurring in forested areas, the amount of clearing should be limited and efforts made to minimize fragmentation of forest habitat.

5.11-D **Rural**

This planning area contains around 550 acres of St. George's agricultural lands and the 75-acre Rocky Ridge golf course property. While there are a few non-farm residences within this area, most of the land is in large parcels.

With the closure of the Pillsbury farm in 2006, St. George lost its last active dairy. The town's location in Chittenden County on the urbanizing fringe of the greater Burlington area will make finding a way to keep these lands in productive farm use difficult given the demand for and value of the property for residential development. The town, however, desires to maintain the rural character of these lands created through two centuries of productive use. St. George should be creative and consider innovative techniques to maintain this character for future generations, while respecting the rights of current property owners for a reasonable return on their investment and financial security after years of work as stewards of the land.

5.11-E **Forested Uplands**

This planning area contains around 900 acres of St. George's forested uplands. There are a limited number of existing homes in this area and most of the land is in large tracts.

Steep slopes and poor soils constrain development on these lands. These woodlands are recognized for their habitat value and are identified as a special resource on page 35 of this plan.

In order to protect environmental quality and preserve the scenic quality of the town's hills and ridgelines, development within this planning area should be allowed only at extremely low densities with careful review to condition any development and limit adverse impacts. Any development allowed within this area should be undertaken in a manner that minimizes the fragmentation of forest habitat, limits the amount of clearing, and is not highly visible from public property or rights-of-way. The scale, height, building materials, color and reflectivity of proposed development should be reviewed to reduce the impacts of hillside or ridgeline development on the aesthetic character of its surroundings and the scenic qualities of the town.

5.11-F **Goals**

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

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

Economic growth should be encouraged in locally designated growth areas, or employed to revitalize existing village and urban centers, or both.

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

5.11-G **Policies**

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>133 Enact regulations that will establish a clear delineation between the proposed village center and outlying rural lands in terms of density, development patterns and allowed uses.</p> <p>134 Direct the majority of the town's growth to the village planning area.</p> <p>135 Target the village planning area as a location for new or expanded public facilities and economic development.</p> <p>136 Prevent strip development along the state highways.</p> <p>137 Promote the preservation of open space, forested habitat and agricultural land in the rural areas of town.</p> | <p>138 Limit further fragmentation of the town's significant blocks of forest land.</p> <p>139 Explore new and innovative measures to achieve the traditional settlement pattern of a compact village center surrounded by rural countryside.</p> <p>140 Revise the town's land use regulations in conformance with the visions, goals and policies of this plan.</p> <p>141 Continue to inform and educate residents about the town's land use planning efforts and regulatory process.</p> <p>142 Continue to seek participation and input from all residents and property owners in the town's planning, development review, policy-setting and decision-making processes.</p> |
|---|--|

5.12 **IMPLEMENTATION**

5.12-A **The Past Five Years**

The 2012 Town Plan identified revision of the town's land use regulations as the highest priority. This task has been completed successfully. Also in recent years, town officials and residents have undertaken a number of successful efforts to enhance our community and quality of life including the:

- Construction of recreation facilities on the town center property.
- Development of a town website.
- Organization of a summer camp for St. George students.

Additionally, the St. George Planning Commission received an introduction to town center planning by Diane Gayer of the Vermont Design Institute.

5.12-B **The Next Five Years**

The St. George Planning Commission has identified the actions below as being of the highest priority as the town continues to work towards achieving the purposes of this plan.

Village Center

This plan reasserts residents' original vision for development of a village center in St. George. We should begin by taking the following steps to make that dream become a reality:

- Form a Village Center Task Force to spearhead the town's efforts.
- Undertake a planning study and design charrette for the town center property resulting in development of a village master plan.
- Adopt an official map to guide development in a manner consistent with the master plan.
- Seek new town center and/or growth center designation for the village center in order to fully access a range of funding opportunities and mechanisms.

Conservation Commission

Our town should form a Conservation Commission with a mission to:

- Increase knowledge of the town's natural environment and historic resources.
- Promote the wise use, conservation and/or preservation of the town's important resources and special features.
- Review projects and make recommendations regarding the protection of natural and cultural resources as requested to assist in local development review processes.

5.12-C **Over the Long-Term**

This plan identifies many additional actions that should be taken in the future. The vision set out on page 2 of this plan can only be achieved through sustained action by the town, its officials and residents over the long-term. This implementation section should continue to be revised and updated as projects are completed, conditions change, opportunities arise or priorities shift.

5.13 **COMPATIBILITY**

It is important to consider how our plans for St. George's future fit with the plans of our neighbors, the larger region and even the state. Few of the goals or purposes of this plan can be achieved by St. George alone. Our plans may impact or be impacted by the actions of others.

State law requires towns to review whether their plan is compatible with those of their neighbors and the region. Additionally, the town's plan must be in conformance with state planning goals. The St. George Planning Commission has completed that review and has found this plan to be compatible as described below.

5.13-A **With Our Neighbors**

Hinesburg

The 2012 St. George Town Plan continues to place the land at the St. George - Hinesburg town line into four planning areas from west to east:

- Rural (Rocky Ridge Golf Course, which straddles the town line)
- West Side Residential (existing residential development)
- Forested Uplands (Mt. Pritchard), and
- East Side Residential (eastern slope of Mt. Pritchard overlooking Lake Iroquois).

Hinesburg's 2011 Town Plan describes three planning areas along the town line:

- Agricultural (west of Route 116)
- Rural Residential (east of Route 116)
- Shoreline (adjacent to Lake Iroquois)

Each town is planning for low- to medium-density residential uses along the shared border in respect of adjacent forests and natural resource areas.

Shelburne

The 2012 St. George Town Plan continues to place the land at the St. George - Shelburne town line into one planning area:

- Rural

Shelburne's 2012 Town Plan places the land along the town line into one planning area:

- Rural

Each town is planning for low- to medium-density residential uses along the shared border; their land use plans are compatible.

Williston

The 2012 St. George Town Plan continues to place the land at the St. George - Williston town line into three planning areas:

- Rural
- Forested Uplands, and
- East Side Residential.

Williston's 2011 Town Plan places the land along the town line into one planning area:

- Ag/Rural

The 2011 Williston Town Plan also shows a proposed Lake Iroquois Area Overlay District, which would abut St. George at the southernmost point on Oak Hill Road.

Each town is planning for low-density development along the shared border. Both towns are working to preserve the rural character by protecting open space through the use of cluster development policy. The land use plans are compatible

5.13-B **With Our Region**

The 2006 Chittenden County Regional Plan recognizes St. George's village center by designating its lands as a Village planning area. The regional plan describes Village planning areas and establishes policies for such areas as follows:

- Village Planning Area is a compact area of mixed-use activities that maintains the character of a Vermont village. This type of Planning Area is intended to serve its local surroundings as a municipal center where people can live, work, shop and recreate.
- Provide for the commercial, cultural, educational, employment, industrial (when compatible), institutional, and recreational needs of local residents and employers.
- Have a high priority for public sewer and water infrastructure and for transportation investments (including nonmotorized modes) to support future development.

- Be developed in accordance with local plans and bylaws to allow for higher-density, mixed uses, employing design standards that incorporate alternatives to automotive transportation, ensure the compatibility of nearby land uses and minimize adverse impacts on natural resources and ecosystem health.

The remainder of town is part of the Rural planning area, which is described and for which policies have been developed as follows:

- The Rural Planning Area provides for places that are primarily working lands and natural areas so that these places may retain the character of Vermont's traditional rural landscape.
- Promote the use of land for recreation, conservation, agriculture, silviculture, and other resource-extraction industries through private activities, public land management, and the designation of natural areas.
- Be developed in accordance with local plans and bylaws and cooperative efforts among government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and landowners to retain the character of Vermont's traditional rural landscape and ensure ecosystem health.
- Encourage residential development to be small-scale and to cluster on small lots so as to aggregate areas of open space.
- Not provide the same level of services as the other Planning Areas, instead providing most local services for Rural Planning Area residents and agricultural businesses in nearby Village Planning Areas, while other needs will be met by uses in the Metropolitan Planning Areas or Enterprise Planning Areas.
- Have a lower priority for public sewer and water infrastructure investments and programs.

This plan's land use planning areas are compatible with the general planning areas described in the regional plan and further the goals of the regional plan.

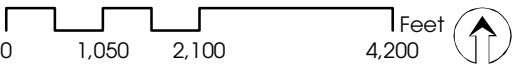
5.13-C **With State Law**

To encourage the appropriate development in St. George, this plan strives to attain consistency with the state's planning goals. This revision to the plan ensures that the town's decisions will be guided by a coordinated, comprehensive planning process and policy framework. Citizen participation has been and will continue to be encouraged at all levels of the planning process. As evidenced throughout this plan, consideration has been and will continue to be given to the use of our resources and the consequences of growth.



Note: Map for planning purposes only.
Boundaries are approximate.

Prepared by PlaceSense, January 2007



- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| A.1. Village Center | B.3. Rocky Ridge |
| A.2. Village Residential | B.4. The Forest |
| B. West Residential | C. East Residential |
| B.1. St. George Villa | D. Rural |
| B.2. St. George Estates | E. Forested Uplands |