



SAINT ALBANS

*Vermont*

**CityPlan**

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**Adopted by the St. Albans City Council  
on August 14, 2017**

## **Table of Contents:**

List of Planning Goals .....	1
Chapter 1. Our City Plan.....	2
Chapter 2. Downtown St. Albans .....	7
Chapter 3. Our Neighborhoods.....	15
Chapter 4. Our Commercial Axis .....	20
Chapter 5. A Community That Thrives and Prospers.....	28
Chapter 6. Running Well and Getting Where We Need to Go.....	40
Chapter 7. Community Resilience .....	55
Chapter 8. Mapping Our City’s Future .....	68
Chapter 9. Our Role in the Region.....	77
Chapter 10. From Planning to Action.....	79

# List of Planning Goals

*The objectives, policies, programs and actions suggested by this plan are organized under the following Planning Goals. They are numbered for purposes of future reference.*

1.1 The City of St. Albans employs an inclusive, engaging and responsive planning process. ....	4
1.2 Our City Plan addresses the State’s planning goals.....	4
2.1 We will maintain the form and character of Downtown St. Albans as a linkage to our City’s history. ....	10
2.2 We will ensure that Downtown St. Albans thrives as a center of commerce, culture and community life in the face of ever-changing socio-economic trends. ....	12
3.1 All City neighborhoods will be safe, vibrant and connected places to live.....	16
3.2 A variety of housing options will be available for all income levels and segments of the City’s population.....	18
3.3 Our neighborhoods will play a significant role in marketing our City and attracting residents. ....	19
4.1 The City is the economic and commercial hub of Northwest Vermont, welcoming proactive redevelopment activities, and providing a variety of goods, services, jobs and economic opportunities for the region.....	26
5.1 Living in, working in, or visiting the City contributes to healthy lifestyles. The City has ample opportunity for residents to be healthy including recreation facilities, walkable streets, nutritional food, and community events and activities. ....	36
5.2 Accessible learning opportunities in the City will support a life-long process that fosters personal success and contribution as members of the community. ....	38
6.1 The City’s utilities, public works, and public safety services will benefit quality of life and be a source of pride to residents. ....	52
6.2 City streets, sidewalks and facilities will efficiently and safely get people where they need to go and play a beneficial role in place-making. ....	53
7.1 Public services and private property in the City will be resilient in the face of natural events and economic challenges. ....	64
7.2 We will increase the environmental sustainability of public and private infrastructure in the City.....	65
8.1 This is our plan for future land use in the City .....	72
9.1 The City will benefit the region in our role as the only city and the largest historic growth center.....	77
10.1 This is how we will implement our City Plan.....	80

## Chapter 1. Our City Plan

This is the municipal development plan of the City of St. Albans, Vermont; developed and adopted as enabled by 24 V.S.A, Chapter 117, Subchapter 5. We call it our “City Plan.” The plan’s development was overseen by the City Planning Commission with input from the public and duly adopted by the St. Albans City Council. The City will not be required to adopt a new plan until 2025, although we are not barred from doing so sooner.

Our City Plan has many purposes and uses. One is to comply with State statutes for land use planning and regulation. Another is to include items required by many state and federal programs, such as the State Designation of Downtown St. Albans. A third is to provide support for ordinances, grant funding, and activities that could benefit the City. For instance, many grant applications are bolstered by being able to say that the proposed project is included in our City Plan.

Our planning process is guided by a vision of the City of St. Albans as a prosperous economic and cultural center in the northwest Vermont region, providing a high quality of life to its residents and unique attractions to visitors.

In light of the above, the following strategies were followed in the development of this plan:

1. The chapters of the plan are organized around consolidated realms of City/community activity.
2. The objectives, policies, programs and activities suggested by this plan are organized under nearly two dozen Planning Goals. Each goal is located in the plan chapter most relevant to its subject matter.
3. All planning goals, objectives, policies, programs, and activities are numbered for ease of future reference.
4. It is unlikely that any idea proposed during the public input phase of the CityPlan process did not find its way in the plan somehow. The City Plan is our opportunity to collect as many ideas as may be beneficial to our community in the future. The plan gives direction on how to interpret ideas that may appear to conflict or compete for the same resources.
5. Most text in this plan directly relates to the requirements of State statute or known programs in which the City wishes to participate. Supporting documents/plans and background information are referenced as appendices. All referenced information is compiled together at <http://www.stalbansvt.com/cityplan> for the public to access.

The Planning Commission put out print ads and social media requests for public comment and held more than a dozen public meetings to discuss different aspects of the City Plan. Some of the specific suggestions that the Planning Commission received from the public were:

- Suggestions for a women’s health center in the City.
- An inviting, walkable, bikeable community.
- Need more bike trails or multi-use. Would bring tourism and benefit the community. Would be good attraction for hotel. Link to Hard’ack, Collins-Perley, and Hathaway

Point. Perhaps even involve a ferry connection at lake. People in Canada area looking for things to do.

- Consider ways to protect youth from messages promoting alcohol and tobacco (i.e. retail advertising) that can be seen from public space. For instance, ban the outward display of such messages within a certain distance of schools.
- Eliminate cigarette litter. Provide receptacles and/or pocket ashtrays.
- Policies that discourage substance use on any public facility.
- Increase sense of safety.
- Activities in Taylor park.
- Various suggestions for Downtown St. Albans, including longer business hours and additional shops and restaurants, such as natural foods, men's clothing, and eateries serving a wider range of ethnic specialties, such as Mexican and Korean.
- A winter farmer's market and a community garden in Taylor Park.
- More things for families to do in St. Albans.
- A community/youth center.
- Primers for new businesses and for getting involved on City boards.
- More Planning Commission visits to different neighborhoods.
- Add more transitional zones between the Low Density Residential and Business 1 districts.
- Add an activity to explore expansion of the historic district to include current/former railroad buildings.
- Map intermittent drainage streams in the City.
- Additional child care, community development, and social services in the City.
- A professional performing arts venue.

### **What do we mean by the following?**

- ✓ Planning Goal – a value or vision toward which we will plan.
- ✓ Objective – An end result or sustained activity that we wish to see as part of fulfillment of a planning goal.
- ✓ Policy – A rule or principle that will guide our programs and activities or that we wish to see enacted in regulations.
- ✓ Program or Activity – an action or initiative performed by the City/community, as guided by the policies and in fulfillment of the objectives.

Note: sometimes programs and activities seem to blend with policies when we state we wish to carry out a program in a certain way or when the proposed action is to develop a regulation (policy). We did our best to correctly classify these items, but the most important part is that they were included in the Plan.

## **1.1 The City of St. Albans employs an inclusive, engaging and responsive planning process.**

### **A. Objectives**

1. Fulfill statutory requirements in Vermont State law, specifically Chapter 117 of 24 V.S.A., related to municipal planning and the ability to access State benefits and resources.
2. Address each of the State planning goals and elements.
3. Foster a conversation about our goals for many aspects of life in our community and then formulate policies to guide municipal regulations, programs and activities.
4. Produce regulations, ordinances, and programs that most effectively and equitably implement the City's objectives and policies.
5. Provide support for the City's efforts to seek grant funding and other external resources.

### **B. Policies**

1. The City's planning process will welcome input from the community.
2. This City Plan will be used as a basis for City regulations, programs and activities.
3. Our planning process will endeavor to formulate objectives and policies and endorse programs and activities that do not contradict each other or diverge from the ultimate benefit of the people of the City of St. Albans. The City Administration is respectfully directed to maintain a beneficial posture for the City when implementing any recommendation of this plan or weighing one policy or program versus another.
4. The City's Plan and permitting regulations will be amended with a problem-solving focus whenever regulatory contradictions or unintended consequences are revealed or when better ways of accomplishing the City's objectives and policies are discovered.
5. All Planning Commission meetings will follow open meeting laws and be accessible to the public.

### **C. Programs and Activities**

1. This City Plan and its appendices and supporting documents will be available online at [www.StAlbansVT.com/CityPlan](http://www.StAlbansVT.com/CityPlan).
2. The City will collaborate with other municipalities and organizations on regional planning goals.

## **1.2 Our City Plan addresses the State's planning goals.**

- A. Our City Plan establishes, and is the product of, establish a coordinated, comprehensive planning process and policy framework to guide decisions by our community.

- B. The process through which we developed our City Plan welcomed citizen participation of all types in order to ensure the legitimacy of our local decision-making processes.
- C. As a whole, our City Plan seeks to balance the use of resources with our taxpayers' abilities to provide funds, as well as the ability of the City to find external sources of support. The stated policies and programs herein are designed to promote growth and development while maintaining the character, form and quality of life in St. Albans.
- D. Collectively our City Plan is a statement of objectives, policies, and programs of the municipality to guide the future growth and development of land, public services, and facilities, and to protect the environment. The following chapters of the plan each list the objectives, policies and programs that we intend to pursue in order to implement our vision for the City of St. Albans. The final chapter consists of a summation of our goals, policies and programs and suggestions for implementation.
- E. Our City Plan addresses each of the State planning goals as described in 24 V.S.A. § 4302. The below table shows the planning goals that most directly reference each State goal.

<b>State Planning Goals:</b>	<b>Met by City Planning Goals:</b>
1. Establish a coordinated, comprehensive planning process and policy framework	1.1, 1.2, 10.1
2. Encourage citizen participation	1.1
3. Consider the use of resources and the consequences of growth and development	7.2, 10.1
4. Encourage and assist municipalities to work creatively together	9.1
5. Maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside	2.1, 4.1, 8.1
6. Provide a strong and diverse economy	2.2, 4.1
7. Broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities	5.2
8. Provide for safe, convenient, economic and energy efficient transportation systems	6.2
9. Identify, protect, and preserve important natural and historic features	5.1, 7.1, 7.2, 8.1
10. Maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, forests, and other land resources	5.1, 7.1, 7.2, 8.1
11. Make efficient use of energy, provide for the development of renewable energy resources, and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases	7.1, 7.2

12. Maintain and enhance recreational opportunities	5.1
13. Encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries	2.2, 4.1
14. Provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont's natural resources	7.2, 8.1
15. Ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing	3.2
16. Plan for, finance and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services	6.1, 6.2
17. Ensure the availability of safe and affordable childcare	5.2
18. Encourage flood resilient communities	7.1, 7.2

F. Our City Plan includes the required elements for municipal development plans as described in 24 V.S.A. § 4382. The below table shows the planning goals that most directly reference each State element.

<b>State Plan Elements:</b>	<b>Met by City Planning Goals:</b>
1. Statement of objectives, policies and programs	Included in each chapter.
2. Land use plan	2.1, 3.1, 4.1 8.1
3. Transportation plan	2.1, 3.1, 6.2
4. Utility and Facility plan	6.1, 6.2
5. Policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic and historic features and resources	5.1, 7.1, 7.2, 8.1
6. Educational facilities plan	5.2
7. Program for implementation	10.1
8. How the plan relates to development trends and plans for adjacent municipalities, areas and the region	9.1
9. Energy plan	7.1
10. Housing element	2.2, 3.2
11. Economic development element	2.2, 3.3, 4.1
12. Flood resilience plan	7.1, 7.2

## Chapter 2. Downtown St. Albans

St. Albans is fortunate to have a classic New England downtown at its core featuring architecturally interesting block facades, a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere, historic landmarks, and the central green of Taylor Park. In recent years, considerable effort has gone into revitalizing and redeveloping the downtown.

### Notable events in Downtown St. Albans' recent revitalization:

- 2003: Creation of St. Albans For the Future (SAFF) downtown nonprofit.
- 2004: Downtown Designation awarded through the Vermont Downtown Program.
- 2005: SAFF receives 501(c)3 tax-exempt status from the IRS.
- 2006: Completion of Market Analysis and Marketing Plan (Arnett Muldrow and Associates).
- 2009: Completion of the Downtown Master Plan (Arnett Muldrow & Associates, Mahan Rykiel Associates, Community Design Solutions, and MapMaker Photogrammetric Services).
- 2010: St. Albans Growth Center (with Downtown at the center) is designated by the State of Vermont.
- 2011: *Create St. Albans* toolkit results from charrettes and public input on the form and character of Downtown St. Albans and the neighborhoods.
- 2011: City-SAFF merger agreement results in new Downtown Board.
- 2012: Rehabilitation of the historic St. Albans House
- 2012: St. Albans Tax Increment Financing District approved by the State.
- 2013: Completion of first downtown streetscape improvements along Main St.
- 2014: Completion of new downtown Ace Hardware store. Redevelopment of the City's core lot (Main, Lake, Federal, Kingman) including a new municipal parking garage and new office building leased to the State. Mylan Technologies expands and purchases the old State office building.
- 2015: Completion of Hudson-to-Hoyt block streetscape improvements on Main St.
- 2016: New Hampton Inn hotel breaks ground on Lake St., along with City streetscape improvement project on same block.
- 2017: *Anticipated* opening of the Hampton Inn, completion of Lake St. streetscape project, and ground-breaking of Lake-Federal-Catherine-Market intersection improvement project.

## The Importance of Downtown St. Albans

Downtown St. Albans not only is the geographic center of the City but also represents a substantial portion of the municipal grand list value, contains some of our community's most significant historic architecture, and is matched only by the surrounding neighborhoods in defining the City's sense of place. The Downtown is a center of commerce, employment, culture and community life for the entire county. The historic buildings and street and sidewalk infrastructure provide a pedestrian-scale, detailed character which sets Downtown apart from more modern commercial areas and which is a key aspect of marketing. At the same time, the City has resolved that the rehabilitation and preservation of Downtown's historic buildings can most sustainably be achieved through economic relevance.

The City's goals are to have Downtown's historic buildings fully utilized and at the same time paired with development of the infrastructure and services expected by today's residents and visitors. The planning policies and programs for Downtown go at lengths to protect its character

and form while also allowing for redevelopment, new construction, and sometimes demolition that do not degrade the whole of the historic district.

The City's efforts and investments to revitalize Downtown St. Albans are a recognition of its importance to the community. Public resources (local, state and federal) have been invested into the Downtown's infrastructure and buildings in order to spur private investment and economic activity. Streetscape improvement projects have added safer and more-welcoming "complete streets" amenities to Downtown while also helping to rebrand the community and create a new sense of place. City façade grants, State historic tax credits, and other financial incentives have been invested in buildings and businesses in order to fill storefronts and keep upper floors occupied. There is a new sense of vibrancy Downtown, since the City's current level of public investment began in 2011, and voters have continued to support related measures brought before them.

### **St. Albans For the Future and Downtown Designation**

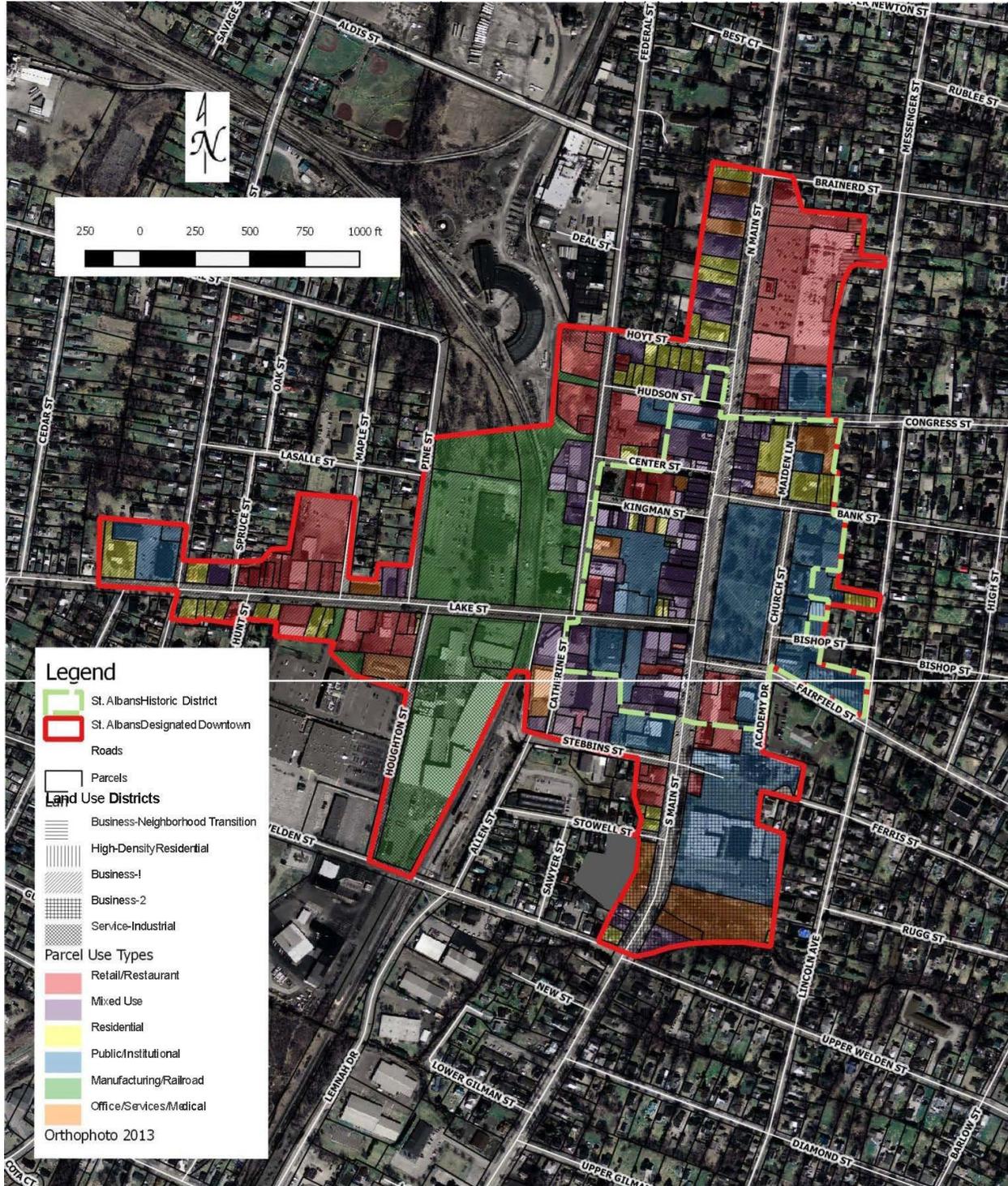
In 2003 the City called for the creation of St. Albans For the Future, Inc. (SAFF) as a nonprofit organization dedicated to revitalizing Downtown St. Albans and achieving designation through the Vermont Downtown Program. SAFF proposed a map for the designated downtown (see following map) that most closely coincided with both the historic and growing areas of the City's central commercial core. Downtown designation was granted by the Vermont Downtown Development Board in 2004. Designation benefits the City by granting access to financial and technical resources that are directly applicable to the revitalization goals of this Plan:

- a. Access to state historic tax credits assists property owners in rehabilitating and preserving historic buildings that contribute to the character and form of the downtown.
- b. Access to the Downtown Transportation Fund can be used to support the City's streetscape and complete streets goals.
- c. Higher scoring for Downtown in other grant programs, including the Municipal Planning Grant program and the Transportation Alternatives program, helps bring in financial resources for planning, marketing, and transportation improvements.
- d. Access to State technical resources, especially staff in the VT Downtown Program, is useful when advice, strategies, and consultation can help deal with particular challenges.
- e. Downtown designation assisted the City in achieving State Growth Center designation, which then assisted the City in gaining State approval for its tax increment financing district. Downtown designation also makes the City eligible for other types of State designation programs associated with the Downtown Program.

### **The St. Albans Historic District**

In 1979, the City submitted nomination forms to the National Parks Service to create the St. Albans Historic District and to add it to the National Register of Historic Places. The historic district consists of roughly 112 properties that make up the densest and most architecturally-contributing portion of Downtown St. Albans (see following map). This area of the City consists of a character and form that helps to define the community's sense of place and culture, and many of this Plan's policies are dedicated to its preservation. The historic district is also given special consideration in some areas of the Land Development Regulations.

# Map of the Designated Downtown and Historic District Showing Current Land Use Districts



## Downtown St. Albans Reinvestment Statistics Reported to the VT Downtown Program

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total 2012-2016
# Facade Renovations	5	9	3	11	3	<b>31</b>
Private \$	\$169,700	\$313,175	\$45,800	\$250	\$30,000	<b>\$558,925</b>
Public Including Tax Credits \$	\$0	\$23,675	\$7,400	\$0	\$25,000	<b>\$56,075</b>
# Other Rehabs	11	29	11	14	19	<b>84</b>
Private \$	\$1,049,000	\$4,829,090	\$1,295,265	\$611,500	\$1,971,940	<b>\$9,756,795</b>
Public \$	\$198,000	\$0	\$0	\$0		<b>\$198,000</b>
# New Construction	0	2	1	4	2	<b>9</b>
Private \$	\$0	\$16,500,000	\$9,000,000	\$1,817,705	\$11,050,000	<b>\$38,367,705</b>
Public \$	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		<b>\$0</b>
# Public Improvement Projects	1	1	2	4	1	<b>9</b>
Government (state & local) \$	\$539,483	\$2,994,808	\$8,494,805	\$3,572,884	\$1,151,122	<b>\$16,753,102</b>
Private/Local Downtown Org. \$	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$334,936		<b>\$334,936</b>
# Volunteer Hours	994	900	765	300	432	<b>3,391</b>
# Facades + Rehabs + Constr.	16	40	15	29	24	<b>124</b>
\$ Amount Invested	\$1,416,700	\$21,665,940	\$10,348,465	\$2,429,455	\$13,076,940	<b>\$48,937,500</b>
Net Change in # Businesses	4	9	5	3	4	<b>25</b>
Net Change in # Jobs	13	218	20	14	13	<b>278</b>
Total Reinvestment - Private \$	\$1,218,700	\$21,642,265	\$10,341,065	\$2,764,391	\$13,051,940	<b>\$49,018,361</b>
Total Reinvestment - Public \$	\$737,483	\$3,018,483	\$8,502,205	\$3,572,884	\$1,176,122	<b>\$17,007,177</b>
<b>TOTAL Reinvestment - TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,956,183</b>	<b>\$24,660,748</b>	<b>\$18,843,270</b>	<b>\$6,337,274</b>	<b>\$14,228,062</b>	<b>\$66,025,538</b>

The above table shows how much public and private investment has gone into properties and infrastructure in the past five years within Downtown St. Albans. The data sources include permitting records, City project files, and development agreements. These data are often used to illustrate the success of the City's redevelopment efforts and public-private partnerships associated with Downtown revitalization; the City has attracted nearly \$50 million in private investment with just over \$17 million in public investment from local, state and federal sources.

### **2.1 We will maintain the form and character of Downtown St. Albans as a linkage to our City's history.**

#### A. Objectives

1. Keep as many historic buildings fully utilized as economically feasible.

2. Limit divergence from the historic form of Downtown St. Albans' streets, sidewalks, and buildings.
3. Ensure that historic buildings and other forms of contributing architecture are well-maintained.
4. Preserve the quality and aesthetic benefits of all public streetscape improvements.
5. Identify other structures to add to the Historic District, such as railroad buildings.

#### B. Policies

1. Efforts to identify, protect, and preserve important historical and architectural resources within the City will be welcomed and supported where appropriate.
2. City regulations will direct new construction to be sensitive to context and historic architecture and patterns.
3. City regulations will first favor re-use and restoration of existing historic structures over demolition for new construction.
4. If demolition of historic structures is proposed, City regulations will put the burden on the applicant to show the compelling and unique improvements that the development will offer for the public good and the sustained maintenance of the overall Historic District.
5. City regulations will direct new construction to be sensitive to context and historic architecture and patterns.
6. City regulations will use design review and sign review as tools for preserving the look and feel and Downtown and Historic District, and apply new learning and standards, as appropriate.
7. City regulations will maintain the strong urban form of Downtown St. Albans, including the provision of safe and accessible pedestrian corridors, dense development, reduced setbacks or the lack thereof, taller buildings where appropriate, and the utilization of public parking rather than requiring off-street parking.

#### C. Programs and Activities

1. Continue the Downtown façade improvement program and other forms of financial assistance and property-owner outreach for buildings and businesses Downtown.
2. Promote and facilitate the use of state and federal historic tax credits and other programs that can be used by property-owners to rehabilitate historic structures, as well as make them safer, more energy efficient, and more accessible.
3. Explore special needs housing and childcare in or accessible to Downtown where they can both address local needs and increase property investment.
4. Capitalize on the historic form and character of Downtown St. Albans in marketing materials.
5. Inventory historic structures in the City and explore possible expansion of the St. Albans Historic District or inclusion of additional structures in the Historic Register. Ensure that economic development potential is also preserved in such endeavors.

## **2.2 We will ensure that Downtown St. Albans thrives as a center of commerce, culture and community life in the face of ever-changing socio-economic trends.**

### A. Objectives

1. Ensure that Downtown St. Albans attracts private investment, including property development, location of new businesses and the expansion of existing establishments.
2. Ensure that Downtown is a welcoming place for residents and visitors to shop and pass time for both daily practical needs and special occasions.
3. Maintain Downtown St. Albans as the center of county government.

### B. Policies

1. The City will maintain Downtown St. Albans as a premier example of a successful compact urban center and
  - i. encourage economic growth in the designated downtown area,
  - ii. design public investments to strengthen the downtown area physically as well as attract private investment,
  - iii. encourage appropriate residential development in our historically dense development pattern, and
  - iv. illustrate the principles of smart growth.
2. The City will seek to capitalize on the ability to locate jobs and community events in Downtown St. Albans, especially in light of its adjacency to areas of the City that exhibit higher unemployment and lower household incomes.
3. City regulations and initiatives will encourage infill development and redevelopment.
4. The permitted and conditional uses allowed Downtown will be compatible with the type of economic activity that is most conducive to the vibrant and active use of historic districts in today's commercial climate.
5. City regulations will use standards that are not prohibitive to development in the current market.
6. City regulations and initiatives will enable sustainable grand list growth and tax increment financing revenue in the Downtown for increased public investment throughout the City.
7. City regulations and initiatives will continue to maintain a balance of motorized, non-motorized and public transit transportation options Downtown.
8. City regulations and initiatives will encourage a balance of commercial and residential uses Downtown, with a preference for retail in first-floor spaces and a mix of housing, offices and other uses on upper floors.
9. City infrastructure projects will pursue "Complete Streets" design wherever possible.
10. The City will support the farmers market and similar efforts to sell local agricultural and craft goods and to link customers with healthy, local food.
11. The City will support increased rail services, including intra-state commuter rail and the reestablishment of passenger service to Montreal.

12. Downtown designation, through the Vermont Downtown Program, is beneficial to the City of St. Albans by allowing the City to access key financial and technical resources associated with our downtown revitalization.
13. Processes for jurying and providing public art in Downtown St. Albans will be encouraged.
14. The City will support efforts to facilitate and encourage tourism from Quebec, including initiatives improving processing speeds at nearby U.S. Customs ports-of-entry, construction of the proposed “A35” autoroute in Canada, and the re-establishment of Amtrak train service to Montreal with a stop in St. Albans.

#### C. Programs and Activities

1. Partner with St. Albans for the Future to maintain Downtown St. Albans’ State-Designated Downtown status.
2. Market Downtown St. Albans as a prominent facet of our community’s brand.
3. Continue to expand and maintain streetscape improvements Downtown and seek a diverse array of funding sources to do so.
4. Utilize funding and other resources available for Brownfield clean-up activities.
5. Develop an informational package for new businesses and residents discussing regulations, City services and other pertinent information.
6. Explore the inclusion of north-south bicycle access into the planned Federal Street Multi-Modal Connector improvements.
7. Work to extend North Main St. sidewalks to the boundary with the Town of St. Albans and include crosswalks in that area as well. Also, consider sidewalk extensions to the entrance of the Missisquoi Valley Trail Rail.
8. Offer Taylor Park as the site of the Farmers Market and similar activities.
9. Explore the possibility of a multi-modal center near the railroad station and, at the least, support efforts to provide more attractive and effective means of connecting rail passengers with Downtown St. Albans.
10. Continue to invest in City Hall facilities and position it as a venue for meetings, programs, arts, performances, and events.
11. Develop a master plan for Taylor Park and use capital programming to improve the park’s infrastructure and natural environment.
12. Seek VT Downtown Board approval to add properties to the map of the designated downtown that are appurtenant to the current designated area and that would make appropriate use of the benefits of the program.
13. Explore and/or support construction of one or more elevators at the rear of the Main Street buildings to make them handicap accessible and more attractive for commercial uses.
14. Explore and/or support the commercial use of the rear of buildings located around the City Parking Garage.
15. Increase the amount of public art in Downtown St. Albans. Explore opportunities and processes for jurying and providing public art.

**Appendices at [www.StAlbansVT.com/CityPlan](http://www.StAlbansVT.com/CityPlan):**

- ✓ Historic District Nomination Forms and Photos
- ✓ 2009 Downtown Master Plan
- ✓ 2017 Downtown Designation Renewal Application

## Chapter 3. Our Neighborhoods

The City of St. Albans has residential neighborhoods like no other community in our region. A significant source of the uniqueness of the City's neighborhoods today is their historic form and character – 60% of the City's owner-occupied housing stock was built before 1950. The City's neighborhoods consist of the areas of detached single-, two- and multi-family structures that surround the community's commercial axis. The neighborhoods are equal to Downtown St. Albans in terms of their importance to the look, feel, and quality of life in our City. Of course, the neighborhoods also perform the function of providing the majority of housing in the City. The City's planning goals and policies concerning the neighborhoods address three major topics:

1. the City's ability to provide a range of livable housing options,
2. quality of life and safety, and
3. look, feel and character.

The primary source of residential need and supply data for this City Plan is the St. Albans Housing Study from July 2015. While nearly two years old, the Housing Study's data and recommendations are still relevant (included in Appendices). Overseen by the Planning Commission, the overall goal of the study was to facilitate discussions and answer some of the burning questions our community had about housing. The Executive Summary at the beginning of the study lists the Planning Commission's answers to the original six questions of the study. Here is a quick look at what was learned.

### **1. What is the nature of the City's current housing stock, especially owner vs. renter and the % of subsidized units?**

The report contains a wealth of data and information from various sources in response to this question. Among other things, the study found that:

- most residential properties (75%) are single-family homes,
- the ratio of owner vs. rental housing units is around 1:1,
- the majority of City housing units were built before the 1950s, and
- the percentage of subsidized rental housing units (project-based) is 22.8%.

### **2. What are market rents in the City?**

The study found that median rents paid ranged from \$775 to \$850 as of July 2015, based on data from a tenant survey, the U.S. Census Bureau, and Craigslist. Public subsidies likely affected the reported survey numbers, and the range of rents was from \$565 for a studio apartment (tenant survey) to \$1,953 for a 4-bedroom (Craigslist). The report contains more break-outs and permutations of that data, e.g. rents per number of bedrooms.

### **3. What critical needs exist for housing in the City? What do we need more of?**

This question was the hardest to answer, especially from a local perspective, because needs are so great and truly regional in nature. The report suggests that the provision of

housing can be an important tool for nearly any socio-economic policy goal and that the City's greatest housing need may be to improve and preserve its current housing stock.

**4. What is the effect of subsidized housing on the private rental market in the City? And vice versa.**

From a landlord survey and other input, the study found that there is no commonly held answer to this question. The two main conclusions are:

- a. The opinions on negative or positive effects of project-subsidized housing upon market rate housing are mixed among private landlords.
- b. Tenant-based subsidies (Section 8) can benefit market rate housing just as much as any other type.

**5. What is the effect of subsidized housing on the City's grand list?**

The data show that the State's rules for assessing subsidized housing projects provided an initial negative impact on the grand list when enacted in 2007. Over time, the subsidized project values have increased at a slightly smaller rate than the rest of the grand list.

**6. What are some ways to ensure the proper maintenance of housing in the City and the residential quality of life of our neighborhoods?**

This question gets at another complex issue with no easy answers.

- a. Landlords need to make enough in rents to be able to maintain rental properties.
- b. Homeowners need to have enough money to maintain their properties
- c. Neither of the above two deals with the very real issues of aesthetics, noise or lawn clutter which also affect neighborhood quality of life.

As expected, this study has revealed no immediate solution for quality of life issues. However, the study did provide some insight on how much landlords could do to affect some of the tangible and intangible aspects of tenant behavior.

**List of Opportunities and Solutions:**

The study lists various possible options to explore concerning with housing issues and "problem properties" in the City, many of which have been implemented in other communities, and some of which are more applicable to the City than others. The recommendations start on page 39 of the study.

**3.1 All City neighborhoods will be safe, vibrant and connected places to live.**

**A. Objectives**

1. Reduce and prevent long-term vacancies and housing blight.

2. Preserve the integrity and character of our neighborhoods.
3. Connect our neighborhoods to our parks and schools and to the entrances to the Aldis Hill trail system.
4. The City will have housing available to attract and retain a broad range of new residents.

#### B. Policies

1. Maintain the residential primacy of our neighborhoods by allowing uses, where beneficial and compatible, such as home occupations, recreational space, childcare, and bed & breakfasts.
2. Maintain neighborhood streets and sidewalks safe for and accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists, and other travel modes.
3. Target appropriate incentives and regulatory enforcement to support the upkeep and improvement of housing and to add value to our neighborhoods, with particular attention paid to compliance in rental units.
4. Explore new revenue sources and programs for home improvement funding/financings and implement as appropriate.
5. Encourage compatible infill residential development in existing neighborhoods.
6. Include neighborhood character and consequences in consideration for converting single-family homes to multi-family homes.
7. Protect stream corridors running through residential yards and other areas in our neighborhoods.
8. Encourage the development of energy-efficient housing to reduce heating and electricity costs.
9. Support housing connected to schools, safe areas for physical activity, and healthy food access via safe walking and biking routes and public transportation.
10. Provide setback areas to promote aesthetics, health of natural resources, neighborhood character, avoidance of nuisances, and the general quality of life in the City.
11. Regulate parking to protect the residential nature of the neighborhoods.
12. Discourage or prohibit through-truck traffic, “airbrakes,” speeding, and other nuisances and safety risks in residential areas.
13. Protect the beneficial aesthetic and ecological aspects of neighborhood streetscapes.

#### C. Programs and Activities

1. Provide resources and technical assistance for water quality solutions on residential lots, such as green stormwater infrastructure, and drainage issues being addressed.
2. Support historic rehabilitation of the existing housing stock with inventories and incentives, as appropriate.
3. Use City redevelopment funds and other methods to improve properties that are not being addressed by the private market and convert them back into contributing aspects of their neighborhoods.

4. Review and amend the various uses allowed in our residential districts to ensure that they are primarily residential, while other supportive and beneficial uses are allowed as appropriate.
5. Reconstruct aging neighborhood sidewalks. Once a neighborhood's sidewalks have been rebuilt, pursue a maintenance plan to deal with damaged or shifted sidewalk panels as they arise.
6. Pursue new sections of sidewalk so as to provide a safe off-street pedestrian network for all of the residential neighborhoods.
7. Ensure that the City's streetlights provide adequate illumination in our neighborhoods and request new lights from the utility when needed, respond to situations when there are complaints of too much light, and engage with property owners to problem-solve those situations without reducing the neighborhood's overall illumination.

### **3.2 A variety of housing options will be available for all income levels and segments of the City's population.**

#### **A. Objectives**

1. All residents of the City of St. Albans have access to affordable, safe and sanitary housing.
2. Existing City housing will be retrofitted for energy efficiency.
3. Universally accessible, or otherwise ADA compliant, housing units in the City will increase over time.

#### **B. Policies**

1. Use regulations and incentives, when appropriate, to encourage the appropriate location of childcare services in close proximity to families in our neighborhoods.
2. Ensure that home occupation rules allow for appropriate degrees of entrepreneurship and small-scale economic activity in people's homes but still respect the residential nature of neighborhoods.
3. Explore form based codes or similar design standards for neighborhoods.
4. Support the Franklin County Senior Center and senior housing.
5. Take property valuation methods and likely results into account when considering subsidized housing developments that require City support.
6. Allow accessory dwelling units at least to the degree required by State statutes.
7. Treat manufactured homes in the same manner as any other housing structure.
8. Allow two-family homes as conditional uses in all residential districts with appropriate restrictions on lot size and configuration.

#### **C. Programs and Activities**

1. Pursue the recommendations of the 2015 City of St. Albans Housing Study and Needs Analysis, including any duly-adopted amendments to the study.

### **3.3 Our neighborhoods will play a significant role in marketing our City and attracting residents.**

#### A. Objectives

1. Maintain the ability of residential parcels to meet the needs of modern households.
2. Protect the aesthetics and historical architectural heritage of our neighborhoods.
3. Maintain a healthy tree canopy and system of greenbelts in City neighborhoods.

#### B. Policies

1. Parking shall not be allowed in City greenbelts and on front lawns. Parking areas in front of residential housing shall be discouraged and only allowed when other parking options are not realistically feasible.
2. Residential regulations shall be designed, implemented, and/or supported in ways that recognize the need to maintain the residential viability of the historically small or crowded parcels in our neighborhoods.

#### C. Programs and Activities

1. Market the City's neighborhoods, as well as the City's associated quality of life efforts.
2. Use City resources, when appropriate, to re-establish and maintain greenbelts and find alternatives to greenbelt parking.
3. Explore facilitative form-based standards for residential districts in the City that do not erode the ability of landowners to maintain property.
4. Encourage neighborhood events and gatherings.

### **Appendices at [www.StAlbansVT.com/CityPlan](http://www.StAlbansVT.com/CityPlan):**

- ✓ 2015 Housing Study and Needs Assessment

## Chapter 4. Our Commercial Axis

The City's current Business-1, Business-2 and Service-Industrial land use districts comprise a roughly north-south axis of primarily commercial and industrial uses mixed in with other civic and high-density residential uses. With Downtown St. Albans in the middle, the commercial/industrial districts most closely follow South and North Main St., the "Federal St. Corridor" (Lemnah Dr., Allen St., Catherine St., and Federal St.), and the Railroad line. The eastern halves of Lake St., Lower Welden St., and Lower Newton St. are also contained within this area.

### Designated Areas

There are various designated areas in the City important to the health of the commercial axis. The map below shows these areas. They include:

**Downtown St. Albans.** State-designated and described in Chapter 2. This area has seen some of the most intense redevelopment over the past five years.

**The St. Albans Historic District.** Locally-nominated onto the National Register of Historic Places, and described in Chapter 2. This area contains our City's historic commercial core, and it represents some of the character and form that must be preserved when redevelopment activities occur.

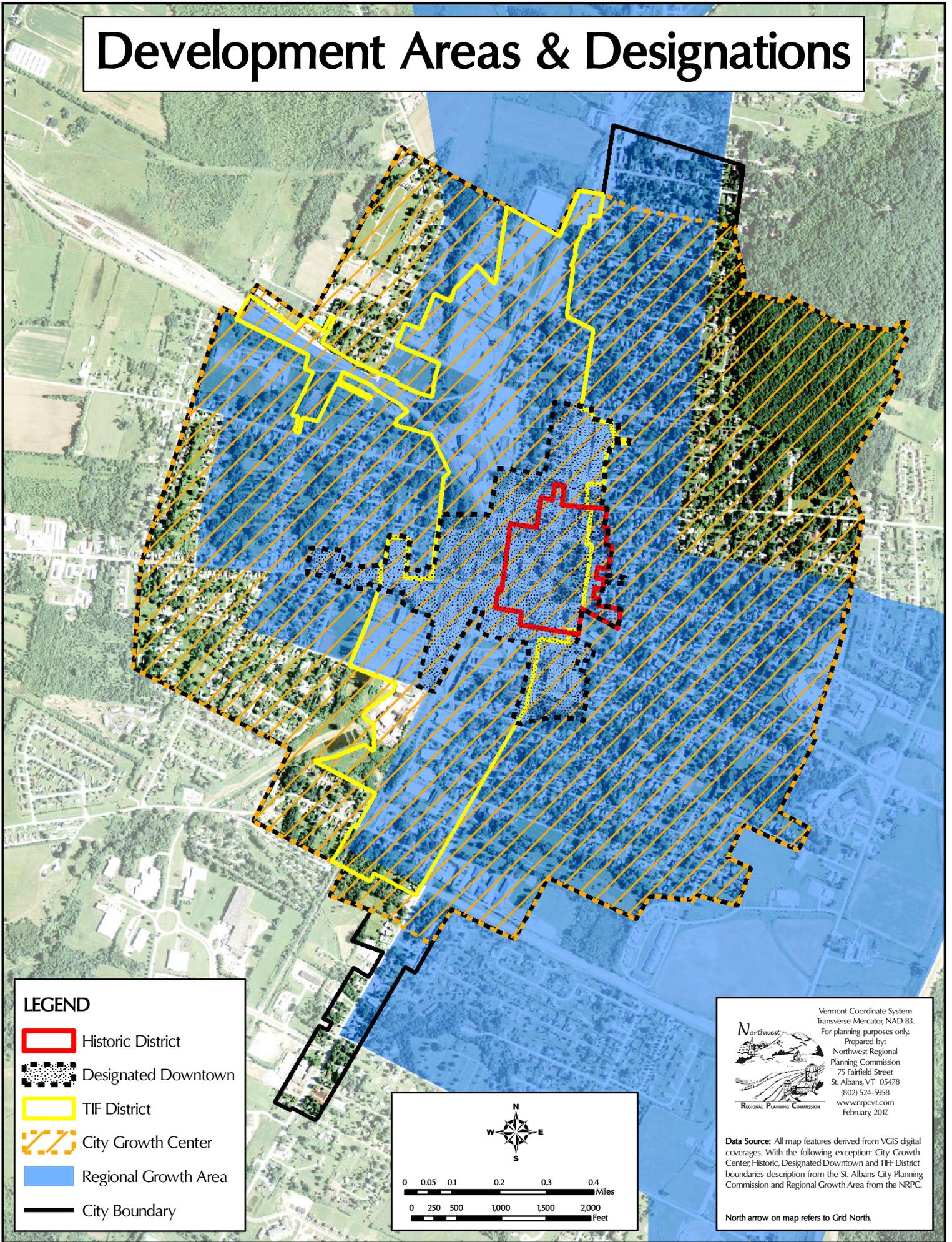
**The St. Albans Growth Center.** Also designated by the State, this area is enabled by the Downtown designation but was only approved after the City demonstrated its ability to ensure development would occur in a manner reflecting smart growth principles and the State's statutory planning goals. As with the Downtown, the Growth Center designation enables the City to access certain financial and technical resources. The Growth Center extends beyond the commercial axis and contains the majority of the City's neighborhoods, which is a reflection of how most forms of development in our community have historically resembled smart growth and will continue to do so. It should also be noted that the Growth Center does not contain the southernmost and northernmost ends of Main St; this reflects the State program's goals to keep development central, avoid strip development, and not sprawl into neighboring communities.

**The St. Albans Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District.** This area is state-approved and most closely matches the commercial axis. In 2012 the City successfully applied to the Vermont Economic Progress Council for the TIF district, within which most of the State and local tax revenues from any new grand list growth can be earmarked toward debt service on bonds for public infrastructure improvements. The City has used TIF funds toward brownfield mitigation, streetscape improvement projects, and the construction of the new parking garage. All of these projects have been paired and enabled by new private developments, such as the St. Albans Creamery Store, the Ace Hardware store, the office building at 27 Federal St., the expansion of Mylan Technologies, and the construction of the new Hampton Inn hotel. Other possible projects that could be funded via TIF include Taylor Park improvements, stormwater treatment, brownfields clean-up at the former Fonda/Solo Manufacturing site, and the Federal Street Multi-Modal Connector.

**Northwest Regional Growth Area.** This area is designated by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC). Most of the City makes up the central portion of NRPC's primary growth area designated in the 2015 Regional Plan. The City is included due to its historic status as the commercial center of Franklin County and due to the high-density residential neighborhoods. Inclusion in this area signifies that development within the City is likely to be viewed as compatible with the Regional Plan and supported by NRPC.

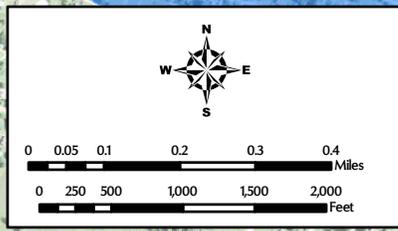
The map of Development Areas and Designations is included on the following page.

# Development Areas & Designations



## LEGEND

-  Historic District
-  Designated Downtown
-  TIF District
-  City Growth Center
-  Regional Growth Area
-  City Boundary



Vermont Coordinate System  
Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.  
For planning purposes only.

Prepared by:  
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February, 2017



REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. With the following exception: City Growth Center, Historic, Designated Downtown and TIF District boundaries description from the St. Albans City Planning Commission and Regional Growth Area from the NRPC.

North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

## City Development Efforts

Over the last several years, the City of St. Albans has used planning and direct engagement in order to increase private investment, property development and job growth within the commercial axis. The goals of these efforts are to grow the City's grand list while increasing options for residents and visitors to live, work, and play in our community, all in a manner compatible with concerns for character and form, especially within the Downtown. With those goals in mind, the City's strategy is to use public funds and other resources to "level the playing field" for private development inside our community versus other areas. The City assumes a role of removing the barriers to development that typically exist in historic centers and not in other areas where the private market could invest. Examples of the City's redevelopment contributions have included:

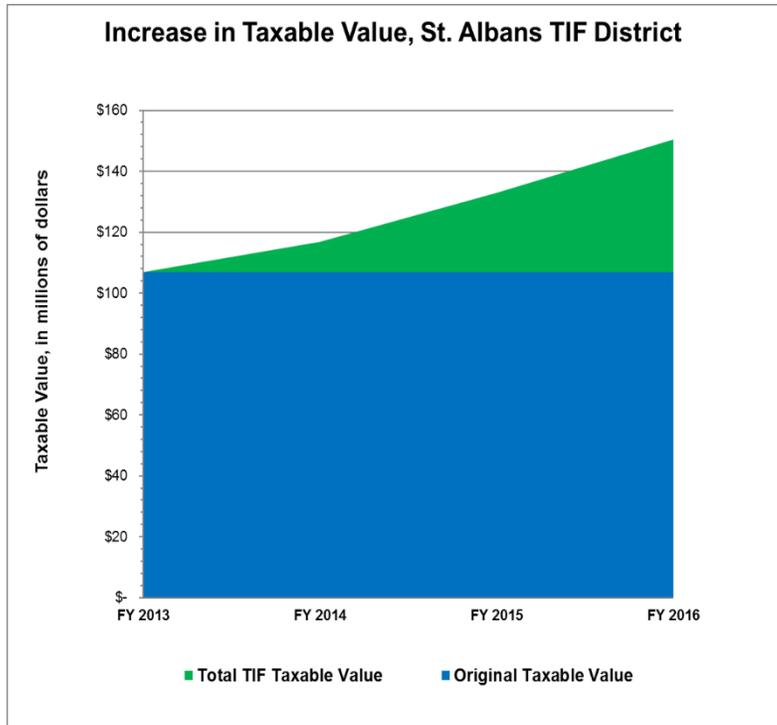
- Assessment and mitigation of brownfield contamination.
- Demolition and appropriate disposal of structures.
- Improvements to public infrastructure.
- Creation of off-site parking capacity.
- Specialized financing of land and capital.
- Coordinating multi-party real estate transactions.
- Openness to revision of local regulations.

The City has been able to successfully engage in these activities while very rarely using general fund dollars. Common funding sources include City redevelopment funds (not general fund), tax increment financing, and state and federal grants. The Downtown reinvestment data table in Chapter 2 illustrates the City's success: the City has attracted nearly \$36 million in private investment in the Downtown with nearly \$16 million in public investment from local, state and federal sources.

Most redevelopment investments are designed by the City Manager and staff and presented to the City Council for its approval. Some mechanisms, such as TIF bonds, require voter approval. The City's policies and available tools have allowed it to be nimble and flexible in the face of development realities while at the same time risking very little on the part of local taxpayers.

The realities of redevelopment in a historic center, when paired with available tools, have a significant effect on the City's policies and programs for the commercial axis. The reliance on tax increment financing puts a high value on property values. Only increases in tax revenue can help pay off the debt for public projects that attract development and contribute to the public good. Any decreases in taxable value erode the City's ability to use TIF for public projects. This means, for example, that the City may not necessarily use property tax reduction as a development tool, as other communities sometimes do. It also means that increases in tax-exempt property can be detrimental to the City's efforts. The TIF district figure in this chapter and the grand list values table in Chapter 6 show the effect the TIF district has had on revenues for public projects as well as on the City's overall grand list. The grand list has experienced more growth over the past three fiscal years than it has in a decade.

Another reality is that the City must sometimes favor new construction over preservation or reconfiguration of existing structures in the Historic District. One example is the City’s core lot redevelopment, for which the City also recognized that the overall economic viability of the Historic District would be bolstered by the new office building at 27 Federal St. and the new Hampton Inn hotel, even though the three structures at 15-17 Lake Street, 45 Lake Street and 27 Federal Street would be demolished in the process. When all is said and done, the hotel, office building, and new parking capacity should have economic ripple effects benefitting the current and future occupancy of historic buildings in the district.



The TIF district began with a baseline total grand list value of \$106 million in FY 2013. By the end of FY 2016, that grand list value had grown by 40% to \$150 million. Tax revenues from that incremental value are being used to pay down debt from public projects.

## Jobs in the City

All of the City’s major employers are located within the commercial axis, except for Northwestern Medical Center and St. Albans City School.

The table of key employment sectors below shows that the number of jobs in the City has generally grown over the past five years, although seasonal differences and annual fluctuations are not taken into account. If it is to be believed, the 20% increase is quite impressive. The City’s jobs also represent nearly 45% of Franklin County’s total employment.

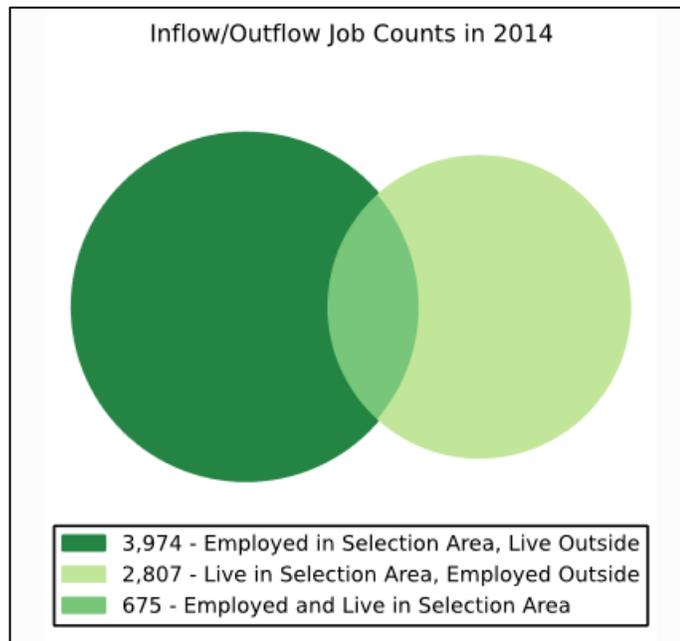
The five sectors with the most employment are manufacturing (e.g. Mylan Pharmaceuticals), education and health services (e.g. the hospital), the federal government (e.g. Customs and Immigration), professional and business services (e.g. A.N. Deringer), and trade, transportation and utilities (vast majority is retail and food/beverage). The City’s job spectrum is dominated by some large employers, such as Mylan, Northwestern Medical Center, Customs and Immigration, the three schools, and the State of Vermont. This reliance on several large employers should be noted as a concern for community resilience. However, there is also a large mix of jobs at hundreds of professional offices, health care providers, shops and restaurants. Overall, there were 408 reported employers of some sort in the City in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2016, which is an increase of only 1.7% from 2011, which means that job growth is more likely through business expansion, rather than new businesses. The City’s 408 employers represent a third of Franklin County’s total employers in the State report.

**Jobs in the City of St. Albans by Sector**

Key Employment Sectors	2016, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	% change from 2011, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Qtr
City Total, All Sectors	7,894	20.0%
Natural Resources and Mining	17	6.3%
Construction	102	4.1%
Manufacturing	948	3.5%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,489	22.7%
Information	93	-19.1%
Financial Activities	166	-19.4%
Professional and Business Services	1,314	52.3%
Education and Health Services	1,149	14.3%
Leisure and Hospitality	449	17.2%
Other services, except public administration	113	20.2%
Federal Government	1,154	49.3%
State Government	319	5.3%
Local Government	580	-2.4%

Source: U.I. Covered Employment & Wages (QCEW), Dept. of Labor, State of Vermont

An employment statistic that continues to vex City planning is illustrated in the pie chart below. The U.S. Census Bureau LEHD program (using the most recently available 2014 data) shows that a very small minority of the City’s resident labor force actually works in the City. This is despite the many housing units and jobs in the community. Nearly 4,000 people come in from outside the City to work here. Nearly 3,000 City residents commute to other communities. Only 675 people live and work in the City. It is assumed that the City’s broad range of employment opportunities offer many options for City residents. It is also assumed that it benefits the community to have more people living and working here, contributing more of their days here, spending less time commuting, and having more time for recreation and civic engagement in the City.



Source: On The Map, LEHD Program, U.S. Census Bureau

## **4.1 The City is the economic and commercial hub of Northwest Vermont, welcoming proactive redevelopment activities, and providing a variety of goods, services, jobs and economic opportunities for the region.**

### A. Objectives

1. Provide a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities and maintains environmental standards and quality of life.
2. Collaborate to provide for economic opportunities in areas with high unemployment or low per capita incomes.
3. Increase private investment along the City's commercial axis, with a priority for increased property values in the tax increment financing district.
4. Provide the plurality of employment opportunities in Franklin County.
5. Increase the percentage of the resident labor force that lives and works in the City.
6. Ensure the redevelopment of key vacant or underutilized properties, especially the following City-owned properties as of the adoption of this City Plan: the Former Fonda/Solo Manufacturing Facility, 14 Stebbins St., and the vacant properties at the corner of Congress and No. Main St.

### B. Policies

1. City regulations will use standards that are not prohibitive to development.
2. The City will prioritize development in the Tax Increment Financing District.
3. Increases in tax-exempt property will be discouraged, and alternatives will be sought for any reduction in tax assessments, particularly in the TIF district.
4. Support the efforts of the Franklin County Regional Chamber of Commerce and Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation, as appropriate.
5. Emphasize customer service in the permitting and development review process.
6. Support a broad range of advanced telecommunications options in the City.
7. Encourage commercial development that fits the character of the surrounding area.
8. Take the necessary steps to maintain the State Growth Center Designation, which is beneficial to the City of St. Albans.
9. Maintain the TIF district in good standing.

### C. Programs and Activities

1. Promote appropriate development through tax increment financing, and use the taxes on the incremental property values for projects fulfilling the public good.
2. Promote the City as a vital regional and statewide center for business/professional services, retailing, education, residential use, recreation, and dining.
3. Engage in appropriate programs that celebrate the City's heritage and creative economy, including agricultural and food related industries.
4. Support and invest in educational, health care, and municipal services and infrastructure that will aid in attracting economic development opportunities.
5. Encourage local buyers to purchase goods and services from local businesses.
6. Support programs that assist with the working capital and expansion needs of existing or new businesses.

7. Assist business in utilizing local labor and community services and facilities by coordinating with educational and employment programs.
8. Continue to utilize funding and other resources available for brownfield assessment and mitigation in the City.
9. Acquire vacant, underutilized, or blighted properties in a financially responsible manner for the purpose of marketing them for redevelopment.
10. Develop and launch a public relations and marketing campaign to attract private investment, new residents and visitors.
11. Pursue the public infrastructure projects proposed in the City's 2012 application for the Tax Increment Financing District as well as any projects added upon approval of the Vermont Economic Progress Council.
12. Be active in the regional planning process to discuss the delineation of regional growth centers.
13. Pursue any remaining recommendations of the State's 2010 acceptance of the Growth Center Designation, including performing a Historic Resource Inventory.

**Appendices at [www.StAlbansVT.com/CityPlan](http://www.StAlbansVT.com/CityPlan):**

- ✓ 2010 Growth Center Approval
- ✓ 2012 TIF District Plan

## Chapter 5. A Community That Thrives and Prospers

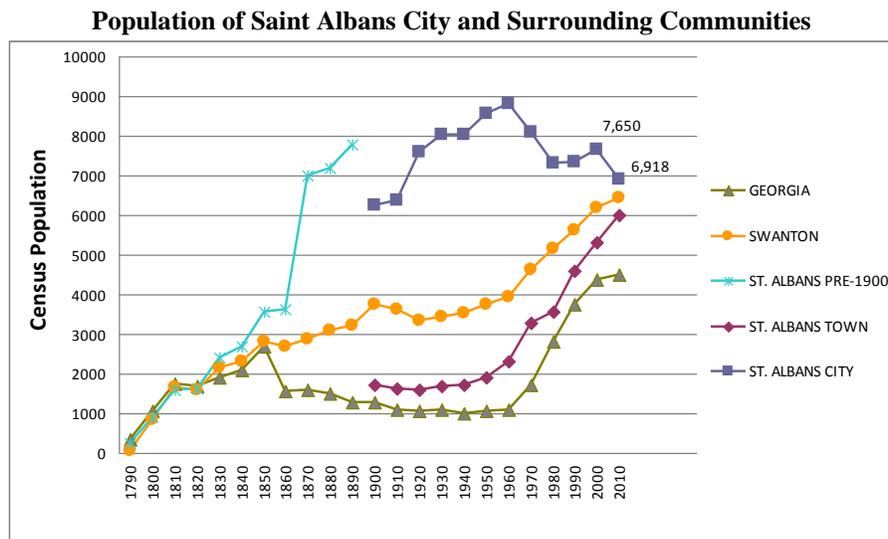
The City of St. Albans is fortunate to be home to, or adjacent to, the county's richest array of recreational and wellness resources. The City also has access to quality educational and childcare opportunities. All of these attributes play an important part in the attraction and retention of residents and visitors to the community. However, there are some areas with challenges to overcome, and other areas with exciting new opportunities to pursue. The City is most active in the realm of recreation, within which it directly provides many activities and resources for other municipalities within the county. In other areas such as health care, public health, education, and childcare, the City is a potential collaborator and facilitator with like interests.

### Location of Resources

Recreational, health care, and educational resources mentioned in this chapter and located within the City can be found on the Facilities map in Chapter 6.

### City Residents

The last Census of population in the City was in 2010 with a total of 6,918 residents. The City's population curve (see below graph) is typical of traditional centers in Vermont, experiencing substantial growth after its incorporation and then population decline since the mid-1900's. The City's 2010 Census shows a population decline of 9.6% since 2000, and such a substantial decline seemed surprising at the time. The City never investigated or contested the number. 2010 downgrade in City population seems to have influence intercensal estimates from both the Census Bureau and the VT Dept. of Health, which show the City continuing to lose population gradually through the decade. The State of Vermont Populations from August 2013 (VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development) also predict the City's population declining to 5,230-4,745 by 2030. The City will look to the 2020 Census to see if the declining population trend truly continues.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census

The rest of the state and county have been growing in population and are projected to grow, even if only modestly. With the many amenities that the City offers, the community should be able to attract some of this residential growth over time.

Median Age		
	2000 Census	2010 Census
St. Albans City	35.2	36.3
Franklin County	35.7	39.6
Vermont	37.7	41.5

Source: US Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing

Age distribution is important in order to predict future service needs, especially for school capacity and senior services. The City’s median age table shows that it is younger than the county and the state, although all seem to be growing older. The Age Group Analysis shows that the City has a lower proportion of its

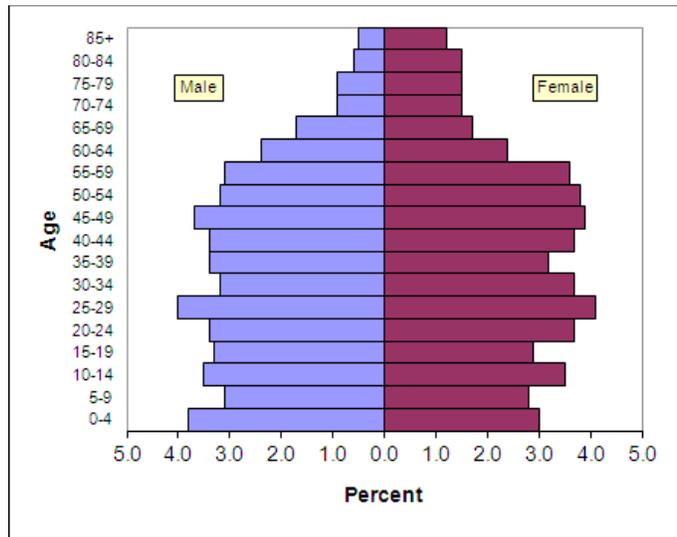
Age Group Analysis, 2010 (%)			
Age Group	Vermont	Franklin County	St. Albans City
Under 18	20.7	24.7	23.7
18-34	21.5	19.2	24.4
35-64	43.3	44.1	40.0
65+	14.6	12.2	12.0

Source: US Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing

population in the 65+ age group than the county or state. Despite this data, the City should expect to attract older residents seeking proximate services.

Interestingly, the City has a higher proportion of its population aged 18-34. Perhaps this represents recent high school graduates who have stayed in the area for work or young families in the City.

**2010 Census Population Pyramid**



Saint Albans City’s population pyramid is atypical of a Vermont community. One cannot see the “Baby Boom Bulge” (roughly the 45-64 age groups) as distinctly as one can in other communities or in Vermont. Saint Albans’ baby boomers seem to have more equilibrium with younger age groups. The 25-29 age group stands out in the pyramid as the largest overall group, accounting for 8.1% of the population. The exact cause of this group’s prominence is unknown, although it could be a reflection of the baby boom echo, or children of the baby boomers.

**Residents in Need**

The Economic Data appendix at the City Plan webpage contains information from the time period of 2011-2015 from the U.S. Census’s American Community Survey. The table below shows some key statistics from this data. It shows that there are generally people with less means and with more needs that in the county and state. Median incomes are lower, although

families tend to compare better. Unemployment, poverty, and lack of health insurance are all higher in the City. Of particular note is the estimated 24% family poverty rate. These data show a need for special social/health services, customized educational supports, and free/affordable recreation opportunities in order for the entire population to be able to thrive in the City of St. Albans.

**Sample of 2011-2015 Economic Data**

	<b>City</b>	<b>Franklin County</b>	<b>Vermont</b>
Unemployment Rate %	6.7	4.9	5.5
Median Household Income	\$44,013	\$58,199	\$55,176
Median Family Income	\$69,519	\$71,289	\$70,027
No Health Insurance %	6.1	5.6	5.8
Poverty %, of all People	14.8	8.7	11.5
Poverty %, of Families with Children	24.0	11.0	13.2

**Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau**

**Note: Margins of error are not shown.**

**Recreational Resources**

The City has access to a variety of open spaces and recreational facilities. Facilities located within the City are shown on the Facilities map in Chapter 6. The City Pool, the Barlow St. Community Center and Park, City Hall Auditorium, Taylor Park, and Houghton Park are managed by the City Recreation Department with assistance from Public Works. Also within the City are the Aldis Hill Playground trails, which are owned and managed by the Aldis Hill Trust, the Bellows Free Academy High School gym, and William Cioffi ball fields, operated by the St. Albans Little League with assistance from the City.

There are many other recreational areas outside the City but accessible to its residents. The Maple Run School District manages the gyms and fields at St. Albans City School and the St. Albans Town Education Center, and the Collins-Perley Sports Complex. The trail head of the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail is located just north of the City boundary, and the trail is owned and managed by the State of Vermont under the advisement of the Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council. The Hard’ack Recreation Area, including ski/sliding hills, trails and fields, is on the City’s northeast boundary, and the City insures Hard’ack and performs most maintenance functions. The City and Hard’ack, Inc. have also entertained a possible agreement to strengthen the partnership and to add further City oversight and administration. St. Albans Bay and its park are located at the end of Lake Road and are managed by the Town of St. Albans. The final area of note is Silver Lake, which is an emergency reservoir owned by the City and located in Fairfax and Georgia. This pond is secluded and wooded and could prove to be a unique recreational resource in the future. Further beyond the City limits are Kill Kare State Park, Burton Island State Park, and Knights Island State Park, the Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge, the Long Trail and other hiking trails in the Green Mountains, various golf courses, Jay Peak Resort,

Smugglers Notch Resort, Fairfield Pond, Lake Carmi, other smaller lakes and ponds, rivers, and streams.

The City-owned recreation facilities are the responsibility of the St. Albans Recreation Department, which consists of two full-time staff and numerous seasonal part-time staff and volunteers. The department also offers a variety of youth and adult recreation programs and assists with community events. The St. Albans Recreation Commission provides oversight for the department. The recreation program budget is approved by the City Manager and City Council. Revenues consist of City tax dollars, participant fees, and event sponsorships. Grants will often be sought to help fund improvements to City recreation facilities.

## **Health Care and Wellness Resources**

### **Health Care Facilities**

St. Albans City and Town are home to the Northwestern Medical Center (NMC). The services provided at NMC include 24-hour emergency care, intensive care, general medical and surgical center, OB/GYN services, in/outpatient surgical services, occupational health/industrial medicine, and a host of support services including medical labs, x-ray, and physical therapy. NMC recently began construction on new in-patient and primary/specialty care facilities on its campus. In cases of specific need, many City residents go to University of Vermont Medical Center in Burlington, Vermont's most extensive health care center.

Aside from regional medical centers and hospitals, there are several smaller integrated medical practices in and near St. Albans where people have access to a group of doctors and other trained staff for health needs. These include Northwestern Primary Care, St. Albans Primary Care, Northwestern Pediatrics, NOTCH (Northern Tier Center for Health), NMC Urgent Care, ClearChoice MD, and the Georgia Health Center. Other health care providers serving the City include: Northwest Counseling and Support Services, the Vermont Health Department, Planned Parenthood, Northwestern Occupational Health, Franklin County Home Health Agency, various Fletcher Allen specialists, and a variety of other private health care professionals from dentists to optometrists. Of recent note is the announcement that BAART Behavioral Health Services will open a new medication-assisted opiate addiction treatment center on a parcel on the southern end of the City (spanning the City-Town border). The need for further opiate addiction treatment options has been widely recognized as a public health issue for the community. There has been a multitude of reports, colloquial data and anecdotes about the need for more primary care physicians in the City and statewide for several years now.

### **Community Wellness and Social Supports**

The greater St. Albans community enjoys a broad array of opportunities and resources for general or specific health and wellness needs – from personal health goals, to family planning, to providing housing and nutrition. The following organizations are good places to go to find out what current opportunities are.

The **Vermont Department of Health**, with a regional office at 27 Federal Street in the City, plays an important part in community health services. The regional office provides many state

services and also works in partnership with local health care providers, voluntary agencies, schools, businesses, and community organizations to improve health and to extend statewide initiatives in local communities throughout the state.

**Northwestern Medical Center** acts as the region's health care hub and organizes and supports many community initiatives, such as alcohol/tobacco use prevention and RiseVT, a partially grant-funded collaborative to encourage healthier lifestyles at the individual, business, and community level.

**Northwest Counseling and Support Services** is a private, non-profit, human services agency serving Franklin and Grand Isle Counties and providing intervention and support to children, adolescents, and adults with emotional and behavioral problems, mental illness and developmental disabilities.

**BAART St. Albans**, located currently at Northwestern Medical Center and soon to be on South Main Street just outside the City, provides medication-assisted treatment for those who suffer from an opiate-use disorder. It is the first-such treatment center in the area.

**Franklin County Home Health Agency** in St. Albans Town provides health care, rehab therapies and hospice services to clients in their home settings in the communities of Franklin County. Their programs and services include care for pregnant women, children and adults.

**Samaritan House** is a non-profit organization that provides emergency shelter and transitional housing to people without other options or resources within the region. Their shelter in Downtown St. Albans, also called Tim's House, has been operating in overflow status since August, 2008. To address this issue, the City of St. Albans received \$600,000 from the Vermont Community Development Program to sub-grant to the Samaritan House for an expansion and other improvements to the existing facility.

**Franklin/Grand Isle Community Action and Food Shelf** runs as an arm of the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity and provides a variety of free services to help low-income residents in the region, including assistance with fuel, utilities, housing, food, budgeting information through the Farm to Family Program, advocacy, information, referrals, and tax preparation.

**Voices Against Violence and Laurie's House**, which are also administered by CVOEO, provide shelter, crisis intervention, support and advocacy services to victims/survivors of domestic and sexual violence in the region.

**Martha's Kitchen** is a soup kitchen run by a collection of local churches. It provides nutrition to those in need and can also connect clients with other area services.

**Club Respite** in St. Albans Town is an example of an adult day care center where older relatives can enjoy daily activities.

The **Franklin County Senior Center** on Messenger St. in the City is a nonprofit entity that provides meals, recreational/social programming, and gathering space for older residents of the area. The Senior Center's facilities can also be reserved for community functions and meetings. The Senior Center also coordinates Meals on Wheels for the community.

### **The City's planning role.**

The City of St. Albans does not directly provide any health, wellness, or social support. However, the City can plan for the following:

- Land use policies that may affect where certain uses can be located and to what degree.
- Collaboration in acquiring funding or other resources for programs.
- Partnership and coordination between City services and health, wellness, or social support services.
- Advocacy or leadership on certain community issues.
- Contributions appropriated as part of the City general fund.

## **Childcare**

The availability of adequate childcare facilities for working parents is increasingly recognized as an important part of a community's social and economic infrastructure. Childcare services are important influences on a child's early development, while at the same time help enable working parents to enter or stay in the workforce. Parents who are unable to find or afford childcare services have much greater difficulty entering or remaining in the workforce. This can lead to increased social, educational, and health costs.

The provision of childcare services is not strictly a local issue. For example, it might be more convenient or practical for a St. Albans City resident working in Burlington to use childcare services there or along the way in Georgia, and vice versa. Many families that live outside the City use childcare services in the City if it is convenient to their place of employment.

The Vermont Department for Children and Families regulates both licensed childcare centers and registered home family childcare programs. A query at DCF's Bright Futures Child Care Information System showed 12 licensed providers (and no others within a 5-mile radius) and 21 registered homes (with only 7 more 5 miles out). The vast majority had no vacancies. These facilities serve children with full-day childcare and/or part-day pre-school but do not include legally exempt childcare services (such as homes that provide care for no more than two families, including the provider's) or other unregulated arrangements among families and friends.

DCF's April 2017 Vermont Regulated Child Care Program Report on Program Closures paints a bleak future for child care openings going forward. The report states that the St. Albans region has experienced a 32% drop in registered homes over the past five years and only a 3% increase in licensed centers. The report surmises that registered homes are more susceptible to personal and financial challenges.

Nevertheless, there is a significant need for child care in the City. The 2011-2015 American Community Survey estimates that 48% of children under 6 years in the City have both parents in the workforce. This rate is higher at nearly 83% for children 6-17 years. In addition, the City assumes that childcare for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shift is difficult to find.

### **The City's planning role.**

Other than recreation programs, including day camps, the City of St. Albans does not directly provide regular childcare services. However, the City can:

- Adopt land use policies that may affect where certain childcare services can be performed.
- Collaborate with the acquisition of funding or other resources for programs.
- Find ways that childcare providers can use City recreational facilities, if desired.
- Partner and coordinate with childcare initiatives.
- Advocate and lead on community issues.

## **Educational Resources**

### **Primary and Secondary Educational Opportunities**

St. Albans City is part of the Maple Run Unified School District (MRUSD), formerly known as Franklin Central Supervisory Union, which also includes St. Albans Town and Fairfield. MRUSD was created by voters as a three-town merger in 2016 and will assume operations on July 1, 2017. PK-12 Education in St. Albans City is primarily provided by the St. Albans City School (SACS) and Bellows Free Academy (BFA) high school and Northwest Technical Center. Also included in the MRUSD are St. Albans Town Education Center and Fairfield Center School, both PK-8. It should be noted that BFA also oversees the Collins-Perley Sports Complex.

SACS is located at 29 Bellows Street and serves kindergarten through grade 8 with a capacity of 1,120 students. The school's principal facilities include a gymnasium/auditorium, cafeteria, library, computer lab and numerous classrooms and offices.

Enrollment at St. Albans City School has increased by 91 students over five years, with a 2016-2017 enrollment of 788 students. But that increase is largely due to the inclusion of pre-kindergarten students at the school. When pre-k students are removed from the equation, the current enrollment is 23 less students than five years ago. However, since the pre-k inclusion 4 years ago, enrollment has been variably steady with a slight upward trend.

Students from the City attend Bellows Free Academy (BFA) for secondary education located at 78 So. Main Street, which has a capacity of 1,100 students. The school's principal facilities include a library with both in-house and online reference material, media center with state-of-the-art technology, cafeteria, auditorium, and numerous classrooms and offices. Some athletics take place at the Collins-Perley Sports Complex, which also serves as a regional resource for sports and physical activity.

Within BFA is also the Northwest Technical Center, which teaches technical job skills. Courses are offered in automotive technology, building trades, cosmetology, culinary arts, design, medial and human services, public safety and fire services, video production, and engineering technologies. NWTC serves approximately 200 students and 1500 adults annually, most of which are post-secondary.

Approximately half of the BFA students come from St. Albans City and St. Albans Town. The balance consists of tuition students from Fairfield, Georgia, Sheldon, Bakersfield, Alburgh, and other communities. In the past five years, school enrollment has decreased from around 1,070 students to just over 900 students in 2016-2017.

### **The new Maple Run Unified School District**

The MRUSD is a new entity that brings an increased level of governmental consolidation and coordination to the schools in the City, Town and Fairfield. It will be interesting to see how the new governance affects school costs, as well as how enrollment trends affect the use of all district facilities together. Recently MRUSD released a policy to allow up to 10 students, district-wide, to transfer to a school that was not previously their school of residency, e.g. a student who lives in St. Albans Town asking to transfer to St. Albans City School. The City should be ready to provide any input it deems appropriate as district policies further evolve concerning which school students will attend.

### **Alternative and Non-Traditional Education**

In addition to the Northwest Technical Center, Vermont Adult Learning is a statewide program that administers a High School Completion Program, Vermont Adult Diploma Program, a GED program, and a Work Readiness Program. There is a Vermont Adult Learning Center located on Lemnah Drive.

Project Soar, managed by Northwestern Counseling and Support Services, also offers a non-traditional high school experience for students that have experienced difficulty in the conventional classroom and school environment. While attending Soar, they gain skills in academics as well as in behavioral and emotional development. The goal of the program is to prepare students to successfully return to their sending schools to excel academically and also to become well-rounded citizens and family members.

### **Post-Secondary Education**

Several opportunities exist for higher and continuing education in St. Albans City as well as in the region. Community College of Vermont has a campus in the City on South Main Street, offering special interest courses and diploma programs. The University of Vermont has an Extension office in St. Albans that also provides opportunities for lifelong learning. The Vermont Technical College also offers a nursing program. Relocating the Community College campus and other higher learning opportunities downtown would bring about vitality and new opportunities.

There are several higher education institutions in Burlington, about 40 minutes south of St. Albans City, including the University of Vermont, Champlain College, and St. Michael's

College. Johnson State College, Lyndonville State College, and universities in Montreal are also within commuting distance of St. Albans.

### **The City's planning role.**

The City of St. Albans does not directly provide any educational services and does not have an active role in the planning for facilities, policies and funding associated with MRUSD, CCV or other involved entities. However, the City can:

- Adopt land use policies that may affect where certain uses can be located.
- Collaborate in acquisition of funding or other resources for programs.
- Partner and coordinate with educational organizations.
- Advocate or lead on certain community issues.
- Highlight the successes and offerings of area educational institutions as part of the City's marketing and branding efforts.

## **5.1 Living in, working in, or visiting the City contributes to healthy lifestyles. The City has ample opportunity for residents to be healthy including recreation facilities, walkable streets, nutritional food, and community events and activities.**

### A. Objectives

1. Recreation facilities are accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists.
2. City residents and visitors have a variety of free or otherwise affordable opportunities to recreate indoors and outdoors.
3. City residents have access to a wide variety of health care services in a number of different forms, including the services needed to avoid opiate addiction and hasten the treatment for those currently dealing with opiate addiction.
4. Forested areas, specifically Aldis Hill, will be soundly managed and protected from development pressure.

### B. Policies

1. Support neighborhood-based community gardens throughout the City, as appropriate.
2. Support access to health education and recreation to support physical and mental health for City residents.
3. Encourage development that will not significantly diminish the value and availability of outdoor-recreational opportunities.
4. Develop regulations that reflect the unique circumstances of structures, performance measures, and use of land associated with recreational areas.
5. Ensure clean and healthy natural areas and open spaces, including parks, and wooded areas, that contribute to the quality of the City's environment and unique sense of place.
6. Support parks with master planning and capital improvement programming.
7. Support the concept of bicycle/pedestrian/transit access to the Collins-Perley Sports Complex.

8. Play a role in the construction and maintenance of pedestrian connections outside the City limits that connect to important community resources.
9. Support health and resource centers, where appropriate, for those with special or unique needs, such as opiate treatment centers, addiction housing, women's/family wellness centers, and senior centers.
10. Maintain relationships with and support for organizations that regularly use City parks, such as the St. Albans Steelers Football Program.
11. Explore the recreational and educational use of streams in the City.
12. Explore recreational use of Silver Lake.
13. Protect Aldis Hill from development, including solar and wind energy installations.

### C. Programs and Activities

1. Model best practices related to promoting healthy communities at all municipal facilities and events (such as providing nutritious foods).
2. Maintain high-quality City-owned recreation facilities using the City's capital budget and program.
3. Identify and protect public access to non-commercial outdoor recreational opportunities, such as hiking trails and recreation paths.
4. Preserve and enhance public spaces so that they can be sustainably used for community-wide events.
5. Promote the City St. as the cycling hub of Northwest Vermont with connections to Burlington, Lake Champlain, and Canada.
6. Ensure that the City's recreation facilities are connected with safe pedestrian and bicycle routes.
7. Improve the street, sidewalk, and street-crossing safety of routes to schools in order to encourage/allow students to walk or bike to school on a regular basis.
8. Pursue the implementation of "Complete Streets" designs whenever possible.
9. Engage in master planning activities for all City parks to engage multiple stakeholders, inform short- and long-term visions, and program the related capital improvements.
10. Facilitate further discussion on how best to regulate controlled substance dispensaries and the retail sale of controlled substances.
11. Explore the need and ability to limit the outward advertisement of the sale or dispensing of alcohol, tobacco, and controlled substances City-wide or in specific areas of the community.
12. Explore possibilities for partnership with Hard'ack, Inc. and collaborate to expand the recreational programs and infrastructure at Hard'ack.
13. Explore possibilities for providing recreational programming at its Silver Lake property in Georgia and Fairfax and implement as appropriate.
14. Explore the expansion of indoor recreation space, such as basketball courts, for regular free or low-cost use and located within the City or adjacent with bicycle/pedestrian/transit access.
15. Collaborate with others to improve the trails and features on Aldis Hill, including implementation of the 2014 St. Albans Recreation Reserve Trail Sustainability

- and Management Plan. Also pursue better connections to the Aldis Hill trail network via trail heads, wayfinding, parking, and pedestrian connections.
16. Provide support for a women's holistic wellness and resource center, dedicated to serving mothers and children in in many areas, including staying healthy and car seat safety.
  17. Develop a master plan for Houghton Park and Barlow St. Park and use capital programming to improve each park's infrastructure and natural environment.
  18. Perform an assessment of the City Pool facilities and create a plan for improvements, replacements, and/or relocation that will sustain and expand offerings for the community.
  19. Support Martha's Kitchen's effort to relocate to a new, appropriately-sited facility, accessible to its clientele.

## **5.2 Accessible learning opportunities in the City will support a life-long process that fosters personal success and contribution as members of the community.**

### A. Objectives

1. Broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure the full realization of the abilities of residents and visitors.
2. Increase the availability and lower the cost of childcare in the community.

### B. Policies

1. Support the network of community support services, such as Northwest Counseling and Support Services, to help individuals and families achieve economic, social, and personal success.
2. Support the Community Justice Center, Court Diversion Program and other groups in their efforts to provide restorative responses to offending; conflict management and dispute resolution; and community forums and educational programs.
3. Support a variety of quality, affordable childcare options for parents and guardians with young children.
4. Support access to high quality educational and vocational training opportunities to encourage full realization of the abilities of City residents.
5. Support cooperation and collaboration between the community, municipality and schools.
6. Processes for jurying and providing public art in St. Albans will be encouraged.
7. Support the Northwest Technical Center, Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, Workforce Investment Board, and other organizations that could provide linkages between City projects and vocational training opportunities.

### C. Programs and Activities

1. Engage with local stakeholders in Safe Routes to School planning and programming.

2. Monitor any new policies of the Maple Run Unified School District that would affect which PK-8 schools City resident students would attend and provide input, wherever possible, in the interest of our children, neighborhoods, transportation issues, public safety, and community branding.
3. Look for more opportunities to link City projects, like housing rehabilitation, with the Northwest Technical Center, Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, Workforce Investment Board, and similar vocational training organizations.

**Appendices at [www.StAlbansVT.com/CityPlan](http://www.StAlbansVT.com/CityPlan):**

- ✓ Aldis Hill Trail Plan
- ✓ Economic Data from the American Community Survey

## Chapter 6. Running Well and Getting Where We Need to Go

### Form of Government

The City of St. Albans operates under a Council/Manager form of local government. The Mayor of St. Albans City is elected by the voters for a two-year term and acts as moderator with a voice and vote in all City Council meetings and proceedings. The City Council consists of six-members representing each of the six wards within the City and the Mayor. Council members are elected for staggered three-year terms. Elections are held on Town Meeting Day. The Council concentrates on leadership and policy decisions - ensuring that the local government is responsive to community needs and wishes. The Council hires the City Manager to manage and administer City operations. The primary divisions of City Government under the purview of the Manager include finance and administration, public works, water and wastewater, planning and development, operations and business development, recreation, police, and fire. The current City administration prioritizes customer service and public confidence in every interaction with residents, taxpayers, businesses, and visitors.

### City Finances

The majority of the City's revenue originates from property taxes. As the community grows and economic conditions and needs change, the type and quantity of services provided change and in response the municipality must adjust revenue streams accordingly.

The City's tax base consists of taxable properties as assessed in the Grand List. As of April 1, 2016 the total grand list was assessed at \$725 million, but many properties (around 60) included in that number are considered tax exempt by state and federal law or local decisions. Therefore the total taxable value was \$540 million, more than 25% less than the total assessment.

Residential properties make up the majority of the tax base. The tax base had been fairly flat for the last ten to fifteen years, however, the grand list has grown recently, as shown in the table below, in concert with the new tax increment financing district (covered further in Chapter 4).

### City of St. Albans Total Grand List Value

Fiscal Year	Total City Wide Taxable Value (millions)	Cumulative Change in Taxable Value (from start of TIF, in millions)	Cumulative Growth (from start of TIF)	Annual Change in Taxable Value	Percentage Change in Taxable Value
2006	\$ 377.3				
2007	\$ 384.7			\$ 7,335,000	1.9%
2008	\$ 383.8			\$ (872,700)	-0.2%
2009	\$ 384.5			\$ 754,800	0.2%
2010	\$ 383.5			\$ (1,012,200)	-0.3%
2011	\$ 383.3			\$ (195,300)	-0.1%
2012*	\$ 473.1			\$ 89,740,800*	23.4%*
<i>* Note: reappraisal year, growth represents an overall increase in assessed values as a result of the reappraisal.</i>					
2013	\$ 472.2			\$ (904,400)	-0.2%
2014	\$ 487.7	\$ 15.5	3.3%	\$ 15,513,700	3.3%
2015	\$ 518.6	\$ 46.4	9.8%	\$ 30,905,600	6.3%
2016	\$ 540.3	\$ 68.1	14.4%	\$ 21,717,140	4.2%

In recent years, the administration has placed strong emphasis on recruiting new commercial and industrial development to increase the tax base. The City also aggressively pursues federal and state funding for projects, in order to offset local costs. As a result of these efforts, the tax rate has remained stable for the last few years.

### **City Hall**

St. Albans City Hall is located on North Main Street. City management and administrative offices, including the municipal vault and storage of all municipal records, City Council chamber, meeting rooms, and an auditorium are all located there.

In 2016 the City completed a \$2.3 million renovation project at City Hall as authorized by a bond vote. The renovation project reconfigured most of the inside of the building and accomplished the following objectives:

- ✓ Adding two elevators and complete ADA accessibility.
- ✓ More than doubling vault space.
- ✓ Creating a better configuration of office space.
- ✓ Increasing the size and capabilities of the City Council chamber.
- ✓ Replacing all heating, cooling and electrical systems in the building and increasing energy efficiency with assistance from Efficiency Vermont.
- ✓ Reengineering the passive sound technology in the auditorium.

City Hall is now a much more efficient and useful space for City government and public events. The City will continue to work on maximizing the capability of the auditorium to host events, with the possible addition of light and sound equipment and improvements to the stage area.

### **City Communications**

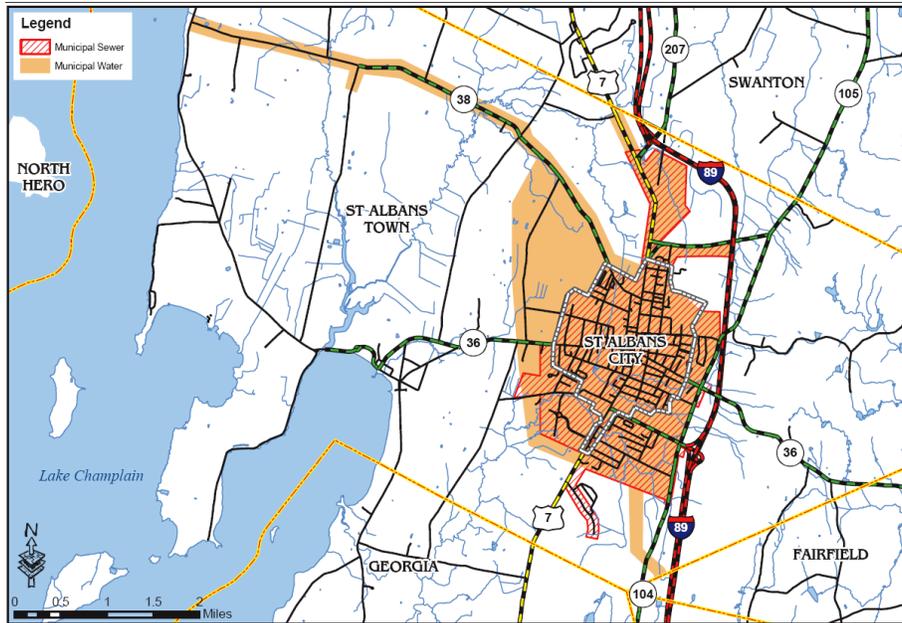
The City strictly adheres to the State's Open Meeting Laws and ensures that all meetings are posted and recorded in compliance with those laws. For communication purposes, the City currently maintains a website, a Facebook page, a public alert system (phone, text, email), and makes regular posts on the community's page on FrontPorchForum.com.

### **Public Works**

The Public Works Department manages municipal utilities and infrastructure in addition to the maintenance of municipally owned lands and buildings. These include among other things snow removal, street and sidewalk repair, water and sewer line installation and repair, landscape maintenance, and general repair of public investments. The Public Works Garage is on Aldis Street.

### **Water Supply**

The City operates a municipal water supply system servicing the entire City and parts of the Town of St. Albans (see following map).



**Municipal Sewer and Water Service Areas**

The City maintains close to 4,000 water accounts, the majority being residential accounts (approximately 10% are commercial and less than 1% industrial). About one-third of the water accounts are located in the Town. New service connections are regulated by a water/sewer allocation ordinance, which has been revised by the City Council in the past, based on the needs of the system and the City.

The City water's system is drawn from two sources – a reservoir complex located in North Fairfax (conventional gravity fed) and Lake Champlain (via a pumping system). The City also owns a reservoir on Silver Lake in Fairfax and Georgia as an emergency reserve supply. The reservoir complex in North Fairfax consists of the South Reservoir/Dam (originally constructed in 1873) and the North Dam (originally constructed in 1893). The Maquam Shore Water Treatment Facility was originally constructed in 1953 to supplement the City's water supply with treated water from Lake Champlain.

Distribution to the City is made possible by several large water mains, pump stations, a one million gallon storage tank, and miles of smaller distribution lines. The City's water supply system has sufficient capacity for anticipated growth within the existing service area.

### **Wastewater Treatment**

The City operates a municipal wastewater treatment system servicing the entire City and parts of St. Albans Town north and south of the City. The wastewater treatment plant (installed in 1930) is located on Rewes Drive north of the City in the Town of St. Albans. Wastewater and stormwater are transported to the treatment plant via a network of sewer pipes. Approximately 60% of the treated water is combined wastewater/stormwater. Disinfected effluent is discharged into Stevens Brook, which is authorized under a permit issued by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. One condition of the permit is the amount of phosphorous allowed to be discharged into the watershed. City voters recently passed an \$18 million bond to replace

and/or improve equipment at the treatment plant and install a new filter system to further remove phosphorous. The bond authorization may also be used to address some of the combined sewer overflow.

The City maintains close to 4,000 sewer accounts, the majority being residential accounts (approximately 10% are commercial and less than 1% are industrial). Less than 20% of sewer accounts are located in the Town of St. Albans (as compared with over 30% of water accounts). As noted in the Water Supply Section, new service connections are regulated by a water/sewer allocation ordinance.

The sewer treatment plant is permitted to receive 4 million gallons per day (gpd) of influent and discharge .5 milligrams per liter of phosphorous. In 2016 the plant received an average of 2.4 million gpd. For comparison, the number was 2.7 million gpd in 2010, a particularly wet year, and 2.3 million gpd before that in 2009. There are currently just over 250,000 gpd in committed, unconnected allocations. The plant is currently left with a remaining uncommitted capacity that hovers just under 1 million gpd and is more than enough for the projected growth of the City and serviced areas within the Town.

### **Solid Waste Management**

Every municipality in Vermont must either have its own Solid Waste Implementation Plan or belong to a Solid Waste District. The City of St. Albans belongs to the Northwest Solid Waste District, which has a regional solid waste management plan and a certified regional facility. The Northwest Solid Waste District sponsors many activities such as “special collections” (bulky items, scrap metal, and tires) and Household Hazardous Waste collections (oil based paints, solvents, cleaners, pesticides, and other chemicals that would be harmful to the environment if not handled properly).

### **Police Department**

The St. Albans Police Department is devoted to providing professional and quality police services, and strives to remain effective, efficient, and responsive to the changing needs of the community, while providing a safe environment that enhances the quality of life in St. Albans. The role of the St. Albans Police Department is to provide administrative, patrol, investigative, crime prevention, dispatching and emergency management services. In 2011, the Town of St. Albans contracted with the Police Department to extend police services to the Town as well as the City. That contract continues today.

The Police Department is located on Lower Welden Street, which also houses the Fire Department and Central Dispatching. The Department has no lock-up facility on site. All prisoners are transported to the Northwest Correctional Center in St. Albans Town. The public safety facility is currently at maximum capacity and is located in a 500-year flood plain. The City would like to relocate the Police and Fire departments. The former Fonda/Solo Manufacturing



property is being eyed as a potential location for a new Public Safety facility, possibly paired with Public Works. If public safety were moved, the City would most likely sell the building on Lower Welden St. for redevelopment.

The Police Department employs over 20 full-time police officers and two part-time officers. At their disposal are several marked police cars, as well as unmarked detective vehicles. The vast majority of funding for the Police Department comes from City taxpayers, while the Town of St. Albans pays for its coverage via contract. Some police department positions are partially or fully grant funded, including school resource officers, a domestic violence investigator, and a Drug Task Force investigator.

The Vermont State Police, Franklin County Sheriff, and U.S. Border Patrol also collaborate with the City Police Dept. and provide law enforcement support in certain crime cases, emergencies, and other incidents.

The Police Department notes that the community's strongest asset in crime fighting efforts is an "Informed and Engaged" citizenry. The Department places an emphasis on community policing efforts.

### **Fire Department**

As a first response organization, the City of St. Albans Fire Department responds to fires, public safety and medical emergencies, disasters and terrorist acts. The timely delivery of these services enables the Fire Department to make significant contributions to the safety of St. Albans and homeland security efforts. The mission of the Fire Department is to protect the residents and visitors of the City of St. Albans with coordinated efforts in code enforcement, public education, hazardous materials and incident mitigation, thereby reducing the loss of life and property due to fire and other emergencies while also contributing to the quality of life. The Fire Department is also part of the Countywide Mutual Aid Agreement for Emergency Services Responders.

The Fire Department is located on Lower Welden Street, along with the Police Department and Central Dispatching. The St. Albans City Fire Department provides 24 hour per day fire and rescue service to City residents and visitors. The water system and hydrants are checked routinely to ensure adequate residual water pressure and proper functioning. There is ample water supply and pumping capacity in the event of a major fire.

The Fire Department currently budgets for two full time firefighters, 24 volunteer firefighters, seven cadets, and several firefighters in training. The full-time firefighters also provide building inspection services and code enforcement to ensure that structures are constructed in compliance with City ordinances, Vermont Health Regulations, and Vermont Fire and Building Safety Code.

### **Ambulance**

Ambulance services are provided to the City under contract with AmCare Ambulance Services, located on Main Street in the City. Along with the Police and Fire Departments, AmCare participates in the county-wide mutual aid agreement.

### **Circulation, Access Management and Traffic Control**

There are 10 miles of arterial streets (Class 1 highways) and 17 miles of collectors and local streets (Class 2 and 3 highways). At the center of the City is the intersection of US Route 7 (Main Street) and VT Route 36 (Lake Street/Fairfield Street). VT Route 38 (Lower Newton Street) and the limited access St. Albans State Highway South (SASH) also pass through the City. The Transportation Map in this chapter shows highway functional classification and Vermont classification in the City.

The City of St. Albans exhibits a well-connected street network easily accessed from Interstate 89 via the St. Albans State Highway (SASH) to Main Street, via Highgate Road and Route 7 to Main Street, and via Route 104/Fisher Pond Road to Fairfield Street. Connectivity provides for good traffic circulation, efficient travel between local destinations, and the economical provision of services and infrastructure maintenance. Despite the City's street network, circulation in the City is challenged by only one north-south arterial street (Main Street). The lack of alternate arterials creates traffic congestion on Main Street and is disruptive to neighborhoods as motorists use side streets as short cuts to avoid the congestion on Main Street.

Planning and design work is currently underway on the *Federal Street Multi-Modal Connector*, which is a project that would significantly improve multi-modal safety and traffic management in the City. This project would redesign and improve the current "de facto" traffic corridor of Lemnah Drive and Allen, Catherine, Market, Federal and Lower Newton Streets, and construct a new direct connection to the St. Albans State Highway (SASH). The project would also include new traffic signals at Federal Street's intersections with Lake Street and Lower Newton Street, a traffic signal where the new road would intersect with So. Main St. and the SASH, a new round-about at Lower Welden-Allen-Lemnah, and accommodations for pedestrian and bicycle safety along the corridor. The Federal Street Multi-Modal Connector presents the City with a great opportunity to redevelop Federal Street, including developing a multi-modal transportation center at the location of the current AMTRAK station.

Driveways and other ingress/egress off City streets are regulated under the City's Land Development Regulations in terms of location, width, the number of access points, and the angle of intersections. The City does not have a comprehensive access management policy or regulation.

There are four signalized intersections located within the City, which are maintained by the City Fire Department. They include:

- US Route 7/Upper-Lower Newton St.
- US Route 7/St. Albans Shopping Center
- US Route 7/Lake St./Fairfield St.
- US Route 7/Upper-Lower Welden St.

The 2002 St. Albans Circulation Study found several intersections without signalization that might warrant signalization or a round-about/traffic circle based on accident rates and level of service. The Study recommends further study to confirm. These intersections included:

- Lake St./Federal St./Catherine St.
- US7/Industrial Park Rd.

- US7/SASH,
- US7/Nason St.
- US7/Congress St./Hudson St.
- Federal St./Lower Newton St.

Most streets in the City have a speed limit of 25 miles per hour. The exception is Route 7 north and south of the Central Business District where the speed limit is 35 miles per hour.

Traffic calming was recommended by the 2002 St. Albans Circulation Study, including developing a traffic calming policy and procedures manual and completing streetscape improvements. There are a variety of traffic calming techniques that affect driver behavior and expectations - causing vehicles to slow down and adopt a more pedestrian-friendly behavior. Traffic calming techniques are included among the “complete streets” streetscape improvements that have been implemented in Downtown St. Albans. Traffic calming techniques will also be addressed by the Federal Street Multi-Modal Connector project.

### **Pedestrian and Bicycle Accessibility and Circulation**

The City of St. Albans has sidewalks along most of its streets within the downtown core and along at least one side of most of its collector and local streets. Downtown streetscape improvements accentuate crosswalks with curb extensions, where possible. Painted crosswalks are located throughout the City.

Annually, the City Council places the continuation of the sidewalk replacement program before the voters. It has passed overwhelmingly each year. The Council Subcommittee on Public Safety and Quality of Life has the primary charge to determine replacement priorities and to identify sidewalk width issues, maintenance and other associated technical issues. In 2016, City voters approved a bond of just under \$5 million to replace all City sidewalks in poor condition within a 3-year period.

Bicycle accessibility is improving in the City. Class 1 paving in 2017 will add bike lanes to either side of North and South Main Streets and Lake Street outside the on-street parking zones, within which sharrows markings will be used in the street. More work needs to be done on both bicycle accessibility within the City and the provision of connections between the City and popular biking locations in the region.

### **Street Improvement Program**

The Public Works Department manages an annual Street Improvement Program, which is included in the Capital Improvement Plan. The Street Improvement Program has a budget of \$266,637 for the 2018 fiscal year and is proposed to increase to \$335,000 by FY 2020. This funding is used for paving projects, sidewalk maintenance, street light maintenance, plowing, and line striping on an as needed basis.

The Street Improvement Program operates out of the Public Works Garage, where all vehicles, equipment, and materials are stored. The approximate 7,000 square foot garage was built in 1979 for a City with substantially less responsibilities and equipment than it now has. According to the Public Works Director, space at the Garage is congested. The former Fonda/Solo Manufacturing property is being eyed as a potential location for a new public works garage,

paired with Public Safety. If the public works garage were moved, the City would seek to development the Aldis St. property, most likely with recreational and residential uses.

All new roads are required to comply with the Vermont State Design Standards. The St. Albans City Development Regulations include specific construction standards for street layout, curve radii, grade, and intersection. All public roads are required to be paved.

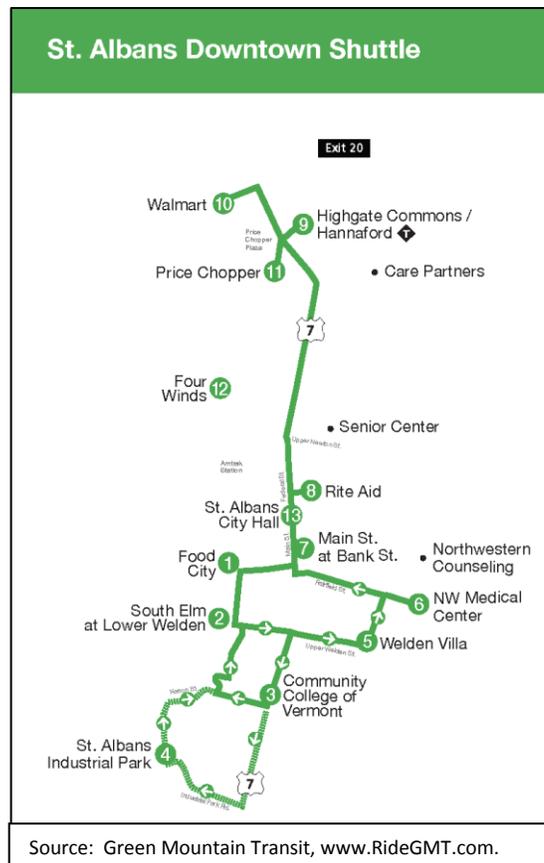
The City Council’s Public Safety and Quality of Life Committee develops annual priorities for street improvements and presents them for Council approval

### Public Parking

Public parking is an important consideration in planning a vibrant City. Following the 2009 Downtown Master Plan, the parking subcommittee of the City’s Master Plan Implementation Committee (MPIC) completed an inventory of public parking spaces in the Downtown area. The inventory tallied 414 parking lot spaces, 155 on-street spaces on Main Street from Congress Street to Stebbins Street, and 326 on-street spaces in the remaining Downtown area. However, those tallies are lower today, since many spaces in 2009-2011 did not meet current codes and guidelines and were eliminated during the streetscape improvements to Main and Lake Streets during 2012-2017. Nevertheless, City Staff report that parking is one of the top concerns reported by businesses and customers Downtown. The City also heard public input in 2011 and 2012 that parking meters were not a preferred choice for ensuring turn-over of spaces. The City has chosen to use ticketing enforcement of parking time limits. Revisions are made to the City Ordinances governing the timed parking zones (in Title 17), based on the success of parking enforcement and input from businesses. In order to allow for the redevelopment of the Downtown core, the City used TIF funds to build a new parking garage, which nearly quadrupled the parking capacity of the central municipal lot.

### Public Transit

Green Mountain Transit (GMT) operates public transportation, in addition to elderly, disabled and Medicaid non-emergency transportation services, in the St. Albans area. They operate a Downtown Shuttle between 5:45am and 6:40pm Monday through Friday and between 9:45am and 3:30pm on Saturdays to many locations throughout the City and Route 7 North in the Town (see map). Some locations are a request service including the Industrial Park, Senior Center, Northwestern Counseling, Hawk’s Nest Housing and Care Partners. The City has some areas designated for transit stops, but they are normally shared with other uses. There are currently no bus shelters in the City. GMT also has routes that connect St. Albans City with other areas in the region. The Alburgh to Georgia Commuter Shuttle stops at several locations in the



Source: Green Mountain Transit, www.RideGMT.com.

City, taking riders to the Georgia Industrial Parks. The Richford to St. Albans Shuttle takes riders from Richford and other locations along Route 105 into St. Albans. The St. Albans LINK Express is a St. Albans to Burlington commuter route. Finally, the Price Chopper Shopping Shuttle is currently supported by that store's foundation and has stops in St. Albans and Swanton.

### **Passenger Rail**

Passenger rail service is available via the Amtrak *Vermont*, which originates in the City or via the Adirondack route in Rouses Point, New York. It provides service to Washington D.C. via New York City, Philadelphia and Baltimore, with many smaller stops along the way. The Amtrak station is on the Genesee-Wyoming/New England Central Railway headquarters property on Federal St. More than a decade ago, this passenger line was called the *Montrealer* and terminated in that city after stopping in St. Albans. The City of St. Albans, the State of Vermont, and our congressional delegation have all stated support for the return of the *Montrealer*. Genesee-Wyoming Railways has recently upgraded the tracks north of the City to accommodate passenger rail service, and the U.S. and Canada recently approved a treaty to allow for Customs and Immigration inspections enabling rail travel across the border.

### **Rail Station and Possible Multi-Modal Center**

Even without the return of the *Montrealer*, the area around the Amtrak station could use additional City welcoming and wayfinding amenities. In the past, the City has produced concept plans for a multi-modal transportation center located on the GW/NECR and Amtrak Station properties. Such a center would have multi-fold benefits for the City from improving public transportation opportunities, creating better bicycle and pedestrian linkages, and enhancing community and economic development.

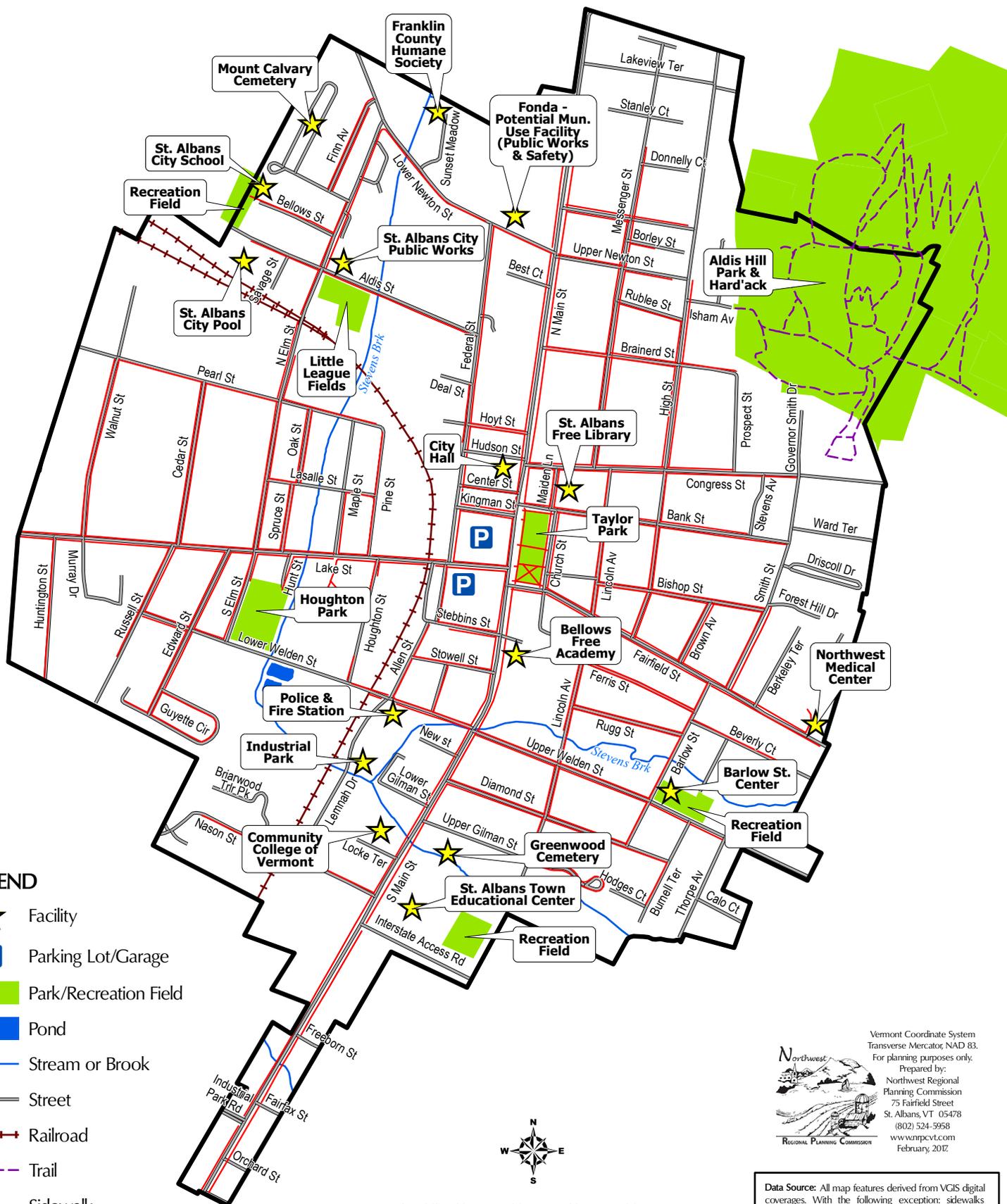
The Northwest Regional Planning Commission coordinated a planning study for the multi-modal center in 2006 (completed by RSG, Associates). The vision identified in the planning study includes the following elements:

- One-stop shop for public transportation – housing all commuter rail, bus and other transportation services (Amtrak, Green Mountain Transit, private bus, cabs);
- Incorporates commuter rail to Burlington; and
- Serves as inner City trail-head to Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail with safe, accessible bicycle connection to actual trailhead.

### **Port Facilities**

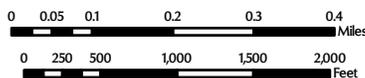
There are no airports or port facilities in the City, nor are there plans to pursue any. The closest airports are Burlington International Airport in South Burlington and the Franklin County Airport in Highgate. The nearest U.S. Customs port of entry is in Highgate at the end of Interstate 89.

# Facilities



## LEGEND

-  Facility
-  Parking Lot/Garage
-  Park/Recreation Field
-  Pond
-  Stream or Brook
-  Street
-  Railroad
-  Trail
-  Sidewalk
-  City Boundary



Vermont Coordinate System  
 Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.  
 For planning purposes only.  
 Prepared by:  
 Northwest Regional  
 Planning Commission  
 75 Fairfield Street  
 St. Albans, VT 05478  
 (802) 524-5958  
 www.nrpcvt.com  
 February, 2012

Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. With the following exception: sidewalks inventory done by NRPC.  
 North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

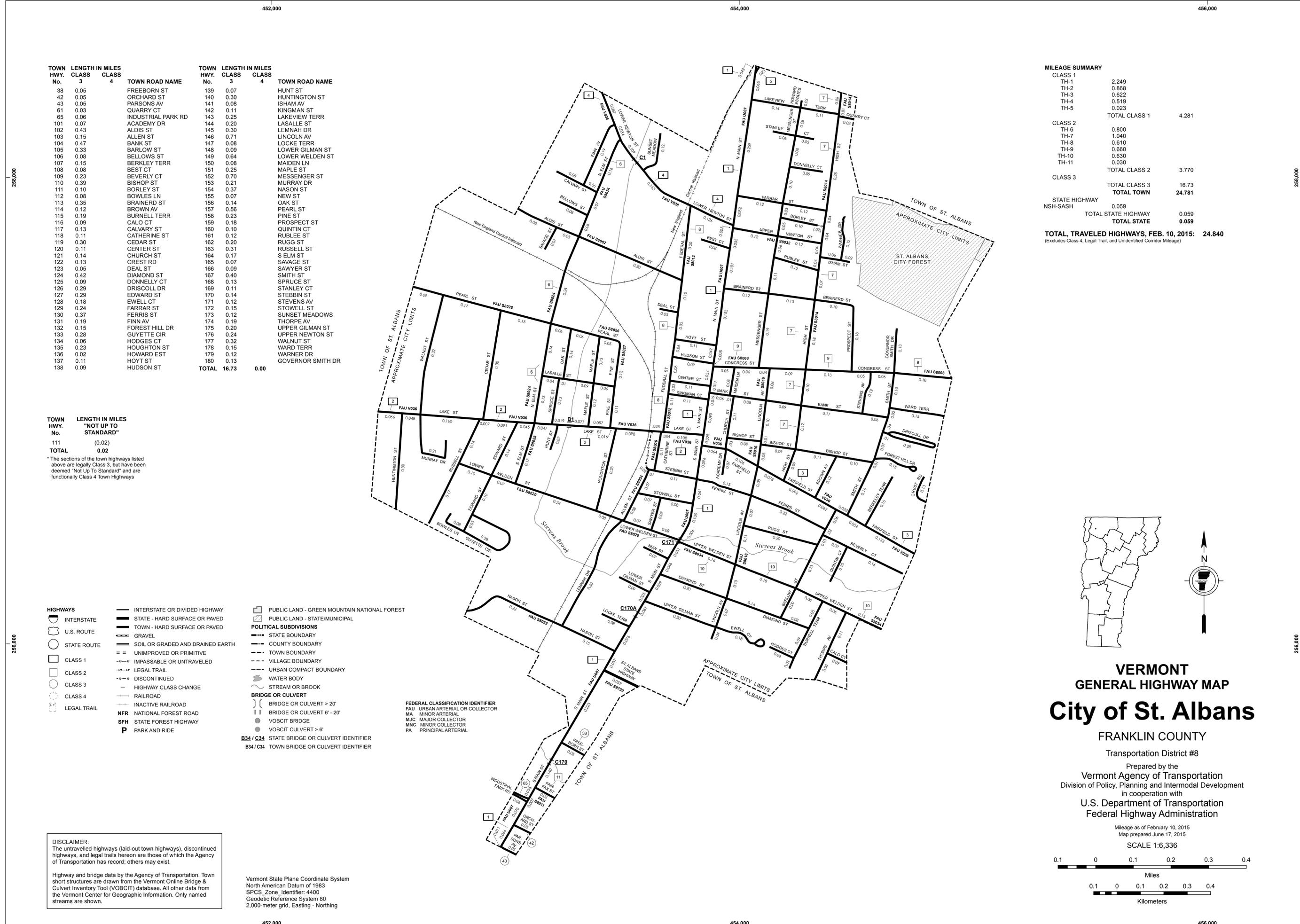


Table with 4 columns: TOWN HWY. No., LENGTH IN MILES CLASS 3, TOWN ROAD NAME, and TOWN HWY. No., LENGTH IN MILES CLASS 4. Lists 138 town roads and their classifications.

MILEAGE SUMMARY table showing totals for Class 1, Class 2, Class 3, State Highway, and Total Traveled Highways as of Feb. 10, 2015.

Table with 2 columns: TOWN HWY. No. and LENGTH IN MILES 'NOT UP TO STANDARD'. Lists 111 town highways.

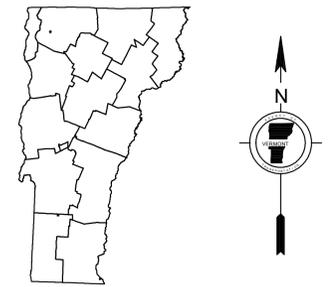
The sections of the town highways listed above are legally Class 3, but have been deemed 'Not Up To Standard' and are functionally Class 4 Town Highways

- Legend for HIGHWAYS, POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS, BRIDGE OR CULVERT, and FEDERAL CLASSIFICATION IDENTIFIER. Includes symbols for various road types, boundaries, and infrastructure.

DISCLAIMER: The untraveled highways (laid-out town highways), discontinued highways, and legal trails hereon are those of which the Agency of Transportation has record; others may exist.

Highway and bridge data by the Agency of Transportation. Town street structures are drawn from the Vermont Online Bridge & Culvert Inventory Tool (VOBCIT) database.

Vermont State Plane Coordinate System North American Datum of 1983 SPCS\_Zone\_Identifier: 4400 Geodetic Reference System 80 2,000-meter grid, Easting - Northing



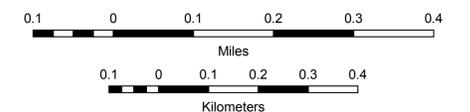
VERMONT GENERAL HIGHWAY MAP City of St. Albans

FRANKLIN COUNTY Transportation District #8

Prepared by the Vermont Agency of Transportation Division of Policy, Planning and Intermodal Development in cooperation with U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration

Mileage as of February 10, 2015 Map prepared June 17, 2015

SCALE 1:6,336



# Transportation



## LEGEND

- Existing Traffic Signal
- Possible Future Traffic Signal
- Possible Future Round-About
- - - Arterial
- - - Collector
- - - Local
- State Highway
- Class 1 Highway
- Class 2 Highway
- Class 3 Highway
- Federal Street Multi-Modal Connector
- Railroad
- City Boundary
- Downtown Streetscape Improvement Area

**Highway Functional Classification**  
As highway classification moves from Freeway to Arterial to Collector down to Local roads, the emphasis gradually shifts from mobility orientation to one of land access, and provides greater flexibility in design.

**State of Vermont Classification**  
**Class 1:** Form extensions of State Highways and are numbered as such.  
**Class 2:** Form connections from town to town, and/or carry a more significant volume of traffic than other roads in Town.  
**Class 3:** All other traveled roads receiving State Aid funds.

Vermont Coordinate System  
Transverse Mercator NAD 83.  
For planning purposes only.  
Prepared by:  
Northwest Regional  
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75 Fairfield Street  
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www.nwrpcvt.com  
February, 2017.

**Data Source:** All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages.  
North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

## **6.1 The City’s utilities, public works, and public safety services will benefit quality of life and be a source of pride to residents.**

### A. Objectives

1. The City will provide for or facilitate a full slate of public services, including street maintenance, fire and police protection, emergency medical services, schools, water supply, sewage, and solid waste disposal.
2. City workers will employ pleasant and constructive customer service.
3. City services are present, approachable and responsive to the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.
4. Police, Fire and Public Works will have adequate access to the equipment they need.

### B. Policies

1. Use public investments, including the construction or expansion of infrastructure, to reinforce the general character and planned growth patterns of the area.
2. Ensure that the public safety facilities and equipment enable the Police and Fire departments to operate at optimum levels of efficiency and effectiveness.
3. Pair construction and improvement of public works and public safety facilities with private redevelopment activities.
4. Adopt and use City regulations to properly manage solid waste collection.
5. Explore ways to conduct road maintenance in off hours when it would minimize traffic disruptions, reduce other construction nuisances, and yet still be cost-effective.

### C. Programs and Activities

1. Plan for future needs of public services and construct a capital improvement program accordingly.
2. Keep all City vehicles and equipment in excellent working and aesthetic condition.
3. Brand all City equipment with the City, Police, Fire, or other respective visuals.
4. Engage in a process to plan for and construct a new public safety facility and possibly and new public works facility, preferably paired with private redevelopment in the tax increment financing district.
5. Explore the development of a garbage collection ordinance and adopt such an ordinance if deemed beneficial to the City.
6. Ensure the useful life of the City water treatment and wastewater treatment facilities by planning for needed upgrades and expansions, and pursuing the necessary funding, including voter-approved bonds.
7. Implement an electronic application for reporting citizen concerns and requests.
8. Continue to evaluate the emergency response needs of the community and expand services and/or engage in regional efforts as appropriate.

## **6.2 City streets, sidewalks and facilities will efficiently and safely get people where they need to go and play a beneficial role in place-making.**

### A. Objectives

1. To provide for safe, convenient, economic and energy efficient transportation systems that respect the integrity of the natural environment, including public transit options and infrastructure for pedestrians and bicyclers.
2. The City will have good traffic circulation and traffic management, which limits congestion on City streets.
3. The physical state of City streets and associated infrastructure will be maintained in good condition.
4. City residents have access to a variety of self-transportation and public transit options.
5. Pedestrian accessibility and comfort and complete streets design is incorporated into planning for street and traffic improvements.

### B. Policies

1. Promote the use of arterial and collector roads for through traffic.
2. The rate of growth in the City will not exceed the ability of the community to provide facilities and services at a reasonable cost to the taxpayer.
3. City regulations will limit curb cut distances and widths on streets to promote safety, good circulation and accessibility for all modes of transportation.
4. Sidewalks will be clearly established, including across driveways, and kept free of obstruction in order to preserve the connectivity of the system.
5. Public parking is planned from a district wide basis taking advantage of shared parking resources.
6. The Federal Street Multi-Modal Connector, including reconfiguration of the Lake Street/federal Street/Catherine Street intersection and a new multi-modal center, is a priority transportation need for the City.
7. If real estate realities ever change, and in balance with other possible needs for the land, the City will be open to the idea of extending the Federal Street corridor along the “Fonda” property north of Lower Newton St.

### C. Programs and Activities

1. Use a capital budget and plan to prioritize capital needs identified in this plan and in other related documents or studies, and outline the timing and financing of needed improvements.
2. Monitor traffic impacts of new development, and consider the requirement of traffic impact studies.
3. Participate in inter-municipal and regional transportation planning to address regional traffic problems.
4. Monitor the condition of City streets and associated infrastructure through regular inventoring and assessment.
5. Include major transportation infrastructure improvement projects, as well as support for annual street and sidewalk reconstruction/maintenance, in the City’s Capital Budget and Planning Process.

6. Work with the railroad and rail siding users to maintain the condition of railroad crossings in the City. The Aldis Street crossing is in particular need of improvement, as of the adoption of this Plan.
7. Look for new opportunities to provide new street connections, or re-establish historical ones, across rail lines.
8. Rehabilitate the neighborhood sidewalk network and keep it in fair or good condition with focused maintenance.
9. Explore alternatives for connecting Federal St. with North Main St.

**Appendices at [www.StAlbansVT.com/CityPlan](http://www.StAlbansVT.com/CityPlan):**

- ✓ Plans for Federal Street Multi-Modal Connector

## Chapter 7. Community Resilience

For the purposes of our City Plan, community resilience is defined as the ability of our City and its residents and businesses to continue to prosper with only temporary set-backs in the event of disasters, hazards, or socio-economic challenges. Also, included in the definition of resilience is the ability of City residents to be able to provide themselves with basic needs, even during the course of hazards and challenges.

Our community resilience efforts currently focus on four main areas, some of which overlap:

- Hazard Mitigation
- Flood Resilience
- Environmental Sustainability
- Household Energy Resilience

### Hazard Mitigation Planning

In March of 2017, the City Council approved the City's first Hazard Mitigation Plan. A Hazard Mitigation Plan is required by the State of Vermont and FEMA before a community can access certain funds and resources for mitigation projects and after disasters. It is a good exercise in being aware of the potential unfortunate events that could occur in the City and prioritizing project to lessen the damage when disasters do occur. Unlike the emergency management or operations plans that are used in the event of a disaster, Hazard Mitigation Plans focus on what the City could do BEFORE a disaster.

The City's Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP), as amended will be considered a component of this chapter of the City Plan. Of particular relevance and usefulness are the following tables in the HMP:

- Table 5.2 Summary of Hazards and Impacts for City of St. Albans: summarizes possible hazards that the City could experience, their estimated frequency and severity, the amount of risk they pose to the City, the estimated potential losses in dollars, and particular areas of vulnerability.
- Table 7.1 City Policies and Plans that Mitigate Hazards: lists existing policies and plans, such as this City Plan, the Emergency Operations Plan, and the School Emergency Response Plan, their current status and potential role in hazard mitigation, and any gaps or needs to be addressed.
- Table 7.2 Implementation Schedule for Prioritized Mitigation Projects (included below).
- Attachment A. Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment: lists potential hazards, the impacted area, probability of occurrence, and degree of consequences.
- Attachment C. St. Albans City Priority Matrix: for the identified mitigation projects.

**From the 2017 Hazard Mitigation Plan: Table 7.2 Implementation Schedule for Prioritized Mitigation Projects**

*Note: In the table below, time frames are defined from the date of this plan (2017) as follows: Short term equals 6 months to one year. Medium term equals 1-3 years. Long term equals 4+ years.*

Score	Hazard Mitigated	Mitigation Action	Responsibility/Oversight	Funding/Support	Cost/Benefit	Time Frame	Initial Implementation Steps
32	Structure Fires, HazMat, Water/Waste Water Service Loss	Improve Water Main Lines, Valves and Waste Water Service Lines	Public Works Director, City Council	HMGP, State Agency of Natural Resources Water Infrastructure Financing Loan programs, local (capital budget)	High/High	Long – term (2016 – 2026)	On-going update of City's asset management inventory for water and wastewater infrastructure. Preliminary engineering planning studies (within 5 years).
31	Flooding, fluvial erosion.	Buyout Properties Prone to Flooding on Lower Welden Street	City Council, City Manager	HMGP, 406 Mitigation, local (capital budget)	High/High	Medium Term (2017-2020)	Consult with landowners ( 5 years) regarding buyout. Consult with state hazard mitigation officer (5 years) for feasibility of buyout.
31	Flooding	Stevens Brook Floodplain Terrace Project (300 feet) on Lower Welden	City Council, Public Works, City Manager	HMGP, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's Ecosystem Restoration Grant, local (capital budget)	High/High	Long-term (2017-2021)	Seek partnership with landowners. Work with VT Department of Environmental Conservation on developing hydraulic studies for corridor and RFP for project engineering design proposals. Seek funding.
29	All Hazards	Relocate City Public Safety Building	City Council, City Manager, Emergency Management Director	HMGP, 406 Mitigation, local (capital budget, bond vote)	High / High	Short-term (2017-2019)	Specifications determined. Grant writing.
28	All Hazards	Procure and install generator at Community Shelters. (BFA High School, St. Albans City Elementary )	City Council, Emergency Management Director, City Manager	HMGP, local (capital budget)	Medium / High	Short – term (2017-2019)	Determine generator size, switch type, and installation needs. Seek Public Safety grants for facility protection.
28	All Hazards	Procure and install generator at water system (Maquam)	City Council, Public Works, City Manager	HMGP, local (capital budget).	Medium / High	Short – term (2017-2019)	Determine generator size, switch type, and installation needs. Seek DHS grants, and state grants for facility protection.

Score	Hazard Mitigated	Mitigation Action	Responsibility/Oversight	Funding/Support	Cost/Benefit	Time Frame	Initial Implementation Steps
28	All Hazards	Procure and install generator at municipal water system (midway station)	City Council, Public Works, City Manager	HMGP, local (capital budget)	Medium / High	Short – term (2017-2019)	Determine generator size, switch type, and installation needs. Seek DHS grants, and state grants for facility protection.

## Flood Resilience

This is an area of special focus for the City Plan under State statute, and the Hazard Mitigation Plan is the most detailed source of information on this topic. The type of flooding, to which the City is most susceptible would be from streams, including Stevens, Rugg and Grice Brooks as well as any intermittent streams from Aldis Hill. The Flood Vulnerability map below shows the areas of City that are within 100-year and 500-year flood zones.

From the 2017 Hazard Mitigation Plan:

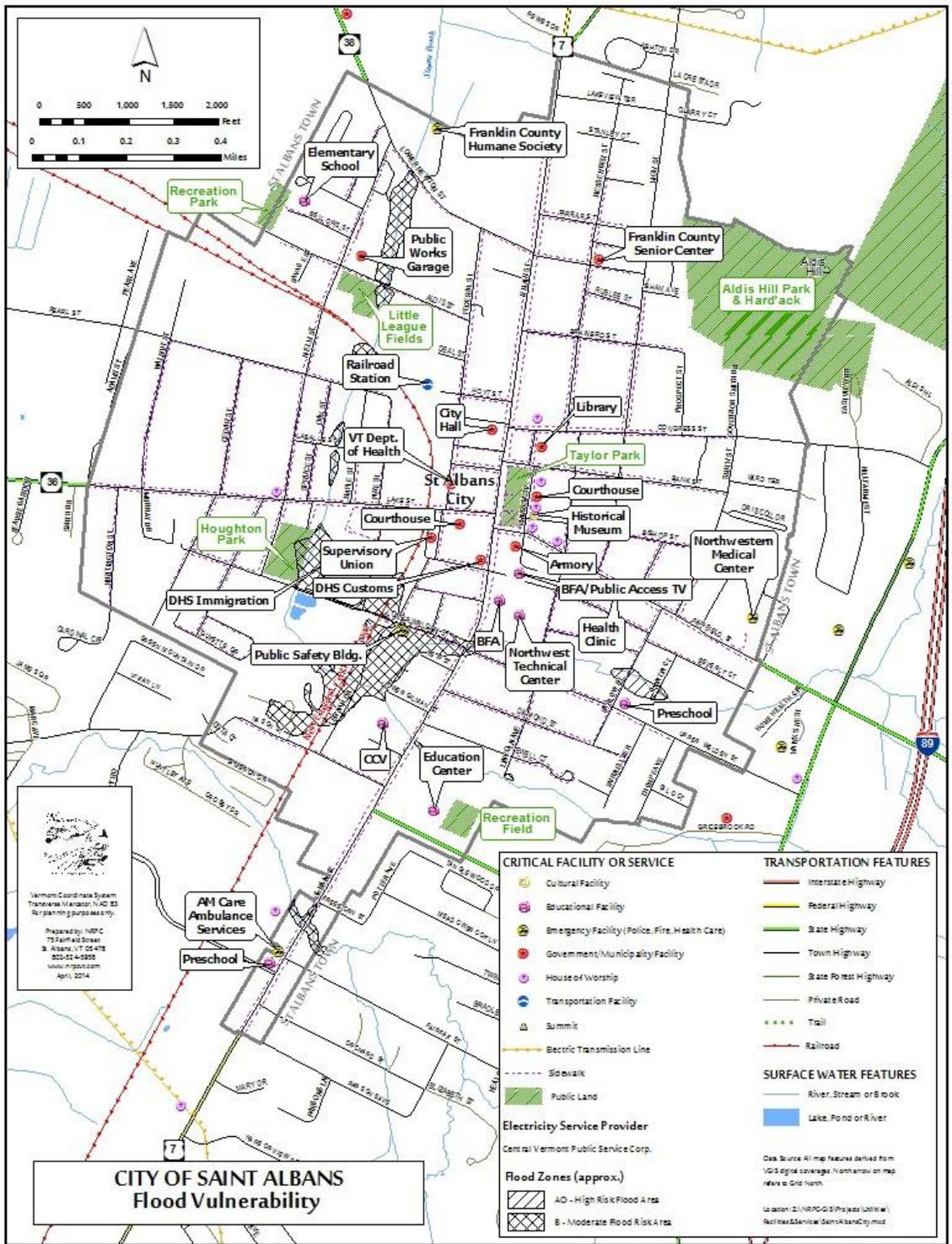
**Table 5.2 SUMMARY OF HAZARDS AND IMPACTS FOR CITY OF SAINT ALBANS**

Hazard Type	Frequency of Occurrence	Severity	Risk	Estimated Dollar Losses	Vulnerability
Flooding	Frequent	Limited to Catastrophic	Moderate	\$3,118,508.24	Roads, bridges, residences.

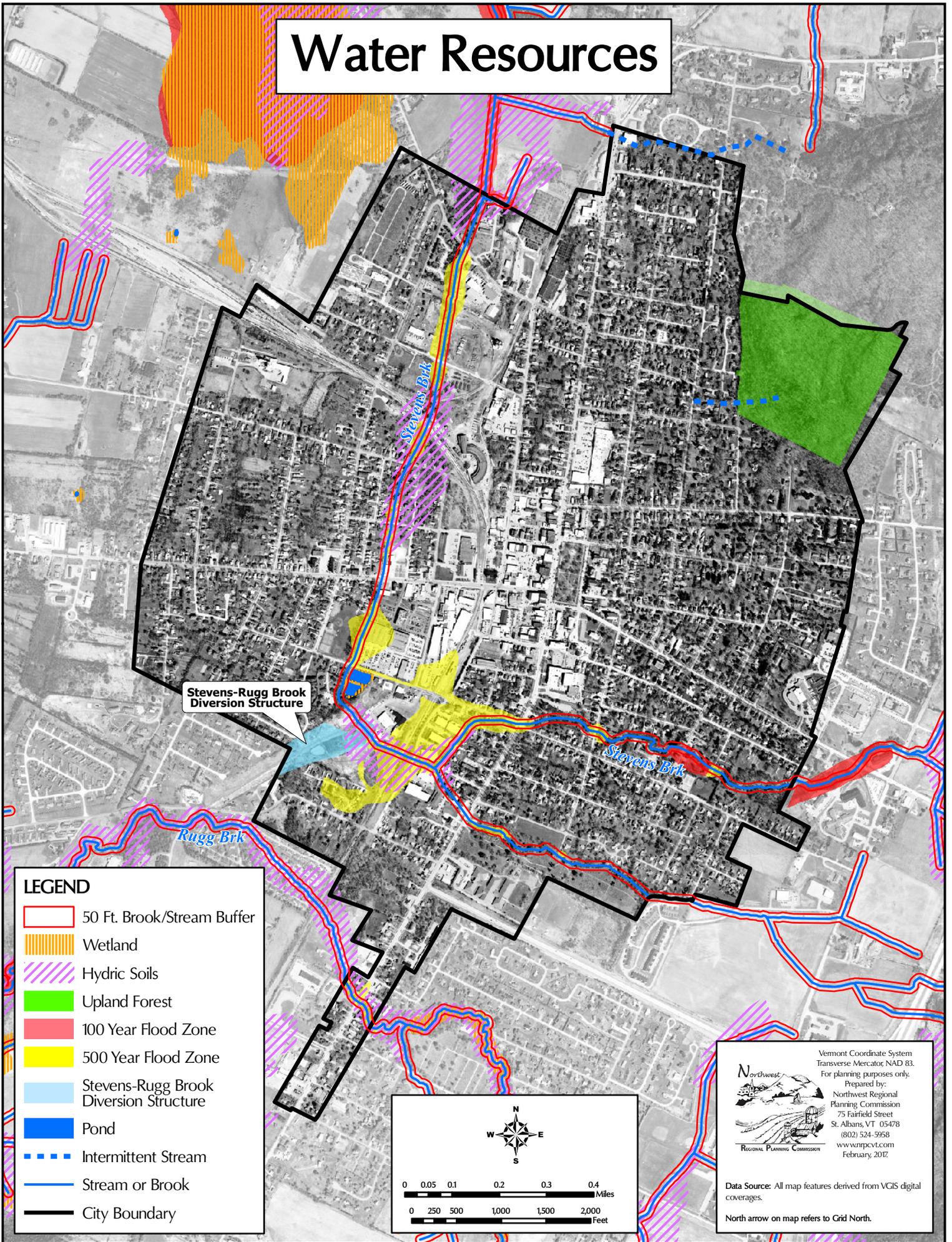
The City’s Land Development Regulations include flood hazard regulations that are meant to prevent any further development within the small 100-year flood zone. This will limit any property damage or loss of life during a flood event. Furthermore, the City is required by its Municipal Separated Storm Sewer permit to adopt regulations that would protect all stream corridors in the community and prevent further development along all of the brooks.

Three projects in HMP Table 7.2 above would directly address flooding issues:

- Buyout of Properties Prone to Flooding on Lower Welden Street
- Stevens Brook Floodplain Terrace Project (300 feet) on Lower Welden
- Relocate City Public Safety Building

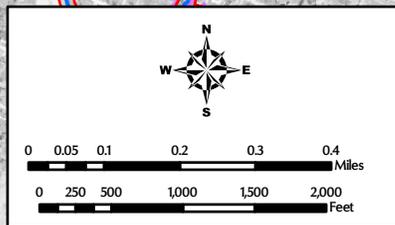


# Water Resources



## LEGEND

-  50 Ft. Brook/Stream Buffer
-  Wetland
-  Hydric Soils
-  Upland Forest
-  100 Year Flood Zone
-  500 Year Flood Zone
-  Stevens-Rugg Brook Diversion Structure
-  Pond
-  Intermittent Stream
-  Stream or Brook
-  City Boundary




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 North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

## **Environmental Sustainability**

Environmental degradation can affect the resilience of our City when our natural resources become unhealthy to the point of limiting the ability of residents to thrive and discouraging economic activity. Environmental requirements and costs associated with natural resource degradation can also affect the City's ability to operate within the means of taxpayers to provide the necessary funding.

The City currently enjoys ample green spaces within our parks, lawns, and greenbelts. There is an enjoyable and beneficial tree canopy that spans the public and private lands within our community. In addition, Aldis Hill represents an area of contiguous forest; the City's only such area, in fact. In order to maintain ample green space in the City, this includes policies and programs to restrict lot coverages in most areas and encourage lawns, to protect greenbelts from erosion, and to plan for the City's parks. For the purposes of a healthy tree canopy, the City now also has a tree inventory and Urban Forest Strategic Action Plan. Chapter 8 proposes new land use districts for Aldis Hill and educational and recreational properties that will better reflect the current status of these areas and the role they serve as forests and green space.

The City has recently begun planning and activities associated with stormwater management. This is an issue with impacts inside and outside the City, such as the algae blooms in St. Albans Bay. Storm run-off from impervious surfaces in the City can lead to pollution in the form of sediments and substances in the water as well as the erosive effect of high flows. Impervious surfaces also focus water supply to local streams during storm events, rather than through gradual groundwater infiltration, so brooks in urban areas are more likely to be dry when there are no rain events.

The City's stormwater system is allowed to discharge to Stevens and Rugg Brooks under a Municipal Separated Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit, which sets federal and state requirements and is issued by the VT Dept. of Environment Conservation (VT DEC). An MS4 permit is required because certain sections of Stevens and Rugg Brooks are considered impaired, i.e. external factors are suppressing the viability of organisms in the streams (maps of the contributing watersheds are included in the online appendices). Eventually the State of Vermont will revise the City's permit to also include the reduction of phosphorous loads into the Lake Champlain watershed, as determined by the Lake's Total Maximum Daily Load plan. The City's MS4 permit requires minimum control measures and other items related to planning, outreach, and implementation for stormwater treatment. Current the following three documents contain the City's plans for complying with the MS4 permit:

### **Stormwater Management Program**

The City's Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) is updated as needed and submitted to VT DEC for approval after a public comment period. The current SWMP includes, and is not limited to, the following activities:

- Engage in local stormwater education activities (ongoing).
  - Participate in a regional stormwater education program.
  - Maintain a stormwater website.

- Assist schools with stormwater-related curricula.
- Organize workshops and clean-up events.
- Monitor for illicit discharges to the stormwater system and eliminate if found (ongoing).
- Ensure that City construction activities comply with erosion-control and stormwater management standards (ongoing).
- Adopt a stormwater ordinance that regulates certain private development during and post-construction (2017).
- Adopt regulations that protect stream corridors (2017).
- Clean and maintain the storm system, including incorporated treatment systems (ongoing).
- Maintain staff training (ongoing).
- Development and implement flow restoration plans for Stevens and Rugg Brooks (submitted in 2016).

### **Flow Restoration Plan for Rugg Brook**

In order to remove the impairment of a stretch of Rugg Brook, the State would like storm flows to Rugg Brook to be reduced by at least 15% and for flows outside rain events to be increased by nearly 17%. This would reduce the run-off sediments impairing the brook while also maintaining healthy water levels. The City has been given twenty years by the State to achieve these flow goals.

The Flow Restoration Plan (FRP) for Rugg Brook contains a watershed-wide analysis of options and includes flow reduction projects for both the City and Town of St. Albans and VTrans. The City's projects are estimated by the FRP to cost more than \$500,000 and would include:

- The construction of a detention facility at the southern end of the Lemnah Dr. / Nason St. intersection. This facility would treat flows from the east, including portions of the St. Albans State Highway and the St. Albans Town Education Center.
- Three infiltration areas along the right-of-way of So. Main St.
- An infiltration area on private property on So. Main St.

The FRP contains a timeline and financial plan for these projects.

### **Flow Restoration Plan for Stevens Brook**

Concerning Stevens Brook, the State would like storm flows to be reduced by at least 24% and for flows outside rain events to be increased by at least 24%. As with Rugg Brook, the City has been given twenty years by the State to achieve these flow goals. Unlike the Rugg Brook situation, most of the Stevens Brook watershed's impervious area is in the City, versus in the Town of St. Albans or on VTrans land.

The Stevens Brook FRP contains a similar watershed-wide analysis of options and includes flow reduction projects for both the City and Town of St. Albans and VTrans. The City's twelve projects for Stevens Brook are estimated to cost more than \$5 million and would include:

- Expanding the capacity of the stormwater facility at St. Albans Town Education Center.
- Treating stormwater in the piece of land along the western side of Lemnah Dr.
- Building a stormwater treatment facility near Rewes Dr. in the Town of St. Albans to treat run-off from areas in the City.

- Retrofitting the cooling pond area owned by Green Mountain Power on Lower Welden St.

As with Rugg Brook, the Stevens Brook FRP contains a timeline and financial plan for these projects. The challenge faced in implementing this FRP is illustrated by the fact that 96% of the treatable impervious acres would require land that the City doesn't currently own for projects and that more than 26% of those treatable impervious acres would have to be treated by projects located entirely outside of the City limits.

### Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The two behavior-types of City residents that can best be linked to greenhouse gas emissions are vehicle use and home heating fuel.

Composting also helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. City residents are served by Northwest Solid Waste District and Hudak's farm store, which both accept food scrap on site. NWSWD also provides home composting equipment/assistance and is piloting a home food scrap curb-side pickup service in the City.

The below table shows that City households rely heavily on fossil fuels for heat and at a higher rate than the rest of the county and state, primarily due to the lack of wood heat used.

### Home Heating Fuel

	Vermont		Franklin County		St. Albans City	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
<b>Total:</b>	257,167	100.0%	18,685	100.0%	2,876	100.0%
<b>Utility gas</b>	42,451	16.5%	4,364	23.4%	1,897	66.0%
<b>Bottled, tank, or LP gas</b>	39,021	15.2%	2,325	12.4%	121	4.2%
<b>Electricity</b>	11,889	4.6%	364	1.9%	131	4.6%
<b>Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.</b>	114,826	44.7%	7,804	41.8%	598	20.8%
<b>Coal or coke</b>	662	0.3%	15	0.1%	0	0.0%
<b>Wood</b>	43,833	17.0%	3,504	18.8%	89	3.1%
<b>Solar energy</b>	197	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Other fuel</b>	3,755	1.5%	290	1.6%	31	1.1%
<b>No fuel used</b>	533	0.2%	19	0.1%	9	0.3%

Source: Table B25040, 2011-2015 ACS, U.S. Census Bureau. Note that margins of error are not shown.

Included in the online appendices is commuting data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. This data shows that 77% of City commuters drove alone to a vehicle to get to work in the period between 2011-2015, and only 12% carpooled. However, these numbers are comparable to the county and state figures. Under 2% of City commuters reported using public transportation to get to work, but the number is actually higher than the county and state figures.

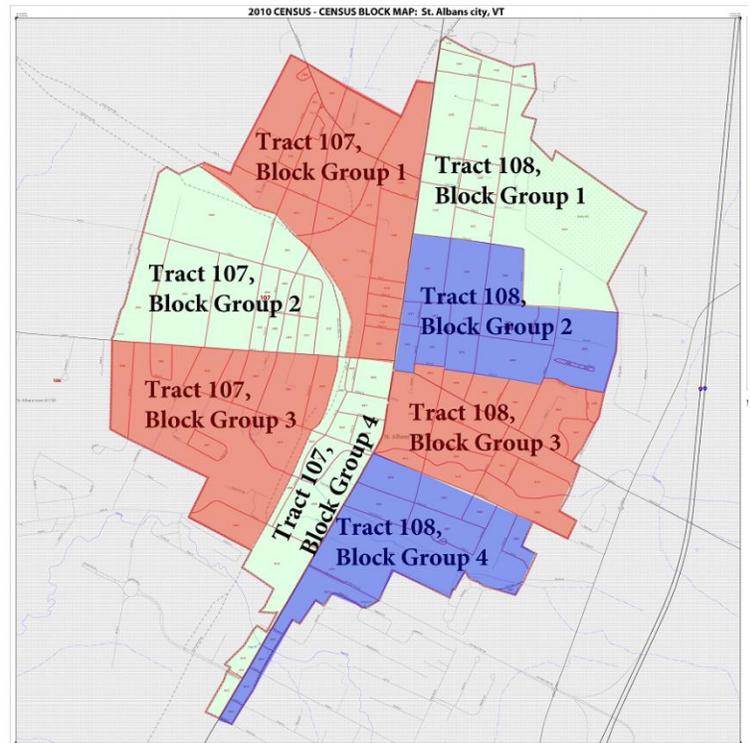
In terms of distance to work, there is an interesting paradox: regardless of the many employment opportunities offered in the City, local commuters are more likely to work outside their county of residence (39%) than the overall county and state figures. Perhaps more exploration could go

into why more City residents don't work locally. The 2015 Housing Study revealed a similar dynamic in its commuting analysis.

Electric vehicles have potential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, depending on the source of electricity. There is a role for the City of St. Albans in helping to provide a “corridor” of electric vehicle charging stations from Vermont’s northern border, through the City, south to Burlington, and beyond. Currently there are four level-2 chargers in the City, located in the parking garage. There are potential plans to add another charger, possibly level-3, to the City Hall parking lot.

## Household Energy Resilience

An important aspect of community resilience is the ability of households to acquire the energy needed for their basic needs and quality of life. In July of 2016 Efficiency Vermont published *Mapping Total Energy Burden in Vermont*, which revealed that at least one Census block group in St. Albans City experienced high energy burdens. The study’s analysis was based on a comparison of regional and local average energy costs with Census income data for each block group. Block group 1 of Census tract 107, which is basically one half of the City’s northwest quadrant, ranked fifth in the state for thermal energy burden, first for electricity burden and transportation burden, and second for overall energy burden.



The table below shows that the estimated total energy burden of households in Tract 107, Block Group 1 is more than 25% of median income. The other City’s block groups are included for comparison.

### City Block Group Energy Burden Table

Census block group ID	Thermal Energy Annual spending	as % of median income	Electricity Annual spending	as % of median income	Transportation Energy Annual Spending	as % of median income	Total Energy Annual Spending	as % of median income
Tract 107, Block Group 1	\$716	4.8%	\$1,098	7.3%	\$1,944	13.0%	\$3,758	25.1%
Tract 107, Block Group 2	\$823	2.0%	\$1,098	2.6%	\$2,171	5.2%	\$4,091	9.7%
Tract 107, Block Group 3	\$1,552	2.0%	\$1,098	1.4%	\$2,422	3.2%	\$5,071	6.7%
Tract 107, Block Group 4	\$529	1.9%	\$1,098	4.0%	\$2,000	7.3%	\$3,627	13.3%
Tract 108, Block Group 1	\$1,087	1.5%	\$1,098	1.5%	\$2,306	3.2%	\$4,491	6.2%

Census block group ID	Thermal Energy Annual spending	as % of median income	Electricity Annual spending	as % of median income	Transportation Energy Annual Spending	as % of median income	Total Energy Annual Spending	as % of median income
Tract 108, Block Group 2	\$768	1.6%	\$1,098	2.3%	\$2,086	4.3%	\$3,951	8.2%
Tract 108, Block Group 3	\$894	1.7%	\$1,098	2.0%	\$2,108	3.9%	\$4,100	7.6%
Tract 108, Block Group 4	\$833	1.5%	\$1,098	2.0%	\$2,216	4.0%	\$4,146	7.5%

**Source: Efficiency Vermont, Mapping Total Energy Burden in Vermont, July 2016**

There are many existing programs that could help City household with energy use and burden, mostly through electricity and heating efficiency. Most programs provide low-interest or deferred financing for retrofits of existing housing, such as insulation, energy-efficient fixtures, heating equipment, etc. Organizations that provide such assistance include Efficiency Vermont, Vermont Gas, and the Champlain Housing Trust.

## **7.1 Public services and private property in the City will be resilient in the face of natural events and economic challenges.**

### A. Objectives

1. Mitigate the damage that could be caused by natural and economic hazards.
2. Protect property damage and stream equilibrium through effective stream corridor management.

### B. Policies

1. City regulations will limit further development of stream corridors and limit disruption of riparian buffers.
2. Support the development of clean and renewable energy generation facilities inside and outside of the City that do not detract from the character and form of the area.
3. Support energy efficient investments in street lighting, including LED.
4. Promote transportation energy conservation through efficient modes of travel and travel patterns.
5. The interests of urban redevelopment and flood resiliency shall be balanced in floor regulations or as flood hazard areas are updated or delineated.

### C. Programs and Activities

1. Maintain energy efficient municipal buildings and infrastructure.
2. Participate in the Public Service Board hearings to ensure that the City's interests are represented.
3. Utilize planning, outreach and municipal activities to limit the cost burdens of water quality requirements, including compliance with the City's MS4 permit and CSO order.
4. Update the City's Hazard Mitigation Plan on a regular basis and pursue the projects identified within.

5. Maintain and enforce flood hazard regulations in compliance with federal and state rules, at the least, and update as needed.
6. Adopt stream corridor protection rules.

## **7.2 We will increase the environmental sustainability of public and private infrastructure in the City.**

### **A. Objectives**

1. Decrease the amount of water and air pollution from properties and activities in the City.
2. To identify, protect, and preserve significant natural and fragile areas; outstanding water resources, including stream corridors, aquifers, and wetlands; and significant scenic views.
3. To maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, vegetation, and other land resources.
4. Make efficient use of energy, provide for the development of renewable energy resources, and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

### **B. Policies**

1. The quality of air, water, and land resources in St. Albans City is protected through development regulations.
2. Key natural features such as Aldis Hill, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, floodplains, streambanks, and local waterways are protected from the impacts of development.
3. Runoff and erosion shall be controlled during all phases of construction.
4. City ordinances and regulations will prevent and discourage the deterioration of lawn and turf areas, both public and private, due to parking or other activities.
5. The City values its tree canopy and will enhance it.
6. The City will advocate for sensible state and federal stormwater policies that do not contribute to a disproportionate cost burden for redevelopment and new development in Vermont's urban areas.
7. Ensure responsible management of City stormwater infrastructure and seek to limit stormwater runoff as a non-point source of water pollution.
8. The City will collaborate with other organizations and private property owners on treatment of stormwater.
9. Building code enforcement will have benefits beyond fire safety, and the City will act when contributing buildings are found to be in states of neglect, in order to help preserve historic structures and prevent unnecessary losses in property value.
10. City regulations will maintain lot coverage requirements that provide for areas on parcels that cannot be impervious and that encourage greenspace, except within the commercial core area.
11. Support the concept of a corridor of electric vehicle charging stations from Vermont's northern border, through the City and beyond.
12. The City will support efforts to comply with State recycling and composting requirements while also addressing issues of neighborhood quality of life.

13. The City will support programs that provide technical assistance, grants, and low interest loans for residential and commercial energy efficiency upgrades.
14. Property line setbacks in the City of St. Albans are implemented for the purposes of public safety, emergency access, aesthetics, quality of life, and avoidance of visual nuisances. Ground-mounted solar panels and solar canopies (also including solar plants as defined in 30 V.S.A. § 8002) shall be set back from property lines by at least 10 feet, or as otherwise required by 30 V.S.A. § 248(s), whichever distance is longer.
15. Ground-mounted solar panels and solar canopies (also including ground-mounted solar plants as defined in 30 V.S.A. § 8002) shall not extend any higher than 17 feet from the ground, except for solar canopies mounted over vehicular travel areas, which can therefore be up to 24 feet tall.
16. Solar panels (also including solar plants as defined in 30 V.S.A. § 8002) mounted to the roofs of principal buildings and accessory structures shall also be regulated for the purposes of aesthetics and avoidance of visual nuisances. Roof-mounted solar panels must comply with one of the following standards:
  - i. the solar panels do not extend farther than two feet above the roof surface and are mounted so as to match the degree of incline of the roof, or
  - ii. the solar panels are located or screened so that they cannot be seen from the public right-of-way or neighboring properties by a person standing at 6 feet in height within 50 feet of the building.
17. Solar panels (also including solar plants as defined in 30 V.S.A. § 8002) mounted to the roofs of accessory structures shall not extend any higher than 17 feet from the ground.

#### C. Programs and Activities

1. Taylor Park and other green spaces will be optimized for their role in storing and treating stormwater run-off in the City.
2. Pursue a stormwater program to house the functions of stormwater outreach, technical assistance for private property, management of stormwater from City infrastructure, and the construction and maintenance of new stormwater treatment facilities.
3. Explore a stormwater utility as a means to fund a stormwater program.
4. Pursue projects and funding to reduce the stormwater flowing into the combined sewer system.
5. Actively engage in the State's Tactical Basin Planning process.
6. Use residential and commercial building code enforcement to help prevent fire events, ensure the safety of occupants and property, and to provide knowledge of when contributing structures are in states of neglect.
7. Make use of opportunities to add electric vehicle charging stations to public parking sites.
8. Adopt an ordinance or other policies for the management of erosion and the mitigation of stormwater pollution during and after public and private construction activities in the City.
9. Implement a tree program with funds and staff expertise to inventory City trees, identify trees that need monitoring, remove public safety hazards and nuisance

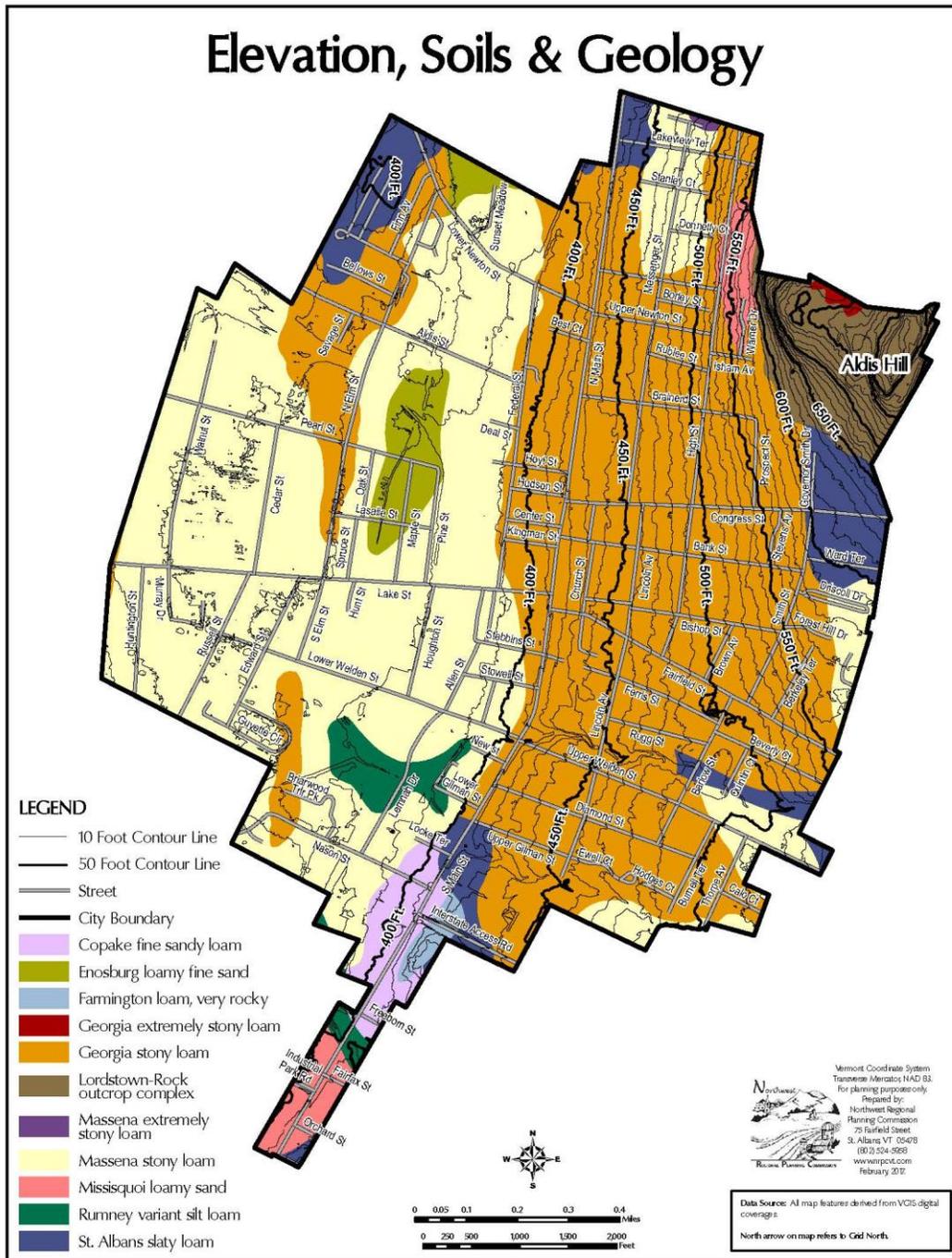
trees, and annually install new or replacement trees using methods to identify optimal species and locations.

**Appendices at [www.StAlbansVT/CityPlan](http://www.StAlbansVT/CityPlan):**

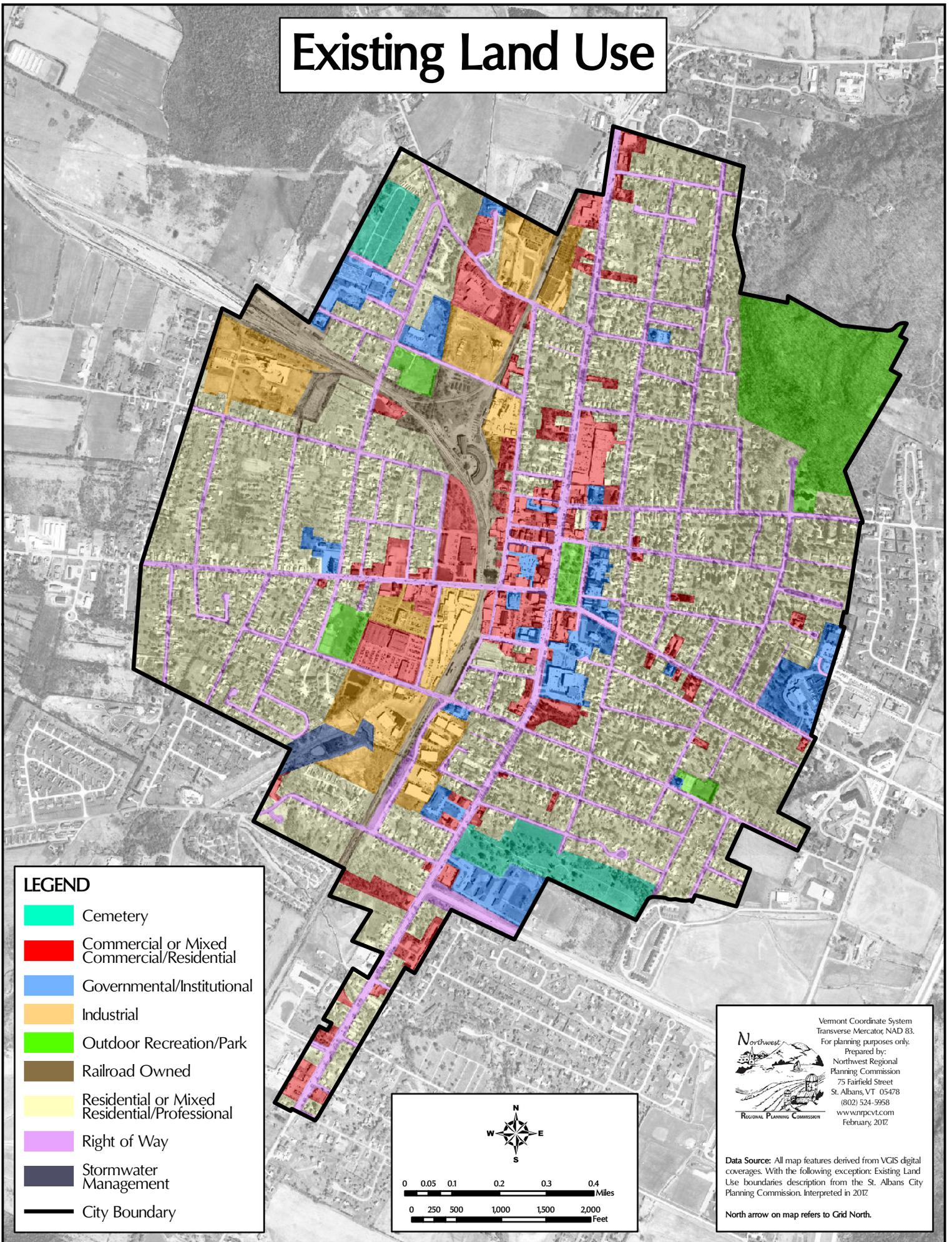
- ✓ Hazard Mitigation Plan
- ✓ City of St. Albans Urban Forest Strategic Action Plan
- ✓ Maps of Impaired Areas of Stevens and Rugg Brooks
- ✓ Stormwater Management Program
- ✓ Rugg Brook Flow Restoration Plan
- ✓ Stevens Brook Flow Restoration Plan
- ✓ Commuting Data from American Community Survey

# Chapter 8. Mapping Our City's Future

As reflected in its name, this chapter is dominated by maps associated with existing and proposed land uses in the City. In the following pages you will find a map for the underlying geology of the City, a map of existing land use types, a map of proposed land uses, and a map of proposed design review districts. The latter two maps are referenced as part of the Planning Goal this this chapter.

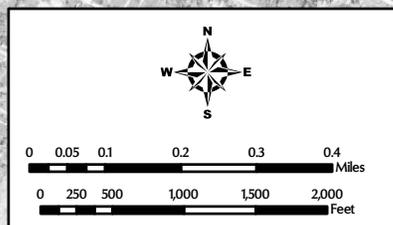


# Existing Land Use



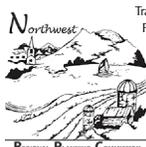
## LEGEND

- Cemetery
- Commercial or Mixed Commercial/Residential
- Governmental/Institutional
- Industrial
- Outdoor Recreation/Park
- Railroad Owned
- Residential or Mixed Residential/Professional
- Right of Way
- Stormwater Management
- City Boundary



Vermont Coordinate System  
Transverse Mercator; NAD 83.  
For planning purposes only.

Prepared by:  
Northwest Regional  
Planning Commission  
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February, 2017.



REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

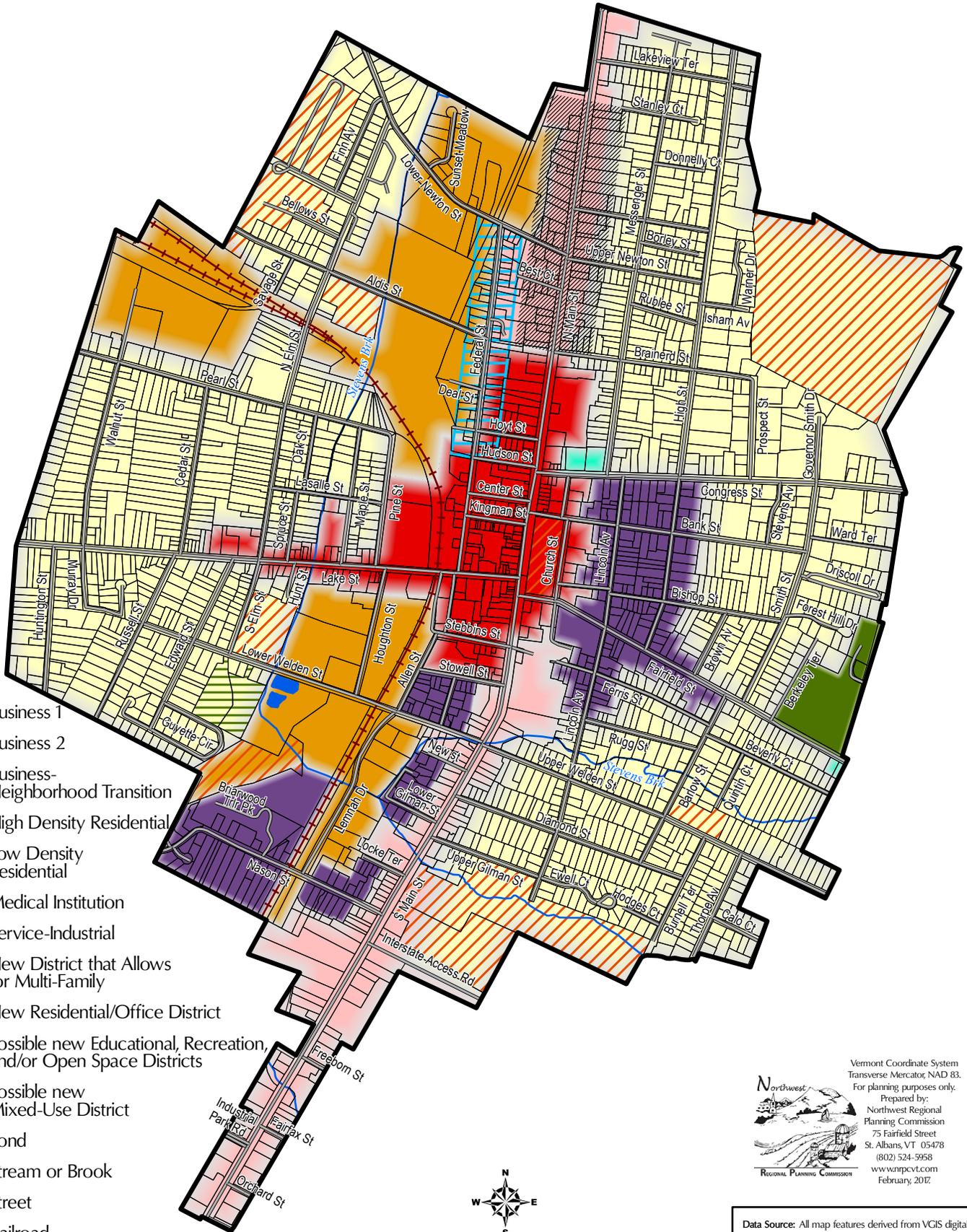
Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. With the following exception: Existing Land Use boundaries description from the St. Albans City Planning Commission. Interpreted in 2017.

North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

# Proposed Land Use

## LEGEND

- Business 1
- Business 2
- Business-Neighborhood Transition
- High Density Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Medical Institution
- Service-Industrial
- New District that Allows for Multi-Family
- New Residential/Office District
- Possible new Educational, Recreation, and/or Open Space Districts
- Possible new Mixed-Use District
- Pond
- Stream or Brook
- Street
- Railroad
- Parcel Line
- City Boundary



Vermont Coordinate System  
 Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.  
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Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. With the following exception: Proposed Land Use boundaries description from the St. Albans City Planning Commission. Interpreted in 2017.

North arrow on map refers to Grid North.



## **8.1 This is our plan for future land use in the City**

This planning goals includes the preceding maps for Proposed Land Use and Proposed Design Review Districts. For interpretation of the two maps, here are descriptions of the current land use and design review types from the current Land Development Regulations:

### **Land Use Types**

#### **Low Density Residential**

The intent of this district is to maintain within the City a pleasant and uncrowded residential area, and to encourage appropriate development and/or redevelopment that will complement the existing residential land use. This area shall be primarily for single-family dwellings, along with accessory uses. A variety of other residential uses, along with selected non-residential uses may be allowed as conditional uses, provided they meet all applicable standards and can be shown to be compatible with the district's objectives.

#### **High Density Residential**

The intent of this district is to provide an area within the City for moderately dense residential development and growth, while maintaining a safe and healthy atmosphere for the district's residents. Single-family dwellings shall be permitted uses within this district, along with accessory uses. A variety of other residential uses, along with selected non-residential uses may be allowed as conditional uses, provided they meet all applicable standards and can be shown to be compatible with the district's objectives.

#### **Business-Neighborhood Transition**

This intent of this district is to provide an area of transition between commercial areas and other residential districts. This district maintains the densities, dimensional standards, and character of a pleasant and uncrowded residential area and allows the types of uses that would historically be found where business districts transition into residential areas. Single-family and duplex residential uses are allowed, along with selected non-residential uses as conditional uses, provided they meet all applicable standards and can be shown to be compatible with the district's objectives.

#### **Business 1 - Central Business Subdistrict**

It is the intent of this district to provide for a diverse range of business and service uses within the traditional business center of the City. The subdistrict is intended to protect and enhance the function of the downtown area as the primary commercial, financial, retail and governmental center of the region. It is designed to accommodate a wide variety of commercial activities, particularly those which benefit from pedestrian activity and access.

#### **Business 2 – Transitional Business Subdistrict**

It is the intent of this district to provide for the location of a wide range of business activities. These activities support the function of St. Albans as the primary business center in the region and provide a wide range of goods and services for local and regional needs outside the downtown area. These areas are convenient to customers, preserve the carrying capacity of

streets and require the provision of off-street parking and loading.

### **Medical Institution District**

It is the intent of this district to provide a suitable location for health services of regional importance and associated uses. The district is currently dominated by the Northwestern Medical Center hospital. This district provides good transportation and infrastructure access.

### **Service-Industrial District**

It is the intent of this district to provide for the location of a wide variety of service, industrial, manufacturing, distribution and research facilities providing employment opportunities and broadening of the tax base of the City. These locations provide good transportation and infrastructure access.

## **Design Review Types**

### **DR1 – Traditional Downtown**

Established to maintain and preserve the unique historic character and function of the City's downtown and central business district. Architecture shall reflect historic forms and materials and adaptive re-use of historic architecture is strongly encouraged. Infill, renovation and revitalization of the City's core shall respect and preserve the "main street" character, walk ability, public spaces and the sharing of parking and other public infrastructure, which reflects the historic urban form of the City. The district places emphasis on and the preservation of historic resources and the character of the historic downtown as a part of a vibrant central business district. Buildings in the DR1 are mixed-use with premium local and regional boutique retail uses and entertainment establishments, fostering a multicultural environment. Residential or office use above the ground floor is encouraged.

### **DR2 – Downtown Expansion**

The intent is to recognize an area suitable for the expansion of downtown commercial and mixed-use developments, which expands the synergy of the Traditional Downtown district. Buildings in the DR2 district are mixed-use developments, housing street front retail and restaurant services with residential and office use above the ground floor, where feasible. Architecture of a historic nature shall be used in conjunction with contemporary designs. Architecture should reflect historic forms and materials and adaptive re-use of historic architecture is encouraged. New structures and additions or alterations to existing structures shall be designed in a manner that is harmonious with, or complements the scale, massing, height, proportions, roof pitch, window style and placement, materials, color and design of surrounding historic structures and significant buildings of architectural merit. Strong pedestrian access to neighboring uses and districts shall be developed and maintained. Parking lots and structures are to be located away or discreetly screened from street view.

### **DR3 – Residential**

Provides residential housing adjacent to the traditional downtown and is intended for the preservation and enhancement of its historic pattern, architectural scale and green space. It is characterized by dense, compact development with a mix of housing types. Similar setbacks, footprints, scale, mass and height are expected to continue. Existing vegetation and the

pedestrian-oriented environment shall be maintained. Emphasis shall be placed on the preservation of the tree lined boulevard quality of Main Street and the surrounding streetscape. Low-intensity business activity is permitted at residential scale, which includes home occupations or professional offices that are unobtrusive and fit within the character of the neighborhood. New development and redevelopment in these neighborhoods shall reflect the existing and desirable patterns of size, scale, footprint and massing as well as historic architectural patterns and materials.

#### **DR4 – Gateway**

Provides a higher standard of appearance for corridors that serve as the main entrances into the downtown area and shall complement and anticipate the historic core of the City. Buildings, architectural styles, and design features shall create a memorable and positive first impression upon entering the City, to establish an image and character that is uniquely St. Alban's, as well as to fulfill the service demands of nearby neighborhoods, residents, and visitors. New construction, conversions or rehabilitation of existing structures should continue existing historic scale and setbacks. Site plans shall reference and relate to the historic greenbelt and provide creatively screened and located parking areas.

#### **Conservation of natural resources and rare features.**

According to the Vermont Natural Resources Atlas at <http://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/anra5>, there are no known rare, threatened, or endangered species or “significant natural communities” located in St. Albans City. The site does identify the forested Aldis Hill trail area as a portion of habitat block #490 with a weighted score of 3. Also, the atlas notes two 1997 sightings of uncommon vertebrate animals; one near Stevens Brook at Aldis Street in the wooded area east of the Public Works Garage (SF\_ID 9294) and one near Stevens Brook where it takes a turn to the north at the old GMP cooling ponds behind Lower Welden St. (SF\_ID 9295). The habitat block and the areas of the uncommon sightings will be addressed by proposed regulations to preserve the Aldis Hill area trail and protect stream corridors.

There are currently no known or permitted active natural resource extraction operations in the City of St. Albans, whether they be geological, silvicultural, or involving groundwater. Due to the built-out nature of the City, high development densities, and need to preserve the remaining forested and natural areas, this Plan recommends that such operations not be permitted in the City, to the fullest extent possible. The City Ordinances currently prohibit groundwater extraction within the City limits.

### **Objectives, Policies and Programs**

#### **A. Objectives**

1. Plan and regulate development so as to maintain the City’s historic settlement pattern of a compact urban center.
2. Continue has an example of smart growth, with residential and commercial development concentrated in our community center and strip development avoided.

3. Maintain the City's Designated Growth Center and concentrate development there.
4. Highlight areas between land use districts and explore whether they merit their own transitional district type, such as the Business-Neighborhood Transition District.
5. Maintain the historic, unique, and/or pedestrian-scale form of areas of the City and improve and preserve a welcome and well-maintained gateway aesthetic along the major approaches to the City.

#### B. Policies

1. The City will implement the Proposed Land Use and Design Review District maps above, explore changes in the areas indicated, and amend the Land Development Regulations accordingly.
2. The City will enforce land use regulations in a fair, responsive, and customer-service oriented manner.
3. The City's land use districts will reflect a community with an approximate north-south axis of mixed-use commercial development, a vibrant urban core, and surrounding residential neighborhoods.
4. Amendments to City regulations will favor decreasing existing densities in the residential areas and increasing them in the commercial areas, where appropriate.
5. The City will avoid the creation of legal nonconformities when revising the rules governing land use districts.
6. The City will explore transitional land use districts along the boundaries of existing districts that exhibit opposing degrees of density of use (high vs. low) and type of use (commercial/industrial vs. residential). This is why the lines between districts are blurred in the Proposed Land Use Map. One example of this policy would be the creation of High Density Residential Districts, or similar, in areas where the Business-1 and Low Density Residential District currently border each other.
7. The primary purposes of the current Low Density Residential and High Density Residential Districts (LDRD and HDRD) are to provide for appropriate neighborhood-form residential areas. As changes are made to the land use districts for other parcels, the City will look for opportunities to remove nonresidential land uses from the LDRD and HDRD without creating new legal nonconformities.
8. Discourage and perhaps prohibit commercial natural resources extraction in the City, including forestry and groundwater, with limited provisions for forestland management.

#### C. Programs and Activities

1. Regularly update the City Planning Commission on approved land use permits, especially in cases where the intent of objectives and policies is not being met
2. Procure permitting software for the City that will keep digital copies of all relevant property information and aid in multiple aspects of land use regulation.

3. Explore a re-naming of the residential districts as well as the classification of a third residential district to better match the densities and character of existing neighborhoods.
4. Explore the prohibition of commercial natural resources extraction in the City, with limited provisions for forestland management and other necessary considerations.

**Appendices at [www.StAlbansVT.com/CityPlan](http://www.StAlbansVT.com/CityPlan):**

- ✓ Create St. Albans: Character and Form-Based Planning

## **Chapter 9. Our Role in the Region**

From transportation to land use to water quality, a community's planning efforts can benefit from the involvement adjacent communities and the region. The City of St. Albans is a member municipality of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC), which provides a forum for municipalities in Franklin and Grand Isle County to act on behalf of the region. All communities, including the City, are entitled to equal voting representation by two locally appointed members of the governing Board of Commissioners.

It has been recognized throughout this planning process that the City of St. Albans serves as a center for regional growth and development. Our community is the region's only city. The City shares its municipal borders only with St. Albans Town; however, the City's service area extends far beyond town boundaries, including much of Franklin and northern Grand Isle Counties. This is recognized in, and in conformance with, the designation of the St. Albans area – including the City and adjacent areas of the Town – as the region's primary growth center in the NRPC Regional Plan.

Downtown St. Albans is currently the only State-designated downtown district in the NRPC region. City marketing efforts have typically needed to focus on encouraging day-trips into Downtown St. Albans. However, with recent developments in the Downtown, most notably the new construction of nationally branded lodging, more regional marketing efforts may be warranted when beneficial.

The St. Albans Town Plan was reviewed during development of the City Plan in order to identify rates and patterns of growth along the City's borders. Growth in adjacent areas of the Town has relied heavily on the extension of City infrastructure, and has had both positive and negative impacts locally. The City and Town work jointly in many areas, when mutually beneficial, such as with the current police coverage contract. The City will continue to pursue coordinated planning and development efforts with the Town as appropriate.

The City is active on several subcommittees and advisory committees of the NRPC. Participation on the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and Brownfield Revolving Loan Steering Committee is particularly important so the City has a role in overseeing the Regional Commission's transportation planning program and can lend its unique perspective to redevelopment assistance in the region. The City also has the opportunity to participate in the NRPC Policy/Project Review Committee and other subcommittees.

### **9.1 The City will benefit the region in our role as the only city and the largest historic growth center.**

#### **A. Objectives**

1. The City's unique urban perspective will be heard and valued in inter-municipal and regional planning efforts.
2. The City is and will be open to collaboration and provision of services to adjacent municipalities when mutually beneficial.

3. The City will work creatively with regional municipalities and organizations.

#### B. Policies

1. To consider the use of resources and the consequences of growth and development for the region and the state, as well as the community in which it takes place.
2. Consider the impact of land use decisions on adjacent municipalities.
3. To consider the impact of proposed plans, regulations, and land use decisions of other municipalities and express concerns when incompatibility with City land uses are apparent, especially when adjacent to residential districts.

#### C. Programs and Activities

1. Participate with adjacent communities in grants, studies, and projects that address mutual inter-municipal goals and connections, such as sidewalk networks and recreation infrastructure.
2. Share or contract for resources, infrastructure, and services with St. Albans Town and other nearby communities for greater efficiency and economy when practical and mutually beneficial.
3. Collaborate with other municipalities and regional organizations to address important regional issues, such as improving water quality in Lake Champlain.
4. Collaborate with adjacent municipalities on land use decisions and initiatives to prevent and reduce commercial strip development.

## **Chapter 10. From Planning to Action**

This plan includes more than 200 suggested policies, programs and activities. That is a daunting number, but one must consider that many of them support existing regulations or ongoing programs. For those that would require new action, there are various avenues available to the City and many players with different roles.

### **Avenues for Implementation**

Any policy, program or activity suggested by this plan is likely to be implemented through one of the following three forms:

#### **Rules and Regulations**

The City has a process and resources for adopting rules that govern public and private activities as well as internal operations.

- The **City Ordinances** are local laws. Most ordinances govern the use of public property (e.g. streets), but some have been passed to govern private property as well (e.g. the Public Health and Safety Ordinance).
- The **Land Development Regulations** are a special kind of City ordinance adopted under 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117. They focus on the regulation of private property, governing allowed land uses, degrees and densities of use, and the form and character of development.
- Internal **City Policies and Rules** are adopted to govern how City operations and services function.

#### **Programs and Activities**

The City of St. Albans provides a wide array of municipal services, from public safety to recreation. The City also engages in special projects and agreements to accomplish certain goals. These functions are carried out by City Staff or contracted entities, as governed by adopted laws and rules, and often with direct input from public boards and commissions.

#### **Leadership and Collaboration**

Because of its resources, governmental status, and broad role in local quality of life, the City can take an active or collaborative role in many regional issues not included amongst municipal programs and services. Sometimes these activities become City programs, such as when engagement with the private sector on development evolved into the City's active programs for redevelopment and public/private partnerships. Obviously, the City cannot do everything that St. Albans needs done, and it must prioritize those external conversations in which it can be a leader versus merely a contributor.

#### **The Players**

The **City Council** adopts all local ordinances/regulations, the budgets for the general fund and enterprises (e.g. water/wastewater), and internal policies for the City. The Council also appoints all City board/commission members and hires the City Manager, who ultimately oversees the

conduct of City staff. The Council is made up of 6 members elected from City wards and the Mayor, who is elected at large.

The **Planning Commission** is appointed by the City Council and is given special status in reviewing proposed amendments to the City Plan and Land Development Regulations and is normally the party drafting those amendments. The PC is also free to make other regulatory suggestions to the City Council. The PC also advises the City Planning & Development department and can engage in special projects and studies.

There are many other City boards and commissions relevant to the implementation of this Plan. The **Development Review Board** and **Design Advisory Board** carry out roles in the implementation of the Land Development Regulations. The **Parks Commission** and **Recreation Commission** both advise their respective programmatic areas. The **Downtown Board** acts as the Board of Directors of St. Albans For the Future and advises the City's Downtown Program and maintains the Downtown's state-designated status. There are other boards and steering committees formed for special projects as needed.

**City Staff** carry out all City programs and services, draft all proposed ordinances/regulations and budgets for approval, provide research and administration services, and enforce all City ordinances and regulations.

## **10.1 This is how we will implement our City Plan**

Below is a summary of the implementation steps to be taken for the policies, programs and activities under each Planning Goal, starting with Chapter 2:

### **2.1 We will maintain the form and character of Downtown St. Albans as a linkage to our City's history.**

All of the **Policies** listed under this goal would be implemented through the Land Development Regulations, in fact most are already in place within the existing rules. The Planning Commission and City staff would be able to address any new policies within 3 years.

The **Programs and Activities** associated with facades, tax credits, and marketing would be carried out by City staff. The housing and childcare suggestions would be carried out through collaboration with other organizations. The inventory of historic structures would likely be a project of the Planning Commission in concert with City staff.

### **2.2 We will ensure that Downtown St. Albans thrives as a center of commerce, culture and community life in the face of ever-changing socio-economic trends.**

Most of the **Policies** listed under this goal would be implemented through the Land Development Regulations, in fact most are already in place within the existing rules. The

Planning Commission and City staff would be able to address any new policies within 3 years. Some of the other policies, such as support of the Farmers Market and the maintenance of Downtown Designation, would be through the activities of the City Council, City staff, and the Downtown Board.

There is a broad array of suggested **Programs and Activities** associated with this goal, and most would be undertaken with Staff leadership. A few ongoing projects are mentioned, such as streetscape improvements and the the Federal Street Multi-Modal Connector. There are a couple items about support for St. Albans For the Future and downtown designation. The Taylor Park master plan effort is currently underway. Most items in this list are either ongoing or could be addressed within the next 3 years.

### **3.1 All City neighborhoods will be safe, vibrant and connected places to live.**

Most of the **Policies** listed under this goal would be implemented through the Land Development Regulations, in fact most are already in place within the existing rules. The Planning Commission and City staff would be able to address any new policies within 3 years. Some policies concerning parking and street safety would be addressed through the City ordinances. All items listed could feasibility be addressed within the next 3 years.

The **Programs and Activities** associated with this goal could be carried out by the City's neighborhood redevelopment program, sidewalk construction projects, and City staff communication with GMP. There is mention of an inventory study that the Planning Commission and staff could work together on.

### **3.2 A variety of housing options will be available for all income levels and segments of the City's population.**

Most of the **Policies** listed under this goal would be implemented through the Land Development Regulations, in fact most are already in place within the existing rules. The Planning Commission and City staff would be able to address any new policies within 3 years. Some policies concerning support for the senior center and housing and concerning property valuation would be implemented by actions of the City Council and City staff.

Rather than recreate the wheel, the **Programs and Activities** for this goal simply reference the Housing Study, which contains a robust list of suggestions of its own. The study's suggestions focus on programs that would be carried out by City staff via landlord and tenant outreach, the rental inspection program, etc.

### **3.3 Our neighborhoods will play a significant role in marketing our City and attracting residents.**

The two **Policies** listed under this goal would be implemented through the Land Development Regulations and the City Ordinances. In fact, the first policy is already

reflected in current rules. The second acts as guidance for the Land Development Regulations, as the Planning Commission makes any future changes.

The **Programs and Activities** associated with this goal could be carried out by the City's neighborhood redevelopment program and marketing efforts. There is one suggestion for the Planning Commission to explore form based codes.

#### **4.1 The City is the economic and commercial hub of Northwest Vermont, welcoming proactive redevelopment activities, and providing a variety of goods, services, jobs and economic opportunities for the region.**

Most of the **Policies** listed under this goal would be implemented through the Land Development Regulations. The Planning Commission and City staff would be able to address any new policies within 3 years. Support for FCIDC and the Chamber would be in the realm of the City Council and City staff, as would the maintenance of the Growth Center Designation and the TIF District.

Most of the **Programs and Activities** associated with this goal would be carried out by City staff's redevelopment efforts, from brownfield mitigation to marketing. There one suggestion that calls for collaboration on education and health care issues, which would likely be through City staff contact with local organizations.

#### **5.1 Living in, working in, or visiting the City contributes to healthy lifestyles. The City has ample opportunity for residents to be healthy including recreation facilities, walkable streets, nutritional food, and community events and activities.**

The regulatory **Policies** listed under this goal would be implemented through the Land Development Regulations. The Planning Commission and City staff would be able to address any new policies within 3 years. There are a few policies to be carried out by City planning and construction projects. Five of the policies have roles for the City's Recreation program. On the collaboration side, there is one concerning support for health center and two advocating for bike/pedestrian connections outside the City, which would be in the realm of the City Council and staff.

Most of the **Programs and Activities** associated with this goal would be carried out recreation-related planning and programs, which could be carried out by City staff with input from the Recreation Commission and/or Planning Commission. There are two programs concerning substance use that would entail collaboration with other entities.

#### **5.2 Accessible learning opportunities in the City will support a life-long process that fosters personal success and contribution as members of the community.**

All of the **Policies** and **Programs and Activities** listed under this goal would be implemented through collaboration and conversation with related organizations, such as the school district or childcare providers. This would be in the realm of the City Council and staff.

## **6.1 The City's utilities, public works, and public safety services will benefit quality of life and be a source of pride to residents.**

All but one of the **Policies** listed under this goal would be implemented through City services and construction projects, as overseen by the City Council and administered by staff. There is one suggestion for solid waste collection, which would be addressed by a City ordinance.

Similarly, all but one of the **Programs and Activities** associated with this goal would be implemented through City services and construction projects, as well as some suggestions for facilities planning. The one suggestion for solid waste collection would be addressed by a City ordinance.

## **6.2 City streets, sidewalks and facilities will efficiently and safely get people where they need to go and play a beneficial role in place-making.**

The regulatory **Policies** listed under this goal would be implemented through the Land Development Regulations (i.e. growth management) and City Ordinances (i.e. sidewalks and parking). There are two suggestions related to the Federal St. Multi-Modal Connector.

All of the **Programs and Activities** associated with this goal would be carried out by construction and planning projects administered by City staff and overseen by the City Council.

## **7.1 Public services and private property in the City will be resilient in the face of natural events and economic challenges.**

There are two **Policies** listed under this goal that would be implemented through the Land Development Regulations and likely addressed by the Planning Commission and City staff within 3 years. The other policies would be implemented by City Council and staff support for energy-related initiatives.

The two **Programs and Activities** addressing flood hazards and stream corridor projection would be implemented by the Land Development Regulations. One has to do with City staff's management of facilities, and the others are planning activities to be carried out by staff and relevant boards.

## **7.2 We will increase the environmental sustainability of public and private infrastructure in the City.**

The regulatory **Policies** listed under this goal would be implemented through the Land Development Regulations and the City Ordinances. Three suggestions would be implemented by City staff's management and outreach concerning tree issues and

stormwater infrastructure. There is one suggestion concerning staff's administration of the building code enforcement program.

Most of the **Programs and Activities** associated with this goal are stormwater- and tree-related planning activities and programs to be carried out by City staff with input from relevant boards. There is one suggestion for building code enforcement and one for electric vehicle charging stations, both of which would be carried out by City staff.

### **8.1 This is our plan for future land use in the City.**

All of **Policies** listed under this goal would be implemented through the Land Development Regulations. It would take at least 5 years for the Planning Commission and City staff to navigate and explore the many suggestions and draft amendments for the public and City Council to consider.

The two **Programs and Activities** associated with this goal would be administered by staff in the Planning & Development department.

### **9.1 The City will benefit the region in our role as the only city and the largest historic growth center.**

All of **Policies** listed under this goal would be implemented by the Planning Commission and City staff as they consider amendments to local and adjacent land use regulations.

All of the **Programs and Activities** associated with this goal would be via collaboration with other entities by City staff and the City Council.