CREATE ST. ALBANS: CHARACTER + FORM-BASED PLANNING TOOLKIT

PREPARED BY:
TOWN PLANNING & URBAN DESIGN COLLABORATIVE
JULY 2011

FUNDED BY A MUNICIPAL PLANNING GRANT, AWARDED BY THE VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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THIS TOOLKIT IS ABOUT CREATING A FRESH NEW VISION FOR SMART GROWTH PLANNING AND FORM-BASED DESIGN TO TRANSFORM ST. ALBANS INTO A PLACE THAT ATTRACTS FRESH IDEAS + NEW OPPORTUNITY.

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INTRODUCTION

ST. ALBANS IS POISED FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO REVITALIZE THE COMMUNITY IN NEW WAYS. DECISIONS MADE NOW HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO GENERATE POSITIVE IMPACTS FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

This report consists of best practices and strategies that emerged from a four-day planning and design charrette in St. Albans, Vermont. The ideas contained within the following pages were generated by the community, for the community.

The City of St. Albans is a hidden gem in the New England region. Endowed with a charming downtown, a grand central park graced with stately civic buildings, and picturesque neighborhoods, St. Albans is a unique asset within the pastoral Champlain Valley. Rich in culture and history, the City is the Maple Sugar Capital of the World, attracting thousands of tourists to its annual Maple Sugar Festival; it is also the site of the legendary St. Albans Raid of 1864; and was for years European immigrants' first point of arrival in the New World. The City boasts an excellent school system, a number of large employers within walking distance of neighborhoods, passenger and freight rail, and proximity to the high-volume traffic of Interstate 89. Most importantly, St. Albans has an extremely high quality of life and feeds off the spirit of its people—energetic, cooperative, and determined to bring positive change to the community.

Despite its largely intact urban fabric and numerous amenities, St. Albans has struggled to maintain its vibrancy and population as people have moved to St. Albans Town and other rural areas in search of inexpensive housing and perceived convenience. St. Albans City and Town are separately incorporated, presenting unique opportunities and challenges for both the City with its dense urban network, and the Town with its chiefly rural character.

To generate conversation and build support for a renewed direction for the City, the Create St. Albans Charrette was held in June of 2011. This public engagement process involved a broad cross-section of the community and raised important issues pertaining to local character and form. Discussion about identity, socioeconomic issues, multi-modal transportation, attracting entrepreneurs and families, and many other facets of life that make up the essence of the City were all discussed and explored. This intensive community conversation and design exercise resulted in a fresh vision for the future of St. Albans.

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WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE ST. ALBANS TOOLKIT?

THIS TOOLKIT IS INTENDED TO BE A SOURCE FOR CONCEPTS, IDEAS AND PRINCIPLES RELATED TO STRATEGIC PLANNING AND THE REJUVENATION OF ST. ALBANS.

Addressing numerous aspects of sustainable planning—including urban form, infrastructure, utilities, transportation, and economic development—this Toolkit will support planners, elected officials and citizens in the creation of a proactive planning, development, and marketing strategy to help St. Albans reach its full potential. The most sustainable strategy will be to build upon the City's already strong foundation and community spirit.

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HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT.

THIS TOOLKIT HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO BE READ AS A COHERENT NARRATIVE WHICH OUTLINES A ROAD MAP FOR CREATING A FRESH NEW DIRECTION FOR ST. ALBANS.

This document also works as its name implies, as a kit of tools, able to be singled out and utilized individually. Some tools are ideas or principles and others are specific implementable strategies or methodologies.

The Toolkit will have three main applications: to serve as a source book of ideas for inspiring the community, as a guide through the process of planning and rejuvenation, and finally, as a basic framework upon which future projects and initiatives can be based.

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OVERVIEW OF THE TOOLKIT:

THE TOOLKIT IS ORGANIZED INTO 5 MAIN SECTIONS THAT ARE BASED ON THE PROCESS AND PRODUCTS DEVELOPED BY THE PEOPLE OF ST. ALBANS DURING THE CREATE ST. ALBANS CHARRETTE.

SECTION 1 PROCESS

PROCESS
This section of the Toolkit describes the "Create St. Albans!" public process that was held in June 2011. The information provided should help explain the process by which the community's ideas were collected and distilled.

SECTION 2 VISION

VISION
This section describes the vision developed by the community during the charrette, illustrating both big and small interventions that will help St. Albans become a more vibrant and successful place.

SECTION 3 FORM

FORM
This section of the Toolbox explains and illustrates the form and character that makes up the most loved parts of the City. The information contained here is closely tied into the design of the vision plan.

SECTION 4 ELEMENTS

ELEMENTS
The Elements section outlines a variety of goals and strategies for implementing the community's vision as well as addressing specific challenges or problems identified during the charrette.

SECTION 5 ACTION

ACTION
The Elements section outlines a variety of goals and strategies for implementing the community's vision as well as addressing specific challenges or problems identified during the charrette.

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WHO SHOULD USE THE TOOLKIT?

COMMUNITY LEADERS, EDUCATORS, CITIZENS, BUSINESS PEOPLE, CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS, RELIGIOUS GROUPS, PLANNING STAFF, PLANNING COMMISSION, LOCAL LEGISLATORS, SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS, CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, POLICE, EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS, FIRE DEPARTMENT, CITY ENGINEERS, HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, AND ANYONE CONCERNED WITH THE FUTURE OF THE ST. ALBANS COMMUNITY.

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PROCESS

DOCUMENTING THE CHARACTER OF ST. ALBANS, 2011

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WE HAVE TO DREAM BIG, AND DREAM BIG FOR EVERYONE.

dream v. To form in the imagination; devise.

The City of St. Albans has a rich history of planning and implementing the plans generated by the community. The Create St. Albans process follows in the footsteps of many successful planning efforts, including the Downtown Master Plan developed in 2009; the Taylor Park Plan (currently being implemented); the Main Street Streetscape Project; and the Comprehensive Plan Update (currently in progress).

LEGEND
EXISTING BUILDING
PROPOSED BUILDING
FACADE RENOVATION AND/OR REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY
SHARED PARKING RESOURCES
1A Hudson Consolidated Lot
1B Core Lot
1C Lake Consolidated Lot
1D Allen Street Lot
NEW DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES
REDEVELOPMENT/FACADE OPPORTUNITY
STREETSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS
4A. Main Street Initial Phase -
4B. Main Street Future Phase -
4C. Kingman Street -
4D. (Potential) Long Term Kingman Street Extension
4E. Lake Street Initial Phase -
4F. Lake Street Future Phase -
4G. Federal Street
TAYLOR PARK ENHANCEMENTS
5A. Open view corridor to Civil War Memorial
5B. Proposed splash pad
5C. Future potential pathway; area opportunity - "Kid Gem Focusing"
5D. Potential outdoor dining
5E. Proposed (ramp) accessible entrance
GENERAL THROUGHOUT PARK
• Emphasize fall canopy trees and low CF and WILD shrubs.
• Memorial program to establish placeholdr for future benches, memorials and memorial trees.
Lake Street
Main Street
Kingman Street
Federal Street
Hudson Street
Allen Street
Taylor Park
Congress Street
Fairfax Street
Stebbins Street
Hoyt Street
Bishop Street
Fairfax Street
Lake Street
Hoyt Street
Congress Street
Main Street
Kingman Street
Hudson Street
Stebbins Street
Bishop Street
Federal Street
Fairfax Street
Congress Street
Lake

THE CREATE ST. ALBANS CHARRETTE

From June 16 through June 20, St. Albans held a multi-day planning and design charrette to develop a vision for the community using smart growth and sustainable design principles.

City of St. Albans, Vermont Workshop Schedule	TIME	Thursday, June 16th DAY ONE	Friday, June 17th DAY TWO	Saturday, June 18th DAY THREE	Sunday, June 19th DAY FOUR	Monday, June 20th DAY FIVE
	8:00 AM	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
		On-Site Setup		PREPARATIONS		
Workshop Team: TOWN PLANNING & URBAN DESIGN COLLABORATIVE LLC.	9:00 AM	Project Kick off Meeting with Planning Dept.	WORK/PRODUCTION	**IN-FIELD WORKSHOP** ***9:00 - 11:00 AM***	WORK/PRODUCTION	PRODUCTION
	10:00 AM	Tour & Measurement				
Project Principal - Brian Wright, CNU						
Project Director - Kara Wilbur	11:00 AM			**COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE & INPUT SESSION** ***11:00 - 12:00 PM***		
Coding Expert - Bill Wright						
Planner - Vanessa Farr	12:00 PM	Team Lunch	Team Lunch		Team Lunch	Team Lunch
Production - Robin Bergstrom						
	1:00 PM	PRELIMINARY WORK	WORK/PRODUCTION	Team Lunch		
	2:00 PM			**MEETING #2** *Downtown Master Plan Committee*	WORK/PRODUCTION	PRODUCTION
	3:00 PM					
	4:00 PM					
	5:00 PM					
	6:00 PM	Team Dinner		FORM CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT		
The Studio is open the public whenever the lights are on Thurday through Moday Please stop by any time!	7:00 PM	**OPENING PRESENTATION** ***7:00 - 8:00 PM***	Team Dinner		Team Dinner	**PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF PREFERED VISION, PLAN & FORM** ***6:30 - 8:00 PM***
	8:00 PM	**HANDS-ON COMMUNITY SESSION** ***8:00 - 9:00 PM***	WORK TIME		WORK TIME	**COMMUNITY INPUT & PUBLIC VIEWING** ***8:00 - 8:30 PM***
STUDIO, PRESENTATION & MEETING LOCATION: 54 North Main Street St. Albans, Vermont 05478				Team Dinner		
	9:00 PM					Team Dinner
Public	10:00 PM					
Team Only						

The charrette is an intensive community design workshop that involves all community members interested in or concerned about the future of the community. St. Albans' charrette lasted five days, during which time planning consultants from Town Planning & Urban Design Collaborative (TPUDC) worked with the community to identify character areas and form-based elements within the City and generate a master plan and a vision for the future.

The charrette was held in the heart of the City at the Ralston Building across from Taylor Park. The charrette team, along with City and County planning staff, set up a full working office and studio at the site.

On the first evening of the charrette, TPUDC delivered an introductory presentation on planning and smart growth principles. Immediately following the presentation, the TPUDC charrette team facilitated a hands-on design workshop where the public was invited to roll up their sleeves, draw and brainstorm directly with the charrette team around tables, working over base maps to identify key areas where infill, redevelopment or other interventions should be focused.

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CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT DURING HAND'S ON DESIGN WORKSHOP

On the third day of the charrette, a public pin-up was held so that the team could get feedback from participants about the best elements of the ideas presented.

Following the pin-up, the community and team engaged in a discussion about smart growth, with special attention on form, rather than use, as an organizing principle for land-use planning. The charrette team then introduced the participants to the synoptic surveying process, an

PARTICIPATING STAKEHOLDER LIST:

- City Manager;
- Mayor;
- City Councilors;
- City Planners;
- Planning Commission Members;
- Regional Planning Commission Staff;
- Fire & Police Department;
- Department of Economic Development;
- Community and Neighborhood Leaders;
- Business Leaders;
- St. Albans for the Future;
- Chamber of Commerce;
- Key Institutional Leaders;
- Historic Preservation Representatives;
- State Planners;
- Developers;
- General Public; and
- Local Authorities.

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exercise that involves identifying and measuring elements of the most loved places within a community. The synoptic survey documents the space between buildings, including front yards, sidewalks, greenways, and streets, as well as side yards. It also looks at building heights and uses. This workshop provided important documentation of existing conditions while also allowing the public to better understand the dimensions behind the form and character of most-loved streets within the City.

The charrette team used this field data, along with aerial photography provided by Mapmaker Photogrammetric Services, to define the unique character areas of St. Albans, arranged according to the intensity of development within the community.

The remainder of the charrette consisted of design, incorporating information and ideas gathered from the public during the intermediate pin-up and from stakeholders during meetings and casual drop-ins.

Based on the input from the public received at the Hands-on Workshop, the In-Field Workshop, and stakeholder meetings, the charrette team developed a master plan for the city. The master plan clearly depicts recommended redevelopment scenarios and building configurations, parks and plazas, street connections, and public facilities.

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The plan was developed with the goal of improving the safety and quality of the pedestrian environment, provide uses that serve as pedestrian generators, and incorporate design solutions for an enhanced, attractive and safe pedestrian environment.

A final presentation took place on the last day of the charrette. All of the work produced during the charrette was presented and explained. The meeting was attended by over 30 members of the community and was well received.

CREATE ST. ALBANS CHARRETTE, CLOSING PRESENTATION

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VISION

THE FINAL ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN, CREATE ST. ALBANS CHARRETTE, 2011

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YOU HAVE TO EXPECT THAT YOU HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO BE A WORLD CLASS CITY.

world class n. Ranking among the world's best; outstanding.

St. Albans' transformation into a world-class destination requires the preservation and enrichment of the walkable, connected, mixed-use, diverse neighborhoods that permeate the City. Local residents and visitors alike will stroll the tree-lined streets, eat at the outdoor cafes, shop in the unique local boutiques and relax in beautiful Taylor Park.

This section will begin with an explanation of the planning principles important to local people and on which the master plan is grounded. This will be followed by a broader vision for how St. Albans can fit into the region. Finally, this section will end with a detailed description of the illustrative master plan that was developed during the Create St. Albans Charrette.

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PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The standards and principles of smart growth and New Urbanism are designed to make areas more livable, more vibrant, more people-oriented, and to build pride in a community. These principles include walkability, connectivity, mixed uses, housing diversity, and transportation alternatives, to name a few.

Taken together, these principles add up to a high quality of life and create places that enrich, uplift, and inspire the human spirit.

Unlike many communities, almost the entire City of St. Albans is an intact pedestrian-oriented place, sharing a number of desirable characteristics that provide many great benefits. The illustrative master plan strives to preserve, celebrate, and emulate how these areas are designed, to repair where they have been degraded over time, and expand them into new areas.

A TRADITIONAL VERMONT STREETSCAPE

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A TRADITIONALLY DESIGNED CITY PROVIDES THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS:

WALKABILITY

The term "walkability" has become a buzz word in recent years without much effort to provide definition. As a result, it is often misunderstood to mean a place that would be pedestrian-only or anti-automobile. In fact, the term describes an environment where there is balance between many modes of transportation, including the automobile. Most importantly, it describes an environment in which people feel comfortable walking. The constituent elements of walkability are referred to as "The 3 D's": Distance, Destination, and Design.

"Summed up, there are three constituent elements of walkability. The 3 D's: Distance, Destination, and Design."

Distance. The average pedestrian is willing to walk up to one-quarter of a mile (1320 feet, 0.4 km) or roughly five minutes to a meaningful destination. This ¼ mile or five minute walk from the edge to a meaningful destination at the center is called a "pedestrian shed". For most Americans, distances requiring more than a five minute walk will typically be made in a car rather than by walking. This walking vs. driving threshold is locally calibrated. It may be more expansive in areas with mild climates or cultures accustomed to walking due to higher fuel costs; it may also be constricted in areas with steep terrain or very hot, cold or rainy climates. In St. Albans, the hill and the three seasons of cool weather require the built environment to be of extremely high quality to encourage people to choose walking over driving.

Destination. Meaningful destinations may include a multitude of uses and activities. These include civic spaces such as parks, plazas, squares or greens, as well as schools, meeting halls or other civic institutions. They are used more frequently when residents have easy access to them on foot rather than in an automobile. In addition, meaningful destinations may include commercial areas

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like neighborhood or town centers where daily or weekly shopping needs can be met. Often these destinations, when centrally located, become the "heart" of the community. In St. Albans, Main Street and Taylor Park are clearly the center of the community.

Design. It is important in the design of walkable places to create a sense of enclosure and human scale by pulling buildings closer to the street and not allowing large expanses of asphalt to dominate the frontage of buildings. Buildings close to the street provide interest to those passing by. Additionally, the elements of these more visible and proximate buildings, such as porches, doors and windows, should emphasize this human-scale and the relationship of buildings to a passersby. Buildings located closer to the street also creates an important sense of enclosure for the pedestrian.

HARDWICK, VERMONT

With the exception of very rural areas where automobile traffic is limited, sidewalks of ample width are critical for a walkable environment. Sidewalk width varies along the transect: from a five-foot minimum in rural and suburban areas and up to twenty-five feet in the most urban areas. In St. Albans almost all the sidewalks in the residential neighborhoods are four feet wide. As sidewalks need replacing, the City should consider the feasibility of rebuilding them with a more substantial width.

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Because St. Albans' sidewalks are so close to its streets, additional measures are necessary to provide a comfortable distance between pedestrians and traffic. Street trees situated between the sidewalk and the street provide this necessary buffer. They also create dappled shade which provides visual interest and cools the sidewalk. The tree canopy provides a sense of enclosure within the street, important as both a comfort to pedestrians and as a highly effective psychological cue to slow speeding automobiles. Pedestrian comfort level increases the slower the cars are moving. These traffic-calming measures increase walkability. On-street parking visually narrows the street, putting the driver on guard and translating to a reduced speed.

These strategies are only effective, however, if the travel and parking lanes are actually narrow. Studies have demonstrated that traffic speeds increase in proportion to lane width, whether or not on-street parking and street trees are present. This is true regardless of the posted speed limit. Obviously, the higher the speed of the cars, the more severe the injuries during pedestrian vehicular conflict. Pedestrians are sensitive to unsafe environments, and if vehicles are moving at a high rate of speed, it is less likely that people will walk in that area.

Many of St. Albans' commercial streets are excessively wide, resulting in high travel speeds in the center of the City where walking should be most encouraged. The existing street width provides opportunities for St. Albans to utilize a variety of complete street techniques, including the integration of bicycleways to reduce the vehicular travel lane width. The community has indicated a strong interest in further promoting the city as a biking center and is fortunate to have the existing pavement width in which to inexpensively integrate bike lanes, cycletracks and sharrows.

CONNECTIVITY

All streets should be connected to another street within and outside a neighborhood. By avoiding the construction of dead end streets or cul de sacs, an interconnected hierarchical network of thoroughfares that defines the block structure of the neighborhood can be achieved. The thoroughfare network provides a multitude of routing alternatives to and from all destinations in the neighborhood, dispersing traffic and limiting congestion. Connectivity makes the neighborhood safer by

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allowing emergency service vehicles many options to get to the site of an emergency call if they encounter a street that is blocked or daily traffic moves at slower speeds.

Connectivity is also beneficial to pedestrians, as a network of sidewalks, paths, and passages makes walking more convenient and enjoyable and increases pedestrian access throughout the community. Finally, by increasing the number of routes through the community, pedestrians are provided more interesting walking and biking alternatives and more opportunity for social interaction.

MIXED-USES

Whenever possible, neighborhoods should include a mix of commercial (retail, restaurants and offices), residential, recreational and civic uses. This mix should be well-balanced, incorporating both vertical and horizontal mixed-use within the neighborhood, the block, and the building. An ideal mix would allow residents to meet all of their daily needs within a short walking distance. When this occurs, the number of automobile trips per household is substantially reduced. This mix of uses is optimized when commercial establishments have residential dwelling units above to ensure that the street is always active.

MIXED-USE STREETSCAPE, BURLINGTON, VT

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HOUSING DIVERSITY

Demographic diversity of people in age, income level, culture, and race provides a sense of interest and vitality to the most loved cities in the world. In order to attract this type of diversity, the physical form of a community must be conducive to varied lifestyles. A key component to creating an environment where diversity thrives is the provision of different types, sizes and price points of housing intermingled in close proximity to each other.

The variety of dwelling types should include: different sizes of detached single family houses, rowhouses, apartments and live-work buildings. In addition, small ancillary buildings with a living space above the garage should be permitted within the rear yard of each principal building house for extended family, tenants or guests to stay or live. Residential units should be available either for leasing or for ownership. This allows young and old, singles and families, and residents within a range of income levels to find dignified places that suit their preferences and lifestyles. An additional benefit of this mix of housing types is that workers can live within walking distance of their jobs, rather than requiring that they commute to work, worsening traffic problems.

In St. Albans, the existing residential neighborhoods provide an ample supply of single family homes. Apartments above retail shops are also prevalent. Opportunities exist to expand the supply of live/work units, duplexes, and apartment buildings to provide additional affordable unit types.

RENDERING OF A COTTAGE COURT

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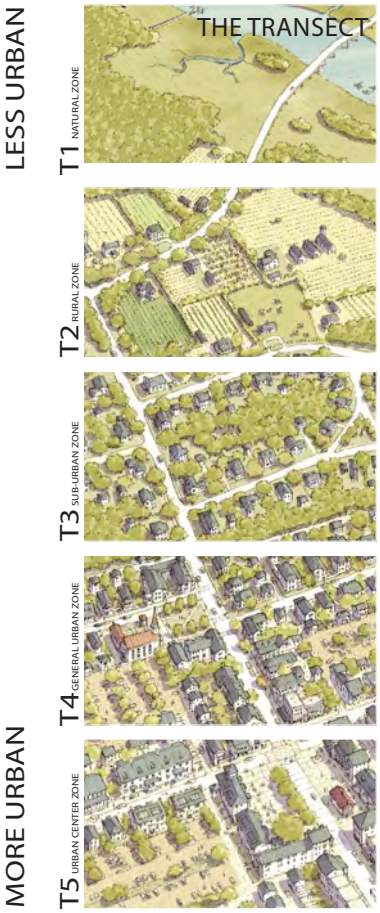
THE TRANSECT

The Transect is a sequence of six environments or character zones ranging from rural to urban. All elements of design should be arranged according to this conceptual framework, from unadulterated wilderness to man-made urban centers. The least intense rural environments are found in the Natural Zone (T1) progressively getting more intense and culminating in the most intense urban environment the Urban Center Zone (T5). Elements such as density, plantings, setbacks, building heights, signage, lighting, thoroughfare design and other elements are variable but still holistically coordinated based on each Transect Zone.



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COMPACT DEVELOPMENT

Compact development is an effective method to preserve land having agricultural, habitat, or scenic value. While it may not be the preference of all citizens, the most sustainable way to develop is with higher densities. That said, simply building more densely without consideration for local market preferences of potential buyers will end in failure.

A sophisticated and nuanced approach is required, as there is no "one size fits all" solution. Utilizing the concept of the Transect, there will be a range of densities within community translating into a multitude of lifestyle choices for residents, from more rural to more urban, or from more sparsely developed to more densely developed. The overall density of a neighborhood may be higher than a conventional development of the same size, but within the neighborhood, some areas may have lower density than the average lot in the conventional neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOOD STRUCTURE

Neighborhoods should contain a discernible center and clear edge. This organizational concept provides an identity to the community. While it may be more difficult to have a well-defined edge surrounding a neighborhood, it is imperative that its center be well formed. The center of the neighborhood should include a civic open space such as a park, square or plaza depending on its location within the range of contexts, from rural to urban. This center should have the most urban character in the community, with buildings pulled up close to the street and a generous sidewalk in front. If transit is available in the community, the transit stop would be found in the neighborhood center.

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TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

It is imperative that choices be provided for alternatives to driving, such as bicycling, walking and using public transit including bus, trolley, or light rail. While driving is not to be shunned, it should certainly not be the only option. Pedestrian-friendly neighborhood design is important to ensure greater inclusion of alternative modes of transportation.

BIKE BOULEVARD

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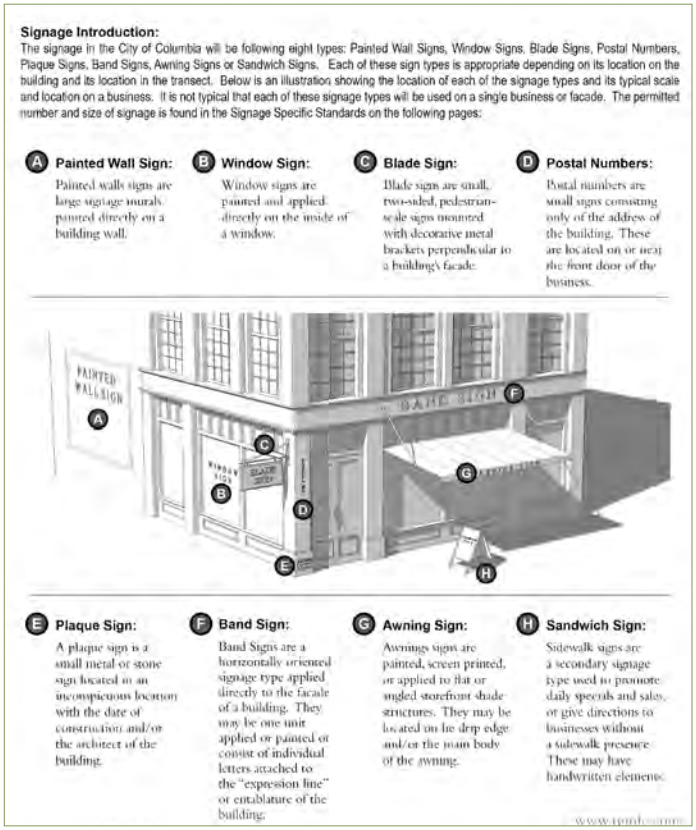
IMPORTANCE OF CODING

While planning and community involvement are critical to successful regional planning efforts, the importance of the coding work itself is often underestimated or ignored. It is this element that makes the vision legal and binding and provides protection to communities and certainty to real estate professionals, developers, and homeowners.

Following the development of a clear vision, communities and their planning consultant must reexamine existing ordinances. These documents will very likely need to be consolidated, simplified and updated to reflect the desires of the community and advances in coding, such as form-based coding.



Signage Introduction:
The signage in the City of Columbia will be following eight types: Painted Wall Signs, Window Signs, Blade Signs, Postal Numbers, Plaque Signs, Band Signs, Awning Signs or Sandwich Signs. Each of these sign types is appropriate depending on its location on the building and its location in the transect. Below is an illustration showing the location of each of the signage types and its typical scale and location on a business. It is not typical that each of these signage types will be used on a single business or facade. The permitted number and size of signage is found in the Signage Specific Standards on the following pages:

A Painted Wall Sign: Painted walls signs are large signage murals painted directly on a building wall.

B Window Sign: Window signs are painted and applied directly on the inside of a window.

C Blade Sign: Blade signs are small, two-sided, pedestrian-scale signs mounted with decorative metal brackets perpendicular to a building's facade.

D Postal Numbers: Postal numbers are small signs consisting only of the address of the building. These are located on or near the front door of the business.

E Plaque Sign: A plaque sign is a small metal or stone sign located in an inconspicuous location with the date of construction and/or the architect of the building.

F Band Sign: Band Signs are a horizontally oriented signage type applied directly to the facade of a building. They may be one unit applied or painted or consist of individual letters attached to the "expression line" or entablature of the building.

G Awning Sign: Awnings signs are painted, screen printed, or applied to flat or angled storefront shade structures. They may be located on the drip edge and/or the main body of the awning.

H Sandwich Sign: Sidewalk signs are a secondary signage type used to promote daily specials and sales, or give directions to businesses without a sidewalk presence. These may have handwritten elements.

SAMPLE SIGNAGE STANDARDS FROM A FORM-BASED CODE

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A VISION FOR ST. ALBANS & THE REGION

THE MIDWAY POINT

St. Albans is located near the midpoint between the Canadian border and Burlington, and is along the main route to Montreal. As one of the northernmost urban areas in Vermont and the first major service center for Canadians heading south along Interstate 89, St. Albans provides a convenient stopping point for travelers, as well as a marketing opportunity to attract Canadians, and the cycling community in particular.

ST. ALBANS: CONVENIENT STOPPING POINT FOR CANADIANS TRAVELING SOUTH

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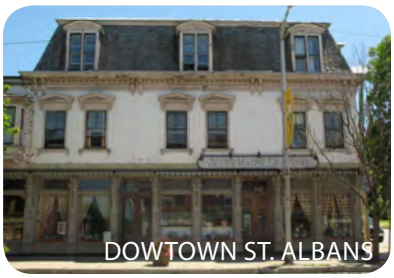
IDENTIFYING THE MUNICIPAL ADVANTAGE

St. Albans has many advantages, including a largely intact urban fabric, an outstanding central park, a regional train depot, proximity to Lake Champlain, the placement at the head of the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, and more. Despite these incredible assets, the City of St. Albans is currently suffering from a lack of identity and lack of confidence in its ability to become a regional destination.

PROXIMITY TO LAKE CHAMPLAIN AND THE RAIL TRAIL

ST. ALBANS NEIGHBORHOODS

LAKE CHAMPLAIN


DOWTOWN ST. ALBANS

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BIG MOVES

THE FOLLOWING PAGES DESCRIBE THE BIG IDEAS THAT EMERGED FROM THE CREATE ST. ALBANS CHARRETTE PROCESS.

1 RETHINKING FEDERAL STREET

Federal Street is currently an uninviting corridor located parallel to Main Street and the railroad tracks. Due to its close proximity to the commercial center of St. Albans, it has the potential to become an interesting and vibrant place that plays on its location at the nexus of the retail and industrial centers of the City. The plan for Federal Street envisions a bustling center of creative industry, arts, new types of housing, and urban agriculture that will attract the entrepreneurial spirit to the City. The southern end of the street will be an ideal location for artisan industrial uses that play into the theme of place-based industry, as well as larger industrial uses that take advantage of the freight rail. The rerouting of truck traffic from Interstate 89 onto Federal Street will work well with the gritty and eclectic blend of uses anticipated for this corridor. As envisioned, Federal Street and Main Street will benefit from a symbiotic relationship, rather than one that competes directly for the same customers and types of business. The northern end of Federal Street would retain its largely residential character.

2 ONE CITY

St. Albans is challenged by a geographic and psychological division between the blocks and the hills neighborhoods. As a strategy to stitch together these areas, the plan suggests a new linear park along the rail line to create a significant point of interest that would attract residents of the entire City, and the region. In addition, the plan also focuses on repairing the urban fabric along Lake Street and Lower Welden Streets to provide a more walkable streetscape, one more reflective of historic St. Albans.

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3 ADDRESSING THE GAP-TOOTH

FEDERAL STREET, ST. ALBANS

Throughout St. Albans, there are example of the gap-tooth, created when the historic building fabric is replaced by a suburban model of buildings pulled back from the street with parking located in front.

gap-toothed adj. Having a noticeable space.

This condition destroys the comfort level of pedestrians, who will choose to turn around rather than walk down a sidewalk surrounded by asphalt and with little visual interest. It has been found that without a highly compelling final destination, a pedestrian will only walk 35 feet along a blank wall before turning around.

The plan builds on the infill strategies shown in the Downtown Master Plan by expanding the same principles along Federal Street, Lake Street, Lower Welden Street, as well as Upper and Lower Main Street.

4 RE-IMAGINING THE COMMERCIAL SIDE STREETS

The plan re-imagines the side streets that run from Main Street to the tracks. Neglected and degraded for many years, there is an opportunity for retrofit of historic buildings as well as infill of these secondary streets with new kinds of housing and work spaces.

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The street sections that run between Federal Street and the railroad tracks offer an interesting potential to experiment with unique building types that integrate light industrial or other more gritty uses, intermixed with urban agriculture and artistic pursuits. This area could become a haven for the creative class and a new kind of place-based industry for St. Albans.

Central Street, with its extremely narrow width, can also be re-imagined as an activated alley with more pedestrian focused activity spilling into the space.

5 A GREENWAY NETWORK

St. Albans currently has a rich collection of green spaces, trails, and parks. The master plan looks at strategies for connecting the existing green spaces and adding additional recreational facilities in strategic locations.

The most significant new park addition can be seen along the flats side of the railroad track, where a greenway is created that shrinks and expands to take advantage of available land. The site known as "tent city" is included in the greenway and is envisioned as a potential site for a sports stadium. A park in this location will also create a viewing place to watch the trains in the operation of the round house.

6 A MODEL FOR TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

The master plan envisions a new transit oriented center around the Amtrak station, to better celebrate and draw attraction to this incredible asset. A mixture of office, housing and retail uses and new liner buildings to conceal parking will help transform this area from a remnant place to a true destination and gateway to St. Albans. A key feature of the plan involves the placement of a new civic green in front of the charming historic rail station to allow this building to be seen from the street. It is envisioned that this transit oriented node will grow in a way that provides a symbiotic relationship with Main Street shops.

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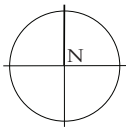
ST. ALBANS MASTER PLAN



Scale: 1”=700’

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PLAN DETAILS

THE FOLLOWING PAGES DESCRIBE SPECIFIC URBAN DESIGN INTERVENTIONS THAT WERE DEVELOPED DURING THE CHARRETTE.

ACTIVATED SIDEWALK

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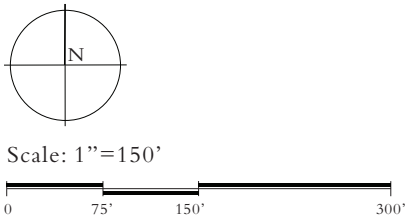
LAKE & FEDERAL STREET INTERSECTION

1 INFILL ALONG LAKE STREET

The vision plan anticipates significant infill and redevelopment along Lake Street in response to strong community interest in repairing this once vibrant thoroughfare.

2 SHOWCASE THE PARK

A small park currently exists adjacent to the New England Central Railroad office building, with a beautiful historic fountain marking its center. The sidewalk along the park sees very little pedestrian traffic and is largely hidden by trees. The vision plan recommends bringing this park to the forefront and making it a celebrated public space within the City.



3 A MULTI-FUNCTION INTERSECTION

St. Albans has been active in its efforts to reroute Interstate 89's truck traffic from Main Street onto Federal Street. The City's current plans show trucks using Market Street and Catherine Street, with a signal at the intersection of Lake / Federal / Catherine Streets. The vision plan developed during the charrette suggests a traditional New England turbine intersection, effectively moving traffic and creating an interesting public space within the community. The intersection would operate much like a round-a-bout, with traffic circulating one way. This turbine design will serve to accommodate truck traffic from the anticipated new Federal Street extension, while directing remaining drivers to Main Street to maintain needed traffic along the City's primary commercial center.

4 CATHERINE STREET

The design of the Lake and Federal Street intersection as envisioned during the charrette anticipates that truck traffic will be re-routed down Market Street, leaving Catherine Street open to a more pedestrian-focused future. It is possible that Catherine Street could become a pedestrian-only street for a short section, allowing for street cafes and outdoor activities.

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AMTRAK STATION AREA

1 AMTRAK STATION
As shown in the photograph below, the Amtrak Station is currently tucked away behind thick hedges and non-descript buildings. In the master plan, this charming historic brick station is celebrated and given prominence on a new civic green.

2 CIVIC GREEN
A new civic green draws the eye to the Amtrak Station and creates a civic space for gathering.

3 LIVE/WORK INFILL
To activate what is now a collection of parking lots and remnant pieces of land, the master plan shows mixed-use infill buildings framing the new civic green and concealing parking in the rear. Needed parking for the Amtrak Station and the New England Central Railroad office building is planned to be relocated in a structured parking garage behind Federal Street buildings.

4 FEDERAL STREET INFILL
To achieve the goal of transit oriented development in the vicinity of the Amtrak Station, the plan shows infill along Federal Street to reactivate the area and provide space for businesses, residential, and retail shops that support transit activities. The build out of the plan should attempt to create a symbiotic relationship between Federal Street and Main Street.

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VIEW OF AMTRAK STATION

This view shows the historic Amtrak station newly exposed to Federal Street. Existing derelict buildings and overgrown hedges have been replaced with a formal green honoring the civic importance of this transportation hub. The new green is framed by live/work buildings to help activate this space and contribute to the generation of a new transit oriented development node. Parking remains, though now concealed by the infill buildings, with additional parking contained across the street in mid-block structured parking anticipated in the 2009 St. Albans Downtown Master Plan.

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FOOD CITY PLAZA

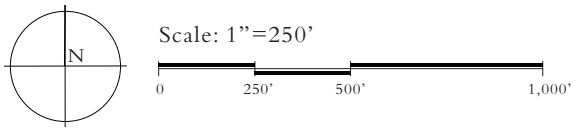
1 INFILL ON PINE STREET
Currently, homes and commercial buildings along Pine Street face the Food City parking lot. The plan envisions infill buildings along Pine to provide a more appealing frontage and a better gateway to the new greenway and its amenities.

2 LAKE STREET INFILL
The vision plan shows new infill along Lake Street, particularly in the vicinity of the tracks where a large number of buildings have been lost over time.

3 THE TAME BOX
The plan shows the potential for big box to remain within the heart of downtown St. Albans, though infilled in a way that promotes walkability. Whether the building remains as a Food City or becomes a neighborhood Walmart or some other medium box operator, this area can be better integrated into the fabric of the City by integrating liner buildings along the street edge.

4 LINER BUILDINGS ALONG THE GREENWAY
In order to provide eyes on the street and transform tent city into a safe, functioning city park, the plan shows new buildings lining the green space, in addition to the activities that will be programmed into the park.

5 IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY
The plan shows making a pedestrian connection across the railroad tracks between Lasalle and Kingman Streets. If this could become a vehicular connection, it would alleviate congestion at the intersection of Lake Street and Main Street by providing an additional route by which to access “the blocks” and the newly envisioned Railroad Park.



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THE GREENWAY

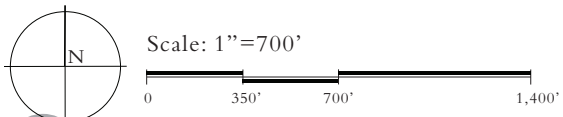
1 MULTIMODAL GREENWAY TRAIL & RAILROAD PARK
One of the big moves conceived in the master plan is a system of multi-modal trails and parks along the railroad track to bring together people from all parts of the City.

2 PLAYGROUND
The plan envisions a new park at the corner of Pine and Pearl Streets, with a playground that can serve both the blocks and hills neighborhoods. The park will also face toward the round-house, allowing people to watch the operation of this fading industrial activity.

3 BOX CAR STUDIOS & INCUBATOR SPACE
The plan shows a series of boxcars located on the edge of Railroad Park. These low cost structures can provide needed incubator space for artists and creative class entrepreneurs to engage in retail or artisan industrial activities, while also creating a draw for this currently underutilized area.

4 SPORTS STADIUM
The master plan suggests a location for a sports stadium, which could potentially be used by an active professional soccer team local to St. Albans. The stadium is situated on industrial land located near the North Elm and Aldis Streets Little League Fields. The site would accommodate the size of stadium needed for a professional team and has the benefit of being located within walking distance of Main Street.

5 GREEN INDUSTRY
Property along Lower Newton Road is ideal for attracting green industry, which can generate additional jobs and create a unique synergy with area farms.



6 RESTORE THE BROOK
The plan shows a green necklace along the edge of the brook that runs through the St. Albans blocks neighborhood. The brook has been compromised over time and should be restored as part of the Railroad Park construction effort.

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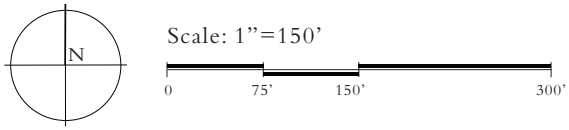
ROUNDHOUSE CREATIVE CENTER

1 TENT CITY GREENWAY
A new civic space is shown on the site of what is known as "tent city." This area is envisioned as a potential park with a playground to serve the surrounding neighborhoods. Open space in this location will also provide a viewing place to watch the operation of the round house.

2 URBAN AGRICULTURE
A small green or community garden could be located within this area to provide a gathering place for the community that emerges in this location. This civic space could serve as a place to showcase work produced by area business and artisans.

3 CREATIVE CENTER
The area surrounding the roundhouse is envisioned as a creative center, where developers could be encouraged to experiment with unique building types that integrate light industrial or other more gritty uses. This area could also be intermixed with urban agriculture and artistic pursuits, becoming a haven for the creative class and a new kind of place-based industry within St. Albans.

4 LIVE WORK INFILL
The plan envisions new infill along Federal Street in the form of creative housing types, including live/work buildings, where ground floors can be dedicated to commercial activities with residential above. The introduction of this building type, currently absent from St. Albans housing stock, would provide a single mortgage for entrepreneurs looking to invest in a business.



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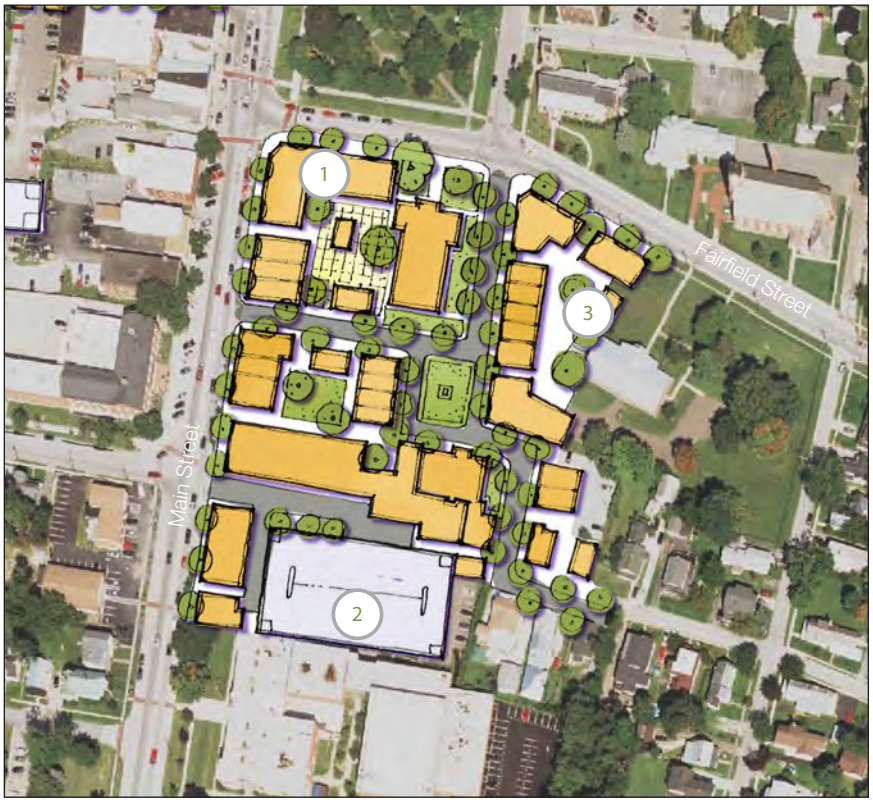
MAIN STREET & FAIRFIELD STREET



1 HANDY TOYOTA LOT

The Handy Toyota lot located at the corner of Main Street and Federal Street offers a significant opportunity to create a strong anchor along Main Street, transforming what is now an auto-oriented building into an urban corner at a critical intersection within the City. There have been many ideas for the transformation of the site. The master plan builds on the idea of creating a vertically mixed use area, with new buildings pulled up to the sidewalk. The plan can accommodate a drugstore at the corner, with a new campus for Community College of Vermont.

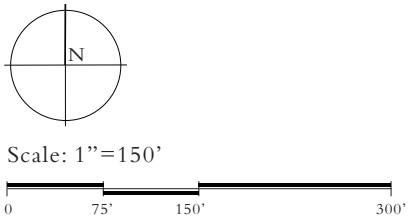
EXISTING HANDY TOYOTA SITE

2 CITY SCHOOL PARKING

The vision plan attempts to address issues of parking related to Bellows Free Academy student parking by creating economic development potential at the school while also accommodating a structured parking facility.

3 STUDENT HOUSING

The plan shows multiple buildings that would contribute to the Community College of Vermont Campus, including liner buildings along Academy Drive that would serve as student housing. The diversity of building types and placement will create a pleasing campus environment with a series of small quads for gathering.



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COMPLETE STREETS PLAN

St. Albans has a network of streets that range from tree-lined neighborhood streets to broad commercial thoroughfares. There is an opportunity through form-based coding to enhance neighborhood and downtown streets, making them even more pedestrian and cycling friendly.

"Complete street" solutions are particularly relevant along wide commercial thoroughfares, many of which have travel lanes that promote high speed traffic at the expense of the pedestrian. These existing commercial thoroughfares are ideal candidates for "road diets", where pavement can be taken from travel lanes and used for bikeways, sidewalks, and greenways.

To take better advantage of the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail head in St. Albans and building on the idea of St. Albans as the midpoint between Canada and Burlington, a conceptual bike plan was generated during the charrette. The bicycle plan, shown on the next page, shows a strategy for retrofitting existing streets with a combination of cycle tracks, sharrows, and bike lanes, to make the City more attractive to cyclists.

The following three pages describe the different bikeway types in greater detail. The addition of these bikeways would accommodate cyclists of all ages and abilities with the added benefit of slowing traffic on existing streets, and creating a more vibrant civic realm.

Street sections are conceptual in nature, but can be fine-tuned to fit the specific rights-of-way within the City.

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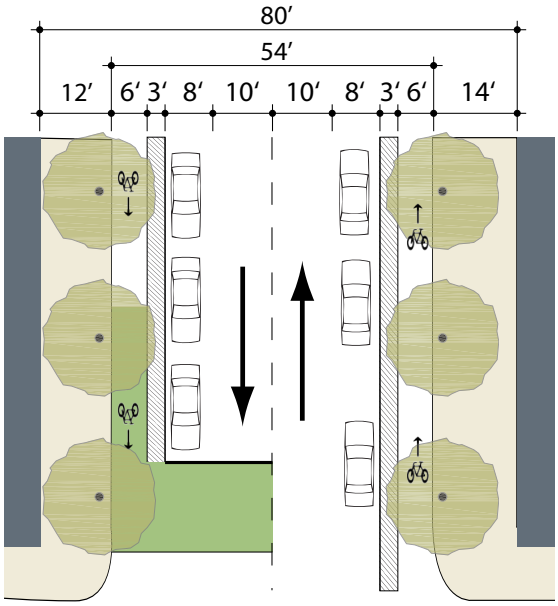
CYCLE TRACK

A cycle track is a bike lane that is protected from moving traffic by parked cars or some other kind of physical barrier such as bollards, curb, or landscaping. A buffer strip can also be integrated to protect cyclists from car doors. Unlike a more standard bike lane, this design physically protects cyclist from vehicular traffic, which has the benefit of greatly improving the rider comfort. Cycle tracks have been shown to increase the number of cyclists, especially among older populations and families who would not normally use an urban bike lane. Intersections must be carefully designed to ensure safe mixing of cyclists and drivers in advance of turning movements.



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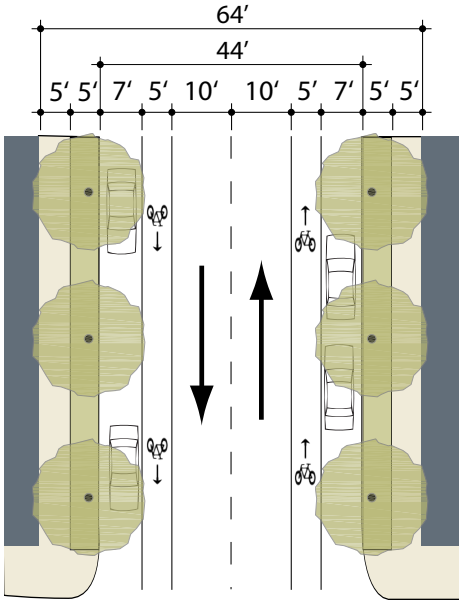
BICYCLE LANE

A bicycle lane is portion of the roadway that has been dedicated for the exclusive use of bicycles. Bike lanes are typically located between the parking lane and the travel lane, moving in the same direction as vehicular traffic. Studies have shown that a simple white line is effective in channelizing both motorists and bicyclists. Existing streets with more than 44 feet of pavement width can be re-striped to include bike lanes.



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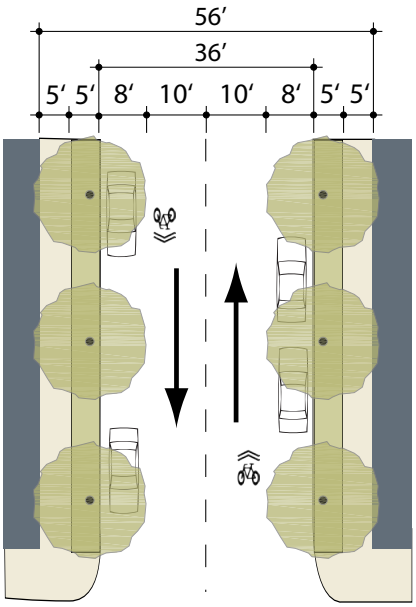
SHARROW

A sharrow refers to the condition where cars and cyclists share the travel lane. Sharrows are typically marked by a bicycle symbol with chevron, making it clear to drivers that they are not the only ones using the road. Unlike a bike lane, a sharrow does not require additional lane width, which keeps vehicular speeds in check. Sharrows are a good solution for streets that are too narrow for conventional bike lanes or cycle tracks. They also have the benefit of being very inexpensive.



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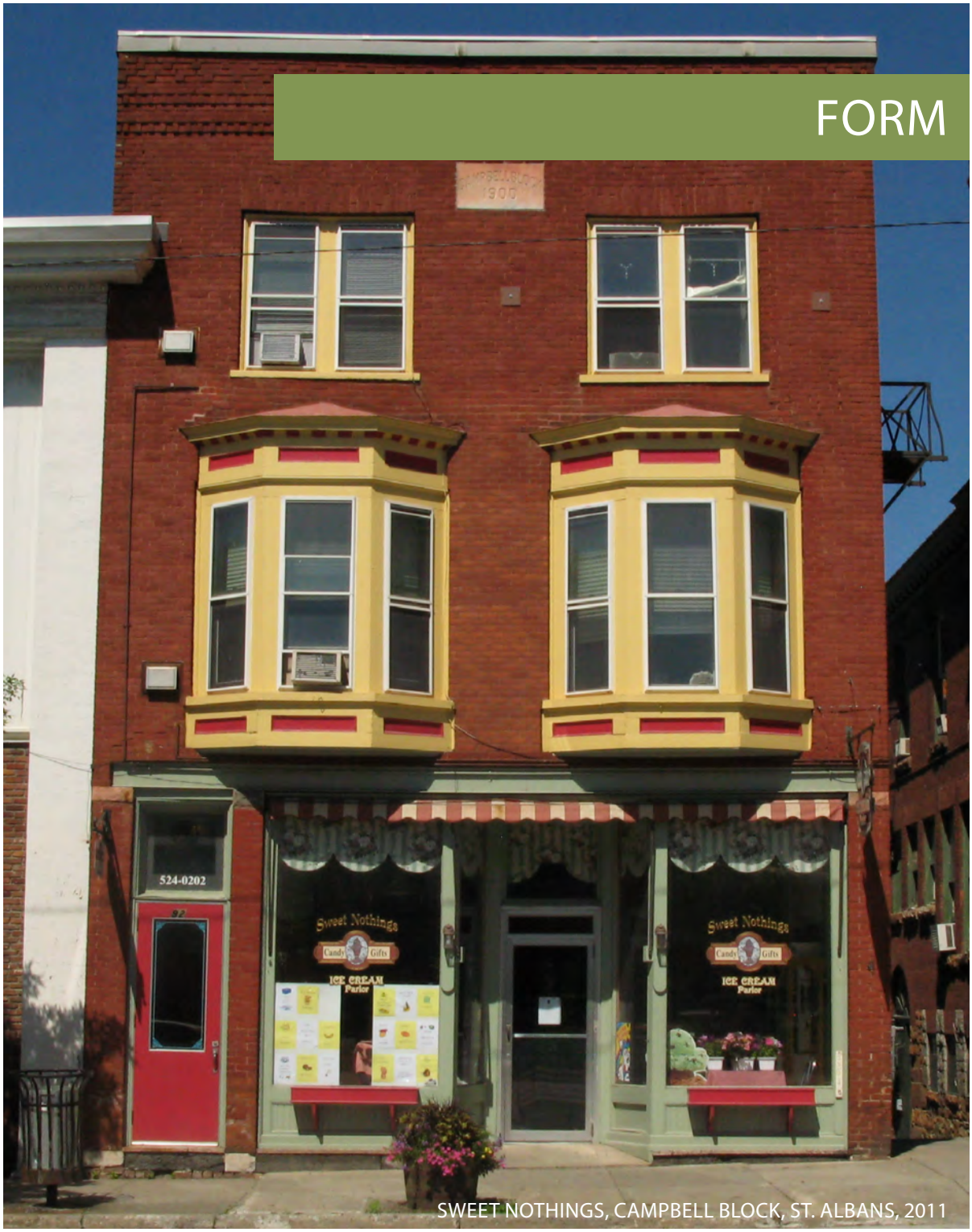
FORM



SWEET NOTHINGS, CAMPBELL BLOCK, ST. ALBANS, 2011

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THE MISSION STATEMENT OF ST. ALBANS SHOULD BE BASED ON CHARACTER

character n. An attribute, trait, or distinct structural or functional feature. Also called characteristic.

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UNDERSTANDING CHARACTER & FORM

How a place feels to a pedestrian is integrally related to the physical characteristics of a space. This linkage between experience and form is critical to creating vibrant and successful streets and neighborhoods.

Every community can be broken down into a range of place types or character areas that fall along a spectrum of the most urban to the most rural. St. Albans is fortunate to have a relatively intact historic urban form and distinct character areas, each of which has its own unique qualities and intensity of development.

As part of the Create St. Albans Charrette, the community and the TPUDC team identified specific dimensional characteristics that make up the form of the City and each of the character areas. This process of discovery led to the development of five distinct character areas within St. Albans.

The information was organized into customized sheets designed specifically for this project that incorporate photographs, illustrations, diagrams, and tables with the metric information, to clearly describe each character area. Each of these character areas include a range of common identifying qualities, which are described in more detail on the following pages.

- T5 Downtown Center
- T4 General Neighborhood
- T3c Cottage House
- T3h Large House
- T3e Estate House

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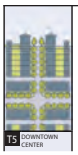
T5 DOWNTOWN CENTER CHARACTER AREA

The Downtown Center Character Area refers to places within St. Albans where attached buildings are pulled to the back of the sidewalk, and typically have a height of two to four stories. Often the first floor is occupied by retail, with office or residential above. The Downtown Center includes Main Street as well as the side streets that share similar characteristics.



T-5 DOWNTOWN CENTER CHARACTER AREA

The T-5 Downtown Center Zone consists of higher density mixed use buildings that accommodate retail, offices, rowhouses and apartments. It has a tight network of streets, with wide sidewalks, steady street tree planting and buildings set close to the sidewalks.

General Character:	T5 Downtown is the historic heart of St. Albans.
Building Placement:	Shallow to no setbacks; buildings oriented to street defining a street wall.
Frontage Types:	Stoop, forecourt, dooryard, shopfront, gallery.
Building Height:	2 to 5 stories.
Type of Civic Space:	Parks, Plazas and Squares, median landscaping.

T5 – Downtown Center Character Area

St. Albans, Vermont

St. Albans, Vermont

St. Albans, Vermont

St. Albans, Vermont

St. Albans, Vermont

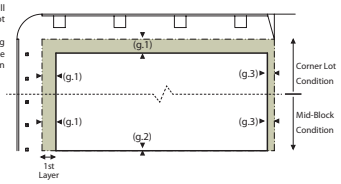
St. Albans, Vermont

BUILDING CONFIGURATION

1. Building height shall be measured in number of stories, excluding Attics and raised basements.
2. Stories may not exceed 14 feet in height from finished floor to finished ceiling, except for a first floor Commercial Function which must be a minimum of 11 feet and may exceed 14 feet. A first floor Commercial function that exceeds 14 feet shall be treated as 2 stories.
3. Height shall be measured to the eave or roof deck.

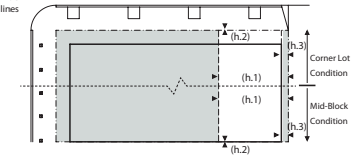
SETBACKS - PRINCIPAL BLDG

1. The Facades and Elevations of Principal Buildings shall be distanced from the Lot lines as shown.
2. Facades shall be built along the Principal Frontage to the minimum specified width in the table.



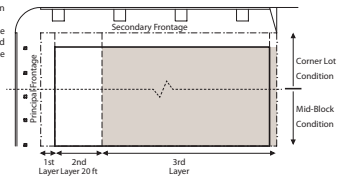
SETBACKS-OUTBUILDING

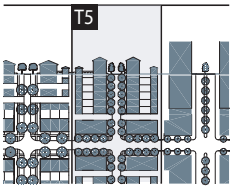
1. The Elevations of the Outbuilding shall be distanced from the Lot lines as shown.



PARKING PLACEMENT

1. Uncovered parking spaces may be provided within the Third Lot Layer as shown in the diagram.
2. Covered parking shall be provided within the Third Lot Layer as shown in the diagram.





e. BUILDING FUNCTION	
Residential	open use
Lodging	open use
Office	open use
Retail	open use
f. BUILDING CONFIGURATION	
Principal Building	4 stories max., 2 min.
Outbuilding	2 stories max.
g. LOT OCCUPATION	
Lot Width	18 ft min. 96 ft max. #
Lot Coverage	95% max.
h. BUILDING DISPOSITION	
Edgeyard	not permitted
Sideyard	not permitted
Rearyard	permitted
Courtyard	not permitted
i. SETBACKS - PRINCIPAL BUILDING	
(g.1) Front Build-to	0 ft. min. 12 ft. max.
(g.2) Side Setback	0 ft. min. ^
(g.3) Rear Setback	3 ft. min. *
Frontage Buildout	80% min. at setback
j. SETBACKS - OUTBUILDING	
(h.1) Front Setback	40 ft max. from rear
(h.2) Side Setback	0 ft min. or 3 ft. at corner
(h.3) Rear Setback	3 ft. min *
k. PRIVATE FRONTAGES	
Common Lawn	not permitted
Porch & Fence	not permitted
Terrace or L.C.	permitted
Forecourt	permitted
Stoop	permitted
Shopfront & Awning	permitted
Gallery	not permitted
Arcade	not permitted
Bungalow Court	not permitted

* Or 15 ft. from center line of alley, whichever is greater

^ Corner lot side setbacks shall match corresponding front setback

\# Corner lot minimum must be 8 ft. wider

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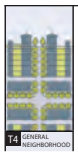
T4 GENERAL NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AREA

The General Neighborhood Character Area, which is largely missing in St. Albans, is characterized by a mix of attached and detached buildings, with varied, shallow setbacks. Buildings are typically two to three stories and include a diversity of uses. The General Neighborhood character area would accommodate a mix of new building types geared to young adults, retires, and entrepreneurs, including live/works, loft apartments, and artisan industrial space.



T-4 GENERAL NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER AREA

The T-4 General Neighborhood Zone consists of a mixed use but primarily residential urban fabric, with ground floor office, retail, and artisan industrial uses. It may have a wide range of building types: single family, duplex, live/works, and rowhouses. Setbacks and landscaping are variable. Streets with curbs and sidewalks define medium-sized blocks.

General Character:	Mix of Houses, Townhouses & small Apartment buildings, with scattered Commercial activity; balance between landscape and buildings; presence of pedestrians.
Building Placement:	Shallow to medium front and side yard Setbacks.
Frontage Types:	Porch, fence, dooryard, forecourt, stoop, shopfront, gallery.
Building Height:	2- to 3-Story
Type of Civic Space:	Parks, Squares, Greens

T4 - General Neighborhood Character Area

Burlington, Vermont

Burlington, Vermont

Burlington, Vermont

Burlington, Vermont

St. Albans, Vermont

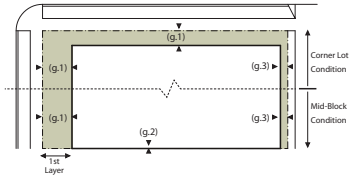
St. Albans, Vermont

BUILDING CONFIGURATION

1. Building height shall be measured in number of stories, excluding Attics and raised basements.
2. Stories may not exceed 14 feet in height from finished floor to finished ceiling, except for a first floor Commercial Function which must be a minimum of 11 feet and may exceed 14 feet. A first floor Commercial function that exceeds 14 feet shall be treated as 2 stories.
3. Height shall be measured to the eave or roof deck.

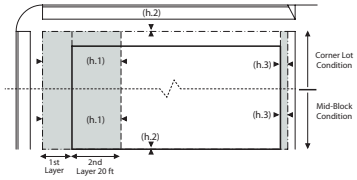
SETBACKS - PRINCIPAL BLDG

1. The Facades and Elevations of Principal Buildings shall be distanced from the Lot lines as shown.
2. Facades shall be built along the Principal Frontage to the minimum specified width in the table.



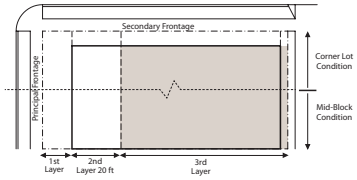
SETBACKS - OUTBUILDING

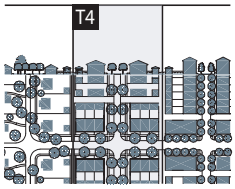
1. The Elevations of the Outbuilding shall be distanced from the Lot lines as shown.



PARKING PLACEMENT

1. Uncovered parking spaces may be provided within the Third Lot Layer as shown in the diagram.
2. Covered parking shall be provided within the Third Lot Layer as shown in the diagram.





e. BUILDING FUNCTION	
Residential	limited use
Lodging	limited use
Office	limited use
Retail	limited use
f. BUILDING CONFIGURATION	
Principal Building	3 stories max., 2 min.
Outbuilding	2 stories max.
g. LOT OCCUPATION	
Lot Width	18 ft. min. 80 ft. max. #
Lot Coverage	70% max.
h. BUILDING DISPOSITION	
Edgeyard	permitted
Sideyard	permitted
Rearyard	permitted
Courtyard	not permitted
i. SETBACKS - PRINCIPAL BUILDING	
(g.1) Front Build-to	0 ft. min. 18 ft. max.
(g.2) Side Setback	0 ft. min. ^
(g.3) Rear Setback	3 ft. min. *
Frontage Buildout	60% min. at setback
j. SETBACKS - OUTBUILDING	
(h.1) Front Setback	20 ft. min. + bldg. set-
(h.2) Side Setback	0 ft. min. or 3 ft. at
(h.3) Rear Setback	3 ft. min *
k. PRIVATE FRONTAGES	
Common Lawn	permitted
Porch & Fence	permitted
Terrace or L.C.	permitted
Forecourt	permitted
Stoop	permitted
Shopfront & Awning	permitted
Gallery	not permitted
Arcade	not permitted
Bungalow Court	permitted

* Or 15 ft. from center line of alley, whichever is greater

^ Corner lot side setbacks shall match corresponding front setback

\# Corner lot minimum must be 8 ft. wider

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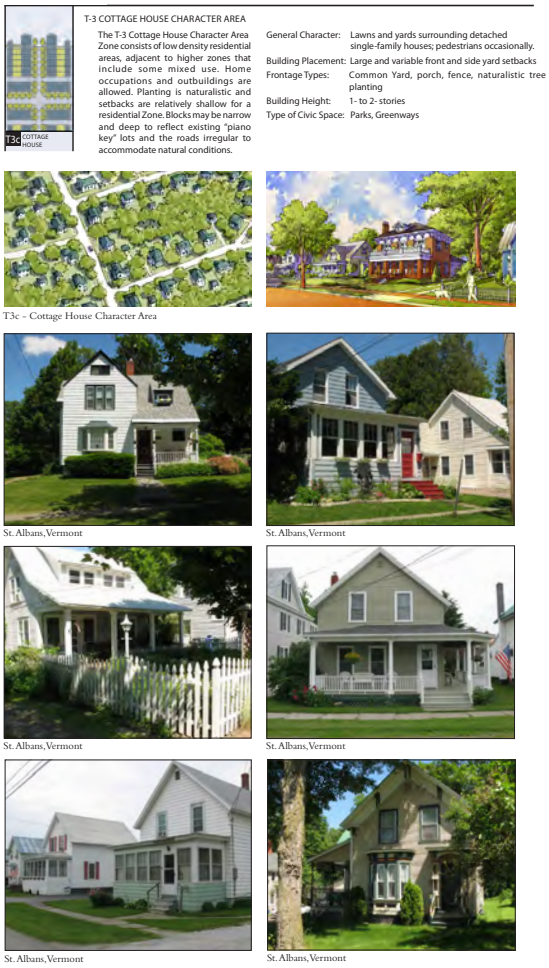
T3c COTTAGE HOUSE CHARACTER AREA

The Cottage House Character Area refers to neighborhoods within St. Albans, located in both the blocks and the hill, dominated by smaller cottage houses. These simple houses are pulled relatively close to the street and are set on more narrow lots. In the blocks, these houses can be found on the piano key lots.



T-3 COTTAGE HOUSE CHARACTER AREA

The T-3 Cottage House Character Area Zone consists of low density residential areas, adjacent to higher zones that include some mixed use. Home occupations and outbuildings are allowed. Planting is naturalistic and setbacks are relatively shallow for a residential Zone. Blocks may be narrow and deep to reflect existing "piano key" lots and the roads irregular to accommodate natural conditions.

General Character: Lawns and yards surrounding detached single-family houses; pedestrians occasionally.
Building Placement: Large and variable front and side yard setbacks
Frontage Types: Common Yard, porch, fence, naturalistic tree planting
Building Height: 1- to 2- stories
Type of Civic Space: Parks, Greenways

T3c - Cottage House Character Area

St. Albans, Vermont

St. Albans, Vermont

St. Albans, Vermont

St. Albans, Vermont

St. Albans, Vermont

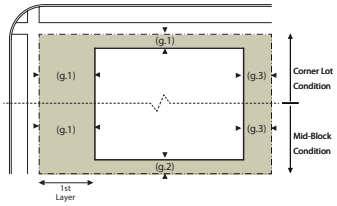
St. Albans, Vermont

BUILDING CONFIGURATION

1. Building height shall be measured in number of stories, excluding Attics and raised basements.
2. Stories may not exceed 14 feet in height from finished floor to finished ceiling, except for a first floor Commercial Function which must be a minimum of 11 feet and may exceed 14 feet. A first floor Commercial function that exceeds 14 feet shall be treated as 2 stories.
3. Height shall be measured to the eave or roof deck.

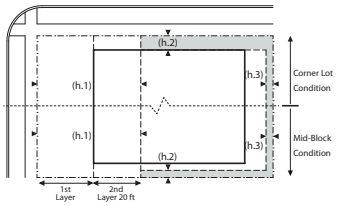
SETBACKS - PRINCIPAL BLDG

1. The Facades and Elevations of Principal Buildings shall be distanced from the Lot lines as shown.
2. Facades shall be built along the Principal Frontage to the minimum specified width in the table.



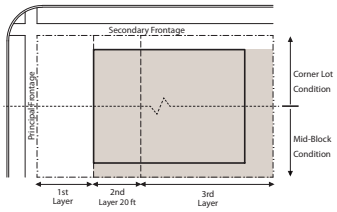
SETBACKS - OUTBUILDING

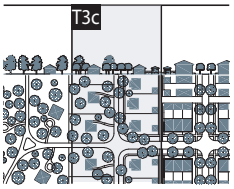
1. The Elevation of the Outbuilding shall be distanced from the Lot lines as shown.



PARKING PLACEMENT

1. Uncovered parking spaces may be provided within the Second and Third Lot Layers as shown in the diagram.
2. Covered parking shall be provided within the Third Lot Layer as shown in the diagram. Side- or rear-entry garages may be allowed in the First or Second Lot Layers by Minor Change.





e. BUILDING FUNCTION	
Residential	restricted use
Lodging	restricted use
Office	restricted use
Retail	restricted use
f. BUILDING CONFIGURATION	
Principal Building	2 stories max.
Outbuilding	1 story max.
g. LOT OCCUPATION	
Lot Width	35 ft min 70 ft max. #
Lot Coverage	20% max.
h. BUILDING DISPOSITION	
Edgeyard	permitted
Sideyard	not permitted
Rearyard	not permitted
Courtyard	not permitted
i. SETBACKS - PRINCIPAL BUILDING	
(g.1) Front Build-to	12 ft. min. 20 ft. max.
(g.2) Side Setback	3 ft. min. 12 ft max. ^
(g.3) Rear Setback	3 ft. min. *
Frontage Buildout	60% max.. at setback
j. SETBACKS - OUTBUILDING	
(h.1) Front Setback	20 ft. min. + bldg. set-
(h.2) Side Setback	3 ft. min.
(h.3) Rear Setback	3 ft. min. *
k. PRIVATE FRONTAGES	
Common Lawn	permitted
Porch & Fence	permitted
Terrace or L.C.	not permitted
Forecourt	not permitted
Stoop	permitted
Shopfront & Awning	not permitted
Gallery	not permitted
Arcade	not permitted
Bungalow Court	permitted

* Or 15 ft. from center line of alley, whichever is greater
^ Corner lot side setbacks shall match corresponding front setback
\# Corner lot minimum must be 8 ft. wider

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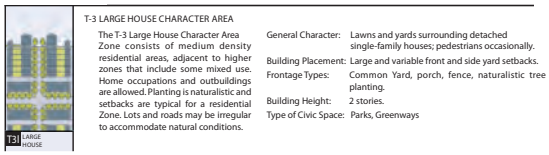
T3l LARGE HOUSE CHARACTER AREA

The Large House Character Area includes the majority of residential neighborhoods within St. Albans. The area is defined by a mix of single family homes with moderate setbacks. Houses are typically one to two stories with lots that include outbuildings.



T-3 LARGE HOUSE CHARACTER AREA

The T-3 Large House Character Area Zone consists of medium density residential areas, adjacent to higher zones that include some mixed use. Home occupations and outbuildings are allowed. Planting is naturalistic and setbacks are typical for a residential Zone. Lots and roads may be irregular to accommodate natural conditions.

General Character: Lawns and yards surrounding detached single-family houses; pedestrians occasionally.
Building Placement: Large and variable front and side yard setbacks.
Frontage Types: Common Yard, porch, fence, naturalistic tree planting.
Building Height: 2 stories.
Type of Civic Space: Parks, Greenways

T3l- Large House Character Area

St. Albans, Vermont

St. Albans, Vermont

St. Albans, Vermont

St. Albans, Vermont

St. Albans, Vermont

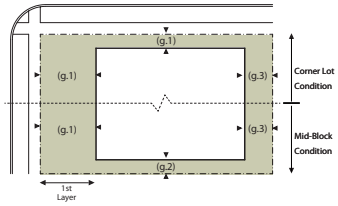
St. Albans, Vermont

BUILDING CONFIGURATION

1. Building height shall be measured in number of stories, excluding Attics and raised basements.
2. Stories may not exceed 14 feet in height from finished floor to finished ceiling, except for a first floor Commercial Function which must be a minimum of 11 feet and may exceed 14 feet. A first floor Commercial function that exceeds 14 feet shall be treated as 2 stories.
3. Height shall be measured to the eave or roof deck.

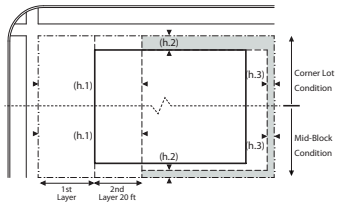
SETBACKS - PRINCIPAL BLDG

1. The Facades and Elevations of Principal Buildings shall be distanced from the Lot lines as shown.
2. Facades shall be built along the Principal Frontage to the minimum specified width in the table.



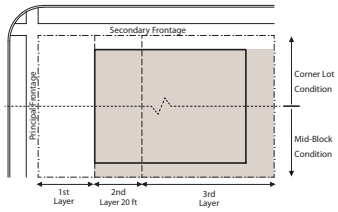
SETBACKS - OUTBUILDING

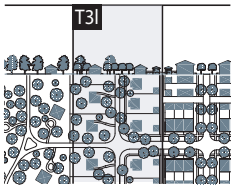
1. The Elevation of the Outbuilding shall be distanced from the Lot lines as shown.



PARKING PLACEMENT

1. Uncovered parking spaces may be provided within the Second and Third Lot Layers as shown in the diagram.
2. Covered parking shall be provided within the Third Lot Layer as shown in the diagram. Side- or rear-entry garages may be allowed in the First or Second Lot Layers by Minor Change.





e. BUILDING FUNCTION	
Residential	restricted use
Lodging	restricted use
Office	restricted use
Retail	restricted use
f. BUILDING CONFIGURATION	
Principal Building	2 stories max.
Outbuilding	1 story max.
g. LOT OCCUPATION	
Lot Width	60 ft min. 100 ft. max. #
Lot Coverage	40% max.
h. BUILDING DISPOSITION	
Edgeyard	permitted
Sideyard	not permitted
Rearyard	not permitted
Courtyard	not permitted
i. SETBACKS - PRINCIPAL BUILDING	
(g.1) Front Build-to	16 ft. min. 40 ft. max.
(g.2) Side Setback	18 ft. min. 48 ft. max. ^
(g.3) Rear Setback	3 ft. min *
Frontage Buildout	50% max. at setback
j. SETBACKS - OUTBUILDING	
(h.1) Front Setback	20 ft. min. + bldg. set-
(h.2) Side Setback	3 ft. min.
(h.3) Rear Setback	3 ft. min. *
k. PRIVATE FRONTAGES	
Common Lawn	permitted
Porch & Fence	permitted
Terrace or L.C.	not permitted
Forecourt	not permitted
Stoop	permitted
Shopfront & Awning	not permitted
Gallery	not permitted
Arcade	not permitted
Bungalow Court	permitted

* Or 15 ft. from center line of alley, whichever is greater
^ Corner lot side setbacks shall match corresponding front setback
\# Corner lot minimum must be 8 ft. wider

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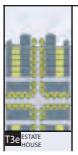
T3e ESTATE HOUSE CHARACTER AREA

The Large House Character Area is reserved for the unusually large lots within St. Albans, the majority of which are located on the hill. The area is defined by large lots, grand setbacks, and two to three story homes.



T-3 ESTATE HOUSE CHARACTER AREA

The T-3 Estate House Character Area Zone consists of large lot, low density residential areas, adjacent to other residential zones. Home occupations and outbuildings are allowed. Planting is naturalistic and setbacks are relatively deep for a residential Zone. The lots and roads may be irregular to accommodate natural conditions.

General Character: Lawns and yards surrounding detached single-family houses; pedestrians occasionally.
Building Placement: Large and variable front and side yard setbacks
Frontage Types: Common Yard, porch, fence, naturalistic tree planting
Building Height: 2 stories
Type of Civic Space: Parks, Greenways

T3e - Estate House Character Area

St. Albans, Vermont

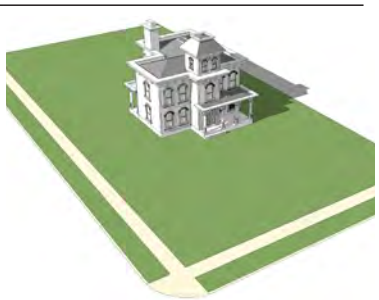
St. Albans, Vermont

St. Albans, Vermont

St. Albans, Vermont

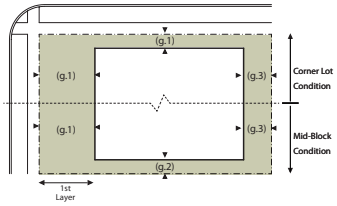
BUILDING CONFIGURATION

1. Building height shall be measured in number of stories, excluding Attics and raised basements.
2. Stories may not exceed 14 feet in height from finished floor to finished ceiling, except for a first floor Commercial Function which must be a minimum of 11 feet and may exceed 14 feet. A first floor Commercial function that exceeds 14 feet shall be treated as 2 stories.
3. Height shall be measured to the eave or roof deck.



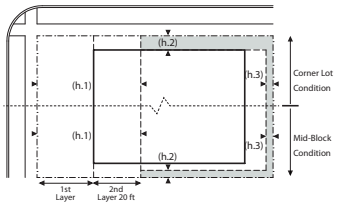
SETBACKS - PRINCIPAL BLDG

1. The Facades and Elevations of Principal Buildings shall be distanced from the Lot lines as shown.
2. Facades shall be built along the Principal Frontage to the minimum specified width in the table.



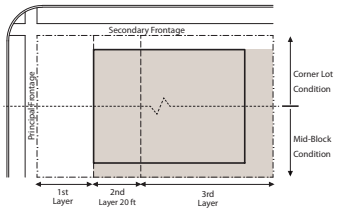
SETBACKS - OUTBUILDING

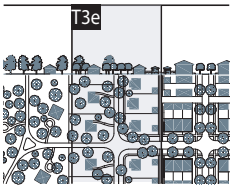
1. The Elevation of the Outbuilding shall be distanced from the Lot lines as shown.



PARKING PLACEMENT

1. Uncovered parking spaces may be provided within the Second and Third Lot Layers as shown in the diagram.
2. Covered parking shall be provided within the Third Lot Layer as shown in the diagram. Side- or rear-entry garages may be allowed in the First or Second Lot Layers by Minor Change.





e. BUILDING FUNCTION	
Residential	restricted use
Lodging	restricted use
Office	restricted use
Retail	restricted use
f. BUILDING CONFIGURATION	
Principal Building	2 story min, 3 story max.
Outbuilding	2 stories max.
g. LOT OCCUPATION	
Lot Width	100 ft. min. #
Lot Coverage	25% max.
h. BUILDING DISPOSITION	
Edgeyard	permitted
Sideyard	not permitted
Rearyard	not permitted
Courtyard	not permitted
i. SETBACKS - PRINCIPAL BUILDING	
(g.1) Front Build-to	60 ft. min.
(g.2) Side Setback	24 ft. min. ^
(g.3) Rear Setback	3 ft. min. *
Frontage Buildout	35% max. at setback
j. SETBACKS - OUTBUILDING	
(h.1) Front Setback	20 ft. min. + bldg. set-
(h.2) Side Setback	3 ft. min.
(h.3) Rear Setback	3 ft. min. *
k. PRIVATE FRONTAGES	
Common Lawn	permitted
Porch & Fence	permitted
Terrace or L.C.	not permitted
Forecourt	not permitted
Stoop	not permitted
Shopfront & Awning	not permitted
Gallery	not permitted
Arcade	not permitted
Bungalow Court	not permitted

* Or 15 ft. from center line of alley, whichever is greater
^ Corner lot side setbacks shall match corresponding front setback
\# Corner lot minimum must be 8 ft. wider

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FORM & USE MAP

All of the property within St. Albans falls into one of the character areas described on the previous pages, or the additional special zones detailed below.

The character areas and additional zones identified within St. Albans are shown on the Form & Use Map on the following page.

CIVIC SPACE
An outdoor area dedicated for public use. Civic Space types are defined by the combination of certain physical constants including the relationships among their intended use, their size, their landscaping and their enfronting buildings. Civic Spaces include parks, greens, squares, plazas, and playgrounds.

CIVIC BUILDING
A building operated by one or more government or not-for-profit organizations dedicated to arts, culture, education, recreation, government, transit, religion, and municipal parking.

SPECIAL DISTRICT
A Special District is an area that, by its intrinsic function, disposition, or configuration, cannot or should not conform to the Character Areas. Special Districts may be mapped and typically include college campuses, hospitals, larger industrial areas, or other unique or special sites.

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FORM & USE MAP

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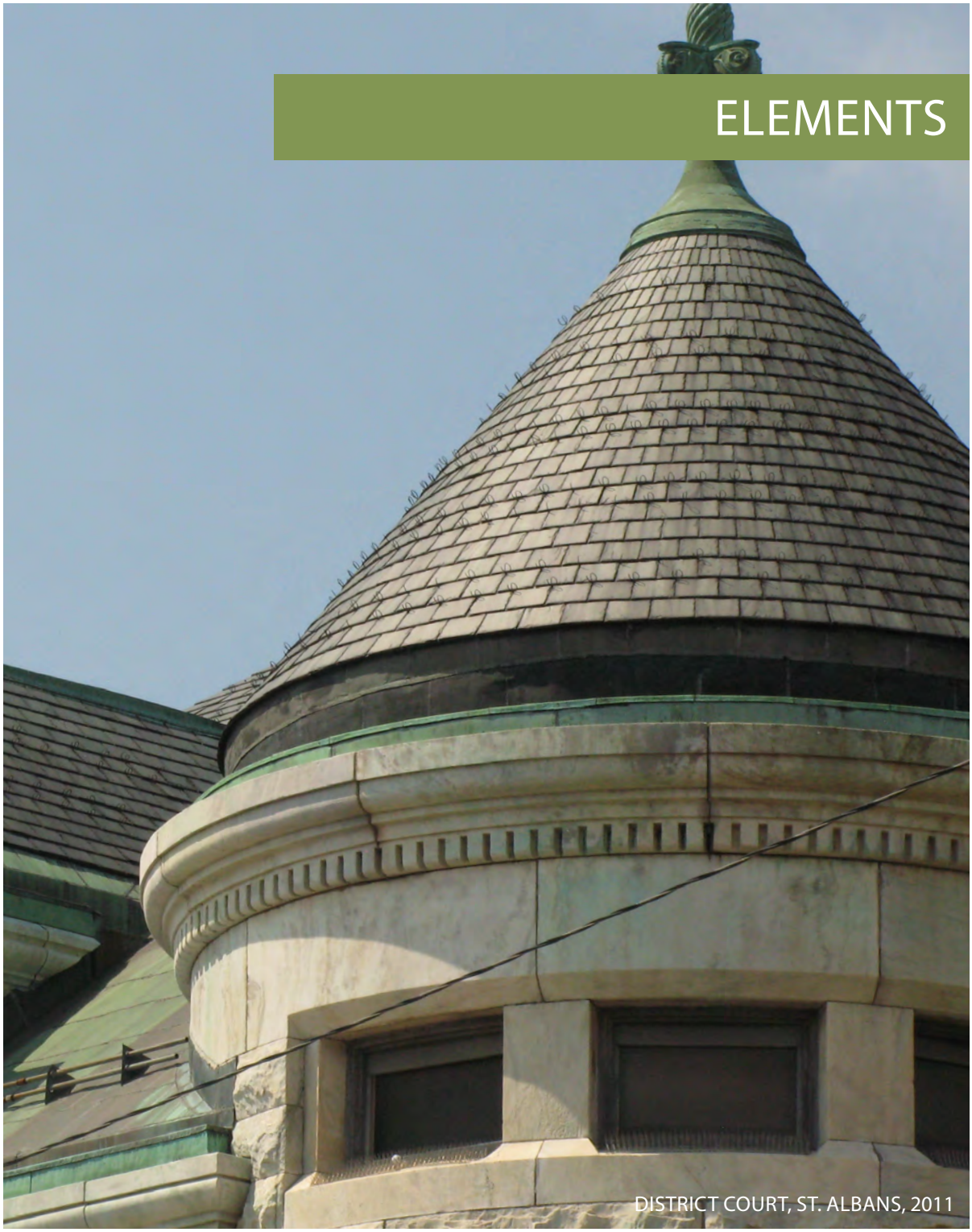
ELEMENTS



DISTRICT COURT, ST. ALBANS, 2011

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ST. ALBANS NEEDS TO FIGURE OUT ITS IDENTITY. WHAT IS ITS MUNICIPAL ADVANTAGE?

identity n. The state of having unique identifying characteristics held by no other place.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MAKING ST. ALBANS A DESTINATION

1 CREATING A NEW IMAGE AND SELLING IT

Despite the City's wealth of assets, St. Albans is currently suffering from a lack of identity and confidence in its ability to become a more vibrant and successful place. The City should continue to work with the public to identify and market the local assets, potentially including a marketing campaign to promote St. Albans regionally.

2 PLACE-BASED TOURISM

Place-based tourism is strong in Vermont, with people traveling to historic villages, towns and cities around the state to take in the picturesque rural landscape and experience small town life. This kind of tourism is dependent on a high-quality built environment that are interesting, beautiful and useful, with an overlay of history. Vermont towns and cities are rich with authenticity and beauty. In contrast, the suburban places in which most people live today would never be visited by place-based tourists, because suburban environments are typically utilitarian and lacking distinction.

While St. Albans has a high quality built environment, some of the historic fabric has been degraded over time. By taking a three-pronged approach of repairing the urban fabric, holding festivals and events, and building a locally-based creative culture, St. Albans can build on its already present place-based tourism economy.

3 AGRITOURISM

Many people are willing to pay to experience the rural character and authentic experiences associated with farming. There is a growing desire for an increased understanding of food sources, production and distribution techniques, organic food production, food movement, and "farm-to-table" options.

With proper planning, an entire community or region can become an agritourism destination. This kind of transformation requires a rigorous marketing and branding strategy, as well as the infusion of agriculture into all aspects of the community. As with building form, agricultural

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form changes along the Transect, from the commercial family farm on the periphery, to the neighborhood plot, to the urban rooftop garden and edible streetscape. City programming should include festivals celebrating seasonal harvests and coordination with local restaurants so they use products that are grown and produced locally.

BACKYARD FARM, ST. ALBANS CITY

Agritourism at the community level is an economic development strategy and should be treated as such. In order to thrive, this kind of business needs sufficient financial resources and manpower. Community agricultural plots should be thought of much in the way a town thinks about creating new parks or creating an economic development program. Accessibility and visibility are critical to success. Several cities have even created a new municipal staff position, the City Farmer, whose salary is paid with the support of proceeds from selling produce.

4 BIZARRE AND UNUSUAL EVENTS

St. Albans, Maple Sugar Capital of the World, already has a successful and regionally renowned Maple Festival. Building on that, the City should consider more ways to attract both locals and tourists to the downtown by organizing additional events that are unique and interesting. Imagine a reenactment of the St. Albans' Raid held in tandem with a fall foliage festival, an Islands to Farms bike race

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that begins and ends in Taylor Park, a seasonal demonstration of tree tapping throughout the downtown, or a French Canadian music festival. More downtown events will generate a greater buzz, which has the potential spin-off effect of attracting new residents, businesses, and tourists.

5 DOWNTOWN HOTEL & MEETING SPACE

Tourism in St. Albans is hindered by the lack of a high quality downtown hotel and meeting space. Efforts should be made to identify priority citing for a hotel and generate mechanisms to attract an urban hotel operator.

A CENTER FOR COOL JOBS

1 THE CREATIVE CLASS

St. Albans is located within an easy drive of Burlington, but has the distinct advantage of lower real estate prices. This positioning makes St. Albans an attractive community for both workers commuting to Burlington as well as to creative class entrepreneurs who want proximity to Burlington but without the higher price tag.

Adding new building types to the City as alternative choices to the predominantly historic single family stock would provide new options that might appeal to this group. Loft-style condos, rowhouses, and live/work spaces would diversify housing options and potentially draw new life into the City.

2 PLACE-BASED BUSINESSES

In today's idea-based economy, where creativity and innovation are valued even more than experience and seniority, a new type of business environment has taken shape. The internet and other technologies have bridged the gap between distance, time, and proximity to natural resources. The new resource is creative people.

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The office park of the 80's and 90's has been replaced with mixed-use urban lofts and warehouses. Previously, municipalities competed to attract business with tax breaks or Class A office space. Today many companies will only locate in a community that is walkable, mixed-use and diverse. This is because the best employees will no longer settle for a suburban lifestyle and are seeking employment in vibrant cities with active street life and culture.

To take advantage of this shift in culture and mindset, St. Albans should incentivize the creation of high quality built environments and then rigorously tailor a marketing message to feature this aspect of the City. Investments in place-making will pay off and should be considered an important economic development program in addition to a quality of life benefit for existing residents.

EXAMPLE OF BUSINESS CATERING TO CREATIVE ECONOMY

3 NEW BUSINESS INCUBATOR SPACE

Local start-ups and new businesses form the foundation of a community in the sense that they generate both financial and social capital. Local businesses serve as a morale booster that help bolster the local economy and create the entrepreneurial spirit and buzz that attracts other creative types and an increase in tourism activity. The process of encouraging new business development can be spurred by the provision of incubator space.

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Incubator spaces can be light weight structures that are modular and moveable, or they can be permanent and built in a location near the commercial center of the community. Rents should be modest during the business start-up phase with the understanding that successful ventures will move out of the incubator and into their own space once they are more established. Incubator spaces can also be used to house artists and other creative types.

In St. Albans, the presence of the railroad and the abundance of proximate underutilized land lends itself to the use of boxcars for inexpensive and interesting incubator space, which could be pulled together at relatively little expense.

EXAMPLES OF LOW COST INCUBATOR SPACE

4 ADDITIONAL OFFICE SPACE

St. Albans could benefit greatly from identifying sites to accommodate office space for small, mid-sized, and large companies to supplement that presence of larger office buildings already servicing large numbers of employees. New offices would be very appropriate within the vicinity of the transit oriented center envisioned for the Amtrak Station area.

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ATTRACTING RETAIL

1 LOOKING AT MAIN STREET AS A COHESIVE RETAIL DISTRICT

Shopping mall managers are incredibly strategic about the kind of businesses they pursue and the details of the shopping environment, such as displays, lighting, and floor surface. Main Street can learn from some of these approaches to identify and attract the right kinds of business, with strategies for providing financial incentives, would help fill vacant space and address gaps in the current retail offerings. Visual improvements to shop facades, displays, and sidewalk furniture could help generate new attention, drawing locals and tourists to the downtown.

2 BOUTIQUE CRAFT BUSINESSES

There is a growing trend among the creative class to seek out local coffee roasters, brew pubs, artisanal cheese makers, and other businesses that offer high quality and locally produced products. St. Albans could seek out the kind of entrepreneurs that are looking for space in up-and-coming urban places as the home base for starting these kind of boutique business ventures.

A CENTER FOR NEW INDUSTRY

1 ECO-INDUSTRY

Often, companies that are in the business of producing goods and services related to sustainability and green building are not only concerned with profit, but also tend to take a more principle-based approach to doing business. They adopt a "triple bottom line" approach in which they are concerned about people, the planet and profit and aspire to "do well by doing good". This socially, environmentally and financially responsible model makes it difficult for companies like this to be taken seriously if their physical presence, identified by their stores and factories, do not follow the principles of their corporate mission. As a result, "green" industries seek out communities that embrace these same philosophies and actively encourage these companies to locate in their city. Becoming well known as a "green" city that is "open for business" to "green" and sustainable companies will go along way toward attracting these eco-industry operations.

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2

VALUE ADDED PRODUCTION

St. Albans is home to the St. Albans Cooperative Creamery, which was established in 1919 to give dairy farmers a reliable market and fair price for their product. More than 80 years later, they are the largest dairy cooperative in Vermont, processing and marketing over three million pounds of milk each day from approximately 463 member farms.

There is potential to build on St. Albans established position as a dairy processing center by incentivizing additional value added propositions, both large and small scale operations, such as local cheese, yogurt, and ice cream production facilities.

St. Albans could also try to market potential cooperative agricultural-related facilities to enable local small scale farmers to pool resources so they can generate a diversity of new value added products.

Expanding dairy and other types of agricultural processing would add an important level of diversity to the local economy and position St. Albans for a greater level of economic resilience.

3

ARTISAN INDUSTRIAL SPACE

St. Albans has an opportunity to integrate a variety of creative building types into its stock, increasing opportunities to attract different kinds of the people to the City. Artisan industrial space is designed to accommodate a workshop and living quarters within one building, similar to a live/work type, where one mortgage covers both uses. This allows creative entrepreneurs the means to affordably engage in small scale artistic and light industrial pursuits. Artisan industrial space can be set up with ground floor workshops facing onto streets, with large doors that can expose the passerby to the work happening inside. Within St. Albans there are several locations where this type of small scale industry could take place, including Federal Street and in the vicinity of the railroad tracks.

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QUALITY OF LIFE

1 FAMILY FUN

St. Albans has an opportunity to better promote amenities currently in place, including the school system, music programs, museums and other unique attributes, while also promoting the kinds of improvements that would attract more families, including high quality new housing, and more activities that are fun for kids, potentially including teaching farms, more playgrounds, and family-friendly events.

SACK RACES IN A PUBLIC PARK

2 MIXED HOUSING & DIVERSITY

Demographic diversity of people in age, income level, culture, and race provides a sense of interest and vitality to the most loved cities in the world. In order to attract this type of diversity to a community, the physical form must be conducive to their varied lifestyles. A key component to creating an environment where diversity thrives is the provision of a mix of housing options. There should be many different types, sizes and price points of housing intermingled in close proximity rather than being separated. The community should include a range of living experiences from rural to urban.

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The variety of dwelling types should include: different sizes of detached single family houses, rowhouses, apartments and live-work buildings. In addition, small ancillary buildings with a living space above the garage should be permitted within the rear yard of each principal building house for extended family, tenants or guests to stay or live. Residential units should be available either for leasing or for ownership. This allows young and old, singles and families, and residents having a range of income levels to find dignified places that suit their preferences and lifestyles. An additional benefit of this mix of housing types is that workers can live within walking distance of their jobs, rather than requiring that they commute to work, worsening traffic problems.

SMALL HOUSE

LIVE / WORK BUILDINGS

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3 STREET GAMES AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

St. Albans has many great public spaces, including parks and fields in which to celebrate and provide opportunities for citizens to congregate. Neighborhood streets also offer an additional space for community gatherings, including block parties, pick-up games, or outdoor movies. Even small efforts to schedule community events helps generate a renewed sense of civic pride and responsibility.

OUTDOOR MOVIES

4 COMMUNITY GARAGE

St. Albans could benefit from the start up of shared or cooperative community spaces, such as a garage where the public could bring their cars and do work on their own vehicles. Although this kind of facility would require start up capital, the project could be managed similar to a co-working space, where the cost associated with equipment and utilities could be shared by members, helping to build a spirit of community and a stronger connection to place.

COOPERATIVE GARAGE

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TRANSPORTATION

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

1 CAPITALIZE ON ACCESS TO INTERSTATE 89

Dual access points to Interstate 89 is one of St. Albans' municipal advantages. To capitalize on this large volume of traffic, the City should consider strategies to improve the gateways in the vicinity of the highway on- and off- ramps through enhanced building siting and design. Highway signage could also be improved to indicate the presence of historical and cultural destinations.

2 REGIONAL BIKE CONNECTIONS

St. Albans is fortunate to be located at the head of the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, which extends to Richford, Vermont. There are significant opportunities to build on this unique asset and attract more bikers to the City. Stronger connections could made from the trail head, currently located near Dussault Auto Sale, to the downtown. In addition, safer and more explicit bike connections can be made from the downtown to the neighborhoods and the lake.

MISSISQUOI VALLEY RAIL TRAIL BEGINNING IN ST. ALBANS

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CREATING A CYCLING HUB

1 BIKES ON TRAINS

Several Amtrak routes have taken measures to accommodate bicycles on it the rail cars. With cooperation between the City and Amtrak, bikes on trains could become a possibility for the Vermonter, generating greater numbers of bicycle tourists for the City.

2 BIKEWAYS

Currently St. Albans is lacking designated bike lanes or other kinds of bikeway infrastructure. Fortunately, there are ample opportunities to inexpensively integrate bikeways into existing street sections. Many of the commercial streets in the City are overly wide. Bike lanes can be used as a strategy to both enhance bikability and to slow traffic.

There are many design alternatives for retrofitting existing streets to promote safer biking conditions.

CYCLISTS IN ST. ALBANS

3 BIKE RENTAL

St. Albans should seek out an provide incentives for a local bike shop to sell and repair bicycles. The city might even consider identifying a location proximate to the trailhead and providing a year's worth of free rent to a business with demonstrated success.

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4 BICYCLE PARKING

Cyclists must have safe and convenient places to store their bicycles at a trip's end. Thus, providing bicycle parking is critically important in supporting bicycling as a viable mode of transportation. Solutions range from the basic bicycle rack, to semi-enclosed bicycle shelters, to full bicycle stations that may include attended bicycle storage and repair, showers, lockers, changing rooms, rentals, and even cafe space.

PREFERRED U-STYLE BIKE RACK IN BURLINGTON, VT

5 END-OF-TRIP FACILITIES

To attract new cyclists and those who are already coming to Vermont, the northwest region, and St. Albans, the City should seek out business that serve this active population. Bike shops, cafes, smoothie stands and other trailside or downtown businesses that are interesting, visible and cater to the needs to the hungry, thirsty biker will do much to build the City's reputation as a bike-friendly destination.

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CIVIC SPACE

1 NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

St. Albans is blessed with a fair number of larger recreation areas; however, there is a noticeable dearth of smaller neighborhood parks that can serve as gathering places. The City should consider finding locations for playgrounds within an easy walk of most homes to better serve the needs of local families and help attract new families to the City.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

2 MULTI-MODAL TRAIL AND GREENWAY

There are large swaths of land on either side of the railroad tracks in the lower part of town. Currently underutilized, this land offers an opportunity to develop a greenway that can serve multiple functions and users, with multi-use trails that serve both bicyclists and pedestrians. The greenway would also help stitch together the hills and flats neighborhoods of the City by giving people from the hills a reason to cross the tracks. The greenway additionally could be engineered to provide natural stormwater infiltration during rain events.

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SUSTAINABILITY

ST. ALBANS AS A LOCAL FOOD CENTER

1 SELF-RELIANCE & FOOD SECURITY

As the cost of food and fuel increases there is mounting concern about food security, that every person in a community will have consistent access to enough food to sustain a healthy life. Because the majority of food for the average American travels about 1500 miles from the farm to the table, most families and communities, other than those who live on or near a farm, are in jeopardy if there is a disruption in long distance food shipping supply chain.

Self-Reliance, also known as Urban or Backyard Homesteading, is a growing trend in which individuals, families, and communities seek to grow as much of their own food as is practical and provide for other basic necessities without much or any input from outside sources. Several proven intensive, low-effort food-production systems include Square Foot Gardening, container gardening, and rooftop gardening.

2 CITY FARM

St. Albans might consider establishing a farm within the City, run by an independent farmer, to grow food, provide outreach to soup kitchens, schools, and the community, and engage all ages and demographics in hands-on agricultural education. This kind of community-supported agriculture can be used to supply hospitals, schools, and the local community, bringing fresh food to institutions and local families.

3 COMMUNITY KITCHEN CO-OP

St. Albans would benefit from a community kitchen for use by local people interested in value-added production of jams, baked goods, cheeses, or other local products. The community kitchen could be an annex to an existing facility within the region, within a permanent market hall or local food distribution center.

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4

COMMUNITY & SCHOOLYARD GARDENS

Community gardens can be established on blighted or underutilized properties, including parking lots, as a way to generate more activity and potentially spur redevelopment. There are several locations adjacent to the rail that could be converted to small-scale community gardens, helping to bring people to this underutilized area of the City.

Schoolyard gardens can be used as a tool to integrate classroom curriculum with an outdoor hands-on experience, environmental education, culinary arts, and nutrition.

COMMUNITY GARDEN IN BOSTON, MA

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5

LOCAL FOOD DISTRIBUTION NETWORKS

For local farmers to be able to compete with conventional grocery stores and modern food systems, there need to be a variety of places and means by which to market their produce. In addition to farmers markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs), there should be farm stands, local food markets, and/or permanent market halls.

St. Albans could consider locating a permanent market hall within the downtown to create a more consistent supply of local products and begin to repair the local food supply chain. The building can be a simple shed or an existing historic building, perhaps along Federal Street.

FARMERS MARKETS WITH SELECTION OF LOCAL PRODUCE

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THE SCALE OF RURAL TO URBAN FARMING TECHNIQUES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

PRODUCTION FARMS – Because of their large size, production farms should be located at the edge of a community. These farms are able to produce food on a regional scale as well as for the community in which they are located typically using row crop techniques.

SMALL FARMS – They are used to serve the immediate community and provide diversity to the supply of local food.

BOUTIQUE AND HOBBY FARMS – These are relatively small but are large enough for the farmer to sell the harvest commercially. Food produced from a boutique or hobby farm typically would be used by the farmer and sold in a farmers market or wholesale setting.

COMMUNITY GARDENS – This type of garden has seen acceptance in a wide range of settings in recent years. They may be part of a park or civic space. They work well in urban areas where land available to residents for individual gardens is limited. A community garden should produce a yield sufficient for participation of residents living in close proximity to it.

YARD GARDENS – These are appropriate for use on detached single family home lots for household use of the residents.

CONTAINER GARDENS – These gardens utilize containers to hold the planting medium and include window boxes, balcony and roof gardens. They can be used to provide household produce needs in more urban areas where space is limited.

EDIBLE LANDSCAPES – This refers to the utilization of plants and landscaping that produce edible food in settings that conventionally would have been limited to ornamental or non-food producing plants. Edible landscapes are not a farm or garden per se, and unlike the farms and gardens described above (with the exception of the community garden), are not limited to use on private lots. There are many plants that are beautiful as well as produce food. In Italy, some areas utilize lemon trees as street trees. Other examples include using blueberry bushes, which make a nice hedge, and strawberries, which are a great groundcover.

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LIGHT IMPRINT DESIGN

A key element in better addressing stormwater management is the reduction of impervious surfaces. Automobile-dominated sprawl development has made stormwater management more difficult and expensive, as it has resulted in increased impervious surfaces in the form of wider roads and large parking lots.

In the past few years, however, there has been much innovation in sustainable stormwater management, in order to reduce infrastructure demands and protect ground water. A new approach, called Light Imprint, incorporates natural and traditional drainage methods, modern engineering infrastructure and state-of-the-art infiltration practices. As a comprehensive set of time-tested methodologies that have been used for generations to deal with stormwater runoff, Light Imprint reduces the need for expensive stormwater infrastructure and provides more sustainable solutions than conventional engineering approaches.

1 MAINTAIN & REPAIR HYDROLOGICAL PATTERNS

All sustainable stormwater solutions should begin with the least technologically complex actions. The simplest technique for the least expense is to preserve the existing hydrological patterns of drainage and percolation. This allows the land to handle the water naturally with minimal, if any, human intervention. Successful sustainable stormwater management is largely related to staying out of nature's way and avoiding the problems we struggle to remediate. In St. Albans, some of the natural hydrological patterns in the landscape have been compromised by years of development. Opportunities exist to restore water systems and create an interconnected network of greenways that can begin to function as a system for natural infiltration and human enjoyment. Many of these broad system connections are illustrated on the master plan developed during the Create St. Albans Charrette.

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2 NATURAL INFILTRATION

An essential element of sustainable stormwater management is natural infiltration. There are a number of solutions to collect water during storm events and enable it to percolate naturally into the ground, recharging the aquifer in the process. The determinative factor as to whether infiltration can occur is the permeability of the surface onto or over which stormwater falls or flows.

3 PAVING

Paved surfaces including roads, parking lots, sidewalks and other hardscaped areas typically utilize asphalt, concrete or tar surfaces that are all impervious. As a result of the paving material chosen and their lack of permeability, these surfaces tend to exacerbate stormwater runoff related issues. There are many materials that are more pervious and are time-tested, including more recent innovations in paving technologies such as pervious asphalt and concrete. These have been developed to allow water to infiltrate large- and small-scale paved surfaces. St. Albans has already incorporated pervious paving material into Taylor Park pathways. These materials should be utilized in the future whenever feasible.

PERMEABLE PAVERS, FREIBURG, GERMANY

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4

RAIN GARDENS & BIORETENTION SWALES

A natural infiltration solution that incorporates short term storage of stormwater in basins and swales are rain gardens. A rain garden, also known as a vegetated infiltration basin, is a man-made or naturally occurring low spot in the landscape in which stormwater is collected and stored temporarily until it infiltrates the ground. Rain gardens can be designed for recreation as well as serving their stormwater infiltration function. As a recreational civic space, they work well because they store rainwater during a storm event and shortly thereafter when people are not usually playing in parks. After the water percolates they are available as a park again. With some adaptation, rain gardens can be located in all settings, from the most rural to the most urban locations.

A more utilitarian solution that utilizes the same concept of short term storage and infiltration is the bioswale. Bioswales are linear depressions with gently sloping sides, planted with vegetation that treat stormwater runoff from rooftops, streets, and parking lots by slowing and filtering it as it passes through them and then channeling any excess water to the storm sewer. The naturalistic aesthetic of the plantings make them an excellent solution for rural and suburban applications.

RAIN GARDEN, WATERCOLOR, FL

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5

GREEN STREETS

Green streets are thoroughfares that manage stormwater runoff at its source by incorporating vegetated water catchment and filtration devices in the form of small rain gardens and bioretention systems. Components such as flow-through planters and other sustainable stormwater solutions allow stormwater from the street to enter planters through cuts in the curb where the plant material removes impurities and allows water to naturally infiltrate or be stored elsewhere. Water-loving plants and those that are able to remove the impurities while thriving so close to traffic in more urban environments are used in green street design, adding beauty and function. It may be possible for St. Albans to retrofit existing neighborhood and downtown streets to accommodate these kinds of bioretention systems.

FLOW-THROUGH PLANTER, PORTLAND, OR

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6 RAINWATER HARVESTING

Harvesting rainwater is the collection and storage of rainwater that otherwise would be lost during a storm event. Rainwater can be harvested from rooftop or ground catchment systems, either in very simple or more complex systems, depending on the intended use of the water. Most systems are simple and consist of gutters and pipes attached to roofs channeling rainwater to a storage facility. The form of storage varies, based on the scale of the system and whether it is located in a more rural or urban setting. The most rural storage option is the pond. Cisterns, large concrete, wood or plastic storage chambers that often are installed underground, provide another storage alternative suitable for use both in rural and more urban areas.

A small storage alternative that works well for residential applications is the rain barrel. Rain barrels have become very popular in recent years and are sold even at national chain grocery and hardware stores. In their simplest form, they can be added to existing gutter systems at little cost, making rainwater harvesting an easy strategy that should be widely implemented at all scales.

7 GREYWATER RECYCLING

Greywater is water that has been used for laundering, dish washing and in showers and sinks. Depending on the local climate and soil conditions, it is possible to recycle grey water for several uses such as landscape and food irrigation or constructed wetlands. Recycling greywater reduces the amount of fresh water needed for each household and reduces the amount of wastewater entering the sewer system.

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8

SHADE TREES

The use of trees planted around houses is a simple and beautiful solution to reducing heating and cooling needs for buildings. When planted on the south and west sides of buildings, shade trees drop their leaves during the cooler fall season allowing warming sunlight to reach buildings. Additionally, they create a lush canopy in the warmer months providing shade to keep the house cool. This provides a low-tech, low-cost solution to reduce the energy needs of buildings.

9

GREEN ROOFS

Green roofs are waterproof, vegetative roofing systems in which a root barrier, drainage system, light weight planting medium and plants are layered on top of an impermeable membrane. They serve to insulate the building, reduce heating and cooling costs, absorb heat from sunlight, and to limit solar heat reflection into the atmosphere which contributes to the phenomenon known as the “heat island effect”. Stormwater not used by the vegetation can enter and be stored in a collection system such as rain barrels or cisterns for later use. Green roofs are not only utilitarian, they can also be designed as an outdoor garden amenity. Finally green roofs can be used as part of an urban agriculture program to produce food for the building or others nearby.

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ACTION

CITIZENS WORKING TOGETHER TO BEAUTIFY THEIR CITY

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WITH GOOD IDEAS YOU CAN MOVE THE MARKET A LITTLE BIT.

move v. To advance or progress.

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NEXT UP!

As follow-up to the **Create St. Albans!** process we recommend the community undertake a series of critical actions. If these items are acted upon, they will increase the likelihood of successfully implementing the ideas contained within the Toolkit. Creating a "buzz" requires a persistent and multi-faceted approach, involving advertising, media coverage, events, new business, visible physical improvements, and more. While we could have created an exhaustive list of To-Do's, studies have shown that the average person cannot focus on more than six or seven variables at a time. As such, we have created seven critical path recommendations that are meaningful, yet easily accomplished. These seven critical path items, in conjunction with the Plan and Elements contained in this Toolkit, will result in the creation of a financially, socially and environmentally sustainable future for St. Albans. The critical path items are detailed below:

1 PREPARE A FORM-BASED CODE

Throughout the charrette, there was overwhelming enthusiasm and support from the community for the form-based master plan and the concept of using form and character as a means for regulating land, as opposed to the conventional use-based approach.

To continue the momentum that has been building in St. Albans over the past several years, we recommend the City seek the additional funding available from the State to draft a form-based ordinance for the commercial areas of the City and potentially an optional overlay for the residential areas. A portion of the funding can also be used to build continued support around the master plan, which serves as the foundation for the form-based coding approach.

Moving forward with form-based codes is the most critical step to realizing the majority of the big ideas suggested within the master plan, particularly those related to economic development, increasing the City's municipal advantage, stitching back together the blocks and the hill through infill along Lake and Lower Welden, expanding housing and commercial opportunities for entrepreneurs and the creative class along Federal Street, and solidifying the community's goals for complete streets that include bicycleways, to name a few.

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It should be noted that the form-based approach is entirely customizable, and therefore should not be dismissed because of any single element of the code. For example, certain controversial elements discussed at the charrette, such as a build-to line in residential neighborhoods, can be loosened or eliminated to reflect the preferences of the entire community.

It is the code that makes the master plan legal and it is the code that will contain the certainty and incentives needed to spur investment within the City.

2 ST. ALBANS SELF-HELP

During the charrette, the team heard from the public that St. Albans does not have a positive self-image. This hampers the City's ability to dream big and imagine itself as a world-class community. Many fine local assets are taken for granted by the locals. The City should begin a process of self discovery, using story telling, public events, and other creative means to help the public identify what they love about their local community, and how those attributes can be strengthened and used as a basis for harnessing the civic energy within the local population.

"How does St. Albans achieve its goals? Through community advocacy, sustained involvement, public and private partnerships, and collaborative governance."

3 REGIONAL MARKETING STRATEGY

As a geographically well situated mid-sized City in the Champlain Valley, St. Albans has an incredible opportunity to market itself to new businesses, residents, and visitors alike. The City could consider the possibility of hiring a marketing consultant to create a national campaign promoting the City's assets. In addition, the City should spearhead additional national and regional events, which would provide a low cost opportunity to generate media exposure and bring new people to the City.

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4 COLLABORATION

As St. Albans continues its effort to become a stronger and more vibrant place, the City should embrace a collaborative approach to undertaking all of the steps of this plan and future efforts. The City is very good at executing plans, but often a committee is formed to tackle a specific task such as the redesign of the park, or the improvements to Main Street, with each committee operating independently of one another. A collaborative and open process between committees, departments and the public would result in a better integrated solution for each effort the City undertakes. The City might consider experimenting with joint committee check-in meetings and utilizing the ever-increasing array of social media tools: Facebook, twitter, blogs, Front Porch Forum, Survey Monkey. Lower tech strategies such as weekly newspaper briefings on City Hall news are also highly effective. Communication should begin as early in the process as possible to allow people to engage before decisions have been made.

If executed properly, a collaborative, open, and holistic process will generate greater involvement in projects, allowing the City to achieve its goals more quickly and with greater public support.

5 DO ONE SMALL THING NOW

To continue the momentum generated in St. Albans during the Create St. Albans Charrette, the City should work with local non-profit organizations to create a quick and easy demonstration project to show the public they were heard. This Toolkit contains many simple ideas that could be implemented quickly and at minimal cost. Another source is the Tactical Urbanism guide, to be found at www.scribd.com/doc/51354266/Tactical-Urbanism-Volume-1.

6 PUBLIC / PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

St. Albans should seek opportunities to form public / private partnerships in order to leverage private sector investment opportunities with support from public sector funding. There may be creative ways to attract a critical number of new businesses with a combination of marketing, financial, and tax incentives. The City of Carmel, Indiana is an great example of a City the utilizes this strategy on a regular basis with great success. Consider contacting their Planning Director and Mayor for more information.

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INNOVATION PLANNING

Many of the ideas contained within this Action section can be expanded, further developed and addressed in a holistic manner. To continue momentum, the City should undertake a locally-driven strategic innovation planning process that uses a charrette type format to bring together local stakeholders who could play an active role in shaping and spearheading some of the big ideas that will lead to change. Emphasis on innovation and creative thinking is key to the success of this process.

A COLLABORATIVE, HAND'S ON MEETING

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CONCLUSION

ST. ALBANS IS POISED FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO REVITALIZE THE COMMUNITY IN NEW WAYS. DECISIONS MADE NOW HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO GENERATE POSITIVE IMPACTS FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

The Create St. Albans Charrette built on past efforts to plan a better future for the City. This toolkit has captured and explained many of the big ideas that were generated over the course of the charrette and attempts to provide a way forward. However, for revitalization and community building to happen, the citizens and policy makers within St. Albans must take action and remain diligent in their efforts to foster positive change. Everyone must work together, and with the larger goals for the City in mind, in order for St. Albans to grow as a civic and commercial center within the region and provide an even greater quality of life for its citizens.

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ST. ALBANS CHARACTER + FORM-BASED PLANNING TOOLKIT

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