

**TOWN OF SAINT ALBANS**  
**TOWN PLAN-2005**

**SECTION I. INTRODUCTION**

In order to ascertain the wishes of the people of the Town of Saint Albans pertaining to land use, land development and development regulations, and to determine whether the citizens wanted to see substantial commercial, residential and industrial growth in the Town of Saint Albans, a Town Plan Survey was developed.

The University of Vermont Center For Rural Studies was retained to develop and administer the Survey in January and February, 2005. Copies of the Survey were mailed to a random sample of citizens in the Town of Saint Albans by utilizing the Voter Checklist and the Grand List. Of the 1,234 valid samples mailed out, the 520 returned responses represents a 42% response rate.

In general, the people of the Town of Saint Albans want to promote the development of affordable housing, commercial and industrial development, single-family or two family housing for residential development, planned unit developments, sit-down restaurants hotels, small and large scale retail stores, professional offices and entertainment facilities. A substantial number of survey respondents indicated that they would like to have future commercial development along Route 7 in the northern part of the Town of Saint Albans, and asserted that business development should be fostered to provide job opportunities, and open space and natural resources should be protected. Finally, the Survey demonstrated that the people of the Town of Saint Albans want to enhance the viability of the business community while maintaining the character of the Town.

The specific results of the Town Plan Survey of 2005 are as follows:

- 1) 49.8% of the people of the Town of Saint Albans believe that controls on development should be relaxed while 34.1% believe that existing controls should continue.
- 2) 83.2% of respondents classified the presence of agricultural activities in the Town as important or very important.
- 3) 69.5% of survey respondents indicated their opinion that land being set aside by the Town for agricultural uses is important or very important.
- 4) 32.9% of people think that the Town should give incentives for projects that provide affordable housing, and 29.9% of people that filled out the Survey believe that the Town should require all subdivisions to include a percentage of affordable units.
- 5) 59.8% of the people think that the rate of residential development is just right.
- 6) 67.8% of people think that the rate of commercial development in the Town is too slow.
- 7) 53.6% of respondents believe that the rate of industrial development in the Town is too slow, while 43.5% of survey respondents think that it is just right.
- 8) 92.2% of the respondents either favor or strongly favor single-family housing.
- 9) 68.6% of survey respondents either favor or strongly favor two-family housing.
- 10) 45.8% of the people that responded to the survey are against or strongly against multi-unit apartment buildings or complexes.
- 11) 67.3% of respondents are against or strongly against mobile home parks.
- 12) 49% of respondents either favor or strongly favor planned unit developments.
- 13) 65.2% of people are either against or strongly against fast food restaurants.
- 14) 85.7% of the people that responded to the Survey either favor or strongly favor sit-down restaurants.
- 15) 57.9% of people either favor or strongly favor commercial development.
- 16) 48.2% of respondents are either against or strongly against supermarkets.
- 17) 72.1% of people either favor or strongly favor small-scale retail stores. 75.2% of people either favor or strongly favor large-scale retail stores.
- 18) 64% of Survey respondents either favor or strongly favor professional offices.

## Town of Saint Albans Town Plan 2005

- 19) 66.7% of people either favor or strongly favor entertainment facilities.
- 20) 45.1% of Survey respondents want to see future commercial development on Route 7 in the north end of the Town of Saint Albans.
- 21) The people that responded to the Survey ranked the mean importance of protecting open space and natural resources as a 3.8 on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating “not important” and a 5 meaning “very important.”
- 22) Respondents ranked the mean importance of providing opportunities for local job growth through business development as a 4.3 on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating “not important” and a 5 meaning “very important.”
- 23) Respondents ranked the mean importance of improving school quality as a 4.0 on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating “not important” and a 5 meaning “very important.”
- 24) Respondents ranked the mean importance of maintaining a moderate tax rate as a 4.6 on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating “not important” and a 5 meaning “very important.”
- 25) Respondents ranked the mean importance of developing recreation trail networks as a 3.2 on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating “not important” and a 5 meaning “very important.”
- 26) Respondents ranked the mean importance of maintaining a moderate tax rate as a 4.6 on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating “not important” and a 5 meaning “very important.”
- 27) Respondents ranked the mean importance of maintaining the Town’s character as a 3.8 on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating “not important” and a 5 meaning “very important.”
- 28) Respondents ranked the mean importance of enhancing the viability of the business community as a 3.9 on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating “not important” and a 5 meaning “very important.”
- 29) Respondents ranked the mean importance of developing affordable housing as a 3.5 on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating “not important” and a 5 meaning “very important.”
- 30) Respondents ranked the mean importance of expanding municipal water and sewer service as a 3.6 on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating “not important” and a 5 meaning “very important.”
- 31) Respondents ranked the mean importance of developing elderly housing as a 3.8 on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating “not important” and a 5 meaning “very important.”
- 32) Respondents ranked the mean importance of developing housing for all income levels as a 3.6 on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating “not important” and a 5 meaning “very important.”
- 33) Respondents ranked the mean importance of improving public transportation services as a 3.2 on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating “not important” and a 5 meaning “very important.”
- 34) Respondents ranked the mean importance of increasing roadway maintenance services as a 3.5 on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating “not important” and a 5 meaning “very important.”
- 35) Respondents ranked the mean importance of increasing Town emergency services such as fire hydrants and ambulances as a 3.5 on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 indicating “not important” and a 5 meaning “very important.”

**SECTION II. TOWN PLAN SUMMARY**

**1. Purpose**

Under State law (24 V.S.A., Chapter 117, The Vermont Planning and Development Act), the St. Albans Town Selectboard created the Planning Commission to prepare a Town Plan, and Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations to implement the Plan. To reflect new developments and any other changed conditions affecting the community the law requires that the Town Plan be updated at least every five years. It is the implementation of the Plan, through the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations that ensures that development that occurs in the Town of Saint Albans occurs in appropriate locations and at a rate that is in the best interest of the people of the Town.

**2. Goals and Objectives**

With substantial growth in population and commercial businesses forecast for the next five years, the following goals and objectives will guide the process of planning for the Town of St Albans.

A. Land Use and Development Patterns

**Goals**

1. Establish zoning districts to prevent overcrowding and traffic congestion, and to minimize adverse effects that may result from situating non-complementary uses next to each other.
2. Provide for Planned Unit Developments (PUDs).
3. Discourage strip development along highways in the Town of Saint Albans.
4. Provide for public and commercial recreational uses.

**Objectives**

- a. Actively collect information on effective Town planning, land use policy and management.
- b. Promote regional economy and efficiency, while retaining the identity and character of the Town of Saint Albans, by coordinating planning for the Town, adjoining towns and the Northwest Regional Planning Commission.
- c. Encourage preservation of areas that contain prime agricultural soils.
- d. Protect and encourage the continuation of agriculture.
- e. Discourage development in areas that are hazardous or not suitable for development.
- f. Encourage a balance between industrial growth and housing.

B. Economic Development

**Goals**

## Town of Saint Albans Town Plan 2005

- 1) Identify and establish appropriate areas to locate or expand businesses and industries.

### **Objectives**

- a. Encourage in suitable locations to meet the needs of the population, business and personal service establishments.
- b. Encourage new industries in suitable locations that will utilize and develop the skills of the local labor force.
- c. Encourage the expansion of existing industries in the Town of Saint Albans to provide additional employment opportunities and to expand the tax base of the Town.
- d. Discourage strip commercial development along highways.
- e. Consider soil capability when evaluating development proposals.
- f. Ensure that development does not have an undue adverse affect on air or water quality, or traffic in the Town of Saint Albans.
- g. Promote economic development in the Town of Saint Albans by providing incentives to developers.

### C. Public Facilities and Services

#### **Goals**

1. Expand or construct a water supply and sewage disposal system.
2. Monitor new, replacement, and existing sewage disposal systems to ensure that they have been properly installed and that they are functioning in a satisfactory manner.
3. Maintain the rigorous enforcement of state and local laws, and municipal ordinances that require high quality water supplies and superior sewage disposal facilities.

#### **Objectives**

- a. Encourage the development of areas in the Town of Saint Albans that currently have access to municipal water and sewer.
- b. Allow greater density for residential and commercial uses in areas of the Town that currently have access to municipal water and sewer.
- c. Improve access to areas zoned for industrial and commercial uses.

### D. Transportation

#### **Goals**

1. Create and maintain a transportation system that promotes land use patterns, that supports economic development, that is coordinated with the regional transportation network, and that supports the other goals of this Plan.
2. Ensure that all major collector roads are designed and constructed to provide the complete spectrum of services desired by the Town.

Town of Saint Albans Town Plan 2005

3. To continue to promote the safe flow of pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic along major transportation corridors by limiting access points.
4. Create a Transportation Improvement Fund District.

**Objectives**

- a. Ensure that all Town-accepted roads are designed and constructed to meet A76 standards.
- b. Encourage the alignment of intersections wherever possible.
- c. Minimize the number of curb cuts on all major roads.

E. Education

**Goals**

- 1) Provide educational opportunities that meet the needs of the population.

**Objective**

- a. Educate school-aged residents, in an environment that is not overcrowded, using a quality curriculum at a reasonable cost.
- b. Broaden access to vocational training.

F. Housing

**Goals**

1. Provide safe, affordable housing that meets the needs of all of the people in the Town of Saint Albans.

**Objectives**

- a. Cooperate with State and not-for-profit agencies to expand the inventory of affordable housing available for residents of the Town.
- b. Consider the need of special population groups such as the mentally and/or physically challenged, single parent households, elderly, homeless and farm workers.
- c. Preserve existing multi-family and other forms of currently affordable housing such as rental units and mobile parks.
- d. Assess existing structures for use as elderly or affordable housing.
- e. Allow as a permitted use, one accessory dwelling unit per single-family house.
- f. Encourage single-family and two-family dwellings.

G. Natural Areas

**Goals**

- 1) Require that further development or increased use on already developed sites on the lakeshore be carefully screened and comply with appropriate sewer regulations.

Town of Saint Albans Town Plan 2005

- 2) Encourage future development in areas where the infrastructure is readily available.

**Objectives**

- a. Limit development in flood prone areas.
- b. Encourage Planned Unit Developments to accommodate the growth of the Town of St. Albans while maintaining adequate green space.
- c. Encourage conservation of natural resources throughout the Town.
- d. Land development shall be discouraged on slopes greater than 25%.
- e. Development on slopes greater than 12% should be carefully performed in order to avoid high environmental costs.
- f. Runoff and erosion should be carefully controlled during all phases of construction and wastes should be treated off the steep slope area.

H. Historical, Cultural and Aesthetic Resources

**Goals**

- 1) To protect the cultural, historical and scenic assets of the Town and promote community pride.

**Objectives**

- a. Pursue grants to evaluate and preserve the barns, houses and other buildings in the Town of Saint Albans that are historically significant.

I. Energy

**Goal**

1. To reduce use of and dependence on non-renewable energy sources.

**Objectives**

- a. Recommend and encourage an energy awareness curriculum in grades Kindergarten through 12.
- b. Recommend that Town officials attend annual energy workshops.
- c. Distribute information on fuel assistance programs to elderly and low-income residents.
- d. Distribute information to all residents on programs such as wood lot management and energy audits.
- e. Promote awareness and use of alternative energy sources.

J. Child care

**Goal**

1. Ensure the availability of safe and affordable child care.

**Objectives**

Town of Saint Albans Town Plan 2005

- a. Provide for home child care businesses as permitted uses in zoning districts that allow single family houses as permitted uses.
- b. Provide for home child care businesses as conditional uses in zoning districts that allow single family houses as conditional uses.

### **SECTION III. HISTORY**

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

Townships, from the earliest days of colonization, were based upon English town development dating back four hundred years. Grants for new towns were to be roughly six miles on four sides and delineated by prominent landmarks. The center of each town was to be marked by a special stake and designated the public marketplace. Thus, even people that lived farthest from the center would have to travel no more than an hour to get to the market. Market days were required to take place once a week.

In 1792 the central part of the town was marked with a stake. In 1799, local landowners, Holloway Taylor, Silas Hathaway and John Smith of Bristol, Massachusetts, deeded to the Town of Saint Albans a six and one quarter acre plot surrounding that stake to become the Town Common. Later, that Common became Taylor Park. In 1897, two square miles in the center of the town became the City of St. Albans. All the land in the St. Albans area was heavily forested with trees that were felled to open the land to agriculture. Timber that was not used to construct dwellings was burned, and the resulting potash was shipped to England to be used to manufacture dishes.

St. Albans Bay, originally called Bellamaquam [Good Beaver], by the French and Native Americans, is approximately two-and-one-half miles in length and one half to one mile in width. From the earliest days of settlement, it was the entry point for boats and vessels coming to the town. Separating the Bay from the main portion of the Lake is a point of land two and one half miles in length and one half to two miles in width. It was originally called St. Albans Point but is now identified as Hathaway Point [named after one of the earliest land owners]. The Bay is shared with the Town of Georgia, just to the south of St. Albans. A recently published area map shows Lazy Lady and Rock Islands as a part of the Town of Georgia. Burton Island, Ball Island and Wood’s Island are in the Town of St. Albans.

In the 1770’s and 1780’s land speculators, including Ethan, Ira, Heman and Zimri Allen and their cousin, Remember Baker, [properties of the Onion River Land Company] purchased huge tracts of land in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties at low prices from the grantees of Benning Wentworth’s charters. [At one time the Onion River Land Co. controlled 60,000 acres of Vermont land.] When peace was restored between the United States and Britain in 1783, and the fears of British-Indian raids from Canada had subsided, other settlers came into the area, purchasing much of their land from the Onion River Land Company and other speculators. The settlers included many Revolutionary War veterans from southern Vermont and other New England states. By 1791, there were 256 residents in St. Albans Town. [The first town meeting was held in 1788.] Ten years later, there were over 901 residents in the town, and the population continued to increase for at least one hundred years. Initially, farming was the principal activity. It began as subsistence farming, but it quickly developed as transportation methods improved.

## Town of Saint Albans Town Plan 2005

Farming during the first half of the Nineteenth Century consisted of raising beef, cattle, hogs, sheep for wool, geese for their feathers and growing rye, barley, corn, potatoes, turnips, peas, beans, pumpkins, flax for use in linen and for linseed oil, hops for brewing and wheat. The business of raising sheep flourished from the early 1800's until about 1850. In the 1850's sheep farming declined and was gradually replaced by dairy farming and the manufacture of butter and cheese. In the earliest days, the nearest flourmill was located in Plattsburgh, NY. Grain was hauled to the Bay on ox sleds and then, when the wind was favorable, transported in log canoes each capable of carrying six to eight bushels of grain, to Plattsburgh for milling. The round trip took about four days. This problem was solved when Eleazer Jewett constructed a gristmill at the north end of the town in 1793. At about the same time, he also constructed a much-needed sawmill.

In the early days, there were very few roads and Lake Champlain was the principal route for travel and commerce. Over time, St. Albans Bay developed into a prosperous community, and three piers were constructed at the Bay by 1835. Several sloops were built at the Bay in 1814 and 1815. George Younger opened a store at the Bay in 1843. It was located in the large building, which still exists, at the foot of the Lake Road, just to the left or south-side of the State Pier. Ownership passed on to B.N. Batchellor and later it was operated by a member of the Land family. Another store was opened by Nelson Cook in the 1860's on the west side of Georgia Shore Road, about one hundred feet south of the Younger/Batchellor building. In 1849, Oscar Burton opened the Franklin County Bank on the upper floor of the Younger/Batchellor building. It was moved to the St. Albans Village area in 1853. The space on the second floor was then used as a theater and dance hall. The St. Albans Bay Post Office was established in 1870 in the brick house on Lake Road opposite the Town Hall. The bricks for this building and for many of the structures at St. Albans Bay were manufactured in a brickyard, situated near a suitable bed of clay, behind the present day Gibson residence on Lake Road.

In 1823, the Lake Champlain Canal, connecting the southern end of Lake Champlain with the Hudson River, near Troy, New York, was opened to provide Vermonters access to markets in New York State, including New York City. The Gleaner, a sailing schooner especially designed for use on canals, was built at the Bay in 1823 by St. Albans businessmen, Nehemiah Kingman, Julius Hoyt and John Taylor. It was the first vessel to sail through the Canal carrying a cargo of potatoes and wheat to New York City and returning with merchandise for local businesses. There was great rejoicing in St. Albans and all along the Canal and at the Hudson River ports as the Gleaner made its maiden voyage. A second sailing schooner, the Commerce, was built at the Bay in 1823 by the Hungerford Brothers of Highgate.

In 1826, the St. Albans Steamboat Company, organized by local businessman, Lawrence Brainerd, was chartered by the State of Vermont to run between St. Albans and Plattsburgh. Two years later, the firm launched the side-wheel steamer, McDonough, at St. Albans Bay for the Plattsburgh run. It was eighty-nine feet in length and powered by a thirty horsepower steam engine. In 1835, the St. Albans Steamboat Company and the McDonough were sold to the Champlain Transportation Company of Burlington. This firm, organized in 1826, over time, gained supremacy over its competitors on the Lake and dominated transportation for over 100 years. It has changed ownership several times but still operates several ferries between Vermont and New York.

In 1827 the Champlain Transportation Company built the passenger vessel, Franklin at St. Albans Bay. It was 162 feet in length and powered by a 75 horsepower

## Town of Saint Albans Town Plan 2005

engine. It was the largest, most powerful boat on the Lake at that time, carrying passengers and freight on the Whitehall, NY, to St. Jean, Quebec, run. Its operating speed was ten miles per hour. In 1868, the St. Albans, Grand Isle and Plattsburgh Ferry Company was organized to operate the River Queen between St. Albans, Maquam Bay and Plattsburgh. It crashed on the rocks at Hathaway Point in 1868 and sank. In 1839, the steamer, Winooski, owned by the Champlain Transportation Company ran for a period of time between Burlington and St. Albans Bay. It was followed, in succession, by the side-wheel steamers, Saranac, Reindeer and Maquam which provided service on the Burlington, St. Albans run up until 1907.

In 1850, the first steam locomotive and train arrived in St. Albans on the newly constructed Vermont Central Railroad. In 1860, the Vermont Central Railroad General Offices were moved from Northfield, Vermont to St. Albans Village. A roundhouse for locomotive repairs and a "car shop" where passenger cars and boxcars were constructed or repaired soon followed. Over time, St. Albans became known as the "Railroad City of Vermont." In 1872, a new corporation, the Central Vermont Railway [The C.V.] was formed from the assets of the Vermont Central Railroad and the Vermont and Canada Railroad. It was destined to become the seventh largest railroad in the country with over 3,500 employees, [including 600 to 700 individuals employed in the St. Albans Shops]. With the advent of the railroad, the freight traffic on the Lake went into a gradual decline dying out in the early 1900s and as the traffic on the Lake declined, so did the commercial activities at St. Albans Bay. The ship owners shifted their emphasis from freight to passenger and excursion service, often times working in cooperation with the local railways that promoted tourism and brought customers from afar to the various lake ports where they could embark on luxurious side-wheel steamers for tours of the lake. Two of the famous passenger excursion boats that came to St. Albans Bay at various times were the Chateaugay and the Ticonderoga. The Chateaugay, capable of carrying 1200 passengers, was built by the Champlain Transportation Company in 1880 and operated until about 1922. The two hundred and twenty foot Ticonderoga, completed in 1906 at Shelburne Harbor, provided occasional excursions from St. Albans Bay until the early 1950's.

Oil barges, bringing petroleum product from East Coast refineries, came into St. Albans Bay until the mid-twentieth century. They tied up at a pier several hundred feet from shore and pumped their cargos into storage tanks along the shore south of site of the so-called "new dock" at the foot of Wharf Street.

The St. Albans Street Railway running from Swanton through St. Albans City and then to Railway Dock at the Bay, was chartered in 1901. It was a flourishing enterprise for a while but went out of business in 1922 when automobiles became widely available. The First Methodist Society was organized at the Bay in 1856 with a membership of twelve persons. Prior to that time Methodists from the Bay area met in the St. Albans Village area. The first Methodist minister at the Bay was the Reverend Simeon Gardner. The first Methodist Church was built in 1857 on the south side of the Lake road, just two building lots east of what is now the Bayside Pavilion. The Brook's Hotel and General Store were on the same side of the Lake road just to the left of the church. A Congregational church was built sometime before 1857 on the north side of the Lake road on the site of the present-day Town Hall. A fire on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1874 destroyed the Methodist and the Congregational Churches and the Brook's hotel and store. A second Methodist Church was built in 1874 on the north side of the Lake road, east of the Town Hall, and it remains there today.

## Town of Saint Albans Town Plan 2005

The three-story brick structure on the north side of the Lake Road as one driving west from St. Albans City enters St. Albans Bay is now the Town Hall. It was built sometime after 1874 when the Congregational Church, originally on this site burned. The building served for many years as the St. Albans Bay Public School for grades one through eight. In 1960 it was replaced by the James P Callaghan Memorial School on McGinn Drive. This latter building has since been converted to other community uses, and the St. Albans Bay public school children, grades one through eight now attend the St. Albans Town Educational Center on South Main Street in St. Albans City.

Although not as old as many of the buildings at the Bay, the restaurant in the rough-hewn wooden structure at the intersection of Lake road and Georgia Shore Road, has been a landmark to four generations of area residents. It was built in 1921, by Robert and Thelma Barker to cater to the summer trade. Sometime in the mid to late 1930's the building was enlarged to provide a dance floor and the structure was named Barker's Pavilion. The Barker's son Bob operated the Pavilion for many years.

In addition to transporting freight, the steamboats and railroads over the many years, brought tourists and persons seeking recreation to St. Albans Bay and to many other scenic areas in Vermont. Hotels and recreation facilities were built at many of these sites. At the tip of St. Albans Point [now known as Hathaway Point] a twenty-five room hotel was constructed by the St. Albans Boating and Fishing Club, and later owned by the St. Albans Traction company. The hotel subsequently became the center of Kamp Kill Kare, summer camp for boys that operated from 1906 until 1966. It is now the site of Kamp Kill Kare State Recreational Park and as the automobile became widely available, summer homes [called camps, locally] were built by area residents desirous of escaping the summer heat, to some extent and enjoying boating, fishing and bathing in the cool waters of St. Albans Bay. The camps are still here and there are many instances now where these camps have been converted into attractive, year-round residences.

One of the earliest settlers of the St. Albans area, Jesse Welden, moved to the Bay after the American Revolution. Welden constructed a log cabin along St. Albans Bay, later built another cabin near Stage Road, our present Main Street and erected a "timber-hewn" house across the street, where the first town meeting was held. By 1788 he had acquired 550 acres of land, cleared much of it and planted an orchard. In 1787 another early settler Silas Hathaway, moved up from Bennington and began construction of a large frame building, later used as a tavern and courthouse as well as a residence. He held title to the land which later became the St. Albans City green, as well as land at the Bay area, which was the chief settlement point during this early period. "It was said that at one time Silas owned so much land that he could walk for thirty miles on his own real estate."

During the 1840's the Bay area continued growing and prospering and in 1840 Thompson, in his Gazetteer of Vermont, recorded the following:

Saint Albans, a post town and capital of Franklin County is in lat. 44° 49' and long. 73°54', and is bounded north by Swanton, east by Fairfield, south by Georgia and west by Lake Champlain, a part of which separates it from North Hero. It lies 25 miles north from Burlington and 68 miles northwest of Montpelier. This township contains 23,040 acres. There was no addition to the settlement until 1785, when Andrew Potter immigrated to this township and from that time the settlement advanced rapidly by immigrants from the south part of this state and from the other states of New England. Among the earliest settlers

### Town of Saint Albans Town Plan 2005

were the families of Messrs, Potter, Morrill, Gibbs, Green and Meigs. The town was organized in 1788. Andrew Potter was the first representative in the general assembly. The church in the village has recently been remodeled and is one of the first Episcopal churches in the state; it presently has 70 communicants. The Methodist society is large and has a chapel in the village. There are no large streams, nor good mill privileges in this township, but there are several saw mills. The soil is a dark loam, rich and in good state of cultivation. The timber is maple, beech, birch and oak. The public buildings are a courthouse, jail, 3 houses for public worship and an academy. There is a book store, 2 printing offices, 3 taverns, several cabinet makers, 1 hat factory, 2 chair factories, 2 manufacturers of tin ware, 1 goldsmith and watchmaker, 3 tanneries and a variety of other mechanics' shops. There are 13 practicing attorneys, 4 physicians and 16 merchants.

According to the census of the 1800's the population grew from 901 in 1800 to slightly less than 8000 by 1890, with a large increase (3637-7014) occurring between 1860-1870. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, as of July 1, 2003, the population of the Town of Saint Albans was 5718.

**SECTION IV. SIGNIFICANT LAND FEATURES**

**1. Natural Resource Base**

The Town of St. Albans is comprised of 22,681 acres of land that range from the plains of the Champlain Lowlands to Bellevue and French Hill. At one time the entire area was glaciated and subsequently covered by a much larger Lake Champlain. As the Lake receded, it left behind deposits of clay, silt and sand that now make up the Town's soils.

Much of St. Albans is underlain by deposits of unstratified glacial drift and bedrock. Drilled wells in these materials generally yield enough water for domestic or light commercial use. Some of the area near Jewett Brook is underlain by fine stratified drift that is characteristic of wetlands. This section generally yields sufficient water only for domestic use.

The Town has three major streams of which only Jewett Brook has its own drainage system. The other two water courses, Stevens Brook and Rugg Brook, share a watershed with the Mill River. The eastern section of St. Albans is marked by numerous streams.

The Town has several important natural areas. The fragile lakeshore provides wildlife habitat, recreation, and drinking water. The extensive wetlands not only help to regulate ground water but together with Woods and Popsquash Islands, provide wildlife habitat and recreation. The eastern section of Town is rugged and very thinly settled, and thus supports many types of wildlife.

Most of the Town that lies to the west of the foothills is situated on clay soil that was deposited as Lake Champlain receded. This old lakebed is rich in nutrients but drains very poorly.

The Soil Conservation Service identified the majority of these soils as members of the Covington, Farmington, Kinsbury, Georgia and Massena classes which are all either clays or stony barns, and are considered to be very well suited for agriculture. The hilly eastern section of town has very thin soils, typically the Woodstock series, that tend to be excessively drained and predominantly exist on slopes of between eight and sixty percent. These are very fragile soils and have little agricultural significance.

**2. Soil Suitability and Limitations for Development**

The suitability of soils for a variety of purposes ranging from septic tanks and leaching fields to agriculture, can be determined by an examination of the soil depth, texture and other characteristics along with the topography on which it occurs. The four basic categories include:

**3. Developable Land**

This represents the area in the town that can easily be used for residential, commercial or other urban purposes. Essentially, these are easily worked soils that have good drainage and are either level or on a moderate slope.

**4. Conditionally Developable**

These areas represent soils that are not as well drained as developable land. Any urban development within these areas would, in most instances, require a community system for the disposal of sewage. Furthermore, higher construction costs are apt to be encountered through the necessity to provide additional or larger drainage facilities for streets, houses and similar uses.

**5. Marginally Developable**

This category includes several land and slope conditions: It includes the steep topography and in some cases the tops of higher ridges, areas where the soil is very shallow and where it would be difficult to provide for on-site sewage disposal, and extensive swamp and bog areas within the Town.

**6. Already Developed**

This category includes the settlements and cemeteries of the Town. It should not be assumed, however, that these areas are closed to development, since in some cases additional uses may be permitted.

The lands primarily used for agricultural purposes have been delineated to indicate what areas of developable land are not already being used.

Soil characteristics are the primary determinants of an areas development potential. Additionally, a lot must have adequate drainage, sufficient depth to bedrock and ground water, and there must not be too much grade.

Although much of St. Albans' soil is suited for agriculture, the same cannot be said for its development potential. The heavy clays that constitute the majority of the Town's soils do not drain well and tend to have a high water table, and large scale development in these areas may result in septic system failure and groundwater contamination. These heavy clay soils can support scattered residential development.

The foothills in eastern St. Albans have very thin soils that are unsuited for any more than scattered development. The ridges should be protected not only because of the fragile nature but also because they give the terrain contrast and act as a backdrop to the Town. The wetlands and the islands are also important natural areas that should be preserved. The soils with the fewest natural limitations for development are mainly north of the City of Saint Albans along route 7 and in the vicinity of the Kellog-Newton road intersection. These easily developable areas have deep, well-drained soils, moderate

terrain, and are not significant natural or agricultural resources.

Further development or increased use on already developed sites on the lakeshore must be carefully screened and comply with appropriate sewer regulations. In general, future development for the Town should be encouraged in those areas where the infrastructure is readily available.

## **SECTION V. LAND USE**

### **1. Existing Land Use General Description of St. Albans**

St. Albans is evolving from an agricultural community to one that also supports seasonal, residential, commercial and industrial development. Most of this growth has occurred along the lakeshore and around St. Albans City, while the flood plain has remained in agricultural use.

Agricultural land dominates western St. Albans, except along the lakeshore, which consists of seasonal camps that are situated close together. Other than this shoreline strip, the historical settlement of St. Albans Bay constitutes the major development in this section of Town.

With the exception of a north-south running ridge, the agricultural land stretches almost all the way to the City of St. Albans, at which point residential and commercial use of land increase. The area that surrounds the City of St. Albans is the fastest growing section of the Town of St. Albans.

Historically, the City has been the region's commercial center but the Town is attracting increasing amounts of commercial development, especially around exits 19 & 20 of Interstate 89. The Town has identified these areas as growth centers overlays for high impact development by offering incentives for high density development (See Zoning map). Although there are some industries in the northern part of Town, the industrial park in the south end has attracted the most recent commercial growth, especially from 1976 to the present.

With the exception of the radar site, the foothills in eastern St. Albans remain mostly rural with some scattered residential and agricultural uses. This area is planned to stay essentially undeveloped because its steep slopes and thin soils cannot support substantial growth of any sort, and because removal of trees and scrub for building would severely increase erosion and flood potential.

### **2. Land Use Districts Protecting Our Future**

In order to carry out the community development policies that were discussed in the last section, current land use techniques call for the division of the Town into districts (See Zoning District Map). Each district has its own purpose, allowable uses, required frontage, lot sizes, and its own maximum allowable density. The uses that are permitted within a district are compatible in purpose, intensity, and traffic generation and usually make similar demands upon a municipality's services and facilities. Adjoining districts are designed to be as complementary as possible so that buffer zones between non-complementary uses are created.

By establishing zoning districts, the Town of St. Albans protects itself from

## Town of Saint Albans Town Plan 2005

overcrowding and traffic congestion, and minimizes adverse effects that may result from situating non-complimentary uses next to each other. Districts allow provisions to be made for future growth of all types, the promotion of economic and community development and the protection of the investments of the Town's citizens.

The creation of districts is one of the central means of coordinating planning within the Town of St. Albans. Without adequately depicted zoning districts, the Town would develop in a random fashion that could result in extremely high economic and social costs, both short and long term. The following is a brief description of the land use areas depicted on the Zoning District map.

### **A. Residential**

These areas comprise the already-established residential neighborhoods and adjacent areas, as well as some undeveloped areas located near public services and facilities. These residential districts should be subdivided to reflect the density of existing neighborhoods and the district characteristics of their locations.

Provisions should be made for Planned Unit Development (PUDs). The concept behind the PUD is to encourage cluster development in order to prevent suburban sprawl, and could include single-family, multifamily, mixed residential, commercial or a combination of uses. The advantage of PUDs is that they conserve open space and save on costs to both the developer and the Town, and therefore they are an important part of future development in the town of St. Albans.

### **B. Mixed Commercial/Residential**

The purpose of this district is to provide for limited commercial uses in areas where there is primarily residential development. Home occupations, neighborhood stores and services, and similar commercial uses should be permitted provided that they do not result in an undue adverse affect on the character of the area.

### **C. Commercial**

These areas consist of the existing commercial areas and adjacent lands that are becoming predominantly commercial, as well as other areas that are conveniently located for travel, motor vehicle, trucking, and similar services for the Town of St. Albans. Within these commercial areas, clustering of businesses should be encouraged to take advantage of the limited strategic locations available and to ensure efficient traffic control.

To minimize traffic hazards and maintain smooth traffic flows, strip commercial development along highways will be discouraged in favor of consolidated access points. The review of commercial development must ensure adequate parking, and should promote attractiveness of signs and site design.

## Town of Saint Albans Town Plan 2005

The zoning regulations for commercial districts should reflect existing densities, avoid overcrowding in new proposed commercial areas, carefully consider the compatibility of high-intensity or high-volume business next to residential areas, and reflect the suitability of the different commercial areas likely to locate in each district.

The commercial area designated in the village of St. Albans Bay should maintain the historic and traditional character of the area. Accordingly, the adaptation of historic buildings to low-intensity commercial uses such as offices should be allowed.

### **D. Industrial**

This district encompasses existing industries, and adjacent areas for expansion of those industries or development of new ones, that can help to increase the tax base and provide employment opportunities. These areas contain the site characteristics desired by industries, including rail and major highway facilities, and the potential for servicing with water and sewer. Sites that have these unique characteristics should be protected from conversion to residential or other less valuable uses. Careful review of industrial development will be necessary to maintain compatibility with nearby residential neighborhoods, to assure adequate parking and smooth traffic flow, and to guard against pollution, hazardous processes, offensive odors, noise and similar disturbances.

### **E. Light Industrial Commercial**

Commercial uses are encouraged in specified districts. Any commercial or industrial development proposed for St. Albans should fit with the character of the Town. This type of development should be located in appropriate, central locations rather than along the edges of the main thoroughfares. The purpose of commercial development is to serve the needs of St. Albans Town and Franklin County residents and to provide additional employment opportunities within the Town.

### **F. Rural District**

Rural areas are predominantly agricultural and forested, with scattered residences and a few businesses, and this character should be maintained. Since much of this district is prime farmland, new residential or other non-farm development should be planned so as to minimize interference with existing agricultural uses. Planned Unit Developments should be utilized to encourage preservation of open space and provide for adequate housing and commercial uses for the residents of the Town of Saint Albans. Agricultural and animal services, supplies and marketing outlets, nurseries, greenhouses, gardening stores, outdoor recreational facilities and similar uses should be permitted in this district.

### **G. Conservation District**

This district consist of publicly-owned recreation and game lands. Additionally, this district includes major wetlands, flood hazard areas along streams, islands, and hills that are unlikely to be developed. These areas are valuable for outdoor recreation and provide a

habitat for wildlife. Agricultural, forestry, and public and private outdoor recreational uses are consistent with the character and physical capabilities of these select natural areas, and therefore, new residential developments and industrial uses should be discouraged.

#### **H. Lakeshore District**

The Lakeshore district is a strip of land bordering Lake Champlain and extending inland 500 feet from the shoreline (at mean lake level 95.5 ft.). All permitted uses in this district would be subject to special considerations given to improving sewage disposal and preventing unnecessary clearing and shoreline erosion. In addition, provisions should be made for public and commercial recreational uses, such as marinas, that are subject to careful review to ensure adequate parking and sanitary facilities, and to prevent adverse affects on existing residential uses.

#### **I. Flood Hazard District**

Flood plains and other flood prone areas should be protected. While limited development can occur in this area, agricultural and other uses that maintain a satisfactory ground cover should be permitted. The areas covered by this district overlap with other districts.

The purpose of this district is to prevent increases in flooding caused by development in flood hazard areas, to minimize future public and private losses due to floods, and to promote the public health, safety and general welfare. Included in this district are all areas subject to a one percent or greater chance of flooding in a 100 year period.

#### **J. Telecommunications District**

This district was developed with the intent of centralizing the growth of communication towers in the Town in order to cluster similar uses and prevent the proliferation of tower sites. The areas covered by this district overlap with other districts.

#### **K. Correctional District**

This district was developed to help plan for the upkeep and possible expansion of the Northwest Correctional facility.

#### **L. Historic Sites**

Given the rich heritage of St. Albans Town, the designation of individual buildings as historic sites, and groups of houses as historic districts, is important to preserving the history of this town.

Not all structures need to be more than 100 years old to qualify for designation as historic landmarks in the Town. Since many barns, houses, or newer buildings may have historical significance to the Town, steps should be taken to preserve those structures.

**M. Fragile Areas**

The Town recognizes the need to protect unique areas of land or water for the plant, animal, geological or other features that may have scientific value.

The Town should identify fragile areas, and impose restrictions on development in those areas.

**N. Green Space/Green Belt**

The Town should encourage Planned Unit Developments to accommodate the growth of the Town of St. Albans while maintaining adequate green space.

## **SECTION VI. TRANSPORTATION**

St. Albans Town is an integral part of the regional transportation system. The Town components of this system enable orderly flow of motor vehicles, boats, trains, bicycles and pedestrians throughout the region. Interstate 89 and U.S. Routes 7, 36, 104 and 105 provide easy access to all parts of Franklin County, Vermont and beyond. The Northwest Vermont Public Transit Network operates a public transit system in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. Currently St. Albans Town is served by the Richford to St. Albans route as well as a shuttle service running through the City and Town. Lake Champlain is a highly valued corridor for recreational boat traffic and may hold some role for commercial traffic in the future. NECR is located in the St. Albans Community and provides a good means of moving both people and freight. Rail trails, bike paths (built and proposed), and other trails utilized by foot traffic as well as snowmobiles all expand the options for movement throughout the region.

The population of Saint Albans Town is increasingly characterized by a high percentage of commuting workers. The commuter nature of many of the St. Albans townspeople will need to be considered in the transportation plan. Commuter lots, traffic flow patterns, rush hour bottlenecks and similar problems will need to be evaluated in detail and journey-to-work data evaluated on a regular basis. In light of this increasing trend, future development should include provisions for adequate carpool facilities, parking and commuter parking lots.

Planning for the future must take into consideration traffic flows both within and to and from the Town. Town road building will be maintained as it is. The St. Albans Town Highway Department maintains approximately sixteen miles of State-Aid road and 34 miles of Town Highways.

With the expansion of the commercial base in the northern section of the Town around Exit 20 of I-89 and along U.S. Route 7 in the same area of Town, the Town is in the process of providing a relief road to run parallel to Route 7 in this area.

To maintain levels of service and to accommodate anticipated growth, several intersections and roadways in the Town will need improvement. The following recommendations are to be followed when considering development in the Town:

### **Goals**

1. Create and maintain a transportation system that promotes land use patterns, that supports economic development, that is coordinated with the regional transportation network, and that supports the other goals of this plan.
2. Ensure that all major collector roads are designed and constructed to provide the complete spectrum of services desired by the Town.
3. To continue to promote the safe flow of pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic along major transportation corridors by limiting access points.

**Objectives**

- A. Assure functional and orderly maintenance and development of transportation systems.
- B. Maintain the rural character of Town Highways.
- C. Alleviate the building traffic pressures along US Route 7 in the northern section of Town.

**Specific Objectives**

- A. The Town of Saint Albans should evaluate Journey-to-work data over the next five years.
- B. The Town of Saint Albans should continue to provide park and ride lots for use in carpooling and public transit as it becomes available.
- C. The Town of Saint Albans should continue the gradual paving of remaining gravel roads as funds become available.
- D. The Town of Saint Albans should proceed with the plan to construct a road to parallel Route 7 in the northern part of Town.
- E. The Town of Saint Albans should work with St. Albans City to combine the Federal Street Bypass with the parallel road to provide relief to the traffic heading north on Route 7.
- F. The Town of St. Albans should control access to major transportation corridors by requiring that developers combine curb cuts and construct new access roads with appropriate drainage systems to meet the requirements of the Selectboard.
- G. The Town of St. Albans should work with the Franklin and Grand Isle Planning Commission to ensure that the Regional Plan identifies the Town's transportation needs.
- H. The Town of St. Albans should improve and expand the sidewalk network in the Town, especially in the growth areas.
- I. The access management section in the Zoning Regulations should be expanded town wide.
- J. Give additional consideration to transportation in the subdivision regulations.
- K. Institute transportation planning in Exit 19 and Exit 20 growth areas.
- L. Satellite transportation centers should be located at Exit 19, Exit 20, St. Albans Bay and in the area of the existing park and ride lot near the VT. 36/VT. 104 intersection.
- M. Install raised and textured crosswalks in major locations along sidewalk & bike path.
- N. Develop a Traffic Calming Policy Procedures Manual.
- O. Curb Extensions should be constructed in place of the painted "no parking zones" adjacent to crosswalk on Main Street and village scale light poles should be placed in the curb extension.
- P. Conduct a warrant analysis for additional signalization at the intersection of Routes 36 and 104.
- Q. Institute traffic calming on US Route 7 and the Interstate access land.
- R. Implement additional access control on US Route 7 North & South.

Town of Saint Albans Town Plan 2005

- S. Install a signal at US 7/Franklin Park West and coordinate with Highgate Plaza signal and VT 207 signal.
- T. Develop an access management plan for the Exit 20 Area, and seek specific access management changes.
- U. Update sidewalks to meet ADA standards.
- V. Initiate a requirement for specifying housing type when creating a subdivision.

**SECTION VII. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

St. Albans Town provides a wide range of community facilities and services to its residents. The Town provides road services, fire protection, police coverage, recreational facilities, solid waste disposal, general governmental services, and educational programs. These services will continue to be provided through the use of the St Albans Town Capital Budget Program, which plans for increased needs brought on by growth. The City of St Albans provides water and sewer service to some of the Town residents.

**1. Town Highway Garage**

The St Albans Town Garage, located on Georgia Shore Road, is used for storage of equipment and materials necessary to maintain local roads. The St. Albans Town Highway Department maintains approximately sixteen miles of State-Aid road and 34 miles of Town highways. Major equipment includes six trucks equipped for snow removal. With a continuation in the residential growth in the Town, it is expected that equipment upgrades and additional staff will be necessary.

**2. Water and Sewer Systems**

Except for those who reside near the City of Saint Albans, most residents rely on private drilled wells and septic systems for their water and sewer disposal needs. Those who utilize the public facilities pay a much higher rate for the services than residents of the City. This disparate rating structure is the major factor that keeps other Town citizens from making use of the City's systems. If the Town secures new or expanded municipal water and sewer lines/systems, all abutting properties in designated growth areas would be encouraged to hook-up.

With the exception of a section of the lakeshore and some residential areas in the southern part of Town, private well and septic systems have met the needs of the residents of the Town of St. Albans. In an effort to alleviate the problems that exist and to responsibly plan for the future, the City of Saint Albans and Town of Saint Albans funded a joint Water and Sewer study. The determination of the completed report is that municipal sewer and water service in St. Albans Town, though desirable, is not financially feasible. Therefore, the current method of individually meeting water and sewer needs will continue until Town systems can be funded. In an effort to alleviate problems that exist and plan for the future, the Town will continue to study the feasibility of a municipal water and sewer system. To improve water and sewer services for all Town residents recommendations for the future include:

- A. The construction or expansion of a water supply and sewage disposal system.
- B. To monitor new, replacement, and existing sewage disposal systems to ensure that they have been properly installed and that they are functioning in a satisfactory manner.
- C. Maintain the rigorous enforcement of state and local laws, and municipal ordinances that require high quality water supplies and superior sewage disposal facilities.

**3. Fire Protection**

The Town's Fire Department is located on Lake Road. The Fire Department's major equipment includes two tankers, one pumper, one quint and small fire fighting and rescue vehicles and devices. There also is a heavy rescue squad with "jaws of life" and farm and industrial accident equipment as well as water rescue.

To maintain the high level of fire protection services currently available to the residents of St Albans Town it is recommended:

- A. That more fire hydrants be installed in necessary locations.
- B. That the Fire Chief continue to review and comment upon local development projects.
- C. That all development projects provide adequate emergency vehicle access.
- D. To continue a contract providing ambulance services for the Town.

**4. Police Protection**

Police protection is provided by the State Police who have a barracks east of the City of Saint Albans. Additionally, the Franklin County Sheriffs Department, located in the City of Saint Albans, has a contractual agreement to provide the Town with services beyond those that it offers to other towns in the County.

**5. Northwestern Medical Center**

Nortwestern Medical Center (NMC) is located on Fairfield Street and provides a full range of services to the surrounding community. NMC is a 70-bed, private, not-for-profit, accredited community hospital that employs more than 575 people, including 70 physicians. The hospital has recently completed several major expansions and renovations in order to better serve the community.

The facility now includes a Medical/Surgical wing; an Intensive Care Unit; the Family Birthing Center; Pediatric Services; 24-hour physician-staffed Emergency Department; Intermediate Care Service; A Surgical Suite and Outpatient Department; Complete Laboratory Facilities; Rehabilitation Services; Diagnostic Imaging; Respiratory Therapy and more.

**6. Solid Waste**

The Town of Saint Albans does not currently have a solid waste disposal facility, and consequently the Town's solid waste is transported to a facility out of Town. Residents are encouraged to recycle and Material Recovery Facilities (MIRF) are a conditional use in several zoning districts. The Town organizes a hazardous waste pick-up at the Highway

garage at least once a year.

Town residents may dispose of solid waste at the Casella Waste Management Facility, 2 Transfer Station Road Highgate, Vermont.

## **7. Town Offices**

At present, the space is adequate to provide services to the Town. However the Town Hall facility is in need of some upgrades to allow easier access to all residents, especially the second floor offices of the Zoning Administrator and the assessors. To continue to serve residents of the Town of Saint Albans, the following improvements are recommended:

- A. Connect a water system to provide for the discontinuation of bottled water in the Town Hall.
- B. Continue to archive town records.
- C. Provide access to the second floor for disabled people.

## **8. Parks and Recreation**

The Town of Saint Albans has many recreational opportunities for its citizens and those of surrounding towns. Included in these opportunities are the Bay Park, which is now owned by the Town of Saint Albans. Additionally, Cohen Park, the Town Forest, the SATEC playground and gymnasium, and the Collins-Perley Complex, provide a wide array of recreational opportunities to residents of the Town of Saint Albans. The Town also contributes to the City Recreation Department, thereby giving Town residents equal opportunity to utilize the City recreation programs, while maintaining public access to all forms of recreation.

Open space available to Town and area residents include the Bay Park, a fine beach site at Cohen Park, and a forest with walking-trails, comprising approximately 162 acres in the northeast section of the Town of Saint Albans.

The Town of Saint Albans should actively pursue new opportunities for recreation through its capital budget, and through proper planning of new development projects. By doing so, the Town will ensure that the recreational opportunities are enhanced to improve the community.

Regarding parks and recreation, it is recommended that:

- A. The Town of Saint Albans provide an open space system for the preservation, protection and enhancement of major physical and environmental features such as mountains, waterways and bodies of water, wildlife and other natural resources, while maintaining public access to all forms of recreation.

## **9. Library Services**

## Town of Saint Albans Town Plan 2005

The Town shares the library services of the St Albans Free Library located at 11 Maiden Lane in St Albans City. There are currently 5,000 regular patrons, 1/3 of whom reside in the Town.

The library provides magazines, audiotapes and thousands of books to its patrons. Additionally, there are public internet access computers, children's story hour, books to shut-ins, discussion groups, a film festival and a public meeting room.

### **10. Educational Facilities**

The Saint Albans Town Educational Center comprises pre-kindergarten through 8th grade. This facility is currently adequate to meet the needs of residents of the Town of Saint Albans and will be for the foreseeable future.

Bellows Free Academy comprises students from 9th grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. This facility is currently adequate to meet the needs of the Town of Saint Albans and will be for the foreseeable future.

**SECTION VIII. IRREPLACEABLE, UNIQUE AND SCARCE RESOURCES**

This category identifies areas that have substantial, long-term social and economic value due to their uniqueness, scientific, recreational or educational value, or fragile nature.

**A. Prime and Very Good Agricultural Soils**

These lands are an irreplaceable resource because of the necessity of fertile soils to provide increased food production, and the economic impact of agricultural production.

Prime agricultural soils have natural fertility retention qualities, substantial organic matter content, favorable drainage, level to gently rolling slopes, sufficient depth and textural qualities as well as a high, available moisture content. These factors make such soils well suited to crop production.

**B. Forest Resources**

Forest productivity shall be protected and enhanced by encouragement of sound management practices and access to the public on public lands.

**C. Earth Resources**

Underground resources in the Town of St. Albans have present or future commercial value. However, the public interest shall be protected by regulations that ensure that extraction or processing of those resources are not adverse to the public health, safety, comfort or convenience, or detrimental to the value of surrounding properties.

Earth resource extraction and processing activities may result in the following potential problems:

- 1) Noise, dust, air pollution, or radiation.
- 2) Surface and groundwater pollution or siltation.
- 3) Storage and disposal of solid and liquid waste.
- 4) Increased storm water runoff, erosion and sedimentation.
- 5) Despoliation of the landscape and limited utility for subsequent uses of the site.
- 6) Decreased highway safety, increased traffic and accelerated deterioration of highways and bridges.

Any extraction or processing proposal shall include a plan for the rehabilitation of the site at the conclusion of extraction or processing activities.

**D. Land filling, site excavation, alteration and providing underground services.**

These activities present the following potential problems:

## Town of Saint Albans Town Plan 2005

- 1) Surface and groundwater pollution, siltation or radiation.
- 2) Increased storm water runoff, erosion and sedimentation.
- 3) Despoliation of the landscape and limited utility for subsequent uses of the site.
- 4) The loss or restriction of the full use of lands by property owners due to the installation of underground services.

### **E. Streams, Headwaters, Shorelines and Surface Waters**

Streams, brooks and Lake Champlain provide the citizens of the Town of St. Albans with water for the Town's wildlife, ground water replenishment, scenic amenities and recreational opportunities. Therefore, it is necessary to protect these valuable resources from disruption, pollution and sedimentation.

Stream headwaters (located in the upper reaches of a watershed) are usually cool, and have a high oxygen and low nutrient content. Further, upland streams tend to be highly productive and are extremely sensitive to sedimentation and pollution discharge. Many of these streams are ephemeral, only flowing after heavy precipitation when surface runoff and rising water tables intersect the stream channel. All of these factors make stream headwaters extremely sensitive to disturbances resulting from forestry and urbanization.

Shoreland conservation practices contribute to the prevention of water pollution, protection of spawning grounds for fish and aquatic life, preservation of shore cover and natural beauty, and the multiple uses of waters.

### **F. Wetlands**

Wetlands are critically important to surface waters. These areas store large quantities of water during periods of high runoff and gradually release water during low flow periods. Therefore, wetlands regulate stream discharge during low flow and peak flow. Loss of the storage capacity that wetlands provide would adversely affect stream behavior, increase floods and reduce stream flow during crucial low flow periods.

Wetlands are also important for the maintenance of water quality because they enable the absorption and assimilation of nutrients and purify water that is discharged. Further, wetlands are centers of ecological activity and support many kinds of wildlife. Therefore development that results in the loss of wetland storage capacity or substantial additions to the marsh areas should be scrutinized.

### **G. Areas of Architectural and Historical Significance**

St. Albans has many structures that have historical significance. In order to preserve the architectural and cultural character of the community and the aesthetics of the Town, consideration should be given to the preservation of such structures. A Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey of St. Albans Town was conducted by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation in the summer of 1985. There are currently 68 sites listed on the Vermont State Register of Historic Places Historic Sites and Structures Survey, but several

## Town of Saint Albans Town Plan 2005

of the structures on the list have already been removed or altered. When addressing development proposals, the historical significance of sites and structures should be considered.

The St. Albans Town Hall is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

### **H. Natural Areas**

#### **Archeological Resources and Archeological Sensitivity:**

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

St. Albans' prehistoric archeological sites include large and small stone quarries, large and small camp sites, and special use sites exhibiting fishing, hunting, tool making, trapping and plant collecting.

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

Natural areas are areas that have educational, scenic, recreational or scientific value. They include areas that constitute unique ecological or natural science value and are suitable areas for education and research, or areas that are unique within a community and possess scenic or recreational values.

Development in proximity to natural areas should take place in such a way as to preserve their value for education, science, research, aesthetics and recreation.

**SECTION IX. EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES**

The Town of Saint Albans currently maintains a public school serving grades kindergarten through eighth. The facility, Saint Albans Town Educational Center (SATEC), is located on South Main Street and currently employs 53 classroom teachers. With the current enrollment of 695 students, there are approximately 13 children per teacher. Nearly 100% of students graduate from SATEC and many begin their secondary education at Bellows Free Academy (BFA) in the City of Saint Albans.

BFA Saint Albans is the secondary school for Town of Saint Albans students from ninth through twelfth grade. BFA employs 122 teachers and has a current enrollment of 1241 students, 469 of whom are tuition students. The facility is close to maximum capacity, the ratio of students to teachers is 10.2 to 1, and the current graduation rate of BFA Saint Albans is around 98%. Finally, BFA has numerous vocational opportunities for its students including Northwest Technical Center, Culinary Institute of New England, Lyndon State College, Johnson State College, and Champlain College. Current demographic and population trends indicate that it will not be necessary to expand SATEC or BFA in the next five years.

During the 2003-2004 year, the residents of the Town of Saint Albans and the City of Saint Albans voted to have BFA change from its independent status to a public school. Finally, the voters also chose a new Board of Directors for BFA.

**SCHOOL EXPENDITURES**

YEAR	SATEC	BFA	TOTAL
FY96	4,492,225	1,704,256	6,196,481
FY97	4,629,584	1,763,589	6,393,173
FY98	4,772,032	2,023,171	6,795,203
FY99	4,951,643	2,241,751	7,193,394
FY00	5,544,334	2,145,294	7,689,628
FY01	5,859,092	2,327,567	8,186,659
FY02	6,255,142	2,440,005	8,695,147
FY03	6,587,428	2,563,642	9,151,070
FY04	7,040,574	2,535,587	9,576,161
FY05	7,589,975	2,761,742	10,351,717

Town of Saint Albans Town Plan 2005

**SCHOOL ENROLLMENT**

YEAR	SATEC	BFA	TOTAL
FY96	763	278	1041
FY97	768	303	1071
FY98	766	317	1083
FY99	748	304	1052
FY00	751	N/A	N/A
FY01	747	316	1063
FY02	747	316	1063
FY03	727	325	1052
FY04	701	316	1017
FY05	695	330	1025

**AVERAGE COST PER STUDENT**

YEAR	SATEC	BFA	TOTAL
FY96	5,887.58	6,130.42	6,009
FY97	6,028.10	5,820.43	5,924.27
FY98	6,229.81	6,382.24	6306.03
FY99	6,619.84	7,374.18	6,997.01
FY00	7,382.60	N/A	N/A
FY01	7,843.50	7,365.72	7,604.61
FY02	8,373.68	7,721.53	8,047.61
FY03	9,061.11	7,888.13	8,474.62
FY04	10,043.61	8,024.01	9,033.81
FY05	10,920.83	8,368.92	9,644.88

**FISCAL YEAR 2004 STATE RANKING OF SPENDING BY SCHOOL PER PUPIL**

*Source: Vermont Department of Education*

School	Rank
Fletcher	83
Georgia	157
Town of Saint Albans	164
Sheldon	166
City of Saint Albans	168
Enosburg Falls	170
Berkshire	173
Fairfield	175
Highgate	187
Richford	193
Bakersfield	197
Franklin	198
Swanton	203
Montgomery	207

## **SECTION X. ENERGY**

### **I. Introduction**

While town energy needs are adequately met at present, future energy requirements should be evaluated. Recently, the costs and vulnerability of outside sources of energy have increased drastically and the use of such energy has continued to increase.

Energy costs, both economic and environmental, have become a major expense in government, business and personal budgets, and successfully reducing the impact of those costs will benefit the Town and its people. Several options are available to help accomplish this goal:

### **2. Educational Opportunities**

- A. Recommend and encourage an energy awareness curriculum in grades Kindergarten through 12.
- B. Recommend that Town officials attend annual energy workshops.
- C. Distribute information on fuel assistance programs to elderly and low-income residents.
- D. Distribute information to all residents on programs such as wood lot management and energy audits.

### **3. Municipal Energy Savings**

Avenues to reduce municipal energy costs include the following:

- A. Manage Town forest and other resources.
- B. Institute energy conservation/renewable energy measures for Town buildings and vehicles.

### **4. Land Use**

Many opportunities exist for the promotion of improved use of energy through land use policies including:

- A. Encourage appropriate site design and building construction for relevant public and private structures.
- B. Include transportation energy costs as a planning and development factor (proximity of residential areas to commercial services, employment areas, central transportation routes, etc.).
- C. Encourage the expansion of natural gas service to Town residents.
- D. Encourage and provide access for renewable energy systems, while still preserving the natural aesthetics of the Town.

Town of Saint Albans Town Plan 2005

- E. Promote management of woodcuts, agricultural lands and similar resources.
- F. Encourage the placement of suitable trees on sites to promote cooling from shade in the summer and heating in winter from cutting down on wind.

## **SECTION XI. HOUSING**

### **1. Introduction**

In Franklin County, residential development has been concentrated largely in St. Albans Town and it is very important for the Town to continue to provide such development, including affordable housing and housing for the elderly.

### **2. Existing Situation**

From 1980-2000, the availability of housing in the Town of Saint Albans grew by more than 70% and approximately 2387 full-time housing units currently exist in the Town. Of this total, approximately 83% are single-family detached units. The second most common dwelling type, mobile homes, constitutes approximately 11% of the Town's housing stock. There are 8 commercial apartments, 143 condominiums, and about 400 seasonal cottages and camps. Additionally, the Town of St Albans has 34 federally subsidized housing units, 119 units of elderly housing, and a 92 unit planned unit development. Finally, a substantial number of people reside in group quarters in St. Albans Town, primarily at the Northwest State Correctional Facility and in nursing homes.

Housing needs have increased significantly in the past few years for many reasons. Growth pressures in Chittenden County have caused people to look farther north for housing and Franklin County has experienced economic growth. Additionally, the Town of Saint Albans offers a rural setting with many of the amenities of an urban community, thereby making it a good place for increased residential development.

In 2004, the median purchase price of a home in Vermont was \$165,000, an increase of nearly 67% over the cost in 1996. Additionally, the median price of a newly-constructed home was \$294,000. In order to help provide more housing, the Vermont legislature recently amended the Planning and Development Act to include as a permitted use one accessory dwelling per residence.

In 2004, the average Fair Market Rent for a modest, two-bedroom apartment in Vermont, as calculated by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Affairs, was \$698 a month, representing a 24% increase over the cost in 1996.

In 2000, a housing needs study of Vermont's six northwest counties, including Franklin County showed that the area has a shortage of 7,400 homes and apartments. Due to low inventory and rapidly increasing housing needs, that shortage is expected to grow to more than 10,000 by the year 2010.

Vermont's housing vacancy rate, which compares the number of available homes and apartments to the entire supply, shows a very tight housing market. Housing experts say a healthy housing market will have a 3% vacancy rate for owner-occupied housing and a 5% vacancy rate for rental housing. Between 2002 and 2003, Vermont was one of only five states in the country where the home ownership vacancy rate dropped below 1 percent. Vermont now has one of the tightest housing markets in the nation.

**3. Recommendations**

With an overall goal of maintaining a variety of housing types and affordability levels, the Town of Saint Albans should:

- A. Cooperate with State and not-for-profit agencies to expand the inventory of affordable housing available for residents of the Town.
- B. Consider the needs of special population groups such as the mentally and/or physically challenged, single parent households, elderly, homeless and farm workers.
- C. Preserve existing multi-family and other forms of currently affordable housing such as rental units and mobile parks.
- D. Assess existing structures for use as elderly or affordable housing.
- E. Allow as a permitted use, one accessory dwelling unit per single-family house.

**SECTION XII. COMPATIBILITY**

1. Land Use Compatibility With Adjoining Communities.

St Albans Town adjoins five towns and Lake Champlain. It is bordered on the north by Swanton, on the east by Fairfield, on the southeast by Fairfax, on the west by Lake Champlain and on the south by Georgia. Additionally, the Town of St Albans completely surrounds St Albans City. St Albans Town shares many natural features with its neighboring towns, and these characteristics provide the foundation for the common land within all of the area communities. Interstate 89, Routes 7, 36, 104 and 105 link St Albans Town with Swanton, Fairfield, Fairfax, Georgia and St Albans City. The Following subsections address the compatibility of the land uses and development trends of the Town of Saint Albans, the municipalities that adjoin the Town, and the Regional Planning Commission.

A. Swanton

Swanton is located north of The Town of St Albans and is linked by two major north/south routes: Route 7 and I-89. Additionally, Maquam Shore Road, Highgate Road, and the New England Central Railroad connect the two towns. Finally, the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail extends from the Town of Saint Albans through Swanton and into Richford.

St Albans Town and Swanton share natural features including Lake Champlain, many brooks, open lands, agricultural soils and several trails within the more mountainous areas of the two towns.

Swanton's land use districts along St Albans Town's northern boundary are currently zoned for rural residential and agricultural uses. On the Town's side of the border the majority of the lands are zoned Agricultural Rural or Conservation. The one area of exception is along Route 7, the Town's designated growth area as approved by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission.

B. Fairfield

Fairfield is located west of St Albans Town and is connected by Route 36. St Albans Town and Fairfield are hilly in the location of the town boundaries and the land is predominately forested. The two towns, along with Swanton, share a unique natural feature: the Fairfield Swamp State Wildlife Management area.

Fairfield is a more rural community then St Albans Town, and existing and proposed land uses along this border are low impact and compatible.

C. Fairfax

Fairfax is located southeast of St Albans Town and has a very limited boundary with the Town. The major connector between the two towns is Route 104. Existing and proposed land uses along this corridor are residential and agricultural/rural on both sides of the Town boundaries.

D. Georgia

Georgia is located along the southern border of St Albans Town. The two towns share St Albans Hill, shoreline along Lake Champlain, and are linked by Route 7. The majority of the border in both towns is zoned for agricultural/rural uses, the shoreline is zoned residential/lakeshore in both towns, and the eastern border is zoned conservation in both towns.

E. St Albans City

St Albans City is completely surrounded by St Albans Town and is located along the intersection of Route 36 and Route 7. New England Central Railroad is based in the City of Saint Albans, and Amtrak stops there on a daily basis. St Albans City provides municipal wastewater treatment and water services to outlying areas of St Albans Town, and the City is undertaking construction of a parallel road to Route 7, known as the Federal Street Bypass. The Town will pursue alternate road to relieve congestion along Route 7.

The City has zoned all of Route 7 for commercial uses, and the Town has zoned large sections of Route 7 commercial, and a smaller section commercial/residential. The City is more urban than the Town and consequently its land use districts along the Town boundary generally allow greater density than the Town.

F. Northwest Region

The Northwest Regional Planning Commission is currently drafting a new Regional Plan. The goals and policies of the St Albans Town Plan are compatible with the Regional Plan. The Town and the Regional Planning Commission worked together extensively on defining the St. Albans Town Growth Centers depicted in the Regional Plan. In general, the proposed St. Albans Town Zoning Districts including commercial and industrial uses are located in the regional plan growth center. The Commercial/Residential District provides only for limited commercial uses in areas where there is primarily residential development.

The scale of these uses is limited, and are not the same as those allowed in the other commercial districts located within the growth center. Therefore, this should not be considered incompatible, as the implementation of the Town of St. Albans Town Plan will not significantly reduce the desired effect of the implementation of the Regional Plan.

2. Regional Issues

A. Lake Champlain Water Quality

As with many other Lake Champlain shoreline communities, the land use activities in St Albans Town have the potential to have a positive or negative impact on lake water quality. Development activities in close proximity to Lake Champlain should be accomplished in a manner that minimizes harmful effects on the Lake.

B. Transportation

## Town of Saint Albans Town Plan 2005

Interstate 89 is the major transportation link through St Albans Town and carries most of the Canadian traffic and regional traffic as well. Route 7 continues to be the main artery between St Albans Town and St Albans City and will continue to suffer congestion until the planned parallel road is built. Route 7 South into Georgia is sufficient to handle traffic now and for the foreseeable future.

Route 36 is the main road into Fairfield. With a steep grade and tight curves, Route 36 is insufficient to handle additional traffic, and is dangerous to forms of transportation such as bicycles and pedestrians. The section of Route 36 between St Albans City and the Bay area of the Town is sufficient for the foreseeable future.

The following three intersections are being studied in order to recommend measures to be taken for their improvement: Vermont Routes 104 and 105, Vermont Routes 104 and 36 and U.S. 7 and Vermont 105.

### C. Land Use

Franklin & Northern Chittenden Counties have recently experienced considerable growth and development, and St Albans Town has established zoning districts to funnel development into desired areas. Consequently, the land uses in the Town of Saint Albans are more compatible with those in adjoining towns and the uses detailed in the Regional Plan.

**SECTION XIII. IMPLEMENTATION**

1. Introduction

The implementation of the Town of Saint Albans Town Plan will be accomplished primarily by amending the Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations, and through the Capital Budget.

2. Amendments To The Zoning Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations

- A. Revise Zoning Districts to reflect recommendations of the Town Plan.
- B. Revise Zoning Bylaws to effectuate recommendations of the Town Plan.
- C. Revise Subdivision regulations to be consistent with the Town Plan.

3. Update the Capital Budget

- A. Plan for all capital improvements described in the Town Plan.
- B. Establish guidelines for municipal spending.

4. Utilize Alternative Funding Sources for Public Facilities and Services

- A. Impact Fees
- B. Special Assessment Districts
- C. Bonds
- D. Grants
- E. Low interest Loans
- F. User Fees

5. Citizen Involvement

Active citizen participation has been encouraged throughout the process of drafting this Town Plan: Numerous public meetings and a comprehensive Town Plan Survey were utilized to maximize the involvement of the people of the Town of Saint Albans. The Town of Saint Albans Planning Commission will also invite public participation in the revision of the Town Bylaws and Subdivision Regulations.