

# **SOUTH HERO TOWN PLAN**

**2015**

PREPARED BY:

The South Hero Planning Commission and  
Residents of the Town of South Hero

with the assistance of  
The Northwest Regional Planning Commission  
St. Albans, Vermont

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## INTRODUCTION

As an island in Lake Champlain, South Hero is a special place. There are many features of the island that are unique and are essential to the Town's character. Among them are broad scenic views of farm fields, the lake, the Adirondack Mountains to the west and the Green Mountains to the east; broad wetlands; natural areas, fossil sites; wildlife habitat; the lake shoreline; and the outer islands.

The purpose of the South Hero Town Plan is to provide a guide to the community and a plan for the future of the Town. This plan contains detailed information about the Town and its natural resources, history, growth patterns, businesses, residents, public services, community events and activities. Much of this information was gathered by residents from surveys, public workshops and committees in 1993 and 1994. The vision for the future of the Town, the goals, objectives and strategies were developed by Town residents.

In April, 2013, a number of South Hero residents recognized that new development pressures were being exerted upon South Hero that could potentially alter the look and character of the Town in ways not previously anticipated. Since the Town's current Development Regulations would not effectively reflect the intent of the current Town Plan, the Selectboard was petitioned to enact an interim zoning regulation to prevent such development from taking place until the Development Regulations could be examined and, if necessary, appropriately updated to better reflect the intent of the Town Plan (this document) and the wishes of South Hero residents. Consequently, the Selectboard did adopt an interim zoning bylaw which placed a temporary restriction on commercial and industrial development in the town.

During the summer of 2013, a small team of South Hero volunteers undertook a town-wide survey to gain a better understanding of how South Hero residents envisioned the future of their town. Commissioned by the Planning Commission, the South Hero Interim Zoning Advisory Committee (SHIZAC) developed, distributed, collected and tabulated the results of the survey and presented them to the Planning Commission and to the Selectboard. Those results have been factored into this revision of the Town Plan. See The SHIZAC Survey on page 58 for more information regarding this survey.

South Hero has established two Village Centers: one in the center of South Hero village area (essentially along Route 2 from the Post Office to Islandacres Farm) and one in Keeler Bay village area (essentially along Route 2 from St. Rose of Lima Church to Island Beverage). These are shown on Map 10 (page 80) and Map 11 (page 81) in the Appendix.

Several upcoming needs of the Town have also been factored into this Plan revision, chief among which is the concern that some existing Town buildings may not be adequate to serve the Town's needs in the future. For example, should the Town need to hire professional firefighters to augment the volunteer staff, replacing the aging, non-code-compliant and inadequate Fire Station with a modern, code-compliant building capable of supporting a 24x7, on-premise staff would be necessary. This requirement cannot be easily satisfied at the Fire Station's current location.

This Town Plan identifies actions that the Town can take to shape its own future in accordance with its vision. The Town cannot control factors such as the economy and State and federal regulations that will

affect the Town's future. However, there is an opportunity for the Town to have greater control over State actions. Title 3 VSA, Chapter 67, §4020 says, "State agencies that have programs or take actions affecting land use, ..., shall engage in a continuing planning process to assure that those programs and actions are consistent with the goals established in 24 VSA section 4302 and compatible with regional and *approved municipal plans*, ... (emphasis added)." By adopting this plan, the Town will have more control over its future and there is a greater chance that State plans and projects will have to reflect the Town's voice. Further, growth is inevitable; though not encouraging or discouraging growth, this plan works towards anticipating growth and ensuring it is well planned.

Town voters elect a 5 member Selectboard. This Board appoints a 7-member Zoning Board of Adjustment, a 5-member Planning Commission, and an Administrative Officer to review zoning applications for development, enforce Town regulations, and revise the regulations as needed.

## LAND USE

Today, South Hero has a mixture of village, residential, farm, and commercial areas scattered throughout the Town. Most of the land in South Hero is classified as either the “Rural Residential” or “Shoreland” District in the Town’s Development Regulations; “Commercial” or “Industrial” uses may be permitted as a Conditional Use in either of those districts, as there are no districts in town that are designated for those uses.

The Town’s history is rooted in agriculture, and indeed much of the land in South Hero is still used for that purpose. In fact, 17% of all land in South Hero is currently preserved by the South Hero Land Trust. Driven by our beautiful lakeshore, a thriving tourist business grew up over a century ago, resulting in a strong seasonal increase in population and a large number of summer homes and camps dotted along the lake. More recently, South Hero has become a bedroom community for workers employed in nearby Chittenden County and across the lake in New York. A significant number of the old seasonal camps and cottages have already been converted to year-round dwellings.

For the most part, the Town’s rural character and small New England village appeal is still healthy and strong. Our two village areas, South Hero and Keeler Bay, have thus far withstood the pressure of modernization and strip malls. We recognize that our path to preserving our Town’s character and appeal lies not in holding fast to the past, but rather in welcoming new businesses and other opportunities by providing encouragement and guidance to allow them to flourish in South Hero without compromising the visual appeal and character of the Town.

There is no “town center” as such in South Hero, although that ranked high on the “wish list” for SHIZAC Survey respondents. Two sections of the town, one in the South Hero village area and the other in the Keeler Bay village area, have been designated as “Village Centers” by the State of Vermont. This designation enables a number of municipal and business opportunities and provides a starting point for establishing a “commercial district” in South Hero. The exact delineation of these Centers is shown on Map 10 (page 80) and Map 11 (page 81) in the Appendix.

The character of South Hero’s soils, topography, geology, and ground and surface water will influence the future growth and development of the Town. U.S. Soil Conservation Service Soil Survey maps provide valuable information on soils, slopes, geology, groundwater, resource potential and wetlands.

Agriculture and Agritourism are an important segment of South Hero’s economy. Besides providing jobs for residents, using an important land resource, contributing to the scenic beauty and open spaces of the Town, and providing important products, farms provide a market for other businesses.

The “Champlain Islands Grown Guide to Agriculture” is published annually by the South Hero Land Trust. This free guide offers up-to-date information on all good things grown in the Islands. Visit [www.SHLT.org](http://www.SHLT.org) for more information.

## **Residential Development**

The predominant land use trend in South Hero is residential subdivision. In the future houses should be located throughout the Town in accordance with Town standards. The major factor affecting residential use will be the capability of land for sewage disposal. While this land pattern is recognized as wasteful of resources, until approvable innovative, alternative sewage disposal systems are found, it will predominate. Measures, including conservation easements, should be applied on 10+ acre lots to protect resources, particularly prime agricultural soils and to enable farming to continue wherever possible. Steps should be taken to cluster residential development where good soils can be found. The South Hero Development Regulations enable the use of Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), which allow for clustered development and the protection of open space. Residential development at higher densities is also appropriate in the village areas. All residential uses should compatibly coexist with prime agricultural land, wetlands, natural areas, shorelines, flood plains, and scenic areas wherever possible, through clustering and use of conservation easements to protect resource areas.

The State of Vermont has recently updated the [Vermont Residential Building Energy Standard \(RBES\) - 30 V.S.A. § 51](#). All new residential construction commenced after March 1, 2015, including additions, alterations, renovations, and repairs, must comply with this new standard.

## **Seasonal Home Conversions to Year Round Use**

The seasonal home community is important to the character of the Town of South Hero. Places that once were only occupied in the warmer months are now occupied year round. Conversions in places where there is a dense pattern of seasonal homes along the shoreline and where soils for septic systems are poor and road access is limited need attention. To protect the water quality of the lake, to enable safe and efficient access to properties, and to protect the scenic beauty and fragile character of the shoreline, the Town will take measures to ensure properly functioning septic systems, year round road access for emergency vehicles, and adequate lake shore and yard setbacks. Act 172, the Shorelands Protection Act passed by the Vermont Legislature in 2014, is expected to significantly impact this activity by imposing new State standards and permit requirements.

## **Village Areas**

The village areas of South Hero and Keeler Bay are compact centers for shops, services, low impact industry, offices, tourist services, places of worship, municipal offices and facilities, the museum, the school and homes. They serve as gathering places for a variety of community events and activities. Both village areas have Village Center Designation as of May, 2014. Businesses located within the designated Village Centers may take advantage of development incentives and benefits as described in the Vermont Statutes<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See 24 V.S.A. § 2793a(c), Designation of village centers by State Board.  
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To enable continued growth in the village areas, safe alternatives for sewage disposal must be found. In addition, extensions to the private water supply system known as Fire District #4 may have to be considered. Traffic on Route 2 must be controlled in the village areas for the safety of pedestrians and to protect the character of these areas. Historic resources contribute to the character of the village areas. New development should recognize these resources and use them in a productive and compatible way. Outside of the village areas, development that maintains the rural countryside will be encouraged. Future revisions of the South Hero Development Regulations may create village zoning districts which would enable higher density development and encourage commercial uses in the village areas.

### **Commercial and Industrial Development**

Commercial and industrial development in South Hero should be of a scale and impact appropriate for the Town's rural character. Commercial services, retail shops, offices, light industries, agricultural operations, and home businesses and industries are encouraged in the Town. Most commercial and light industrial uses will be encouraged in or adjacent to the village areas, however the particular use will determine the appropriate location. Commercial and industrial uses outside these areas will have higher standards to meet and will have to show how they will protect the scenic beauty of the entrances to the Town and will be compatible with the resources that the Town is trying to protect. Home occupations will be encouraged throughout the Town provided they fit in with the surrounding neighborhood. All uses must demonstrate that they have adequate road access and all uses requiring a Wastewater and Potable Water Supply Permit shall be required to obtain a certificate of occupancy from the Administrative Officer before using or occupying a premises.

### **Agricultural Development**

Farms of all types are encouraged to remain on prime agricultural soils in the Town of South Hero. The best locations for farms are designated as prime agricultural land on MAP 2: Primary Agricultural Soils. The Town encourages compatible home occupations on farms, such as farm stands, value added agriculture enterprises, storage operations in barns, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and bed and breakfasts. When a farm designated as prime agricultural land is proposed for subdivision, the Town will work with the owner/developer to locate house sites in a way that protects as much of the prime agricultural land as possible.

### **On Site Sewage Disposal Potential**

South Hero does not have municipal sewage disposal facilities. New sewage disposal facilities must conform to the requirements of the Vermont Environmental Protection Rules. Sewage disposal capacity is dependent upon soil type, and much of South Hero has poor potential for on-site sewage disposal. State regulations allow the use of more innovative treatment systems which work on a wider range of soils and therefore create opportunities for development on lots that were previously considered undevelopable. In addition, developers are increasingly using small-scale shared wastewater systems to

treat entire subdivisions without needing suitable soils on each lot. Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) could be an effective way to make the best use of limited septic capacity. Opportunities to use these and other new technologies and strategies should be considered and encouraged.

The areas that have good potential for on-site sewage disposal are small, scattered, and do not generally coincide with where the most concentrated development has taken place to date, including the two village areas and the lakeshore.

Both the village areas of South Hero and Keeler Bay have very poor soils potential for siting commercial or industrial facilities under present State regulations. Without the benefits of a municipal or innovative sewage disposal system, the concentration of commercial developments is only marginally feasible. Small areas outside of the village areas show good to moderate potential, but their locations, end of Kibbe Point, along South Street and a few others, are either off town roads, or are already residential or prime agricultural in nature.

### **Agricultural Potential**

Areas with Primary agricultural soils have the highest potential for agriculture based on soil physical and chemical conditions. This information is determined from the U.S. Soils Conservation Service Soils Survey for South Hero. Soils in the survey are placed in value groups and classified either as primary agricultural soils or not primary agricultural soils, based on State definitions. MAP 2: Primary Agricultural Soils on page 72 shows those areas that qualify as primary agricultural soils. As a result of field investigations, most non-farm, forested, wetlands, or built up areas have been eliminated from the mapped primary agricultural soils areas.

According to the State definition of primary agricultural soils, these soils “have potential for growing food and forage crops, are sufficiently well drained to allow sowing and harvesting with mechanized equipment, are well supplied with plant nutrients or highly responsive to the use of fertilizer, and have few limitations for cultivation or limitations which may be easily overcome,... the average slope of the land does not exceed 15 percent, and such land is of a size capable of supporting or contributing to an economic agricultural operation.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Land Use Patterns**

According to the 2013 Grand List, there were a total of 9,227 acres of land in South Hero divided into 1,222 parcels, averaging 7.6 acres. Comparing the South Hero grand lists, which in 2003 did not include municipal and church-owned properties, the total number of properties has been relatively stable. Increases in the number of commercial properties and residential properties due to subdivisions have been offset by mergers of non-conforming properties, development of vacant or unimproved properties

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<sup>2</sup> This is the State of Vermont Act 250 definition of Primary Agricultural Soils.

and a reduction of seasonal mobile home parcels without land. There has also been a trend of conversions of seasonal residences to year-round residences. Table 1 compares the distribution of acreage and number of parcels based on information provided from the 2003 and 2013 Grand Lists.

Table 1: 2003 vs. 2013 South Hero Land Use, edited from Grand List

Land Use	# of Parcels		% of Total		Total Acres		% of Total		Avg. Parcel	
	2003	2013	2003	2013	2003	2013	2003	2013	2003	2013
<b>Year-round Residences</b>	495	673	49.5	55.1	3,815.4	3,861.3	42.0	41.8	6.4	5.7
<b>Seasonal Residence</b>	258	214	21.5	17.5	1,236.9	1,161.3	13.6	12.6	4.8	5.4
<b>Seasonal Mobile Homes</b>	173	152	14.4	12.4	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Agriculture</b>	18	18	1.5	1.5	2,508.8	2,527.4	27.6	27.4	139.4	140.4
<b>Commercial</b>	34	42	2.8	3.4	487.3	618.9	5.4	6.7	14.3	14.7
<b>Commercial Apartments</b>	3	4	0.3	0.3	14.8	15.1	0.2	0.2	4.9	3.8
<b>Church</b>	N/A	4	N/A	0.3	N/A	3.6	N/A	0.0	N/A	0.9
<b>Unimproved</b>	113	88	9.4	7.2	888.4	777.9	9.8	8.4	7.9	8.8
<b>Public</b>	2	24	0.2	2.0	132.2	255.7	1.5	2.8	66.1	10.7
<b>Utilities</b>	4	3	0.3	0.2	4.0	5.9	0.0	0.1	1.0	2.0
<b>TOTAL</b>		1,222		100.0		9,227.1		100.0		7.6

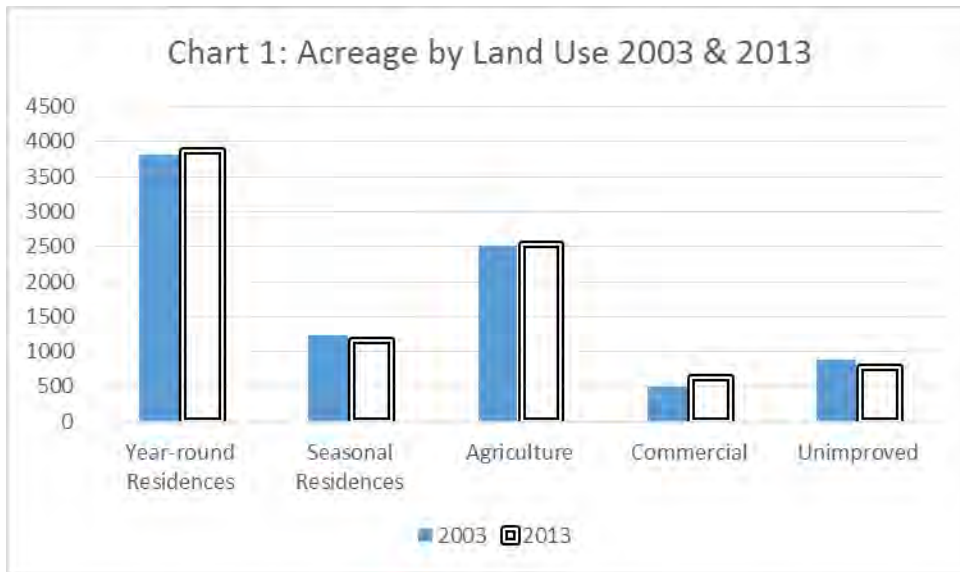


Chart 1: Acreage by Land Use, 2003 & 2013

### Year-Round Residences

There are 673 residential-use parcels of land in South Hero, of which 133 (19.8%) are 10 or more acres in size and which account for 71.7% of all land in year-round residential use. The average lot size of the 540 lots that are less than ten acres is 2.0 acres. See Table 2.

Table 2: Size of Permanent Residential Parcels, 2013

Category	# of Lots	Total Acres	A v. Lot Size	% of Res. Acres
Res: >10 A	133	2,767	20.8	71.7
Res: < 10 A	540	1,094	2.0	28.3
TOTAL	673	3,861	5.7	100.0

### Seasonal Residences

According to the South Hero 2013 Grand List, there are 214 seasonal residence parcels totaling 1,161 acres or 12.6% of the land in South Hero. 198 or 93% of these parcels have lake frontage. Eleven of the 16 seasonal residence parcels without lake frontage are in close proximity to Lake Champlain. The remaining 5 seasonal residences have at least 9-acres of land. The number of seasonal residences decreased 17% from 258 between 2003 and 2013. This decrease is due to the trend of converting seasonal residences to year-round residences.

## **Commercial Uses**

According to the South Hero 2013 Grand List, the parcels with commercial use increased 23.5% from 34 in 2003 to 42 in 2013. Not included are parcels that have small home based or farm businesses. Commercial parcels only comprise of 3.4% of all the parcels in the Town. Since South Hero is located on the main direct travel way between Plattsburg NY and Burlington VT, there have been recent inquiries to develop larger commercial businesses along this travel corridor. Currently the Town has implemented interim zoning to limit the maximum size of commercial, industrial and professional office uses on properties to provide time to survey, evaluate and update the Town regulations so that South Hero can develop in a way that the community would prefer.

## **Farms**

The number of parcels on the grand lists of 2003 and 2013, where farming is listed as the principal use, remained constant at 18 between 2003 and 2013. The number of acres in these parcels also remained consistent with 2,508.8 acres in 2003 and 2,527.4 acres in 2013. Additional lands on many other parcels, which have other uses or are currently listed as unimproved, are also farmed.

## **Hamlets**

Small, historic settlement areas ("hamlets") exist in various places in South Hero. For example, the Allen Point and the Sandbar Historic District could be regarded as hamlets. It might be appropriate to encourage growth in some of those areas rather than starting in a new area.

## **Forested Land**

South Hero has scattered areas of forested land, including mature forest, wetland forests, and young forests that are growing up from old farm fields and pastures. ( See MAP 3: Land Use / Land Cover on page 73.) The Champlain Islands support growth characteristics of Central Woodlands, such as shagbark hickory, basswood, several maple varieties, beech and red and white cedar.

Unfortunately, the predominant woodland variety is ash, exceeding 50% coverage in some locales. The advent of the invasive Emerald Ash Borer beetle (EAB) will have devastating effects in the next decade, as mortality is 100% unless expensive tree by tree preventative treatment is undertaken. Though not identified in Vermont at this writing, EAB's have been identified in all surrounding states and Canada and these areas are under quarantine. Vermont will join other states and provinces which have EAB infestation at such time as the beetle is discovered. The Town should plan for removal of dead and diseased trees on Town property, which includes town road ROW's, and private landowners should be aware of the impact on their property.

A trend of transition from field to forest is occurring in many areas where farming has found areas too small or far from operations to be viable for crop use. While a natural process, this change threatens traditional views of the lake and mountains. Maintaining open land is a challenge, calling for private and public landowner commitment.

### Lakeshore

According to the 2013 South Hero Grand List, 39%, or 476, of all parcels of land in South Hero have lake frontage. 231 of the parcels are year-round residences. 198 of these parcels have seasonal residences. 30 of these parcels are unimproved or vacant. 5 agricultural properties have lake frontage.

### Land Use Trends

As shown in Table 3 below, with the exception of fiscal years 2011 and 2012, permit application for land development have remained overall consistent. During fiscal years 2011 and 2012, there was a decrease in permit applications for land development. New lots for development created by subdivisions have occurred as shown on Table 4 on page 14 . Table 5 on page 14 shows the change in housing units from 1990 to 2010 according to U.S. Census data. There has been an increase in year-round residences and total residences, and a decrease in seasonal residences. This reflects the trend toward converting seasonal residences to year-round residence and development of vacant and subdivided land to year-round residences. The limitation to development in South Hero is often related to septic capacity of the soils on properties.

**Table 3: Building Permits 2005-2014**

Fiscal Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
New Homes	9	10	7	3	7	5	4	3	8	11
Additions	9	14	10	17	17	13	11	11	25	21
Accessory Structures	19	8	18	11	16	11	6	11	12	17
Other	38	44	40	34	20	36	17	18	22	27
Total	75	76	75	65	60	65	38	43	67	76

**Table 4: Subdivisions 2005-2014**

Fiscal Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Approved Subdivisions	2	7	4	6	2	3	3	1	2	4
Acreage Involved	112	204	32	264	10	189	20	7	58	123
Lots Created	3	15	5	17	2	5	3	3	3	10

**Table 5: Housing Units Trends, 1990-2010, U.S. Census Data**

Housing Type	1990	2000	2010	# Change		% Change	
				1990-00	2000-10	1990-00	2000-10
Year Round Units	562	689	716	127	27	22.6%	3.9%
Seasonal Units	396	347	344	-49	-3	-12.4%	-0.9%
Total Units	958	1036	1060	78	24	8.1%	2.3%

### Existing Regulations

In 2009, the Town of South Hero adopted “Land Development Regulations” which updated and replaced the previous Zoning, Subdivision and Flood Hazard Regulations. These regulations take steps to protect six conservation areas, including the “Crick” and the woods near Eagle Camp, through 25-acre minimum lot sizes. There is no specific protection established for prime agricultural lands. Protection for the shoreline is provided by a building setback of 75 feet. The South Hero regulations are not “functionally equivalent” to State requirements as defined in Act 172, the 2014 Shoreland Protection Act; hence, State permits would likely be required for any shoreland development in addition to Town permits. Commercial development is conditional in the Rural Residential and Shoreland districts upon approval of the Zoning Board of Adjustment and site plan approval from the Planning Commission. There is no encouragement for commercial and industrial development to locate in specific areas of the town. Residential development is permitted anywhere in town. The maximum density of residential

development is 1 unit/acre except in the Conservation District, where it is 1 unit/25 acres. Planned Unit Developments allow adjusting individual lot sizes to less than one acre, providing that the entire development contains sufficient acreage to satisfy the 1 unit/acre requirement. In the future, the Town may explore the appropriateness of adjusting the maximum density for residential development in certain districts. Conversions of seasonal homes to year-round use must meet State regulations for septic disposal and potable water, and must have adequate road access and off street parking. The bylaws currently include provisions for telecommunications facilities.

The Land Use Regulations also include rules to guide the subdivision of land into parcels. They include standards for roads, lighting, signs, landscaping, utilities, and the protection of certain resources. They encourage protection of agricultural land but, except in the case of Planned Unit Developments, contain no specific provisions for accomplishing such protection.

## Goals & Objectives

1. Allow South Hero to grow in a responsible way, with respect for its unique characteristics, natural beauty and rural environment in a manner which encourages and nurtures South Hero's sense of community and civic pride.
2. Support agriculture that follows best environmental management practices.
3. Ensure the compatible coexistence of development with major ecologically sensitive areas, such as wetlands, natural areas, Lake Champlain, scenic views and historic sites.
4. Enable mixed use of residential, agricultural, light industrial and/or commercial developments to flourish in the Town.
5. Encourage commercial and small, light industrial development within or adjacent to the designated Village Centers and along Route 2 and Route 314 in a way that maintains the beauty of the entrances to the Town from the east and west and prevents strip development.
6. Take advantage of existing or historical hamlets where appropriate.

## Strategies

1. Restructure the Town's Development Regulations to define Development Areas and take advantage of Village Center Designation.
2. Recognize in plans and regulations that there are certain parts of Town that are more appropriate for development than others due to the capability of the soils for septic systems, presence of wetlands, natural areas, scenic areas, and primary agricultural soils, and existence of State and federal regulations.



3. Consider making provision for a Town Center with adequate capacity to host the Town Offices, Fire Department, Rescue Squad, recreation fields and other functions and facilities as the need develops. Commercial enterprises, in a public/private partnership or just private, should be included.
4. Support purchase and/or donation of development rights to maintain agriculture and important natural areas outside of the village areas.
5. Encourage agricultural easements in subdivisions and promote small lot cluster housing where soils are suitable. Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) might be an effective way to accomplish this.
6. Require that “building envelopes” be defined for house sites in subdivisions to ensure coexistence with wetlands, natural areas, and farmland.
7. Define village areas in the zoning regulations, encourage development in those areas and take steps to improve their appearance, establish and enforce appropriate speed limits.
8. Commercial and small, light industrial enterprises should be encouraged by designating locations where these uses will be less restricted than in other parts of the Town.
9. Support innovative solutions for safe sewage disposal.
10. Support the development of retail, hospitality and service-based businesses best suited to serve the needs of residents, seasonal residents and the tourist population.
11. Evaluate adding limited form-based zoning to the Development Regulations to maintain the character of the Town.

Reconsider the lot size limitations in zoning regulations.

## THE SPECIAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE ISLANDS

Being on an island makes South Hero and our neighboring Island towns unique and inviting places to live. Preserving this environment for the enjoyment of those who live here now as well as for those who will live here in the future is very important to all of us. Described here are some of the many benefits we enjoy as Island residents.

### Attractions

#### Scenic Views

A scenic view is an area from which an open vista may be viewed by the public. Most scenic views will be from public roads, but will also be from public recreation areas and from the lake. The Special Island Environment Committee found 14 scenic views and ranked them from 1 to 4, with 1 being the best. All views are depicted on MAP 4: Community Assets on page 74.

#### #1 Scenic Views

- Sunset View Road overlooking the ridge to the south/west and west with the lake and Adirondacks in the background.
- At the intersection of Landon Road and East Shore Road there is a view across Round Pond into the bay with the Green Mountains in the background. The view is enhanced by the farm fields which surround the intersection.
- Along the causeway traveling in both directions on Route 2: panoramic view.

#### #2. Scenic Views

- Route 2 from Kibbe Point Road east to the town line on the Sand Bar; offers views of the Green Mountains to the east with the lake in the foreground.
- Route 314 as it tops the hill approximately 300 yards from the town line. This slope offers a view of the lake with Plattsburgh and the foothills of the Adirondacks in the background.
- West Shore Road at the junction with Eagle Camp Road looking west over Rockwell Bay. The lake is in the foreground with Plattsburgh in the background.
- West Shore Road overlooking Sawyer Bay with the lake in the foreground and Adirondacks in the background. Also scenic looking east into the fields surrounding the bay.

- White's Beach on West Shore Road viewing the lake to the west with the Adirondacks in the background. Sunsets and beautiful island views of Providence Island, Carleton's Prize and Stave Island.
- South Street from the top of the hill headed south after Whipple Road and for a distance of approximately 100 yards. Views of the lake, greater Malletts Bay, the Adirondacks and the Green Mountains.
- The railroad bed from the point where it emerges into the lake at the south end of the island and proceeds into the lake, i.e. The Fill. Views are spectacular in all directions.
- Hochelaga Road from the top of the hill as one turns off South Street to the turn for Camp Hochelaga. Views of the lake and the Green Mountains.
- Town Line Road looking east and south from the top of the hill at Sweeney's Farm. Views are of the lake, Keeler Bay and the Green Mountains.

### #3. Scenic Views

- South Street has views to the west from Folsom School to the Kinney's Farm. Some lake views but mostly the Adirondacks.
- The intersection of Lakeview Road and Station Road has views to the east and south with fields in the foreground and the Green Mountains in the background.

### #4. Scenic Views

- All of Lakeview Road may be considered scenic, from views of the farm fields, the "Crick" and Green Mountains to the east and the lake and Adirondacks to the west.
- All lake public access areas afford views of the lake and surrounding areas.
- From Kibbe Point Road at the first sharp curve to the right there are views of the lake and the Green Mountains to the east with farm fields all around the area.

### **Scenic Roads**

Upon review of all roads in the Town, it was determined that portions of all roads may be considered scenic, taking into account the beauty of the seasons, the contrast of the sky against open fields and woodlands, and the distant mountains and lake views.

## Wetlands

Wetlands are mostly semi-aquatic lands that are flooded or saturated by water for varying periods of time during the growing season. In all wetlands, the presence of water creates conditions that favor the growth of certain plants, such as cattails, water lilies, alders, dogwood, red maple, and swamp oak, and promote the development of wetlands or hydric soils.<sup>3</sup> Wetlands are important to the town because they provide flood and storm water storage, surface and ground water protection, shoreline anchoring and erosion control, wildlife and migratory bird habitat, threatened and endangered species habitat, educational and recreation opportunities, and open space and scenic beauty.

MAP 5: Critical Areas on page 75 shows the general location of wetlands in South Hero based on soils information, soils interpretation, aerial photography, review of National Wetland Inventory maps and United States Geological Survey maps, and site visits. However, more precise location of wetlands must be determined by more extensive field investigation.

There are two types of wetlands shown on the map: forested wetlands and non-forested wetlands. The map shows large areas of both types of wetlands distributed throughout the Town. The State of Vermont estimates that there are 877 acres of wetlands in South Hero, or 8% of the Town's land area.<sup>4</sup> Due to State and Federal wetland regulations, these areas will have limitations on the type of development that can occur.

The two most significant wetlands in South Hero are the South Hero Marsh Wildlife Area and the "Round Pond." The South Hero Marsh Wildlife Area, shown on MAP 9: Facilities and Utilities on page 79, outlets on the north side of U.S. Route 2 through "The Crick", just west of South Hero village area. It extends southerly nearly to West Shore Road. The "Crick", roughly 100 acres in size, is mostly wooded with deciduous trees. The Round Pond is situated near the shoreline, northeasterly of the intersection of Landon Road and East Shore Road. The pond is mostly open water; the wetland is more extensive and includes some marshes northerly along the shoreline.

## Natural Areas

Natural areas are areas of land which have retained their wilderness character although not necessarily in a completely natural or undisturbed state, have rare or vanishing species of plant or animal life, and/or are unique ecological or geological areas. Natural areas are important for the diversity of the natural environment, for recreation, educational and scientific research opportunities, and for habitat of rare and endangered species of plant or animal life.

Natural areas in South Hero have been identified from two sources: the Vermont Natural Areas Inventory and the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife. No thorough inventory of natural areas has

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<sup>3</sup> Agency of Natural Resources, Water Quality Division, Wetlands Fact Sheet. #6. May 1992.

<sup>4</sup> Agency of Natural Resources, Water Quality Division, Wetlands of Grand Isle County. A Citizens. Draft, April 1992.

been conducted in the town. Therefore, these lists may not be complete. Further, the data from the Vermont Natural Areas Inventory is old and requires updating.

Most of the natural areas identified in South Hero are geological areas, specifically areas of mineral and fossil activity. Other areas include the outer islands and marshes already identified in the wetlands inventory. MAP 5: Critical Areas on page 75 shows the natural areas from the Vermont Natural Areas Inventory and from the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Two sites of particular geologic interest are: 1) at the cut in Route 2 between the northern entrance to Tracy Road and Sunset View Road and 2) at the quarry to the south of Sunset View Road approximately 0.25 miles from Route 2. (The quarry is on private land and permission must be granted before visiting the site.) Fossil evidence may be found in many rock outcroppings throughout the town as much of the rock is in layers of sediments put down over millions of years.

### State Parks

The Round Pond State Park and Natural Area consists of approximately 125 acres of spectacular wetlands, fields, woodlands, and approximately 1,100 feet of Lake Champlain shoreline. This resource was conserved and was opened to the public in 2001.

### Public Access to the Lake

Public access to the lake from the Town of South Hero is an important asset which enhances the recreational and scenic value of the town as a whole for residents, seasonal home owners and visitors.

The public access areas in the Town are shown on MAP 6: Transportation System on page 76 and listed below:

- at the end of the public portion of Hill Road;
- at the end of the public portion of Lavigne Road as it comes into Keeler Bay;
- Keeler Bay Road at the first hard curve to the right;
- Vermont Fish & Wildlife Accesses:
  - Guilmette Access Area, at #78 U.S. Route 2 near Featherbed Lane
  - Keeler Bay Access Area at the end of Sunrise Drive
- Sweeney Farm access off of Town Line Road (winter only);
- White's Beach (owned and maintained by the Town);
- Allen Point Access to "the Fill";
- The railroad bed on Keeler Bay, south of Keeler Bay Marina;

- “Knee Deep” Bay Trail; and
- Round Pond State Park on Landon Road (access to the Lake is by foot over nature trails).

### Public Trails

Trails make land available for walking, jogging, bicycling, horseback riding, skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and all terrain vehicle use. These uses may not always be compatible with each other and trail planning should consider this. Trail locations can include existing rights of way for roads and the former railroad bed and negotiated easements or licenses over private property.

There are several public trails existing in the Town today. One is located along the old railroad bed from West Shore Road to Tracy Road as shown on MAP 6: Transportation System on page 76 as the South Hero Marsh Trail. The railroad bed runs through the Roy Marsh Wildlife Management Area; portions of this area, owned by Vermont Fish and Wildlife, are leased by the Town. The former railroad bed at one time linked the islands to the mainland. There have been discussions about reconnecting the rights of way in order to have a continuous walking and biking trail from as far as Burlington through the islands. In 2003-2004, the South Hero Village to Allen Point Access Linkage Feasibility and Alignment Study investigated the feasibility of a link for non-motorized and snowmobile travelers between the Allen Point Access Area and the village area of South Hero. The study identified a preferred alternative as widening the pavement on South Street slightly and widening the cleared area of the South Hero Recreation Path, which is a half-mile trail located behind the Folsom School and Community Center on South Street. There are also several other public trails: one in the Round Pond State Park off East Shore Road, the Landon Community Trail on Landon Road and, also shown on Map 6, the “Knee Deep” trail connecting East Shore Road to Hochelega Road.

Future trail development will require cooperation and negotiation with landowners, town investigation of liability issues, good access including parking facilities, public support, provision of public safety, protection of wildlife habitat and natural areas, and public funds.

Volunteers can help in easement negotiations, trail planning, trail clearing, fundraising and monitoring. Federal and State funds are available for certain types of trails.

### Recreation

Other recreational opportunities in the Town include fishing, hunting, hiking, and cross-country skiing. In addition, South Hero offers many opportunities to observe wildlife. The margins of wood and meadow afford great variety for the bird watcher. Attention at dawn or dusk will uncover dozens of species. Hawks, vultures and herons are never absent from the summer skies, drawn along with owls and other raptors to the bountiful prey of field, woodland and lake shore. Both Canada and Snow geese use our fields for foraging and resting during spring and fall migration. Deer and wild turkeys are plentiful and easily seen in open fields, while smaller animals may be found in woodlands.

## The Outer Islands

There are seven outer islands that fall within the boundaries of the Town of South Hero. These islands are important natural areas, historic sites, and places of scenic beauty. The following list will give the size and significant features of the islands while MAP 4: Community Assets on page 74 will show their locations:

Carleton's Prize: 0.09 acres; 280' of lake frontage; no buildings; owned by the Lake Champlain Land Trust. Considered a natural area because the island has "significant and unusual land and water interfaces; cliffs, palisades, bluffs, rims." It is also a critical habitat for the Smooth Draba. Carleton's Prize has a place in the history of the Revolutionary War (see boxed story).

### ***The Story of Carleton's Prize: A South Hero Historic Site***

*During the Revolutionary War, Benedict Arnold's fleet of small boats engaged Admiral Carleton's large naval force in the Battle of Valcour Island near Plattsburgh, New York. Arnold lost the engagement and took his remaining boats south on the lake. Admiral Carleton pursued but ran into heavy fog. When a boat was spotted, the admiral ordered that it be fired upon as it was surely the retreating rebels. After several shots were fired, it was determined that the "boat" was, in fact, an island. Hence the name: Carleton's Prize.*

Sawyer Island: 1.9 acres; 1,380' of lake frontage; 1 building; private ownership as seasonal residence. One of the Lake's rock islands. Very little soil, sparse vegetation, some waterfowl nesting.

Kellogg Island: 3.6 acres; 1,960' of lake frontage; 7 buildings; private ownership as seasonal residence. Cedar covered. Striking visual element in Keeler Bay.

Cedar Island (also known as Gull Island): 8.2 acres; 2,300' of lake frontage; 2 buildings; private ownership as seasonal residence. State of Vermont critical habitat for Limestone Rock-Cress. Dense cedars around cliff perimeter.

Fish Bladder Island: 11.6 acres; 2,860' of lake frontage plus 1,580' sometimes submerged; 2 buildings; private ownership as seasonal residence. State of Vermont critical habitat for Limestone Rock-Cress. Limited forest cover due to landscaping and grooming of vegetation except in north end.

Stave Island: 81 acres; 8,650' of lake frontage; 2 buildings; private ownership as a seasonal residence. State of Vermont critical habitat for Smooth Draba, Canadian Milk Vetch, Pale Vetchling, Obediance, Small Skullcap and Back's Sedge. Unique house and observation tower. Shallow soils and brush vegetation with rock ledge shoreline for most part.

Providence Island: 148.5 acres divided into 16 private lots of varying size with 55.4 acres of common land (mostly wetland); 13,485' of lake frontage (5,000' held in common); 9 buildings; private ownership as seasonal residences. State of Vermont critical habitat for Northern Wild Comfrey, Nodding Stickseed,

Limestone Rock-Cress, Smooth Draba, Canadian Milk Vetch, Pale Vetchling, Vetchling, Small Skullcap, Back's Sedge, Alpine Rush and Marsh Horsetail. Cedar forested and meadows with rock ledge and rocky beach shoreline. Connected to mainland by underwater power lines. Important role in the Lake's history. Significant in the War of 1812 and as a summer resort at the end of the 19th century complete with a hotel, a dance pavilion, and ferry service to Burlington!

## Lake Champlain Shoreline

Town records indicate that the Town of South Hero has approximately 150,003 linear feet of Lake Champlain shoreline. In 2013, 39% of all parcels of land in South Hero had lake frontage. Of those 476 parcels, 231 (48.5%) had year-round residences and 198 (41.6%) had seasonal residences. 30 of those parcels were unimproved or vacant. 5 agricultural properties, 10 commercial and 2 public properties also had lake frontage.

## Floodplains

Most of the Lake Champlain shoreline below the elevation of 102' is subject to flooding. In addition, there are other areas, including tributaries to the lake, the "Crick", and wetlands that have been designated as within the 100 year flood levels. (See Flood Insurance Rate Maps for Town of South Hero in Town Clerk's Office for official descriptions.) MAP 5: Critical Areas on page 75 also depicts the 100-year flood zones.

The Town of South Hero Development Regulations also includes rules to protect floodplains and prevent damage to property and risk to human lives. Agricultural and recreational/open space uses are permitted in the floodplains; single family residences, building improvements, public services, certain outdoor recreation uses, and excavation and fill are conditional uses and must meet special development standards.

## Goals & Objectives

1. Increase public awareness of the unique characteristics of South Hero in an effort to help preserve those characteristics for future generations..
2. Maintain adequate public access to the lake in an environmentally responsible manner.
3. Encourage compatible coexistence of development with major ecologically sensitive areas, such as wetlands, natural areas, scenic views, open and agricultural land, historic sites and Lake Champlain itself.
4. Support reduction of lake, groundwater and air pollution.



5. Work towards a system of town multiple use paths, trails and recreational areas that exist within town and private lands. Trails should be accessible to recreational resources, local businesses, the school, and concentrated residential areas.

## Strategies

1. The Town Planning Commission should stay up to date on State and federal regulations concerning wildlife, wetlands, natural areas, and water quality and determine the best course for the Town to take regarding regulations for these areas. The Planning Commission should monitor the effectiveness and enforcement of town regulations.
2. Ensure the Town continues to be represented in and participate in local and regional planning organizations such as the Northwest Regional Planning Commission, Northwest Solid Waste District, etc.
3. The Town should support, seek out and apply for State, federal and private grants for the protection of natural areas, wetlands, scenic areas, recreation areas, and wildlife habitat.
4. The Town should support donations, leases, and other private, voluntary ways to protect natural areas, wetlands, scenic areas, recreation areas, and wildlife habitat.
5. Town zoning and subdivision regulations should be strictly and consistently enforced. All Town officials should be well-informed about these ordinances.
6. In the Town Development Regulations, provisions should ensure that development compatibly coexists with the following special environmental areas:
  - a. Natural areas, especially significant fossil sites
  - b. Critical habitat on the outer islands
  - c. Public access areas on the lake shore
  - d. Lake Champlain shoreline
  - e. Wetlands, including the “Crick” and the area of Round Pond
  - f. Scenic views
  - g. Flood plain areas
7. Ensure that the conversion of seasonal homes to year-round use meets local zoning standards and results in safe and adequate sewage disposal, water supply, and road access.
8. To protect the Lake Champlain shoreline and recognize its diverse and unique character, the Town Planning Commission shall keep apprised of lakeshore land use and identify shoreland areas that may be treated differently in the Town regulations.

9. Support State of Vermont efforts to minimize pollution to the Lake and groundwater.
10. Support programs which:
  - a. Educate the public, including children and landowners, on the importance of agriculture, natural areas, wetlands, and historic sites.
  - b. Organize volunteers who are interested in creating and maintaining town trails and coordinating with regional trail projects.

## COMMUNITY ASSETS

Over the past forty years the amount of land in agricultural use in the Town has declined, people have moved in, and more residents commute to the Burlington area now. Yet the Town of South Hero has maintained its spirit of cooperation and participation in the face of these changes. South Hero is the kind of town that attracts people who value rural life and seek to be involved in their community. The following are community assets that people participate in and which draw people to our town.

### Lake Champlain

Vermonters love Lake Champlain. Many refer to the Lake as the region's crown jewel. We depend on the Lake for drinking water, fishing, swimming, boating and other recreational pursuits. In fact, Keeler Bay is a prime fishing area. Summer tourism and property values are tied to its health and beauty. The Lake attracts businesses with a work force that appreciates the Lake's natural beauty and Vermont's working landscape.

### Health of the Lake

The challenge is that too much pollution is reaching Lake Champlain from the streams and rivers draining into it. The primary concern is polluted runoff -- rainwater or snowmelt that drains off parking lots, roads and streets, logging roads, farm fields and croplands, and lawns. The runoff carries with it sediment, nutrients such as phosphorus that are naturally present in soils, pet and animal wastes, fertilizers, and other pollutants and deposits these pollutants into streams and rivers or directly into Lake Champlain. During periods in which Lake Champlain is in flood stage, septic systems near the Lake are in danger of flooding and contributing to the pollution problem.

Phosphorus is one of the nutrient pollutants found in runoff and arguably the greatest threat to clean water in Lake Champlain. It also comes from eroding stream banks caused by stream channel instability. Too much phosphorus pollution stimulates excessive growth of algae. It can turn Lake Champlain water green, and can even be toxic to pets and people.

The State of Vermont and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are in the process of developing and implementing a new restoration plan for Lake Champlain and its tributaries. For up-to-date information visit [www.watershedmanagement.vt.gov/erp/champlain/](http://www.watershedmanagement.vt.gov/erp/champlain/)

Everyone in South Hero, residents and visitors alike, needs to be mindful of the importance of our Lake. We must be rigorous in our respect for the Lake, make every effort not to add to the pollution problem, and become part of the clean-up effort.

## Organizations and Attractions

### Folsom Education and Community Center

The residents of South Hero recognize that a strong school system has a positive influence on the community, and proudly provide both a safe educational environment for students and a facility that serves as a focal point for community activities and events.

Built in 1948 and expanded in 1973, Folsom Education and Community Center serves grades K-8. It is noted for the dedication and morale of its teachers and staff, its high academic standards, and activism of volunteers in school and after-school programs. Its excellent library is available for both student and public use. The gymnasium is also the site for the annual Town Meeting and other large community meetings.

After experiencing a peak of around 220 students in 1997, enrollment declined to about 110 students in 2012. In the past two years enrollment has been on the rise and in 2014 stands at 129 (see Chart 2 on page 26).

Since the Grand Isle Supervisory Union (GISU) does not have a high school, students have school choice. Students typically pick South Burlington High, Essex High, or Colchester High. Some choose Champlain Valley Union, Vermont Commons, Lyndon Institute, and three area Technical Centers. Tuitions are set by the State Agency of Education.

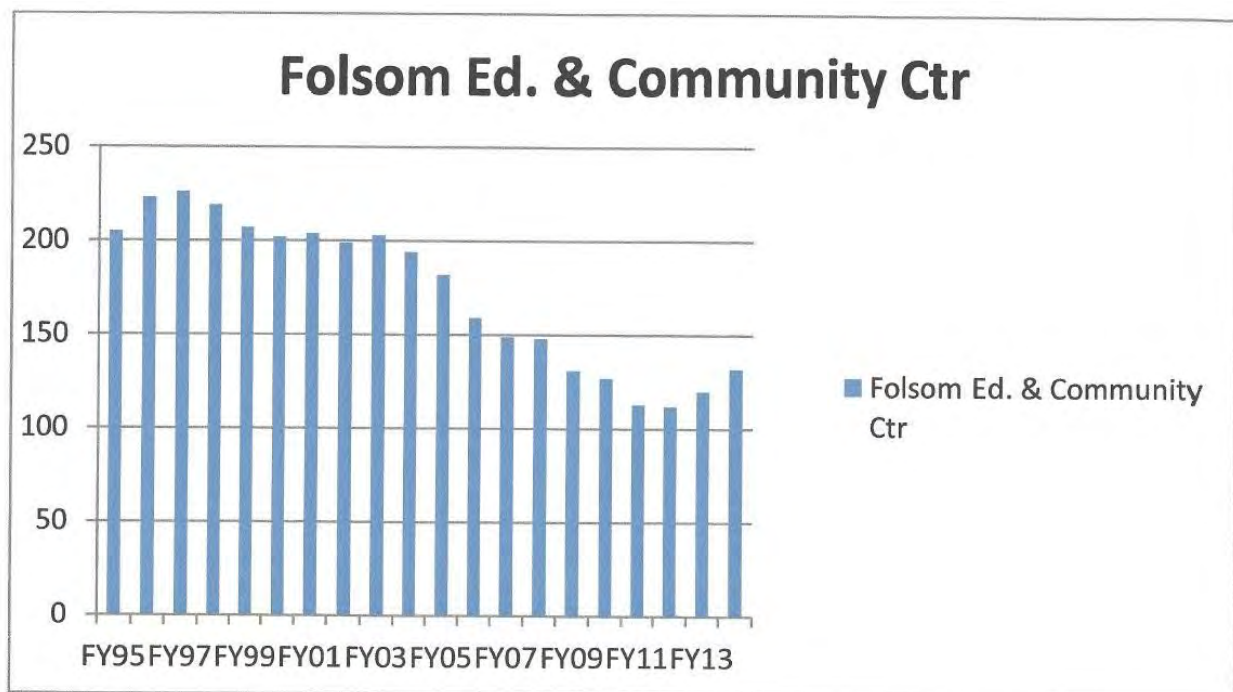


Chart 2: Folsom Education Center Enrollment

### **Champlain Islands Parent Child Center (CIPCC)**

South Hero is fortunate to have the Champlain Islands Parent Child Center. CIPCC is a NAEYC accredited, 5 STAR, non-profit, early care and education center for infants through preschoolers. The Allen House portion of the Center offers pre-K to children who are 4 years old by September 1st free of charge. The cost of pre-K is covered by Grand Isle Supervisory Union budget. It is unique that pre-K is universal for all GISU students. Other school districts and towns have relied on Act 62 Early Education funds to subsidize preschool costs for families. In May, 2014, the State of Vermont recognized the critical importance of early childhood education and has made universal pre-K State law. South Hero is ahead of the curve in offering a quality, universal pre-K program.

CIPCC came to South Hero from Alburgh in 1998 and initially rented the Allen House from Ray Allen. The Center purchased the Allen House in 2002, and the large “Red Building” portion of the Center was built in 2008 and serves as its primary facility for children ages 6 weeks through 5 years.

The Allen House is where universal pre-K students are taught. The Red Building serves as both daycare and preschool. Between both buildings, CIPCC serves about 21 preschoolers annually and between 40 and 50 infants and children total. The Allen House is also where the school provides after-school care for Folsom students.

### **Registered Daycare Centers**

There are only two other registered daycare facilities in South Hero, both of which are operated out of the owners’ homes.

### **Civic Organizations**

Civic organizations are involved in children’s activities, historic preservation, agriculture, business, social services, church activities, and community events among other activities. The organizations and activities include: Boy and Girl Scouts, Masons, Eastern Star, Granny’s Attic, 4-H, churches and church activities, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Camp Hochelaga (a YWCA girls camp), South Hero Players, South Hero Recreation Committee and 4th of July Parade Committee.

The South Hero Land Trust (SHLT), one of several land trusts, is an active organization within the community with the mission of protecting the farmland, woodland, natural and recreational areas, and open spaces which help give South Hero its distinctive quality of life. According to their website, over 1,750 acres of land have been conserved in South Hero, protecting farm land, natural areas, lakeshore,

and scenic vistas of Lake Champlain and the Green Mountains<sup>5</sup>. The SHLT maintains the potential to continue to participate in town plan goals. For more information, visit [www.shlt.org](http://www.shlt.org).

### **Health and Other Services**

South Hero has diverse services, both professional and volunteer, that contribute to the well-being of its residents. They include volunteer fire and rescue squads, the Keeler Bay Health Center, a physical therapist, chiropractor, pharmacies, yoga studios, massage therapist, the Visiting Nurses Association, the Champlain Islands Parent Child Center and Champlain Islanders Developing Essential Resources, Inc. (C.I.D.E.R.), a non-profit group whose mission is “to develop and foster resources that enable the people of Grand Isle County, Vermont to live in their community with dignity.”<sup>6</sup>

Incorporated in 1993, Champlain Islanders Developing Essential Resources (C.I.D.E.R.) is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit, human service organization. C.I.D.E.R.’s mission is to develop and foster resources that enable the people of Grand Isle County (Vermont) to live in their community with dignity. C.I.D.E.R. accomplishes this by providing direct services and collaborating with other individuals and groups.

C.I.D.E.R. feels a special responsibility to elders and persons with disabilities. Efforts are directed at providing the resources and assistance that individuals would need in order to remain living independently in their own homes. Through the Vermont Agency of Transportation, C.I.D.E.R. provides wheelchair-accessible vehicles and transportation for medical appointments, senior meals, and grocery shopping.

C.I.D.E.R. operates the senior meals program (including meals-on-wheels); collects and loans special needs equipment such as walkers and wheelchairs; sponsors an end-of-life education and information program; provides exercise programs for older adults; publishes a monthly newsletter; and coordinates volunteers building wheelchair ramps and other home accessibility programs, making friendly visits and reassurance calls, providing tax and computer assistance, and a wide variety of other individualized services. C.I.D.E.R. relies heavily upon volunteers, and over 130 different individuals assist in some fashion.

### **Tourist Services and Attractions**

For visitors to the Town, there are many tourist services and attractions including: the Chamber of Commerce, museum, gift stores, marina, fishing access, nearby ferry service, quarries and fossils,

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<sup>5</sup> Conserved Properties in South Hero: Allenhom Farm, 310 acres; Buermann Hill, 33 acres; Crescent Bay Farm, 122 acres; Hackett’s Orchard, 48 acres; Islandacres Farm, 162 acres; Jackson Point Property, 63 acres; Lakeside Jerseys (formerly the Roy farm), 91 acres; Maxham Farm, 162 acres; Munson Property, 190 acres; Round Pond State Park, 125 acres; Apple Island Resort Wetland, 23 acres; East Shore Vineyards (formerly the Wells Family Farm and the Landon Farm), 170 acres; Wright Property, 76 acres; Sawyer Bay Farm, 180 acres.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.cidervt.org/> for more details about C.I.D.E.R.  
SOUTH HERO 2015 TOWN PLAN

restaurant/snack bar/delis, grocery stores, gas stations, bed & breakfast, campgrounds and historic sites.

#### ***A Notable South Hero Visitor***

*Ebenezer Allen, South Hero's first settler, lived on the south end of "South Island." To serve many of the island's first settlers who crossed the lake from Colchester Point, he ran a small inn. Ethan Allen, a cousin of Ebenezer and one of Vermont's most famous people, used to frequent Ebenezer's inn. The history books tell how Ethan died one winter night while returning home from South Hero. While the history books claim that Ethan died from "apoplexy," one local version is that Ethan, who was known to imbibe rather heavily, passed out on the way home, fell off the wagon onto the ice and froze to death.*

#### **Historic Sites**

A historic building inventory has identified 99 historic sites in South Hero. In addition, older, long time members of the community have provided additional historical information about the Town. MAP 4: Community Assets on page 74 shows the location of historic sites in the Town. APPENDIX 2: LIST OF HISTORIC SITES on page 63 contains a list of historic sites identified in the inventory, researched by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation and Town residents. The list includes houses, farms, camps, log cabins, school houses, churches, stores, inns, cemeteries, an old boat launch and steam boat landing (from the days before the bridge) and barns. Groupings of historic buildings are in the following areas: 1) Sand Bar Historic District; 2) West Kibbe Point Historic District and 3) South Hero Village Center Historic District. There are no regulations for historic buildings in the Town of South Hero. The list is included for town interest only and is not meant to imply that regulations will be in effect on these sites. In addition to these historic sites, artifacts (arrowheads, pottery, etc.) have been found indicating the presence of Algonquin and Iroquois tribes that moved around the islands.

#### ***A Historic Site in South Hero***

*There was a boat launch on South Hero that was the scene of much activity during Prohibition. Rail tracks led from the shoreline into a shed where bootlegged liquor could be unloaded. Remnants of this activity, including a stone wall and marine railway, can still be found. Today, this site is a private residence.*

### **Affordable Housing**

An important community asset is the supply of affordable housing that enables people to stay in the community and live close to their jobs and families. According to 2010 Census estimates there are 1,032 housing units in town: 552 are owner-occupied, 167 are renter-occupied, and 313 are vacant or seasonal

units. Though according to 2000 Census estimates, the total units is down slightly from 1,036, the occupied units both owner and rented are up from 531 and 132 respectively and the vacant or seasonal units are down from 373.

In 2010 the estimated median year round owner occupied house value was \$329,600 and the median gross monthly rent for year round occupancy was \$882. In 2010 the median family income for the town was \$64,663 up from \$61,198 in 2000; the median county income was \$57,436, up from \$48,878. These increases are 5.7% and 17.5% respectively.

The standard federal and State definition of affordable housing is housing that consumes no more than 30% of a household's income. Housing costs are defined as mortgage, taxes and insurance for owner occupied units and rent plus utilities for rental units. Census estimates indicate that 27.9% (154 of 552) of homeowners and 37.7% (63 of 167) of renters spend more than 30% of household income on housing costs.

A first and regionally identified need for affordable housing is housing for the elderly. Such housing could be provided through regional, non-profit housing developers, such as the Lake Champlain Housing Development Corporation, with the assistance of State and federal grants and loans.

A second and locally identified need for affordable housing is more home ownership opportunities for working families and those with lower incomes. These opportunities can be provided with the assistance of community land trusts, non-profit organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, and vocational programs at high schools.

## Goals & Objectives

1. Preserve South Hero as a peaceful, thriving rural community that prides itself on cooperation, participation, and sharing.
2. Be strong supporters of Lake Champlain cleanup efforts.
3. Make plans and regulations that enhance community assets, maintain community cohesion, look to the future, and consider the needs of landowners.
4. Improve the village environment of the village areas of South Hero and Keeler Bay.
5. Increase the involvement of community members in community affairs.
6. Support preservation of historic sites in South Hero.
7. Support necessary affordable housing.
8. Support housing and services for the elderly.
9. Support youth activities, including their involvement in town events and programs.

## Strategies

1. The following items are community opportunities which should be promoted:
  - educating the public, including children and landowners, on the importance of agriculture, natural areas, wetlands, and historic sites;
  - organizing volunteers who are interested in creating and maintaining town trails and coordinating with regional trail projects;
  - encouraging volunteers to participate in town government;
  - finding a home for cultural events, possibly using a historic site;
  - developing activities that support farmers and are attractive to tourists.
2. Support and participate in Federal, State and local efforts to improve water quality in Lake Champlain. Ensure Town Development Regulations support that effort.
3. Support the work of C.I.D.E.R. (Champlain Islanders Developing Essential Resources) and the provision of elderly housing and transportation services.
4. Support after school enrichment programs for children and participation of youth in town activities, including recreation programs, local government, and recycling.
5. Support efforts to provide affordable housing to meet the identified needs of elderly and low-income families.

## JOBS and BUSINESSES

### Employment of South Hero Residents

Based on 2010 U.S. Census figure estimates, there are 1,631 people in South Hero of which 1,013 are employed. South Hero residents are engaged in a wide range of jobs including agriculture, construction, manufacturing, retail trade, business and professional services, and health and education. Table 6 shows the industries in which South Hero residents are employed. Table 7 shows the occupations of employed South Hero residents. Unfortunately, most of these jobs are off-island.



Table 6: Industry of South Hero Employed Residents, 2010 estimates

Industry	#of Residents	Industry	#of Residents
Educational, health and social services	301	Transportation and warehousing and utilities	38
Retail Trade	126	Public Administration	34
Manufacturing	125	Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	33
Construction	95	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	23
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	80	Information	13
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services	73	Wholesale Trade	13
Other services	59		

Table 7: Occupation of South Hero Employed Residents, 2010 estimates

Occupation	# of Employed Residents
Managerial & Professional Specialty Occupations	436
Sales and Office Occupations	231
Service Occupations	200
Natural Resources, Construction and Maintenance Occupations	90
Production, Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	56

### ***Early Industry in South Hero***

*South Hero's first industry centered around the large oak and pine trees that grew on the island. During the winter months, oak for ship's planking and pine for masts and spars were cut and formed into large rafts. When the ice melted in the spring, these large rafts, with tents and shacks on them for living spaces, were floated on the lake northward with the help of predominantly southerly winds. When they reached the Richelieu River, the currents took over. It would then take most of the summer to reach Quebec City, where the timber was sold.*

## **Goals & Objectives**

1. Recognize that the biggest deterrent to jobs and businesses in South Hero is the lack of adequate water and septic capacity, and work to alleviate these barriers.
2. Actively encourage commercial and small, light industrial enterprises in and near the village areas, in suitable locations on major roads, and in small, mixed use homesteads.
3. Support farming and maintain agricultural land to keep the rural landscape of the Town and help the local economy.
4. Explore innovative ways to finance and provide town services to reduce property tax burdens.
5. Provide incentives to maintain farms and preserve agricultural land, through tax policies, regulations, and the purchase of development rights and conservation easements.
6. Administer town regulations in a fair, consistent and efficient way and monitor them for their effectiveness and enforcement.
7. Support the development of home businesses and industries that fit with the rural character of South Hero.
8. Encourage and preserve economic diversity.
9. Encourage the availability of safe and affordable child care.

## **Strategies**

1. Define village areas in the zoning regulations, encourage development there, and implement appropriate ordinances.
2. Encourage and embrace innovative new technologies for septic systems that would allow safe effluent disposal in challenging soils.

3. Support the expansion of the Fire District #4 private water district and/or setting up other water districts in concentrated areas of the Town.
4. Home businesses and industry should be encouraged, provided such operations do not interfere with the residential and agricultural character of the surrounding area.
5. Outside the designated village areas, commercial development should be limited to where there is adequate sewage disposal capability, water supply, and road access and where the development will not adversely impact gateways to the village areas or contribute to strip development.
6. Encourage the development of communication technology infrastructure to and within the community.
7. Support efforts to allow properly treated and filtered water from Lake Champlain to be used as potable water for domestic and business use.

## TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The purpose of the Town Transportation Plan is to provide guidance for the maintenance and necessary development of roads and other ways to facilitate travel that benefits the inhabitants of the Town respecting their commerce, safety, and leisure, while preserving the rural character of the Town.

The State classifies roads in the following categories:

*Rural Minor Arterials* move large volumes of traffic from one part of town to another. Off-road access is a secondary function of arterials, and curb cuts therefore are limited. A good example is U.S. Route 2 from the Sandbar to Interstate Route 89.

*Rural Major Collectors* carry traffic from local roads to arterials. Examples are Routes 2 and 314.

Rural Minor Collectors are similar to rural major collectors, except they carry less traffic volume. Examples are Station Road and South Street.

*Local Roads* provide access to property abutting the public right-of-way. Local roads are not intended for use by through traffic. Examples are Whipple Road, Sunset View Road, and all our dead end roads.

*Trails and paths* are typically for recreational use; one such follows the old railroad bed from the Cut at Allen Point north to the village of Keeler's Bay and there is a Recreation Path loop just north of Folsom School which includes exercise stations.

South Hero roads include a Federal Highway, U.S. Route 2, a State highway, Route 314 and 22.9 miles of town roads, of which approximately 12 are paved and 10 are gravel. Conversion of gravel to pavement is currently a balance between a desire to maintain a rural aesthetic and the convenience of blacktop as well as by the availability of funds and public willingness to change. New State of Vermont legislation will shortly begin imposing requirements on the Town for road maintenance designed to reduce runoff and pollution as part of the statewide effort to clean up the lake.

While our roads are shared by all users there are few sidewalks and no bike/pedestrian lanes. There is no park-and-ride in town. There is no public transportation system in town.

No private roads have been accepted as Town roads in decades. Private roads must meet the Town Road Standards as adopted by the Selectboard in order to qualify for acceptance as a Town road and it is strongly encouraged that when any new private roads are built or upgraded they meet those standards. It is especially important that these and all roads afford easy access for emergency vehicles.

### Goals & Objectives

1. Continue to maintain town roads in good condition as money and natural contingencies allow, with emphasis on the safety of all users thereof and in compliance with State regulations.

2. Continue to improve the condition and availability of scenic trails and paths throughout the Town.
3. Improve access for pedestrians to village resources and businesses.
4. Encourage ride sharing by establishing a Park-and-Ride facility in the Town.
5. Promote bicycle traffic safety by working with the State AOT and tour groups to improve road conditions, design and rider behavior.

## Strategies

1. Continue to maintain its 26 miles of roads in compliance with State regulations.
2. Continue a process of road improvements as money permits.
3. Improve Town roads in a way that will not alter the scenic quality of roads identified in the Special Island Environment Committee's inventory.
4. Promote non-motorized transportation plans for implementation, through sidewalks, trails and multi-use paths. In addition to connecting the Town's two Village Centers together, include safe non-motorized routes to school, town government, recreation facilities and neighboring towns.
5. Support regional cooperation on trails development.
6. Private roads to seasonal homes are not necessarily appropriate for year round access. When conversions of seasonal homes to year round occupancy are proposed, ensure that adequate all-season access is provided for the occupants as well as for emergency vehicles as part of the approval process for conversions.
7. Continue to participate in planning efforts related to route 7 and 78 byway designation, and consider the recommendations of the 2006 Lake Champlain Byway Corridor Management Plan<sup>7</sup>.
8. Establish a "Park-and-Ride" facility in the Town by the end of 2016.
9. Promote bicycle traffic safety by working with the State AOT and tour groups to improve road conditions, design and rider behavior.

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<sup>7</sup> A copy of this plan can be found in the Northwest Regional Planning Commission's offices.  
SOUTH HERO 2015 TOWN PLAN

## GROWTH and TOWN SERVICES

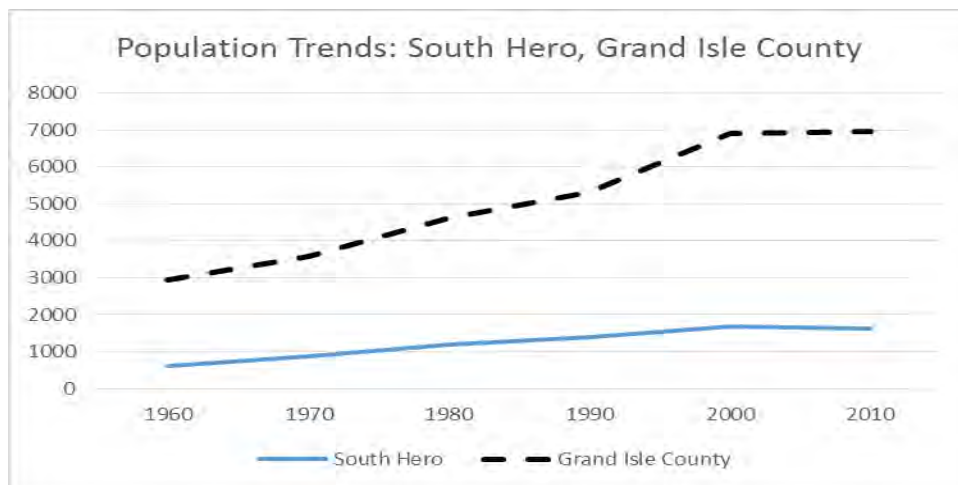
### Population Growth

South Hero population growth is mostly affected by the economic growth in nearby Chittenden County where the majority of South Hero’s labor force works and to which there is excellent road access. Higher housing costs and other expenses in the Burlington area, including added sales tax, cause people to look for more economical living in South Hero and other Grand Isle County towns. South Hero had a reasonably stable population prior to 1960. Between 1960 and 2000, the population grew 176% from 614 people to 1,696. Between 2000 and 2010 South Hero’s population decreased 3.8% to 1631 (see Table 8). It is believed that due to the State educational tax system, ACT 60/68, which transfers a significant amount of locally-raised tax money to other areas of the State, the high tax assessments of shoreland properties, the new State shoreland regulations and the stagnant economy of the Burlington metropolitan area, the South Hero population will remain stable for the foreseeable future (see Chart 3).

Table 8: Population Trends, South Hero & Grand Isle County, 1960 to 2010

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
South Hero	614	868	1188	1404	1696	1631
Grand Isle County	2927	3580	4613	5318	6901	6970

Chart 3: Population Trends: South Hero & Grand Isle County



### Growth in Housing and Commerce

Trends in growth include the following:

- Overall number of parcels over the last 10-years has remained relatively constant.

- The number of commercial properties has slightly increased in the last 10 years.
- Residential subdivisions have increased the number of residential properties.
- Property mergers, especially of non-conforming parcels results in decreasing the number of residential properties.
- There has been development of vacant or unimproved properties and a reduction of seasonal mobile home parcels without land.
- There has been a trend of conversions of seasonal residences to year-round residences.

Table 1 on page 10 shows the distribution of acreage and number of parcels based on information provided from the 2013 and 2003 Grand Lists.

### Growth in Tax Base and Cost of Services

Property Values for the 2003 Grand List were based upon a 1989 appraisal. Property Values for the 2014 Grand List were based upon the reappraisal of 2008. The values are shown in Table 9.

**Table 9: Change in the Grand List 2003 & 2014**

Year	2003	2014	% Change
Total Property Values (in thousands)	\$189,248	\$495,147	162%

Source: Town Reports

As shown in Table 10, between 1992 and 2003 the Town and school budgets increased significantly and at the same rate. Between 2003 and 2014 the Town budget increased at a slower rate than the rate between 1992 and 2003. Between 2003 and 2014 the school budget decreased mostly due to falling student enrollment and the budget limitations of ACT 60/68. Budget growth appears reasonable and well controlled.

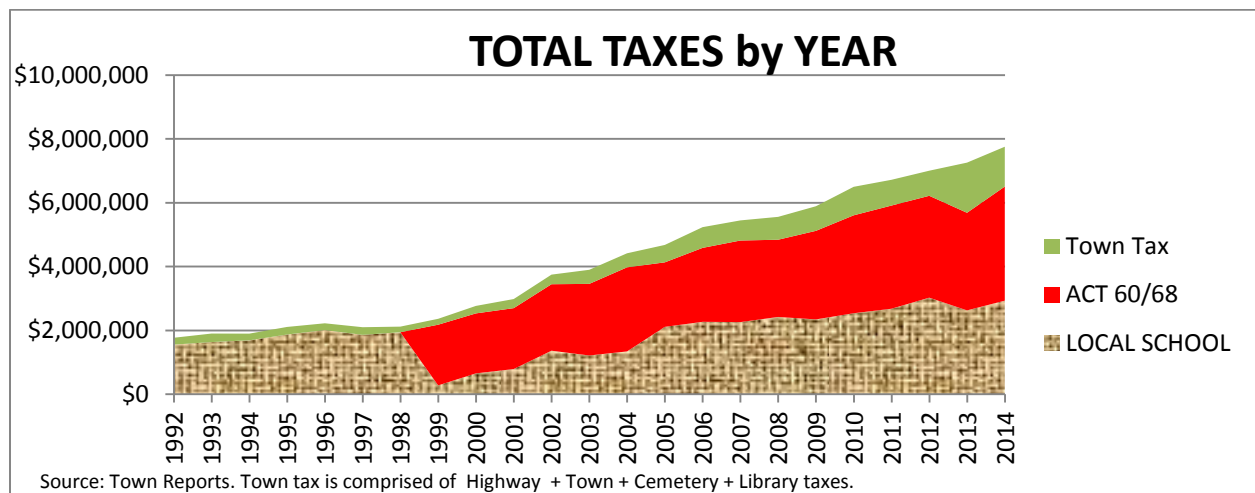
**Table 10: Change in Budget for Town and School Services; 1992, 2003 and 2014**

	1992	% of Total	2003	% of Total	Change '92-'03	2014	% of Total	Change '03-'14	Change '92-'14
Town	389,894	19.2%	853,972	19.82%	119.0%	1,305,364	28.9%	52.9%	234.8%
School	1,636,951	80.8%	3,454,198	80.18%	111.0%	3,212,116	71.1%	-7.0%	96.2%
Total	2,026,845	100%	4,308,170	100%	112.6%	4,517,480	100%	4.9%	122.9%

Source: Town Reports

Taxes tell a very different story, however. On the surface, it appears that tax rates for South Hero are pretty much in line with much of the rest of Vermont, and yet there is very little funding available for maintenance of, and/or improvements to, either the school or the Town infrastructure. Chart 4: Total Taxes by Year shows why this is true.

**Chart 4: Total Taxes by Year**



Under Vermont’s Act 60 and 68, South Hero is required to transfer a significant amount of money raised by property taxes to the State for redistribution to other towns. This means that the education tax burden for South Hero is about double what is needed to support local requirements. Many South Hero taxpayers already feel overburdened by property tax rates, making them reluctant to approve any other spending in the town. Unless action is taken to relieve the property tax burden, improvements to existing Town services and the expansion of Town services will be difficult to initiate.



## Town Services

### Highways

The Town maintains its 22.9 miles of town roads with the use of Town-owned equipment and a full time road foreman and 2 other full time employees. The Selectboard appoints a Road Commissioner who directs the work to be done by the road crew. The budget is set by the Selectboard and supported by taxes and approximately \$50,000 in State aid. There are a large number of privately owned and maintained roads in the Town. The Town provides services on Town highways only.

Portions of U.S. Route 2 and Vermont Route 314 are located in the Town, both of which provide connection to adjacent municipalities and are maintained by the State. As shown by Chart 5 below, traffic on US Route 2 increased as the Town's and area's population increased between 1990 and 2004. The volume of traffic has had a decrease as the Town's and area's population has stagnated. Table 11 compares traffic at two locations on US Route 2 and one location on VT Route 314 for the years 2008, 2010 and 2012, and shows that the traffic volumes, though fluctuating, are remaining fairly constant.

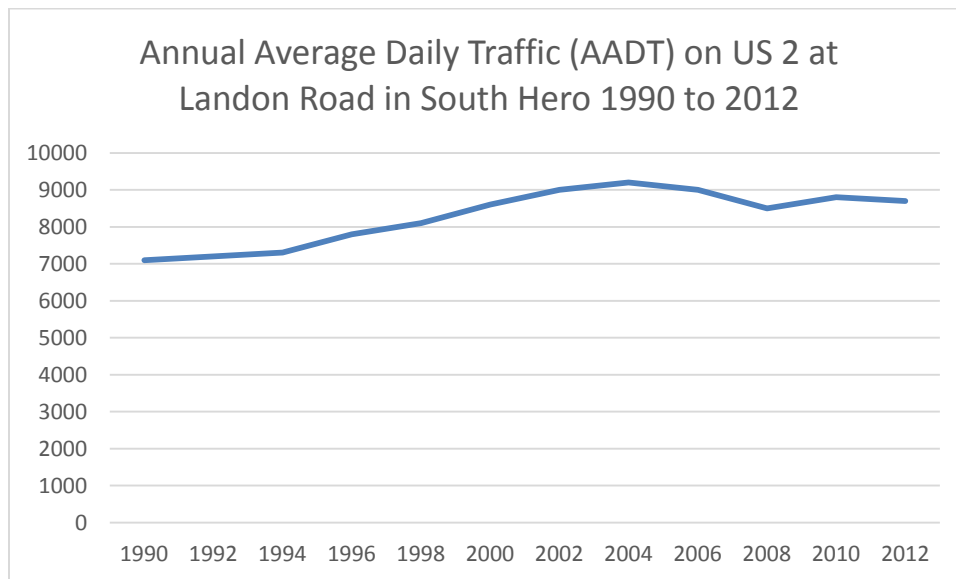


Chart 5: Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) on U.S. Route 2 at Landon Road

Table 11: AADTs on State Routes in South Hero at specific locations

Year	2008	2010	2012
US2 @ Landon Road	8500	8800	8700
US2 @ VT314	4700	4300	5000
VT314 @ G.I. Town line	3200	3200	3100

Source: VTrans 2012 (Route Log) AADTs State Highways

## Solid Waste

The Town contracts with a private company for weekly curbside pickup of trash and recycling through a “Sticker Program.” Several times a year, special trash days are coordinated with the Northwest Vermont Solid Waste Management District (NWSWD) for the disposal of large items. The Town is a member of the NWSWD with a transfer station located at 362 West Shore Road in North Hero (see [www.nswsd.org](http://www.nswsd.org)) and continues to address the problems of household hazardous waste, sludge and other long term solid waste issues through the District.

## Fire Department and Rescue Squad

Both of these organizations are staffed by well-trained and devoted volunteers. The main funding of the operations of these organizations is through public contributions. Two of the Fire Department buildings, Granny’s Attic and the small white building are owned by the Town; the red one is owned by the department. The Rescue Squad’s building and land are owned by the squad. Some purchases of equipment for the fire department and rescue are funded by tax dollars.

In the Spring of 2015, it was brought to the Selectboard’s attention that the Rescue Squad is critically understaffed and urgently needs an increase in qualified volunteers, coverage from adjacent towns, or paid staff. Similar concerns apply to the Fire Department. Neither the current Rescue Squad nor the Fire Department facilities can support paid staff at this time.

## Law Enforcement

The Town has no local police department. Vermont State Police as well as the Grand Isle County Sheriff’s Department cover all areas of law enforcement from traffic violations to major crimes. The Town currently contracts with the County Sheriff’s office for additional coverage and help with enforcement of local traffic ordinances. This coverage includes patrolling of White’s Beach during the summer months and various other extra activities. If you have an emergency, call 911.

## Schools

Students from Kindergarten through Grade 8 attend Folsom School on South Street. For high school, students can choose among area secondary schools and the tuition is paid for by the Town. Between 1994 and 2004 enrollment at Folsom School averaged 208 students. The enrollment dropped to 125 at the start of the 2008 school year. In 2013 the enrollment at Folsom was 129 students. Between 1994 and 2004, the population of high school students from South Hero averaged 99 students. This enrollment dropped to 82 in 2008-2009, and to 69 in 2013-14. As the number of pupils decreases, the cost per pupil increases because there are fewer pupils over which to spread those costs. In the past, some brief discussions exploring school mergers with other towns have occurred; however, discussions ceased because there was no support from any school or town boards. Through the Grand Isle

Supervisory Union (GISU), some sharing of resources has occurred with some overall cost savings to the respective school districts. Given that costs will continue to increase as time passes unless significant changes are made, innovative and effective ways to reduce those costs without sacrificing education quality must be developed.

### Library

The Town Library and the School Library operate together as a Community Library, and share a space located within the Folsom Educational & Community Center. The Town portion of the Library is supported by both Town taxes and the School budget. The Town Library has a small trust fund of which only the interest may be used to purchase current materials. The Library is staffed by two salaried librarians. The Libraries enjoys the support of community volunteers. In recent years security has become a vitally important issue since the two libraries share the same space and are located in the core of the building. A recent study conducted by the Grand Isle Supervisory Union revealed the importance of addressing the issue of security. Currently the Town Library Board is investigating options for relocation.

### Recreation

A volunteer Recreation Commission plans several activities which are scheduled during the summer months and supported by tax dollars. For details and up-to-date information on programs visit [www.SouthHero.net/rec](http://www.SouthHero.net/rec).

### Water Supply

There is no Town water system. There are several water districts, three of which formed a union, Fire District #4, and constructed a pumping and chlorination system to supply water to most of the residents of South Street and several adjoining streets. The districts maintain their own budgets and fund their operations with assessments separate from Town property taxes. Fire District #4 now serves 315 customers and is fast approaching capacity. Necessary upgrades and improvements will be expensive but must be done if the Town is to grow.

In addition to the current water system capacity limits, existing and future water supply needs in the Town could be impacted by problems caused by zebra mussels and other invasive species in Lake Champlain and the State's prohibition on use of lake water for water supply in subdivisions. Increased investment in the water district (Fire District #4) and coordination with the Grand Isle Consolidated Water District should continue to be considered.

### Sewage Disposal

There is no Town sewer system. All residences and businesses must comply with State regulations when installing their systems. Being a Lake community, the Town of South Hero encourages upgrading old wastewater systems before there is a failure issue. New technologies are available that can even pre-treat wastewater.

### Cemetery

There is a Town cemetery located on South Street which operates with some Town funding as well as funding from a cemetery trust fund and income from the sale of lots. There are other small cemeteries on private lands as well.

## **Other, Non-Municipal Services and Facilities**

### Public Transportation

With the exception of C.I.D.E.R., there is currently no public transportation system serving South Hero. C.I.D.E.R., an acronym for Champlain Islanders Developing Essential Resources, is a local organization dedicated to providing transportation services to seniors and people with disabilities in order to help them remain independent. Residents commuting to Burlington or St. Albans can use the Park and Ride lot in Chimney Corners and ride the CCTA Link Express which offers multiple trips daily.

### Airports

Currently there is one privately-owned airport, Allenholm Airstrip, and one identified water airstrip west of Stave Island. The nearest commercial airports are in Burlington and Plattsburgh.

## **Goals & Objectives**

1. Find new ways to finance and provide town services to offset property tax burdens.
2. Insure that new growth does not overburden town services by planning, budgeting and exploration of new ways to cover costs of growth.
3. Promote town plan objectives in the adoption of tax policies and planning for public facilities and services.
4. Promote the voluntary and participatory role of citizens in town government.
5. Promote the production of renewable energy resources, such as wind, solar and/or hydroelectric, by including appropriate provisions in zoning regulations.

## Strategies

1. Continue to support innovative solutions for safe sewage disposal for homes and businesses with waste water problems.
2. Support efforts for education funding reform to address the property tax burdens imposed by Acts 60 and 68.
3. Support the expansion and upgrade of the Fire District #4 private water district and/or setting up other water districts in concentrated areas of the Town.
4. The Selectboard should continue to explore ways to save on supplies and equipment through collective buying with other towns
5. Traffic control on U.S. Route 2 should be considered and be a joint effort of Town, County and State.
6. The Town should develop a capital budget and program that will identify town and school capital needs for a six year period and seek to minimize tax burdens on residents in any one year. The budget and program would contain a time frame for meeting needs and a method of financing the improvement.
7. Develop fees for town services that are based on real costs of providing services.
8. Cooperate with other towns in the region to save costs in Town personnel, equipment and services and to ensure compatible development and natural resource planning.
9. Encourage water conservation and the use of water conservation devices.
10. Explore ways to increase the tax base without adding significant burdens on Town services. Among the ways to do this are to encourage light business growth in central locations, the use of vacant private and Town buildings for new commercial enterprises, and home-based businesses.
11. Address the staffing issues posed by the Rescue Squad and the Fire Department.
12. Investigate whether a central location for growth would help with the efficient and safe delivery of Town services.
13. Encourage public/private partnerships to improve Town services whenever possible.
14. It is not a policy of the Town to provide public facilities and services to the outer islands.

## ENERGY and TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Town of South Hero's geography limits its ability to produce power from traditional methods as well as provide telecommunications infrastructure. The Town is not involved in providing electrical service, gas service or other fuel supplies for its residents. Vermont Electric Coop, Inc. (VEC) provides the electrical service to the Town and to one of the outer islands - Providence Island. Other outer islands use generators or do without electricity. Historically, windmills have provided electricity at summer camps and at farms. New solar farms and small wind-turbine power are compatible with open farmland that makes up the town lands and can provide peak power requirements during times of historically high use, thereby putting the power source near to the demand. The historical settlement patterns, rural character, and somewhat hilly terrain have made the efficient installation of telecommunications infrastructure challenging. As South Hero looks to the future, energy and telecommunications are increasingly important resources that must be considered in comprehensive land use planning.

### Energy

#### Energy Utilities

The Town of South Hero's energy history and outlook is very much tied to that of the State of Vermont. In 2012 the State of Vermont received one third of its power from Hydro Quebec, one third of its power from Vermont Yankee, one sixth of its power from local power generation such as dams, one twelfth from Vermont renewables and one twelfth from other market sources. With the recent closing of Vermont Yankee, the power supply has been replaced through the northeastern grid including the nuclear power facility at Seabrook, NH. These sources dictate pricing throughout the state with little variation. South Hero is served by Vermont Electric Cooperative (VEC) with 32,000 customers.

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau's 2009 Census*

As of October, 2014, VEC's power comes from the following sources (courtesy VEC, from their website):

<b>Generation type:</b>	<b>MWH</b>	<b>% of Portfolio</b>
Large hydro	189,198	39.6%
Small hydro	10,661	2.2%
Farm Methane / Solar / Small Wind	8,238	1.7%
Large Wind	73,044	15.3%
Natural Gas or Oil	182,829	38.2%
Wood	14,250	3.0%

Residential rates include a monthly charge of \$17.22 plus \$.08727 per kWh for the first 100 kWh and \$.1762 per kWh thereafter. A time-of-day rate is available, with on-peak rates being \$.19789 per kWh and off-peak rates being \$.14272 per kWh.

#### The Grid

Power is brought into South Hero via a single transmission corridor through the islands. Recently several residential scale wind turbines and solar panels have been installed by individual property owners to serve residential or agricultural needs on-site. Some of these facilities feed back into the grid, however, do not at this time significantly contribute to the Town's overall need. VEC is seeking to build a 2 Megawatt solar farm just east of South Street.

### **Energy Sources**

A variety of other energy sources are also utilized in the community from gasoline to liquid propane to wood pellets. While an increasing number of residences are heated with biomass such as wood pellets (14% of homes in Vermont), the major home heating sources in South Hero are fuel oil/kerosene (46%) and liquid propane (35%). There are currently three gasoline service stations and several fuel distributors serving the community.

### **Future Energy Prices**

Recently, Vermont renewed its contract with Hydro Quebec that expires in 2016. Under this new contract Vermont will have 218 MW of capacity. According to the State's Comprehensive Energy plan, while a gap between contract supply and expected demand still exists, there is still excess supply in the regional market and no adverse conditions are expected for power users.

At this time, the transportation sector accounts for over 33% of Vermont's overall energy use according to the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan published by the Vermont Department of Public Service. The transportation sector continues to be Vermont's fastest growing end-use energy sector, however recent trends in South Hero show positive reductions in average time to work and carpooling that will hopefully help to defray this trend locally long-term. While power reliability has been an issue of late in northern Vermont with transmission line projects occurring in southern Chittenden County to serve growth in peak loading as well as required redundancies, VEC has no plans to substantially upgrade transmission lines in South Hero. However, there is a 2 megawatt solar farm planned for the community. Other sources of energy continue to diversify; bio-diesel is now available within northwest Vermont. It is likely that gasoline will continue to be in high demand with higher pricing during the course of this plan, albeit with some recent positive alternatives such as the mass production of electric hybrid vehicles. Small scale solar and wind turbines within South Hero will continue to be viable. Alternative and renewable energy sources will continue to grow in importance as traditional energy sources become more limited and more expensive. To this end, the South Hero Zoning Regulations should continue to encourage the use of solar collectors and small wind turbines as well as other alternative energy sources such as geothermal. South Hero has availability of wood and biomass energy sources.

### **Energy Conservation**

The Town encourages energy conservation. By developing primarily in a village pattern in the future and by supporting public trails, the Town hopes to reduce auto trips. Village development and clustering of houses in rural areas could economize on the lengths of roads and utilities and minimize wasteful consumption of land. Establishment of a "Park-and-Ride" facility could contribute to a reduction in automobile traffic. The Town may investigate hill top sites for future water supply storage. These storage sites would enable gravity flow and savings in electricity for pumping water to homes and businesses. Energy conservation efforts can help offset increasing pricing and usage. Energy conservation efforts are also seen as environmentally friendly as increasing concerns about global warming have sparked dialogues about reducing carbon dioxide emissions. Land use planning can

generate sustainable development patterns that are inherently efficient. Most new construction in South Hero is required to meet or exceed the Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards (RBES) through the use of insulation, heating systems, and weatherproof windows and doors. Current building codes provide basic energy efficiency requirements for buildings; however, technology advancements have generated higher standards such as zero energy construction standards in which buildings generate as much energy as they consume. Green construction and LEED Construction (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards promote the use of natural, recycled, and durable building materials as well as energy efficiency. These efficiency standards are also applied to landscaping, advocating for native plantings that are low maintenance. As energy prices continue to escalate, higher levels of energy efficiency will become increasingly advantageous in order to maintain affordability.

## Telecommunications

Telecommunications facilities in South Hero include FairPoint phone lines, FairPoint Digital Subscriber Loop (DSL), Comcast Cable TV and internet, satellite television and radio, various cellular phone service antennas, wireless Internet providers such as HughesNet and GlobalNet, and shortwave radio frequencies that are operated by amateur operators and emergency services. As with energy pricing, South Hero is subject to larger market forces in the pricing of telecommunications services and suffers from a lack of sufficient mass to create a competitive market for such services.

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau's 2009 Census*

### Improving Telecom Services

As telecommunications continue to become a vital part of everyday functions both at home and at work, pressures to increase the speed, reliability, and affordability of these networks will continue to escalate. Northwest Vermont is currently served by one internet transmission line originating to the south. While there is discussion of bringing a second transmission line to Vermont via the Albany, New York area for redundancy requirements, it is unlikely to occur in the near term. On a local level, there are several isolated pockets of South Hero that are currently not served by high speed internet or cellular service. The Town has become increasingly involved in advocating for service for the entire community through services such as Wireless Broadband. The Town should continue to support improvements to the communication infrastructure so that all residents, government services, businesses, and the like can take advantage of existing and developing technologies. In several more metropolitan areas, all-in-one lines have become prevalent with internet, phone, and television provided through one provider such as a phone or cable TV service. Bundled services are currently available to FairPoint and Comcast customers in South Hero. The Town should explore partnerships, both public and private, to expand wired and wireless broadband delivery options for economic development, security, and educational purposes. Currently the State of Vermont is working on a broadband initiative, Connect Vermont, to increase accessibility to broadband and mobile phone service throughout Vermont as well. As cellular and microwave broadcasting devices become smaller it has become more feasible to site these facilities with greater frequency. Due to the existing business in South Hero, cutting edge telecommunications should continue to be a priority for the community. Reliable high speed Internet access is a priority for South Hero to be an active participant in the emerging global creative economy. Verizon and AT&T, telecommunications providers of wireless phone service, have steadily been increasing services within South Hero. Future growth should be coordinated with telecommunications providers to ensure that areas of expansion are adequately served.



## Goals & Objectives

1. Ensure an adequate supply of energy throughout the Town to support long-term sustained economic vitality. Renewable energy is expected to play an increasing role in reducing dependence on fossil fuels.
2. Ensure a reliable, fast, and efficient telecommunications system throughout the Town.
3. Use conservation measures and better building practices to reduce energy use.

## Strategies

1. Promote sustainable development patterns that minimize energy use through the promotion of alternative multi-modal transportation options.
2. Encourage efficient building design, operation and maintenance practices as well as sustainable landscaping for new development.
3. Adopt a comprehensive energy plan that addresses energy conservation in the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Town's facilities and equipment. The Town should be a leader in demonstrating energy conservation with the community.
4. Partner with energy conservation organizations and programs such as I.C.E (Islanders Caring for the Environment) the 10% Challenge, LEED, Efficiency Vermont, Champlain Valley Weatherization Service, and Shareheat to ensure the continued availability of adequate, safe, and affordable energy resources for the community.
5. Continue to encourage the development of renewable energy resources in South Hero such as wind turbines, solar panels, biomass fuels, methane and geothermal.
6. Utility infrastructure should be upgraded and expanded as necessary; however, care should be taken to appropriately site and screen this infrastructure. New or relocated electric cables, communication cables, transmission lines, switches and similar equipment should be located underground and so as not to interfere with or impair South Hero's development plans.
7. Encourage a variety of telecommunications infrastructure. To this end, the Town should encourage solutions that minimize possible conflicts that might arise from these varied sources. Emergency broadcasting capabilities should be preserved first and foremost.
8. Encourage comprehensive, fast, and reliable telecommunications network for the community. To this end, partnering with public and/or private companies may be appropriate.
9. Continue to promote co-location of telecommunication facilities and appropriate siting and screening of these facilities from larger towers to smaller residential dishes.
10. Coordinate future growth with telecommunications providers to ensure that areas of expansion are adequately served.

11. Take the initiative to interact and collaborate regionally for improved critical infrastructure to ensure that adequate, safe, and affordable energy systems and services are available to all residents and businesses and encourage the efficient use of energy.

## FLOOD RESILIENCE PLAN

The Town of South Hero is in the unique position of being on an island, surrounded by the waters of Lake Champlain. The land is fairly flat, and there are few streams of any significance on the island. The result is that the island typically does not face catastrophic inundation resulting from single major storm events such as hurricanes. The flooding that does occur tends to be from the rising waters of Lake Champlain. Such flooding tends to start slowly and last for an extended amount of time. Flooding can pose major transportation issues, property damage, and environmental damage to Lake Champlain.

South Hero's Land Development Regulations includes regulations specific to development in the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), or 100-year floodplain, as delineated by FEMA on the Town's Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). It is important to note that the existing FIRMs are dated as effective on June 15, 1978 and the Flood Insurance Study was published in June 3, 1988. The FIRM was digitized by the Northwest Regional Planning commission in 1999 to assist in planning efforts and is used to determine approximate locations. The digital version is not used for regulatory rulings.

As noted in the "The Special Environment of the Islands" chapter, the 100-year flood plain includes several tributaries to Lake Champlain, the "Crick", and several wetlands (See Flood Insurance Rate Maps for Town of South Hero in Town Clerk's Office for official descriptions.) MAP 5: Critical Areas on page 75 also depicts the 100-year flood zones.

All adopted flood hazard regulations meet or exceed minimum requirements set by the National Flood Insurance Program minimum. Adoption of flood hazard regulations and the FIRM allows the Town to be a member of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and enables all residents of South Hero to purchase flood insurance. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources has not provided South Hero Fluvial Erosion Hazard Area or River Corridors maps at this time.

The primary flood threat facing the Town is posed by Lake Champlain. There have been a total of 4 floods in South Hero over the last 30 years that have exceeded the USGS Major Flood Stage elevation (101.5 feet Above Sea Level) on Lake Champlain. The Lake has exceeded 100 feet in elevation approximately 12 times during that same time frame (see Chart 7 on page 52). The most recent large flooding event was the Flood of 2011. During that flood Lake Champlain's waters reached a height of 103.27 feet above sea level (ASL) as measured at the USGS gage at the Echo Center in Burlington. Flooding was exacerbated by waves caused by high winds.

Flood risk on Lake Champlain in South Hero is greatest from mid March to early June, with the highest risk during early May as melting snow from the mountains flows into the Lake and raises the water level. Abnormally high rainfall during this time frame increases the likelihood of flooding.

It is important to note that although the gauge measuring the elevation on Lake Champlain has been located at the Echo Center since December of 2004, its location and instrumentation has varied over the years, accounting for slight differences in reported water levels. Reported levels are also affected by

wind conditions on the Lake. Chart 6 shows the Lake’s high, low, and mean water level for the 105 years between 1907 and 2011<sup>8</sup>:

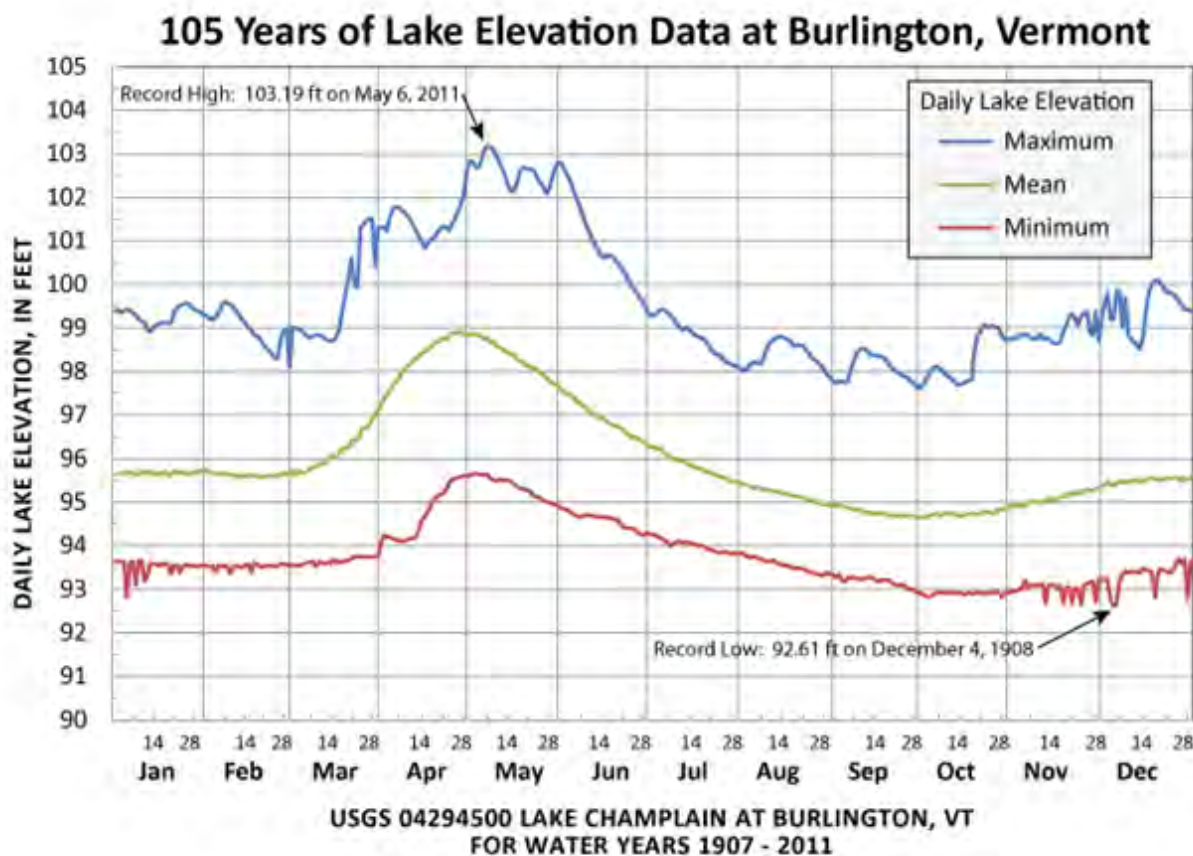


Chart 6: 105-Year Lake Water Elevation Data

There are four flood stages defined by USGS for Lake Champlain. These are:

- Action Stage, at 99.9 feet Above Sea Level (ASL),
- Flood Stage, at 100.0 feet ASL,
- Moderate Flood Stage, at 101 feet ASL, and
- Major Flood Stage, at 101.5 feet ASL.

Major Flood Stage is infrequent but devastating when it occurs. It has occurred 4 times over the last 30 years (see Chart 7: Lake Champlain Water Level, 1985-2014 on page 52, courtesy of USGS). The FEMA 100-year flood elevation of 102 feet has been exceeded only once, that being in 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Chart courtesy of USGS at [http://vt.water.usgs.gov/echo\\_gage/images/lakelev\\_minmax.gif](http://vt.water.usgs.gov/echo_gage/images/lakelev_minmax.gif)  
SOUTH HERO 2015 TOWN PLAN

### USGS 04294500 LAKE CHAMPLAIN AT BURLINGTON, VT

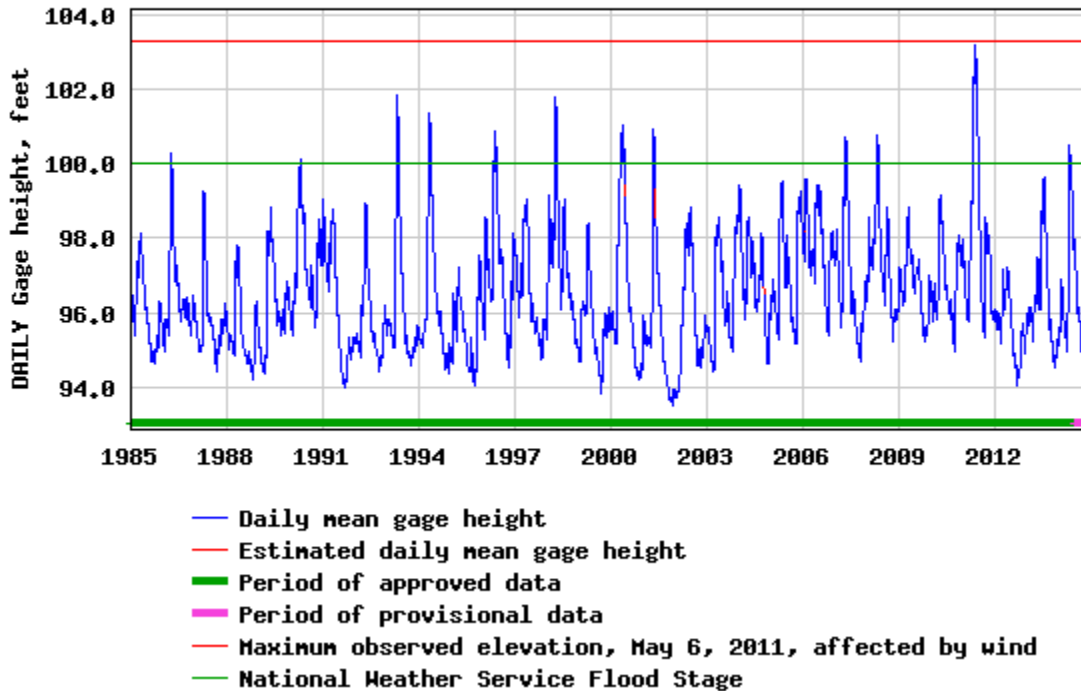


Chart 7: Lake Champlain Water Level, 1985-2014

In comparison, Chart 8: Lake Champlain Water Level, 1955 - 1985 on page 53 (courtesy of USGS) shows that the years from 1955 to 1985 were less severe than the 30 years between 1985 and 2014, recording just 2 instances of Major Flood Stage. This evidence suggests that Lake Champlain flooding is becoming more severe over time. Supporting this conclusion is the following quotation from Climate Change and Public Safety<sup>9</sup>, a paper published in 2011 as part of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources' Climate Change Adaptation White Paper Series:

The US Global Change Research Program's *The New England Regional Assessment of the Potential Consequences of Climate Variability and Change*, published in 2006, reports that New England is expected to experience increases in periodic flooding associated with an increase in regional precipitation of as much as 30%. More sudden, violent rainstorms in the summer and faster melting of snowpack in the spring both increase the likelihood of flood events, when the rain falls too quickly or the ground is too cold to absorb the precipitation.

<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.anr.state.vt.us/anr/climatechange/Pubs/VTCCAdaptPublicSafety.pdf>  
SOUTH HERO 2015 TOWN PLAN

### USGS 04294500 LAKE CHAMPLAIN AT BURLINGTON, VT

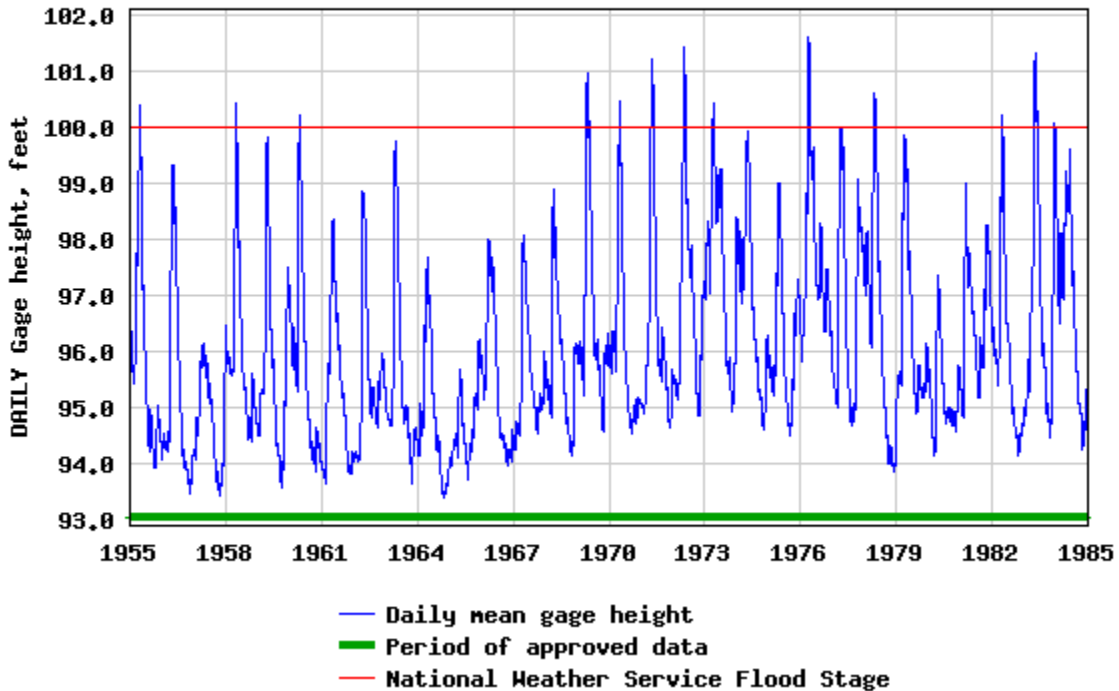


Chart 8: Lake Champlain Water Level, 1955 - 1985

Most of the land area with high flood risk on Lake Champlain is in private ownership. This has led to issues with septic systems and unsecured personal property such as propane tanks. More attention should be paid by the Town to ensure that lakeshore property owners located within or near the Special Flood Hazard Area take proper precautions against flooding. Such precautions should include securing propane or other fuel tanks in compliance with the NFIP, as well as securing any loose personal property that might get washed into the Lake during a flood. Town regulations should be updated to require that all propane and other fuel tanks be securely anchored to the ground. Further investigation needs to be done regarding ways to improve septic systems to be more tolerant of flooding in cooperation with the State Agency of Natural Resources.

Parts of South Hero, such as the south end of Keeler Bay, Wally’s Point, and parts of West Shore Road, Hochelaga Road, and U.S. Route 2 near Milton are and will continue to be the parts of South Hero most at risk for flooding from Lake Champlain. Hochelaga Road and West Shore Road are Town roads and Route 2 is a U.S. highway. These roads may need to be elevated in places at some time in the future to minimize flood damage. During the 2011 flood, access to South Hero across the causeway from Milton on U.S. Route 2 was reduced to one lane due to flooding through the wildlife preserve at the State Park. A more severe flood could pose serious access problems for residents of South Hero.

Flooding on U.S. Route 2 is of particular concern because there are only three means of vehicular access to the Town of South Hero from the mainland of Vermont or New York: from the north through North

Hero, from the west via the Grand Isle Ferry from Cumberland Head, New York, or from the southeast via U.S. Route 2 through the wildlife preserve and Sandbar State Park in Milton.

The path through North Hero runs diagonally across North Hero Island from the Alburgh-North Hero Bridge to the North Hero-Grand Isle drawbridge. This route could easily be compromised due to flooding.

The Grand Isle Ferry is owned and operated by the Lake Champlain Transportation Company. It operates 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, year-round between Cumberland Head, New York, and Grand Isle, Vermont. The ferry is one of two critical components of a major transportation corridor that runs through South Hero, linking Vermont and New York for commercial trucking and private traffic.

As mentioned, the most critical land connection threatened by flooding is U.S. Route 2 which connects South Hero to Milton via the causeway. Known as “The Gateway to the Islands,” this is the major link from the Vermont mainland to the Champlain Islands. In addition to providing a connection to the Grand Isle Ferry, this is the principal way into and out of the Islands for local residents. Any loss of this route, either short term or long term, would be catastrophic. The Town should bring this to the attention of the State and Federal authorities.

Lake Champlain flows north into Canada, via the Richeleau River before proceeding to the St. Lawrence River in Montreal before eventually flowing to the Atlantic Ocean. That means that Canada, which is north of Vermont, is actually “downstream” when referring to Lake Champlain’s flow. Unfortunately, the Richeleau River is narrow and obstructed, as described by the Lake Champlain Committee (<http://www.lakechamplaincommittee.org/learn/e-news-bulletins/archive/lake-flooding-whats-it-mean/>):

Discharge from Lake Champlain is controlled by a bedrock sill near St. Jean Quebec. Fryers Dam, the first dam one encounters after leaving Lake Champlain, is downstream of this sill. Changes in the Chambly canal system in the early 1970’s increase lake levels up to 0.5’ during high water events. Tests by Parks Canada suggest that opening the Canal by-pass during high water could reduce lake levels.

South Hero encourages further efforts to find a way to increase the flows out of Lake Champlain via the Richeleau River during periods of high water levels. However, the Town recognizes that although it sounds like a great idea to reduce flood damage by making it easier for water to flow north from Lake Champlain, there may be some negative consequences. Such actions might help lower Lake Champlain’s water level in Vermont a bit faster, but there may be increased flood risk along the rivers in Canada.

## Goals & Objectives

1. Encourage flood emergency preparedness and response planning in South Hero.
2. Encourage the protection and restoration of floodplains, wetlands and upland forested areas that attenuate and moderate flooding and fluvial erosion.

## Strategies

1. Continue to be a member of the National Flood Insurance Program. The Planning Commission and Zoning Administrator shall ensure that the Land Development Regulations meet all NFIP minimum requirements. The Planning Commission shall ensure that the Land Development Regulations continue to protect floodplains, prevent damage to property, and mitigate risk to human lives.
2. The Planning Commission, Selectboard, and Town emergency services personnel shall work with State and Federal agencies to ensure that connection to mainland Vermont via U.S. Route 2 is maintained during a flood event.
3. The Planning Commission and Selectboard shall draft and adopt a Hazard Mitigation Plan for South Hero that addresses mitigating risks posed by flooding and other disasters.
4. The Selectboard shall annually adopt a Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP).
5. The Planning Commission and Zoning Administrator should work with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources to investigate future adoption of River Corridor or Fluvial Erosion maps and regulations.



## **VISION FOR THE FUTURE of SOUTH HERO**

South Hero is a beautiful, peaceful, thriving rural island town on Lake Champlain. This community prides itself on cooperation, participation, and sharing.

### **Land Use and Special Environment**

South Hero is a town with a balance of broad open spaces, woodlands, and buildings offering magnificent views of the land, lake and mountains. Diverse farm operations, including dairies, orchards, fish farms, vegetable farms, and nurseries, contribute to these open spaces while at the same time providing jobs and offering locally grown products to residents and visitors. Houses are clustered in village areas, along the shoreline, or integrated carefully into the landscape that maintains the rural environment. While there is a strong seasonal resident community, some conversions of seasonal homes to year round use occur, but only when safe means of year round access, water supply and sewage disposal are provided. Revitalized historic village areas provide compact centers for shops, services, and homes, as well as places for the community to gather for social and cultural events. In addition to the shops and services, home businesses, professional offices, tourist services, and small, low impact industry contribute to a healthy economy. In 2001, the community achieved a redesign of the State highway through town to slow traffic flow and to enhance environmental, scenic and historic features. However, it has not yet been possible to implement that plan. Rural roads have retained their scenic quality; they remain narrow and tree-lined, yet are safe for automobiles, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

South Hero is known throughout the region for its Town recreation facilities -- its beaches and parks, its bike paths and trails, and its public access to the lake. Innovative agreements between the Town and landowners have enabled public trail access. The Town takes a responsible role towards protecting Lake Champlain water quality. Air, surface water and groundwater are clean in South Hero as a result of community efforts at providing alternatives to individual auto use, finding creative solutions to sewage disposal problems and runoff into the lake, and preservation of wetlands.

MAP 7: Current Zoning on page 77 reflects the current zoning districts. The South Hero Planning Commission is considering the addition of village zoning districts encompassing the South Hero and Keeler Bay village areas. The extents of these potential districts are shown on MAP 8: Proposed Land Use on page 78.

### **Building Guidelines**

The Planning Commission intends to explore developing Form-based code guidelines for the Village District(s) in the South Hero Development Regulations. The intent of this code would be to develop a language for the physical character of the Village District along the primary travel corridors of U.S. Route 2, South Street, Vermont Route 314 and other areas of the Town as appropriate. The Form-based code guidelines would encourage residential, lodging, office and retail uses for these primary thoroughfares as well as the surrounding community. These guidelines would greatly reduce the time and effort required to obtain building permits for commercial use by allowing the Zoning Administrator to approve applications without the need for Conditional Use and Site Plan Reviews by the Zoning Board of Adjustment and the Planning Commission. Such guidelines would create specific requirements for one and two-story buildings to have the appropriate parameters for height, frontage type and build-to lines

for the development of properties along primary travel corridors, with the goal of providing pedestrian friendly entrances, walkable downtowns, off-street access to buildings along with parking, landscaping and lighting direction, all of which provide the “Village” feel that we are seeking to achieve for the Town of South Hero.

In order to move forward in implementing the vision for these village areas, South Hero applied for and received Village Center Designation in May 2014 for both the South Hero and Keeler Bay village areas. The designated areas are shown on Map 10: South Hero Village Center on page 80 and Map 11: Keeler Bay Village Center on page 81. The village designation program, enabled in Vermont Statute 24 VSA Chapter 76A, provides incentives and assistance to support village planning and revitalization efforts. Designation makes village center commercial property owners eligible for tax credits to support rehabilitation of historic buildings, façade improvements for buildings constructed before 1983, and improvements to comply with buildings codes. Designated village centers also get priority for State funding and are given priority consideration when locating State buildings. To date, there have been no revitalization activities commenced under this program.

## Jobs and Businesses

South Hero is a pleasant place to work - its business climate is both economically and environmentally sound. Agriculture continues to play a major role in the Town as it has in the past. Although many residents commute to the Burlington area for jobs, more and more are finding employment in the Town in home businesses, small professional offices, and light, low impact industries. This growth is due to the town’s efforts to improve its telecommunications system and methods for sewage disposal. New uses for old buildings have enabled many new businesses to be incorporated into the Town with little visual impact and with the added benefit of preserving historic structures. Tourist and recreation businesses continue to be an area of economic growth; residents run riding stables, recreation facilities, charter fishing, restaurants and year round lodging facilities.

There is evidence of community pride in the preservation of the landscape, improvements to public buildings and spaces, and the maintenance and beautification of property that not only benefits residents but attracts others to the Town. The Town welcomes new residents and visitors, inviting them to join in community activities and events and to appreciate the rural beauty and healthy environment of the Town. Services to older residents have encouraged many to continue to make their homes here. Young people are finding opportunities in the Town that enable them to settle here with their new families.

Volunteers and elected officials work together to govern the Town, provide social services, plan community activities, and make South Hero a healthy and safe place to live. Town services are provided in an efficient, safe, friendly and environmentally sound way. Decisions about future services are made in a cooperative and participatory atmosphere. The Town prides itself on the high quality of education offered to its children, the creative solutions it has found to its sewage disposal problems, its recycling program, its recreation facilities, its sound planning, and its services to elderly and youth. A new system

of fees for services enables equitable distribution of the cost of services among users, newcomers, and existing residents. The school plays an important role in community life, not only as an educational center for children, but as a center for education of adults and a link between the youth and the community at large. As a community center, it offers a gathering place for young and old alike and provides a variety of social and recreational programs. A wide range of cultural programs and events available in the nearby Burlington area are made accessible by transportation services that the Town coordinates. Although most of its services are provided locally, the Town is joining with neighboring towns to identify services and resources, such as joint purchasing, technical planning assistance, schools, solid waste management, and recreational facilities, which could be shared efficiently without sacrificing local control.

### **The SHIZAC Survey**

To develop a better understanding of the wishes and thoughts of South Hero residents regarding the Town's future, the South Hero Planning Commission established the South Hero Interim Zoning Advisory Committee (SHIZAC) in the Spring of 2013. SHIZAC's members were volunteers from the South Hero community, and their mission was to develop and conduct a town-wide survey, including both permanent residents and seasonal residents, to help the Commission understand what those wishes and thoughts were. They successfully completed that task in the Fall of 2013, tabulating the results from 304 responses received from the survey and presenting those results to the Commission and to the Selectboard.

From the SHIZAC Survey, we learned that over 86% of respondents would like to see new businesses in South Hero, would like to see them in areas designated for commercial development, and would like to have design and appearance standards for new commercial buildings. Almost 70% of the respondents would like to see commercial development concentrated along Route 2 in Village Centers and an equal number would like South Hero to have a Town Center.

The top six items respondents indicated they would favor having in a Town Center were:

- Town Office
- Community Center
- Fire Station
- Rescue Squad
- Town Library, and
- Public Park

As a Town, we have subsequently learned that although survey respondents were in favor of these items, the voters of the Town were not willing to tolerate any increase in taxes in order to pay for them. Tabulated responses from the SHIZAC survey can be found in APPENDIX 3: SHIZAC SURVEY on page 67.

## Relationship to the Surrounding Region

From transportation to land use to water quality, a community's planning effort cannot happen without involving adjacent communities within the region. The Town of South Hero is adjacent to the Towns of Grand Isle in Grand Isle County and Milton and Colchester in Chittenden County. The following is a review of the relationship between the South Hero Town Plan and the plans of adjacent communities:

### Grand Isle

The Town of Grand Isle's plan was adopted in February 2007. The Agricultural and Residential Zoning District is immediately adjacent to South Hero's Residential District. These districts have comparable permitted and conditional uses. The South Hero Plan does not conflict with the Grand Isle Town Plan.

### Colchester

The Town of Colchester's plan was adopted on April 8, 2014. Colchester is not accessible to South Hero via road, but is connected via the Island Line bike path and ferry during the summer. Residential One District and Flood Plain District are the most adjacent to South Hero. Land uses are compatible with proposed land uses in the adjacent areas of South Hero. The nearest growth center to the Town of South Hero is the Local Growth Center in the Town of Colchester at Exit 17 on Interstate 89.

### Milton

The Town of Milton adopted a new town plan on April 21, 2013. Milton identifies twenty zoning districts in their land use regulations. Two of these districts, the Agricultural/Rural Residential District and the Flood Hazard District, are located on the mainland side of U.S. Route 2 from South Hero. These Milton zoning districts include uses that are comparable to uses permitted in the Shoreline and Flood Hazard District in South Hero, the zoning districts located on the South Hero side of U.S. Route 2.

## Relationship to Regional Plans

South Hero is a member municipality of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NRPC), which provides a forum for municipalities in Franklin and Grand Isle County to act on behalf of the region. All communities, including South Hero, are entitled to equal voting representation by two locally appointed members of the governing Board of Commissioners. Each member municipality has the opportunity to participate in the NRPC Policy/Project Review Committee, Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), Brownfield Redevelopment Program, and other subcommittees.

NRPC is required to adopt a Regional Plan per Title 24, Chapter 117 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated. The Regional Plan is intended for use as a legal document, as a guide for decision makers and as an action plan to address issues of regional importance. The Regional Plan for the NRPC was adopted in October 2007. Land use planning areas in the Regional Plan encourage the conservation of valued resources and a development pattern that will maintain the character and quality of life important to this region. The South Hero Town Plan conforms to the Northwest Regional Plan.

The Chittenden County Regional Plan was adopted on June 19, 2013. The Chittenden County Regional Plan calls for the areas of Milton immediately adjacent to South Hero to remain rural and conservation

areas. This is compatible with the plan of the Town of South Hero. The emphasis on village development and protection of prime agricultural land in the South Hero Town Plan will minimize any potential conflicts with the Sandbar State Park Conservation Area

Transportation plans in Chittenden County are also important to the Town of South Hero due to the commuting patterns of South Hero residents and students and the importance of linking recreation activities throughout the Lake Champlain Basin. The emphasis of the Regional Plan on carpooling, public transportation, and completion of regional road projects could benefit South Hero residents commuting to Chittenden County for work, shopping and school. The Chittenden County Regional Plan mentions planning for the integration of bicycle path networks in several communities, including the Town of South Hero. The South Hero Town Plan supports the creation and maintenance of town trails and coordinating with regional trail projects.

The Chittenden County Regional Plan and Northwest Regional Plan both recognize the importance of Lake Champlain to the regional and State economy, scenic beauty, recreation, and public health. The goals of both Regional Plans are to protect the beauty and water quality of the Lake which is compatible with the goals of the South Hero Town Plan.

## Goals & Objectives

1. Build upon and continue to improve our relationships with neighboring towns.
2. Strive for public participation in the planning process at all levels.
3. Understand what the Town's residents want for the future "look and feel" of the Town balanced against the potential impact on taxes.

## Strategies

1. Encourage citizen participation at all levels of the planning process.
2. Collaborate with other municipalities and regional organizations to address important regional issues, such as improving water quality in Lake Champlain.
3. Consider the impact of land use decisions on adjacent municipalities.
4. Continue working with Town residents to find ways to turn their vision for the future of South Hero into reality.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: TOWN PLAN HISTORY

Planning and zoning in South Hero began on July 11, 1972 with the adoption of interim zoning. The first Town Plan was written and adopted in April, 1975 and permanent zoning bylaws were then established on July 29, 1976. In 1978 special flood damage prevention zoning measures were adopted and in 1979 were ratified by the voters at Town Meeting. Changes to the zoning bylaws followed in March 1990 creating a review of waste water systems when a zoning permit is required. The bylaws also started a more thorough review of seasonal to year-round housing unit conversions and instituted site plan review by the Planning Commission as part of the zoning process. Subdivision regulations were adopted by the voters on March 5, 1990 and the flood damage prevention regulations were updated in March 1991. In 2002, the zoning regulations were updated to include provisions for telecommunications facilities.

From June 1993 to February 1994 significant public input and dedication was realized through six sub-committees of the South Hero Town Plan Steering Committee; they included Use of Land, Special Island Environment, Community Assets, Jobs and Businesses, Growth and Town Services and Public Participation and Publicity Committees.

Early in the process a survey of residents was taken to get their views on a variety of issues. All the committees had access to the results of the survey and used these opinions to help develop their recommendations. The Jobs and Businesses Committee did their own survey of several area businesses to supplement the town survey. The Use of Land Committee talked to all of the farmers in order to arrive at their recommendations for farming and farm land. The Public Participation and Publicity Committee was responsible for writing articles for the *Islander* on the plan, the committees' work and the public workshops and for putting notices of meetings up around the Town. As a result attendance was high at the public meetings.

The 1994 plan was found to be comprehensive and was readopted in 1999. In 2004, the Town of South Hero adopted a Town Plan that included significant revisions. This update incorporated the most up-to-date statistics, including the 2000 U. S. Census data, and was revised to address current issues of concern. The process for developing the 2004 Plan was lengthy and comprehensive, spanning several editions and many years. Great care was taken to involve as many people as possible.

The 2009 Town Plan update was a minor update to ensure that the Town Plan reflected the most current statutes. Current data was included where possible, however new Census data would not be available until after the 2010 Census. The 2009 Plan update also included an update to the Proposed Land Use map, which was intended to lay the groundwork for the potential creation of Village Zoning Districts.

## APPENDIX 2: LIST OF HISTORIC SITES

This appendix contains the list of historic sites that are located on MAP 4: Community Assets on page 74.

### A. School Houses

1. South of Moquin's (second house on right from corner of West Shore Rd.)
2. Rock House, also known as Standard School
3. Kibbe Point, just past Flynn's residence (first on left)
4. Brick building just east of Billie Hazen's on Station Road
5. Julow's home on south corner of Rt. 314 and Eagle Camp Road

### B. Blacksmiths Shops

1. Owned by Joe LaRose
2. Owned by Jane Potvin

### C. Saw Mill, Barrel Making, Cider Mill and Distillery

1. Gabe Joslins - across from entrance to Sunset View Road

### D. Cemeteries

1. Next to Camp Greylock on Buermann Lane
2. In trees between Inn and Thompson (All remains moved into older section of present cemetery. Placed in original irregular pattern) Owned by Ann Harris
3. West Shore Road (north of Eagle Camp Road and turn right beyond Ann Larrow's)
4. Older section of present cemetery

### E. Stone and Brick Houses

1. Blanchard - West Shore
2. Kjelleren - Lake View Road
3. Cashen – "1817 House" - South Street
4. Phelps-Reade - Kibbe Point
5. Hazen - Station Road
6. Woody Smith - was the local tannery, then Masonic Hall

### F. Boat Launch

1. To Milton - Mainland, Sand Bar Motel
2. Phelps - Reade, Kibbe Point - steam boat landing
3. Richards Road - marine railway tracks into a shed to unload liquor and stone walls still there

### G. Masonic Hall



1. South Street after moving from tannery - the Methodists had vacated this church. It became a grades 1-4 school, then Masonic Hall.

#### H. Churches

1. Congregational - Methodist - Granny's Attic
2. Catholic - end of Keeler Bay Road on left (Roy Friend's place)
3. Congregational - built on present site (burned 1976), Masonic Hall was used as church until rebuilt

#### I. Granny's Attic – the old White Meeting House

Built in 1816 as a Protestant Church, then served as a Town Hall downstairs with Maple Lawn Academy - grades 5-8, then the High School upstairs

#### J. Railroad

1. Station across Tracy Road and Station Road
2. Beanery here. Friends Bean of Boston, Ma. Supply
3. Cannery for corn

#### K. Stores

1. Keeler Bay (owned by Robinson, burned, present one on site)
2. Juan Robinson - Red Store across from Inn (Branch's)
3. Wallace/Edson Robinson - Polly McBride residence (east of Red Store), this held the telegraph office
4. William Champagne Store - Rt 2, house directly north of current Keeler Bay store - large windows were storefront
5. Store site between Maplesed Daycare and Ed Gardner's former residence
6. Harrison Fowler Store - Station Road, currently apartments

#### L. Post Offices

1. Brick House (on Routes 2 & 314), stood on site
2. Red Store (Branch's)
3. Building on Route 2 across Sunset View Road

#### M. Camps

1. Eagle Camp - West Shore Road

#### N. Tavern

1. South Street & Route 2, now the Merchant's Bank

O. Native Americans

1. Significant artifacts of the Algonquin and Iroquois tribes throughout the islands of Grand Isle County

P. Dr. White

1. T.B. Hospital (Dr. Solymass) - small cottages for patients

Q. Quarries

1. Lessor's
2. Sand Bar

**Table 12: Alphabetical Listing of Historic Sites**

Allen House	Grimm House	Patno - Allen House
Camp Hochelaga (YMCA)	Gull Island - Cedar Island	Phelps - Allen House
Camp Idlewild	Hall - White House	Phelps - Crescent Bay Farm
Capt. John Stark Log Cabin - Grahn House	Hazen Farm	Phelps - Reed - Lavin House
Carver House	Hazen Place	Phelps Barn - Cook House
Charles Davis Place	Hazen Schoolhouse	Phelps House - Sand Bar Inn
Clark - Winch House	Hazen-Weber Place	Pillsbury Place
Commodore's Table	Hick's House	Providence Island/Caretaker's House
Conro - Buermann Estate House	Julow Barn	Providence Island/Main Lodge
Creamery - Tressler House	Kibbe - LaLumiere Farm	R. H. Allen Store/S. Hero P.O./Bushway
Curley House	Kibbe's Island - Kellogg's Island	Robinson - Baker House
Davis Place	Kinney Farm	Robinson Barn
Dewyea House	Landon - Allen House	Robinson House
Dr. Baker Place	Landon - Carleton House	Robinson Place
Dubuque Place	Landon - Dumbleton House	Roy House
Dunne Place	Landon - Fifield House	Sand Bar Historic District
Eagle Camp	Landon - Rabourn House	Sawyer's Island
Ebenezer Allen (?) - Robinson House	Larrow House	School No 2 - Larme House
Englewood Camp/Pfatteicher Cottage	Legge House	Skyland
Englewood Camp/Swartz Cottage	Lessor Place	South Hero Village Center Historic District
Fifield Cottage (gable roof)	Log Cabin - Coffin House	St. Rose of Lima Church
Fifield Cottage (hip roof)	Log Cabin/Hemingway House	Standard School - Koch House
Fish Bladder Island	Luck Place	Stave Island/Cottage
Fletcher - Tracy House	Lynwood Smith Place	Stave Island/Main Lodge
Fletcher House - 1817 House	Magill Place	Thorpe Place
Fulchino Place	Martin - Coffin House	Tourville House
Gifford Camp (Old Cabin)	McBride - Chittenden House	Varney House
Gifford Camp (Old Dining Room)	McBride - Stevens House	Wallis Mott - Peters House
Gordon - Creveling House	McGovern House	West Kibbe Point Historic District
Goulet Place	Methodist Episcopal Church - Masons Hall	Wheeler - Wells House
Grand Isle Camp - Chamberlain Cottage	Mott Farm - Apple Tree Bay Camp & Marina	White House
		Wilder Place

## APPENDIX 3: SHIZAC SURVEY

South Hero is getting ready to update its zoning regulations for commercial development. Your response to this survey will help determine how our Town could be impacted by commercial development and determine how the Town will look as a result of commercial development. Please keep this in mind as you complete this survey. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

### TOTAL RESPONSES: 298

**YES 259 NO 30** 1. Do you think there should be designated areas for commercial development? If **YES**, then where do you think these areas should be?

YES 69 NO 130 Anywhere along Rte 2  
 YES 209 NO 16 Concentrated along Rte 2 in the village centers (Island Racing to Tracy Road and Sunset View Road to Medical Offices)  
 YES 36 NO 142 Anywhere along 314  
 YES 106 NO 80 Route 314 from Eagle Camp Rd to Rte 2  
 YES 51 NO 130 South Street from Rte 2 to Landon Road  
 YES NO Other: SEE COMMENTS

**YES 257 NO 33** 2. Do you think that South Hero should have design and appearance standards for new commercial buildings?

If **YES**, which of the following do you feel should be included? Check all that apply:

200	Building style	200	Parking
84	Color of the building	72	Pitch of the roof
195	Landscaping	179	Setbacks
181	Lighting	99	Siding materials
214	Maximum number of stories	213	Signage
45	Minimum number of stories		Other:

**YES 195 NO 94** 3. Do you think South Hero should have a committee to review commercial applications for design & appearance and advise the Zoning Board of Adjustment and Planning Commission?

**YES 158 NO 124** 4. Is it important to you that new commercial businesses re-use existing buildings?

**YES 221 NO 66** 5. Do you think South Hero should set maximum size limits on new commercial buildings? If **YES**, then what should be the biggest allowable commercial building size?

Here are some examples:

100	Merchants Bank	11	Hampton Inn
25	Hannaford's	41	Shore Acres

COMMENTS \_\_\_\_\_ 12 Wal-Mart Other: \_\_\_\_SEE  
 116 McGregor's Pharmacy

**YES 212 NO 60 6.** Do you think that parking for new commercial buildings should be regulated?

If **YES**, then where should the commercial parking be located? Check all that apply:

42 Parking visible from the street 78 Parking both in front and back of the business  
 102 Parking behind the business 53 There should be a Village Parking area  
 21 Parking in front of the business Other: \_\_\_\_SEE COMMENTS\_\_

**YES 264 NO 23 7.** Would you like to see new businesses come to South Hero?

**YES 245 NO 36 8.** Should businesses in South Hero be bicycle and pedestrian friendly?

**9.** What types of businesses would you like to see in South Hero?

YES 116 NO 84 Affordable rental housing YES 170 NO 61 Pub/Tavern  
 YES 120 NO 77 Auto repair YES 249 NO 13 Restaurant  
 YES 206 NO 21 Bed & Breakfast YES 127 NO 55 Start-up business incubator  
 YES 177 NO 39 Bookstore YES 60 NO 121 Warehouse  
 YES 245 NO 11 Café/Coffee Shop YES 181 NO 39 Year-round Farmers Market  
 YES 83 NO 110 Gas station YES 168 NO 46 Year-round recreation center  
 YES 75 NO 107 Industrial park YES 168 NO 52 Micro Brewery  
 YES 123 NO 78 Laundromat YES 152 NO 56 Motel/Hotel  
 YES 153 NO 62 Light Manufacturing  
 YES 169 NO 56 Local grocery store YES Other \_\_\_\_SEE COMMENTS\_\_

**YES 209 NO 59 10.** Would you like to have a Town Center?

If **YES**, then what would you like it to include? Check all that apply:

152 Community Center 143 Rescue Squad 134 Town Library  
 149 Fire Station 118 Senior Center 167 Town Office  
 61 Ice Rink 77 Sports Center 94 Youth Center  
 119 Public Park 83 Town Gym Other: \_\_\_\_

Table 13: SHIZAC Survey Response Tabulation

SHIZAC SURVEY RESPONSES				TOTAL: 304			QUESTION:
#YES	#NO	#No Response	%YES	%NO	%No Response		
263	32	9	86.51%	10.53%	2.96%	Designated Areas for Commercial Developmnt?	
211	21	72	69.41%	6.91%	23.68%	Concentrate commercial along Route 2?	
262	34	8	86.18%	11.18%	2.63%	Design/Appearance Stds for new Comm. Bldgs?	
200	95	9	65.79%	31.25%	2.96%	Committee to Review Design & Appearance?	
226	67	11	74.34%	22.04%	3.62%	Maximum Size for New Commercial Bldgs.?	
216	61	27	71.05%	20.07%	8.88%	Regulate Parking for New Commercial Bldgs?	
269	23	12	88.49%	7.57%	3.95%	Like to See New Businesses in South Hero?	
250	37	17	82.24%	12.17%	5.59%	Business be pedestrian and bicycle friendly?	
211	63	30	69.41%	20.72%	9.87%	Like to Have a Town Center?	
What people would like to see in a Town Center:							
168			55.26%			Town Office?	
154			50.66%			Community Center?	
150			49.34%			Fire Station?	
145			47.70%			Rescue Squad?	
135			44.41%			Town Library?	
121			39.80%			Public Park?	
119			39.14%			Senior Center?	
94			30.92%			Youth Center?	
83			27.30%			Town Gym?	
77			25.33%			Sports Center?	
What types of businesses people would like to see in South Hero:							
255	13	36	83.88%	4.28%	11.84%	Restaurant	
251	11	42	82.57%	3.62%	13.82%	Café/Coffee Shop	
210	22	72	69.08%	7.24%	23.68%	Bed & Breakfast	
185	39	80	60.86%	12.83%	26.32%	Year-round Farmer's Market	
181	39	84	59.54%	12.83%	27.63%	Bookstore	
175	64	65	57.57%	21.05%	21.38%	Pub/Tavern	
170	50	84	55.92%	16.45%	27.63%	Year-round Recreation Center	
170	56	78	55.92%	18.42%	25.66%	Micro-brewery	
130	58	116	42.76%	19.08%	38.16%	Start-up Business Incubator	
121	81	102	39.80%	26.64%	33.55%	Auto Repair	
118	88	98	38.82%	28.95%	32.24%	Affordable Rental Housing	
84	114	106	27.63%	37.50%	34.87%	Gas Station	
76	112	116	25.00%	36.84%	38.16%	Industrial Park	
61	126	117	20.07%	41.45%	38.49%	Warehouse	

## APPENDIX 4: MAPS

The following maps are contained in this Appendix:

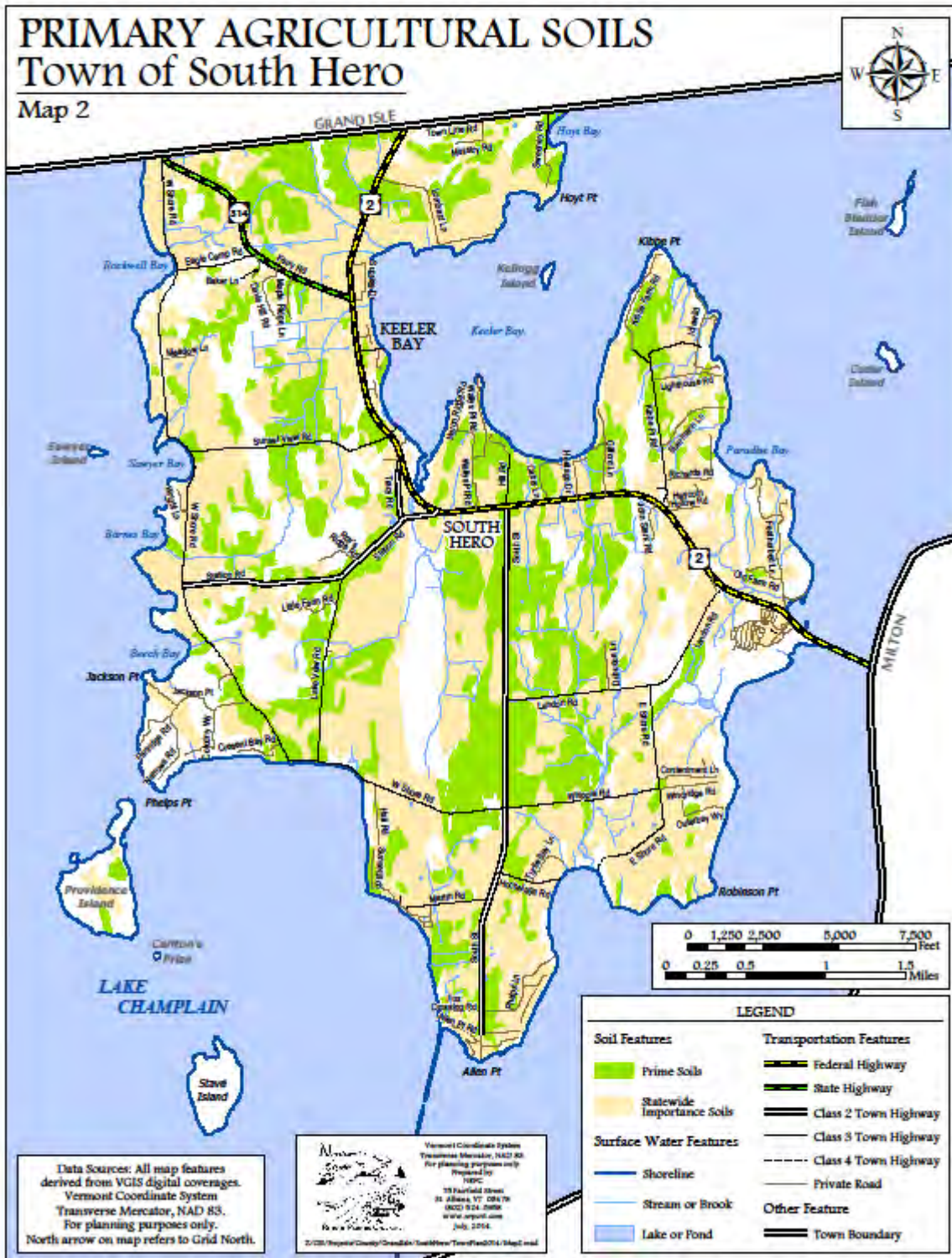
- MAP 1: Base Map
- MAP 2: Primary Agricultural Soils
- MAP 3: Land Use / Land Cover
- MAP 4: Community Assets
- MAP 5: Critical Areas
- MAP 6: Transportation System
- MAP 7: Current Zoning
- MAP 8: Proposed Land Use
- MAP 9: Facilities and Utilities
- Map 10: South Hero Village Center
- Map 11: Keeler Bay Village Center

MAP 1: Base Map

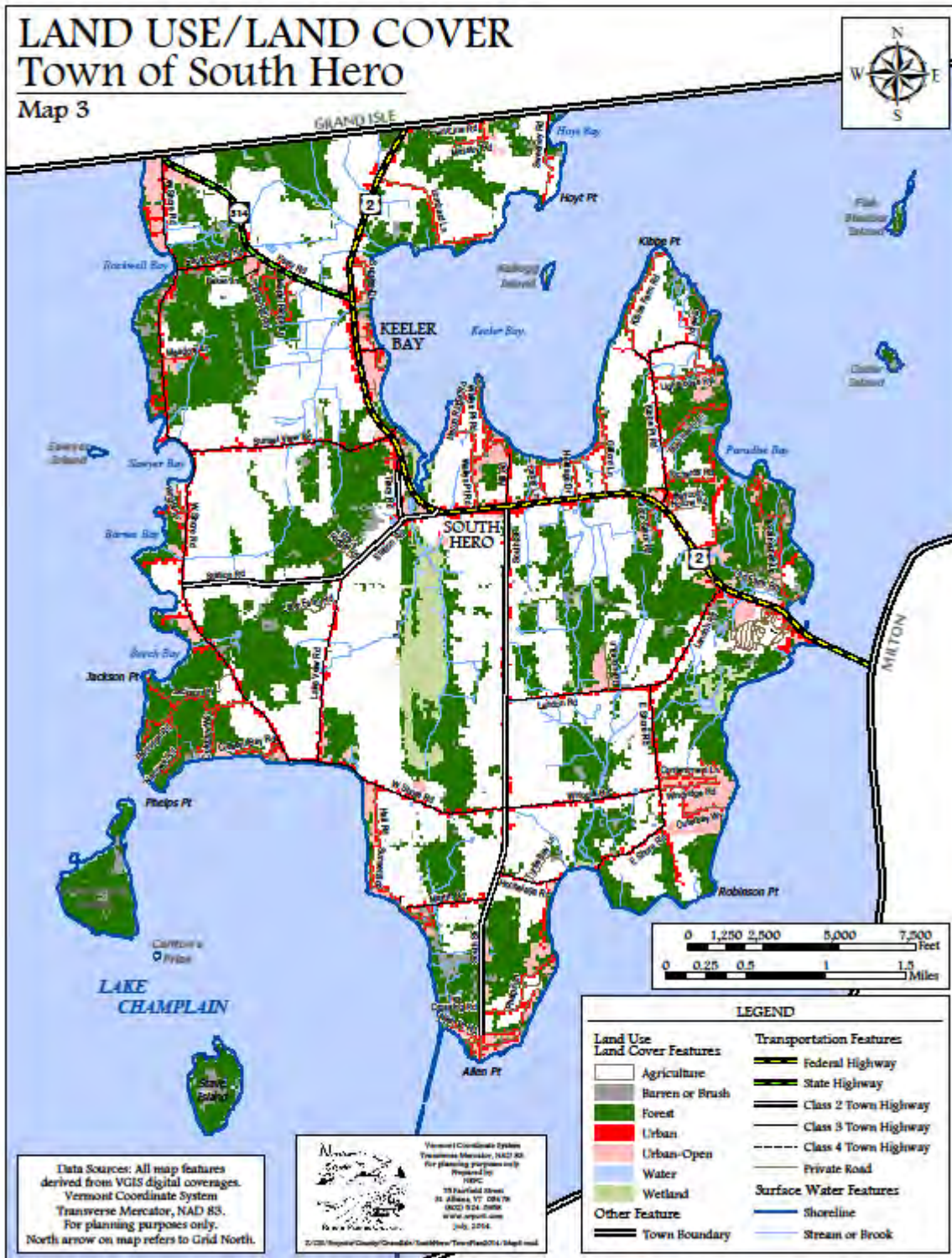




MAP 2: Primary Agricultural Soils

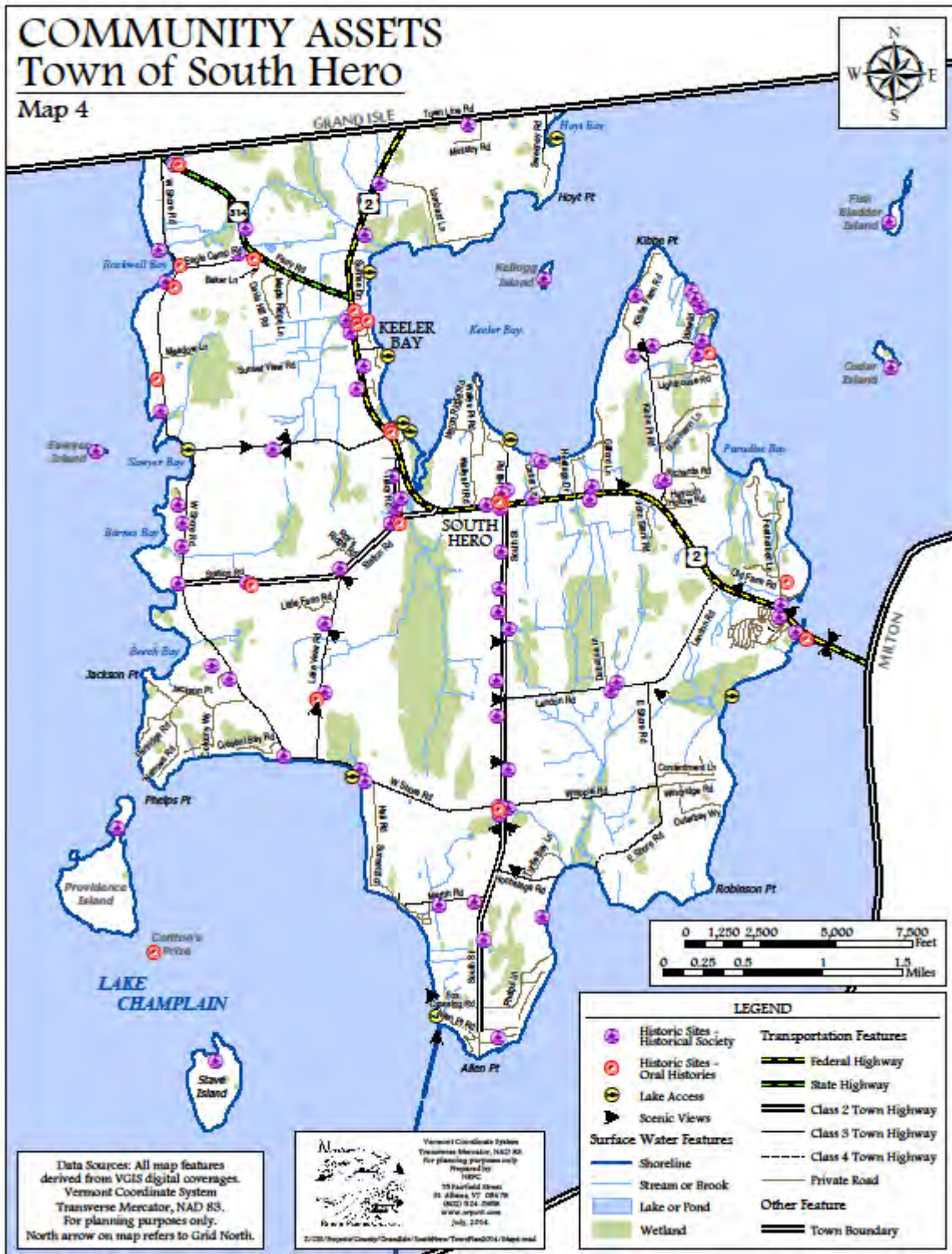


MAP 3: Land Use / Land Cover

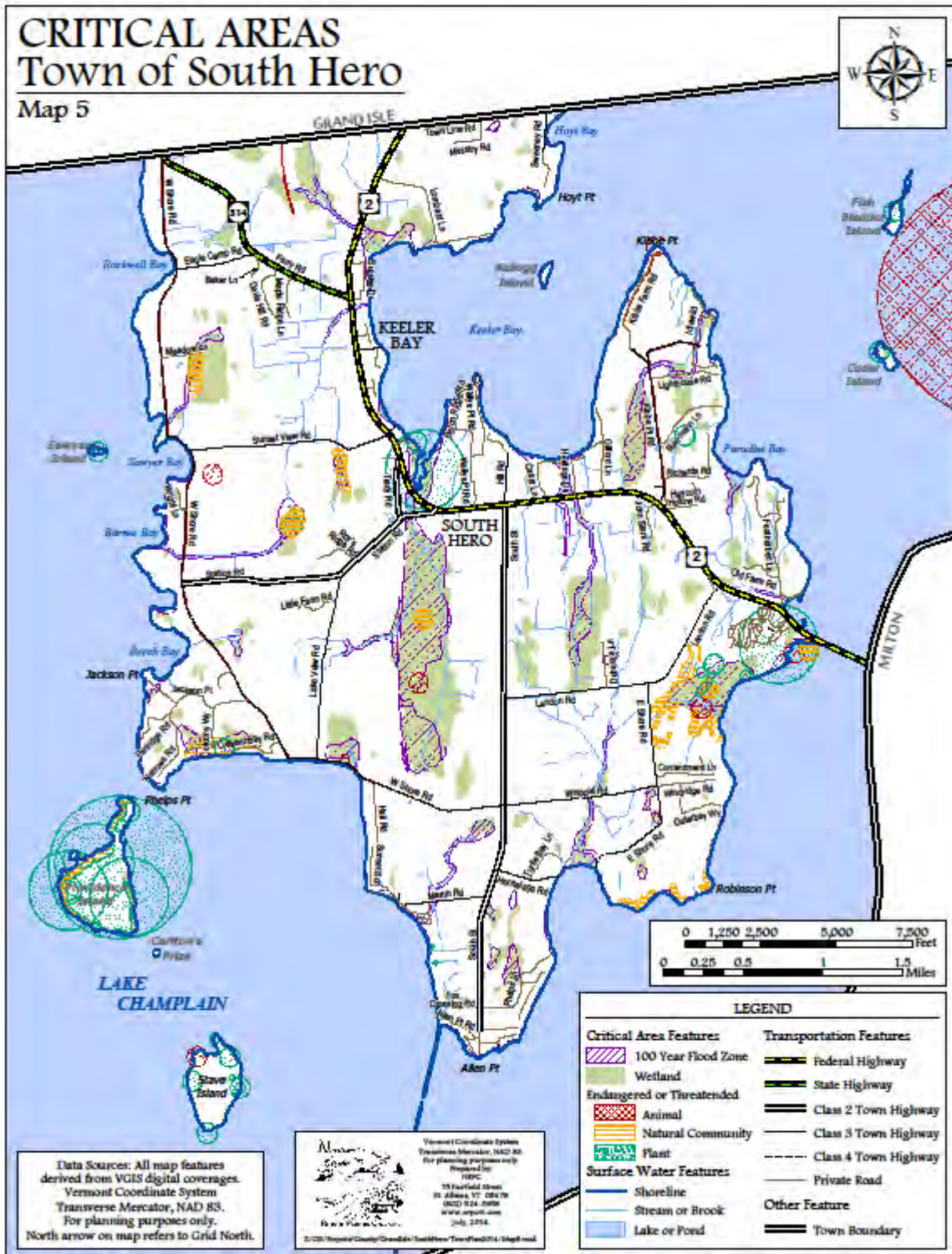




MAP 4: Community Assets



MAP 5: Critical Areas

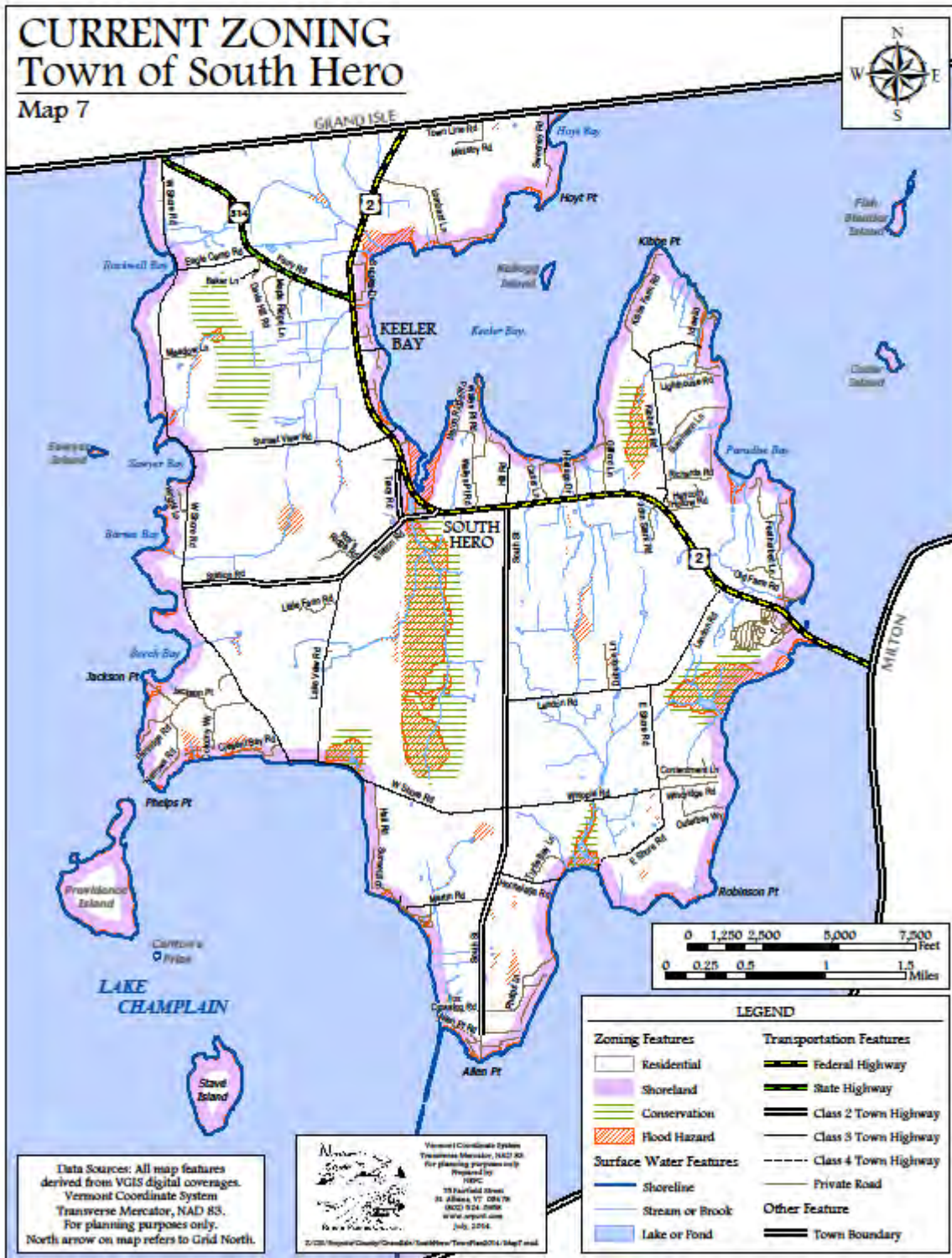




MAP 6: Transportation System

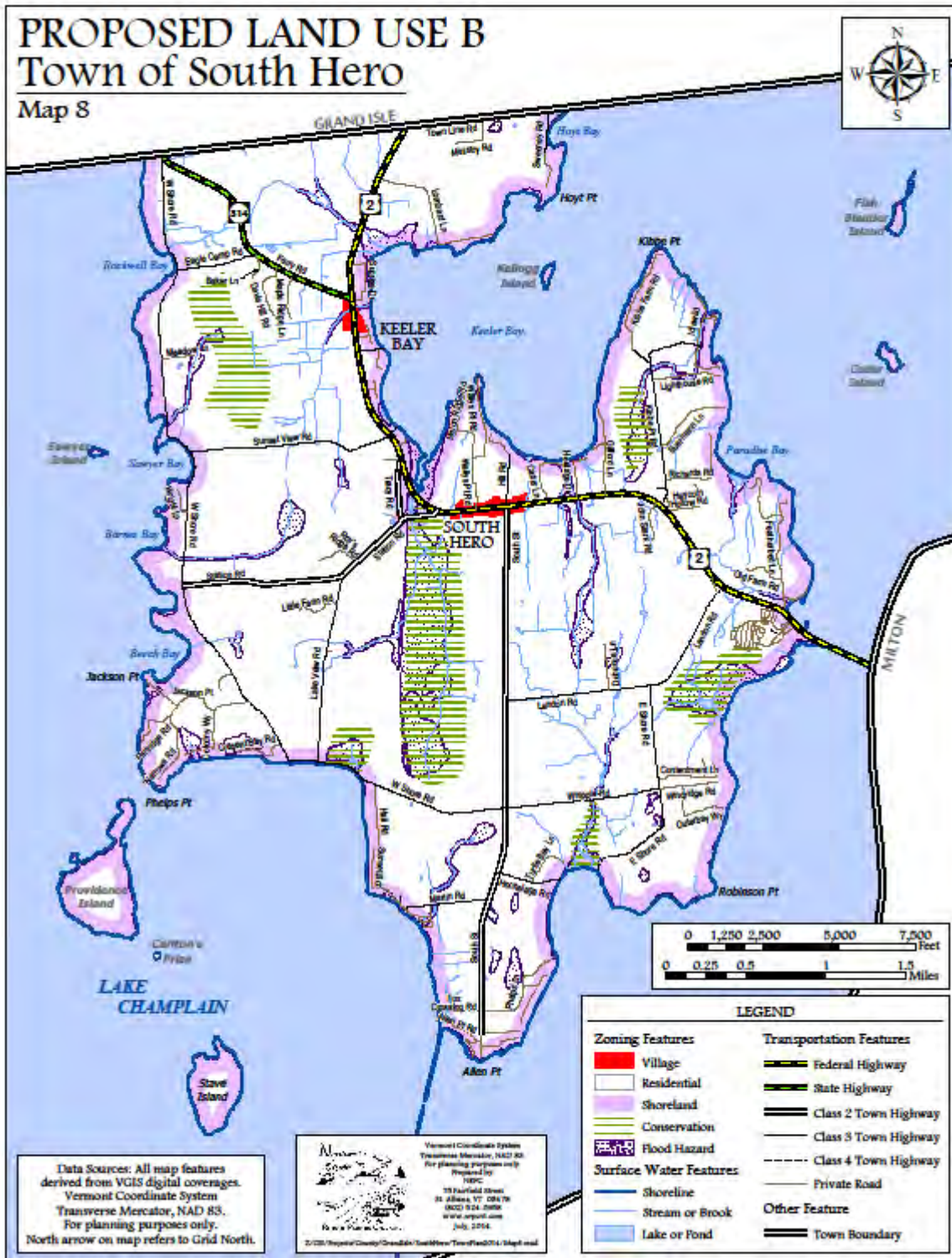


MAP 7: Current Zoning

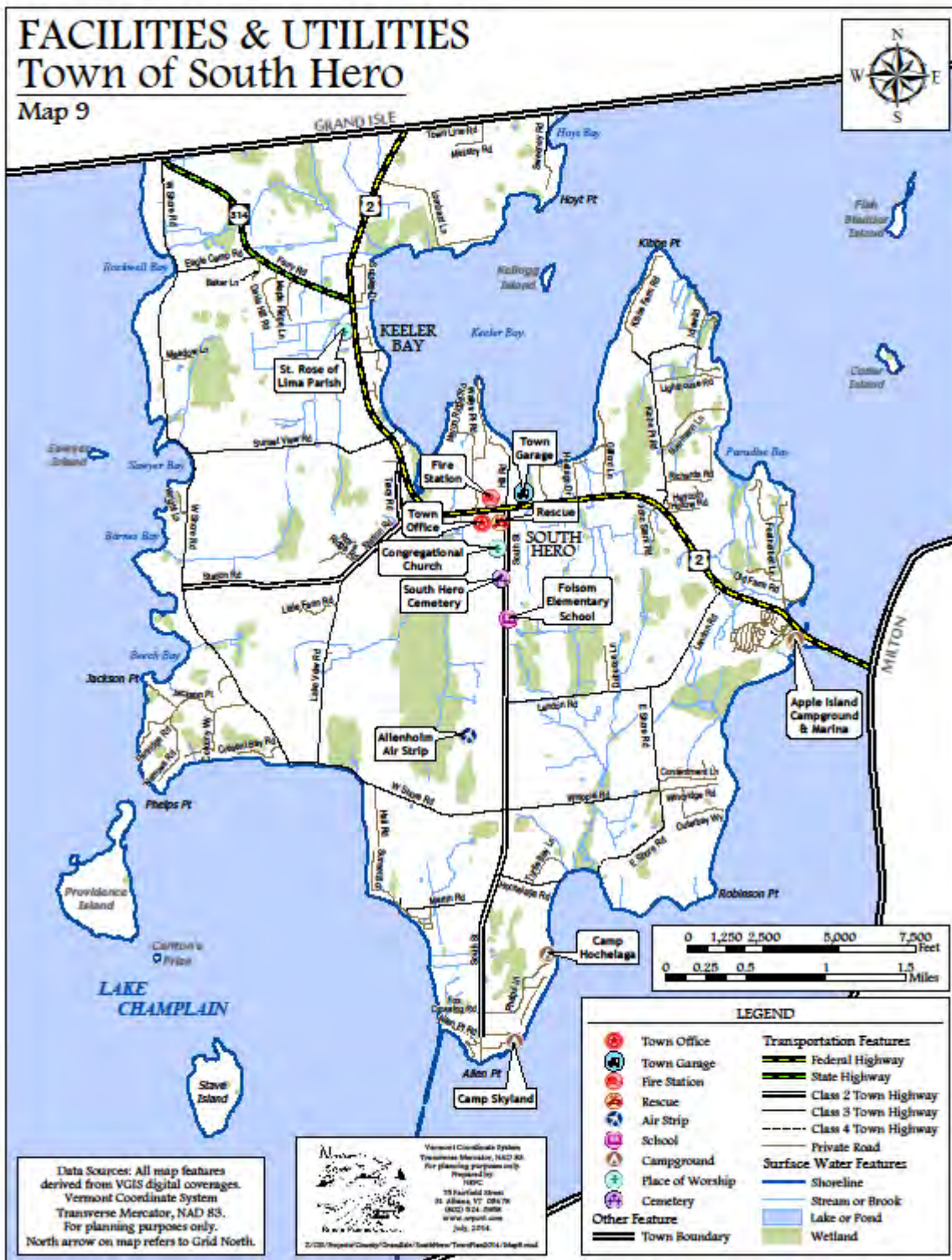




MAP 8: Proposed Land Use

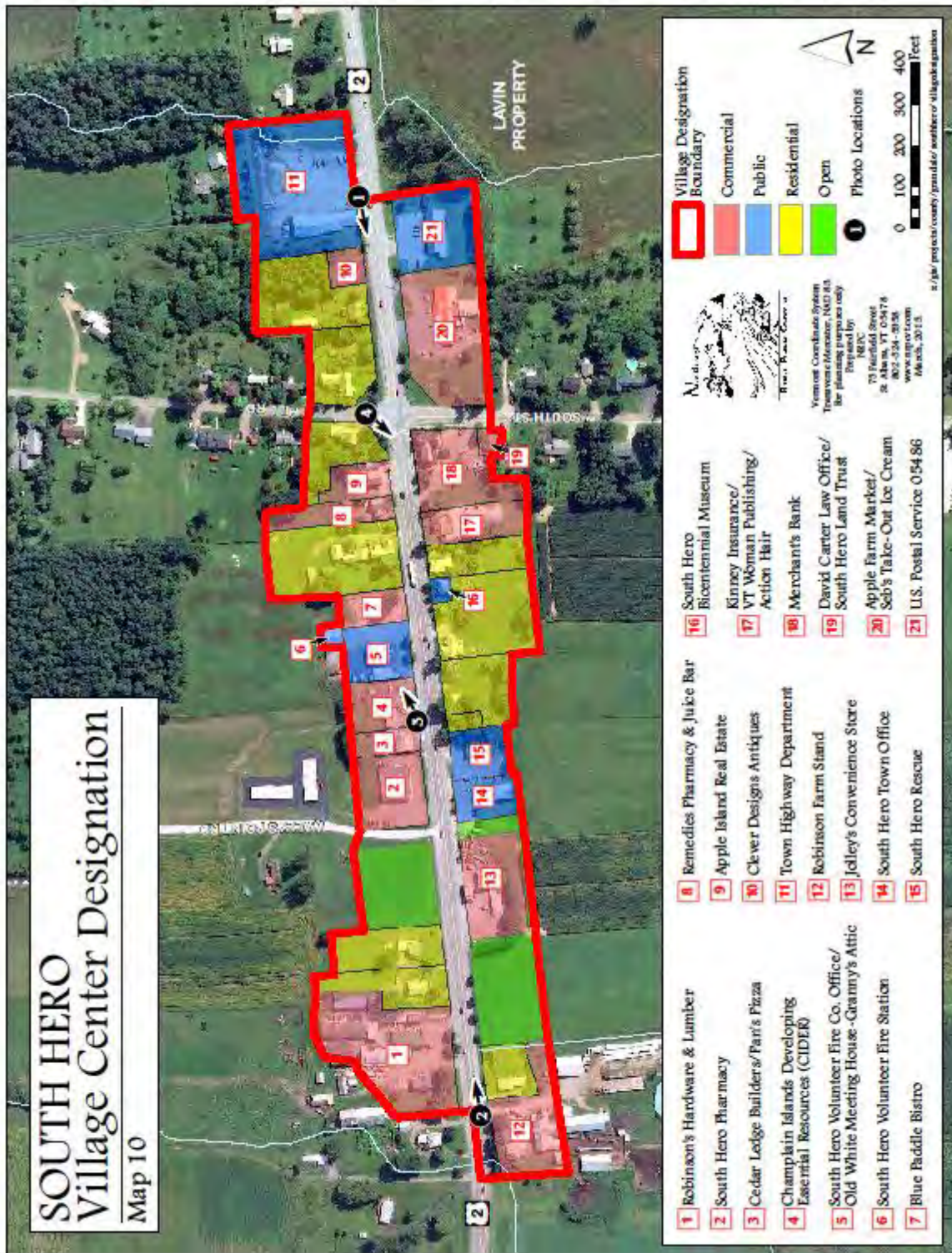


MAP 9: Facilities and Utilities





Map 10: South Hero Village Center





Map 11: Keeler Bay Village Center

