



SAINT ALBANS
Vermont

CityPlan

**Adopted by
the St. Albans City Council:
February 9, 2026**

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Acknowledgments

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Special thanks go out to all of our predecessors who were involved in developing previous iterations of the City Plan and to all of our fellow community members who provided public input during this effort.

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Chapter 1. Our City Plan

Planning Goal 1.1 **The City of St. Albans land use planning process is inclusive and responsive.**

Objective O.1.1.1 Facilitate conversations about our goals for many aspects of life in our community.

Objective O.1.1.2 Produce regulations, ordinances, and programs that most effectively and equitably implement the City’s objectives and policies and enhance the quality of life in our community.

Planning Goal 1.2 **Our City Plan fulfills the requirements of 24 V.S.A Ch. 117 and ensures the City’s eligibility for all requisite benefits.**

Objective O.1.2.1 Address each of the relevant State planning goals and elements in 24 V.S.A. sections 4302 and 4382.

Objective O.1.2.2 Provide support for the City’s efforts to seek grant funding and other external resources for programs and activities.

This is the municipal development plan of the City of St. Albans, Vermont; written and adopted as enabled by 24 V.S.A, Chapter 117, Subchapter 5. We call it our “City Plan.” The plan’s development was overseen by the City Planning Commission with input from the public and duly adopted by the St. Albans City Council. Under statute this City Plan is valid for 8 years, however we are free to amend or readopt it at any time.

Our City Plan has many purposes and uses. One is to comply with State statutes for land use planning and regulation. Another is to include planning topics and discussions that might be required by other state and federal programs. A third is to provide support and legitimacy for ordinances, funding opportunities, and other activities that could benefit the City. For instance, the City may be able to increase the chances of a grant application being funded by being able to say that the proposed project is included in this plan.

In summary, this plan is one of the most important documents adopted by the City, and the Planning Commission and staff have put substantial effort into its development. This chapter describes some of the ways in which the Planning Commission endeavored to ensure that this plan contains our community’s concerns, hopes, dreams, and values. This chapter and others also set the context for the City’s major accomplishments, challenges, and trajectory in many aspects of community life. The Planning Commission drafted this plan at a time when the community is feeling the stressors of the housing crisis, substance use disorder issues, and a rash of petty crime. Things can change quickly, and the plan will be considered for amendment when important developments occur that change the City’s context.

The City Plan Report available at www.stalbansvt.com/cityplan includes a discussion of how this plan fulfills the statutory goals of 24 V.S.A. § 4302. That webpage also includes an appendix of the various acronyms used in the plan.

Vision and Strategy

Beyond the pragmatic discussion of the requirements and benefits of a municipal development plan lies the fact that our City Plan represents an important opportunity to engage in a public process to take stock of the state of our community today, the opportunities and challenges that we face, and how we would like to set our future course. This plan has been developed with a **vision of the City of St. Albans as a thriving community that blends the charm of our neighborhoods with the vitality of a downtown center and many avenues toward prosperity. Guided by a strong sense of civic engagement, the City is committed to being inclusive and caring and to recognizing our history while looking to the future.**

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

1. The chapters of the plan are organized around consolidated realms of City/community activity.
2. The objectives, policies, and actions suggested by this plan are organized under sixteen Planning Goals. Each goal is located in the plan chapter most relevant to its subject matter.
3. All planning goals, objectives, policies, and actions are numbered for ease of future reference.
4. The City Plan is our opportunity to collect as many ideas as may be beneficial to our community in the future. The plan gives direction on how to interpret ideas that may appear to conflict or compete for the same resources.
5. Most text in this plan directly relates to the requirements of State statute or known programs in which the City wishes to participate. Supporting documents/plans and background information are referenced as appendices. All referenced information is compiled together at <http://www.stalbansvt.com/cityplan> for the public to access.

Our Public Input Process

On May 1, 2023, the City issued a press release announcing that the Planning Commission was commencing the update process for the City Plan and urging members of the public to take advantage of opportunities to provide questions, comments, and input.

In September through November of 2023, the City Planning Commission fielded a two-page survey for community members. This survey solicited input on the respondents' hopes and fears for the community, what they loved, what they would like to see changed, and their feelings of safety. The survey could be filled out online or in hard-copy format and was mailed out with utility bills to the 2,370 customers in the City. The survey opportunity was posted to the City website, social media, and Front Porch Forum. Survey forms were also distributed to Tim's House shelter, Martha's Kitchen, the CVOEO food shelf, and the Franklin County Senior Center.

Ultimately, 282 responses were received. A summary of survey responses is available at www.stalbansvt.com/cityplan.

Throughout 2024, discussions were held with key stakeholders in the community, including the following:

- ✓ The Franklin Grand Isle Housing and Homelessness Alliance
- ✓ Agewell
- ✓ The City Belonging, Equity & Inclusion Committee
- ✓ The St. Albans Town Planning Commission
- ✓ Samaritan House and Tim's House Shelter
- ✓ Northwest Vermont United Way
- ✓ The St. Albans Museum
- ✓ The Hunger Council of Franklin & Grand Isle Counties
- ✓ Champlain Housing Trust

The stakeholder discussions were prompted with the following questions:

1. What do you want to make sure the City Planning Commission and City Council know about the work that your organization does in the community?
2. Following up on that, is there anything that you are seeing in the community that you think we should be aware of?
3. Would you like to highlight anything that you hope you will be able to accomplish by 2033?
4. What are some policies or actions that you would like the City to consider adopting or supporting in the 2025 City Plan?
5. Who else do you think we should hear from concerning the City Plan?

The stakeholder discussions yielded a broad range of input, which is highlighted through this plan in relevant sections.

In March and April of 2024, the Downtown Program fielded surveys for consumers and for Downtown businesses. The consumer surveys were sent out via utility bills in both the City and Town and distributed via multiple other means. Responses were taken via hard copy forms and an online option. There were 344 responses to the consumer survey, which included questions about their place of residence, proximity to Downtown St. Albans, the frequency and nature of their visits to downtown, and what forms of media they follow. A summary of survey responses is available at www.stalbansvt.com/cityplan.

Also of note in 2024, the City began receiving public input and comments concerning community substance use disorder, homelessness, petty theft, and a perceived lack of public safety, both in the downtown and the neighborhoods. Much of this input was received at public meetings, including the following:

- ✓ June 10, 2024: a much higher-than-normal public turnout (34 in-person and remote) at a regular City Council meeting, with most attendees speaking during the public comment period about concerns with drug use and public safety.
- ✓ June 18, 2024: a special public safety forum was held in City Hall Auditorium with attendance of more than 300 people.

- ✓ September 9, 2024: another large turn-out (80 in-person and remote) at a regular City Council meeting, with most attendees present to hear and discuss updates from the Police Department and substance use disorder services in the community.
- ✓ January 30, 2025: a well-attended Community Summit in City Hall Auditorium with presentations and Q&A from local organizations active in substance use disorder, social services, and public safety.

In March and April of 2025, the City Planning Commission fielded another survey, using the same online and paper-based methods as the 2023 survey. This survey, specifically for City residents but available for anyone to fill out, focused on housing-related issues. The questions inquired about the respondent's current living situation, anticipated future housing needs, perceived availability of adequate housing, and willingness to live with higher residential densities. Rather than being mailed out in utility bills, this survey was distributed in the lobby of City Hall while the polls were open for Town Meeting Day 2025. The survey opportunity was posted to the City website, social media, and Front Porch Forum. Survey forms were also distributed to Tim's House shelter, Martha's Kitchen, the CVOEO food shelf, and the Franklin County Senior Center. Ultimately, 148 responses were received. A summary of survey responses is available at www.stalbansvt.com/cityplan.

Another recent topic that received substantial public input was the reappraisal of the City's grand list for April 1, 2025. Due to market factors, the share of the City's property tax levy that comes from residential properties increased by 23%, resulting in higher tax bills than anticipated. Twenty-two members of the public attended a City Council presentation that explained the results of the reappraisal, and hundreds more have expressed their concerns and complaints to City staff via multiple channels.

Accomplishments and a look ahead

When the 2017 City Plan was adopted, the City was well into a transformational era of municipally-led redevelopment. City voters had approved tax increment financing bonds to remediate and redevelop the Downtown core parking lot; the community's first-ever parking garage had opened, State workers had moved into their new location at 27 Federal Street, and the Hampton Inn held its grand opening on Lake Street. Meanwhile, these developments all enabled Mylan Pharmaceuticals to purchase the old State office building on Houghton Street and expand its Downtown manufacturing campus. All of these property investments were creating incremental tax revenue to cover the debt associated with the TIF district.

In concert with these private investments, there had been many public investments of note. The City had reopened City Hall after a \$2 million renovation, including upgrades for accessibility, energy efficiency, vault space, and public events. Streetscape improvements had just been completed on Lake Street and were also being constructed for the first phase of the Federal Street Multimodal Connector, at the intersections of Federal, Lake, Catherine, Market, and Stebbins Streets. The City had also just updated the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Since the 2017 City Plan was adopted, there have been numerous accomplishments and challenges of note for the community. Here are some of the developments that have had a significant role in setting the stage for this update of the City Plan.

The City completed an \$18 million project at the wastewater treatment plant to replace and upgrade various components and also increase the rate of phosphorus removal in response to the Lake Champlain TMDL.

Also related to water quality, the City created a stormwater utility, funded with an impervious-based fee assessed on all properties. The new utility, combined with a new stormwater management ordinance, would provide the funds and authority necessary to comply with the flow restoration and phosphorus treatment goals of the City's MS4 permit. The City developed plans for stormwater treatment facilities, including at 74 Lower Welden Street, along Lemnah Drive, and along the new street proposed as part of the Federal Street Multimodal Connector.

The City felt the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic similar to other communities, but it did not devastate the local economy. City staff were sent home to work remotely for the March 2020 "shut-down," and businesses had to pivot to curb-side operations. Many Downtown restaurants did well with curb-side service and delivery, and the City is unaware of any shops that were shuttered solely due to the pandemic. The City fully embraced remote meeting technology, which has been maintained as an option for local public meetings today. Overall, the assumptions are that the City's local economy benefited from the presence of residents who were no longer commuting out of the community during the pandemic and from the many new residents who decided to move to the area.

One local downfall resulting from the pandemic was the closure of the U.S. Customs and Immigration Services (US CIS) office at 65-75 Lower Welden Street. Once a site for hundreds of local jobs, the offices were vacated after a water service break in December 2021. The general belief is that this disruption, combined with the prevalence of remote work during the pandemic, gave the federal government enough pretext to vacate the office permanently for other options. After the move, the property owners were able to argue to cut the complex's \$15 million grand list value in half. In subsequent years, new owners, using less than half of the property for warehousing and leaving the rest vacant, succeeded in lowering the grand list value to \$3.4 million. The site remains in that state today.

The City unveiled a "Police Transformation Roadmap" in August 2020. This effort was undertaken in response to local/statewide concerns after a few well-publicized cases questioning use of force by the St. Albans Police Department and by national concerns following the murder of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis in May of 2020. Elements of the roadmap were informed by an independent review of St. Albans police operations. A new Police Advisory Board was created to advise the department with implementing the values and policies adopted by the City. Soon after the City also adopted the Fair and Impartial Policing policy developed by the State of Vermont.

The murder of George Floyd and similar incidents catalyzed national conversations about race, equity, and implicit bias. In response to local interest in the matter, the City Council created a

Belonging, Equity & Inclusion Committee to identify programs and opportunities, facilitate engagement with groups, and advise City staff and the City Council. As one example of their early work, the BEI Committee drafted a Declaration of Inclusion that was adopted by the City Council in November 2022.

The TIF-funded Congress & Main project brought 63 new subsidized and market-rate apartments to 10 Maiden Lane and 20 Congress Street, and 25,000 square feet of new commercial space on North Main Street across from City Hall. Community College of Vermont moved into the new location, and the St. Albans Police Department moved into the former CCV building on 142 South Main Street, after renovations were completed.

City TIF funds and a generous amount of State funding from VT DEC's Brownfield Economic Revitalization Alliance (BERA) program were invested into the final remediation of the former Fonda manufacturing site to make it ready for redevelopment. The rear portion of the Fonda site was sold to Connor Brothers for a national rail dispatch center. The southeast corner of the site was sold to Cathedral Square, which opened up 33 new senior housing units in late summer 2025. The remainder of the site is under contract with Milot Real Estate for the construction of 87 new units of workforce housing.

The City purchased the old customs/courthouse at 45 Kingman Street from Peoples Trust Company and used TIF funds to remediate environmental issues at the property. This was done in concert with a sale to local developer Jim Cameron under an agreement to renovate the building with 8 new apartments and first-floor commercial space. When finished, one of Downtown St. Albans' most significant historic buildings was restored and put back into use.

The City used TIF funds to remediate environmental issues at 100-120 Federal Street, which included a former junk yard. The lot was paved and made ready for redevelopment; currently being marketed by the City.

The nonprofit Hard'Ack, Inc. transferred ownership of the Hard'ack recreational area, located on the eastern slopes of Aldis Hill, to the City. With local philanthropic funds and other sources, the City built the Greg Brown Lodge at Hard'ack to house a new public event space and the offices of the St. Albans Recreation Department.

As part of the goal to continue investing in Hard'ack as a regional recreational facility, the City worked with the Town of St. Albans on a plan to construct a new year-round municipal pool at the site. City voters approved a new Local Option Tax to fund the pool, along with other activities. The plan was ultimately rejected by Town voters, but the City pursued the project on its own and opened the new pool in 2022. The old City Pool property on Aldis Street returned to the control of St. Albans City School.

Under orders from the State to increase storage capacity in the water system, the City built a second 1-million-gallon tank at the top of Congress Street. Then, planning began to refurbish the existing tank located there, thus extending its useful life and doubling the storage capacity. Also related to the water system, the City initiated the development of an asset management plan.

In response to the State's order to eliminate the precipitation-related combined sewer overflow, the City completed a sewer-stormwater separation project on Stebbins Street and awarded bids to construct 500,000 gallons of underground storage at Houghton Park. The storage project is set for completion in 2026 and will eliminate the vast majority of overflow events.

With a common level of appraisal (CLA) of 84% in 2022, the City was ordered by the State to perform a city-wide reappraisal. After waiting for some legislative changes to develop in Montpelier, the City began the effort in 2023, a dozen years after the last reappraisal. As mentioned above, the housing market drove the updated residential values up further than other property types. The share of the City's property tax levy that comes from residential properties increased by 23%, and this issue became a topic of much discussion and consternation in 2025.

With the housing crisis exacerbated by the pandemic's influences on migration and the market, the City staff and Planning Commission began looking at the possibility of responding to the pressure to increase allowable housing densities. The VT State Legislature passed Act 47 of 2023, which made foundational changes to the statutes that govern local zoning, including new allowances for triplexes and fourplexes and limitations on parking requirements, among other things. Furthermore, Act 181 in 2024 made significant changes to regional planning and the application of Act 250 regulations to designated areas of the State. The act also required regional housing targets to be determined for 2030 and 2050 and allocated among municipalities. The City's land use planning and regulation efforts had to go through significant changes, due to these new laws.

In response to a request from local residents, the City Council created a Climate & Energy Advisory Committee to develop an initial Climate Action Plan for the community and suggest projects and activities for the City to pursue. As this City Plan is being updated, the Committee is currently working on integrating a State-endorsed Enhanced Energy Plan into the climate action plan.

The City completed the first phase of the Federal Street Multimodal Connector at the intersections of Federal, Lake, Catherine, Market, and Stebbins Streets. This project, along with the subsequent Kingman Street Project in 2022, completed the streetscape improvements that had been designed for the historic retail blocks of Downtown St. Albans. The City had begun planning a modest second phase of the Federal Street Multimodal Connector, with a focus on a Federal Street sidewalk and shared use path, when it was awarded a federal RAISE grant of more than \$7 million. Immediately, the City's focus broadened to resuming the planning and permitting to complete the entire Connector project, with a goal to start construction in 2027 or 2028.

The State of Vermont received a federal grant to resurface the entire length of the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail and to extend the trail to Lower Newton Street. The extension would use a section of the rail corridor that the City had brokered as part of the Fonda project and transferred to the State. In concert with the public improvements constructed for the Fonda site, the City built a portion of the path to the intersection and began planning efforts for a new trail head and parking area.

The City collaborated with the Town of St. Albans on two grant-funded projects that explored the options for bike/pedestrian infrastructure along Northern Route 7 from where the City sidewalks end on North Main Street to the area of Walmart. The most recent project was a scoping study that involved analysis by consultants and a suggested alternative that included a shared-use path beginning in the City and going north.

In response to the wave of public concern expressed about the petty crime and community substance use disorder occurring in the community in 2024, the City Council Public Safety and Quality of Life Committee began holding regular meetings, many in Taylor Park, to discuss the root causes of the problems and how the City might respond. Contact was made with stakeholders in the community, and many potential solutions were presented to the City Council and staff. There were many volunteer-based responses to the issue as well, for example, a regular Sunday community clean-up gathering that was held regularly for a time.

The Town of St. Albans terminated its joint police contract with the City in 2021, which regrettably reduced some of the overall capabilities of the St. Albans Police Department. In 2023, the City and Town agreed to a new joint police contract, which would take effect in July 2024. Under the new contract, the Town would share half of the police department's budget, and the City would eliminate the affiliation fee associated with water and wastewater connections in the Town. This was a significant step forward in effectively policing the broader community while finding a solution to a longstanding issue between the City and Town concerning water/sewer services.

As part of the property acquisition to prepare for the Bellevue Development Project, the City purchased the Welden Theatre building and business. The theater was incorporated into the operations of the St. Albans Recreation Department, and investments and improvements have been made. A theater manager has also been hired. The latest fiscal year financials showed that the theater's revenues came in higher than expected, however the overall recreation fund has had to cover the overage from initial investments and repairs. Nevertheless, the outlook for the Welden Theatre is bright, and there is considerable local interest in expanding and enhancing its offerings to the community.

Avenues for Implementation

The City is able to look back at a myriad of accomplishments and challenges overcome since the 2017 City Plan. Looking ahead to the next decade and beyond, there is an equally daunting array of goals and obstacles lying before the community. Each chapter of this plan starts with a set of stated planning goals and objectives and then concludes with an ambitious collection of policies and actions with the purpose of seeing the intent of our City Plan come to fruition and benefit the community.

Some Important Terminology

- ✓ Planning Goal – a value or vision toward which we will plan.
- ✓ Objective – An end result or sustained activity that we wish to see as part of the fulfillment of a planning goal.

- ✓ Policy – A rule or principle that will guide our programs and activities or that we wish to see enacted in regulations.
- ✓ Action¹ – a program, activity, or initiative performed by the City and/or community partners, as guided by the policies and in fulfillment of the objectives.

Any policy or action laid out in this plan is likely to be implemented through one of the following three forms:

1. Rules and Regulations

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

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

2. Programs and Activities

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

3. Leadership and Collaboration

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

Primary Roles in Implementation

Below is a description of the typical parties that would take the lead in the activities to implement this plan.

¹ Note: sometimes a listed action may seem to double as a policy when we state we wish to carry out a program in a certain way or when the proposed activity is to develop a regulation or ordinance. We did our best to correctly classify these items, but the most important factor ultimately is that they were included in the City Plan.

The **City Council** adopts all local ordinances/regulations, the budgets for the general fund and enterprises (e.g. water/wastewater/stormwater), and internal policies for the City. The Council also appoints all City board/commission members and hires the City Manager, who ultimately oversees the conduct of City staff. The Council is made up of 6 members elected from City wards and the Mayor, who is elected at large.

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

There are many other **City boards and commissions** relevant to the implementation of this Plan. The **Development Review Board** and **Design Advisory Board** carry out roles in the implementation of the Land Development Regulations. Other boards and commissions are listed below and described online at www.stalbansvt.com/boards.

- Belonging, Equity & Inclusion Committee
- Climate & Energy Advisory Committee
- Downtown Board (and Board of Directors for St. Albans For the Future)
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Parks & Recreation Commission
- Police Advisory Board

City Staff carry out all City programs and services, draft all proposed ordinances/regulations and budgets for approval, provide research and administration services, and enforce all City ordinances and regulations. Staff will also procure the specialized services of consultants and subject-matter experts as the need arises.

Acronyms: A list of common acronyms used in the City planning process is linked at www.stalbansvt.com/cityplan.

Policies and Actions for the City’s Planning Program

Planning Goal 1.1	The City of St. Albans land use planning process is inclusive and responsive.
Policy P.1.1.1	The City’s planning process will welcome input from the community, including efforts to involve historically marginalized groups.
Policy P.1.1.2	The City’s policies and programs are intended to promote growth, revitalization, and development that preserves and enhances the City’s attractiveness and vibrancy.
Policy P.1.1.3	The ultimate benefit to the City and the achievement of the public good will be the primary considerations when implementing any recommendation of this plan or weighing one policy or program versus another.

Policy P.1.1.4	The City’s Plan and permitting regulations will be amended whenever regulatory contradictions or unintended consequences are revealed or when better means for accomplishing the City’s objectives and policies are discovered.			
Policy P.1.1.5	All Planning Commission meetings will follow open meeting laws and be accessible to the public.			
Actions		Form of Action	Lead Party	Timeline
Action A.1.1.1	This City Plan and its appendices and supporting documents will be available for the public to view online at www.StAlbansVT.com/CityPlan .	Program	City Staff	Ongoing
Action A.1.1.2	Design and hold inclusive public participation opportunities in order to allow a broad swath of the community, from different backgrounds, to be able to interact in fulfilling and meaningful ways.	Program	City Staff, Council and Planning Commission	Ongoing
Action A.1.1.3	The City will collaborate with other municipalities and organizations on regional planning goals.	Collaboration	City Staff, Council and Planning Commission	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.1.1.4	Increase the City’s capacity to track permit and property data in order to analyze the effects of policies and regulations.	Program	City Staff	1-3 Years
Action A.1.1.5	Ensure that the City’s Internet and social media presence is informative, engaging, and current. Utilize other means of public information, such as contact lists and newsletters, as able.	Program	City Staff	Ongoing

Planning Goal 1.2	Our City Plan fulfills the requirements of 24 V.S.A Ch. 117 and ensures the City’s eligibility for all requisite benefits.			
Policy P.1.2.1	This City Plan will be used as a basis for many City regulations, programs, and activities, specifically the Land Use Regulations.			
Policy P.1.2.2	Any duly adopted changes to 24 V.S.A. Ch. 117 will supersede the provisions of this plan and the City’s Land Development Regulations.			
Actions		Form of Action	Lead Party	Timeline
Action A.1.2.1	Utilize interim bylaws as a means to provide clarification and coordination during the period that amendments must be considered for the Land Development Regulations to be updated for revisions to 24 V.S.A. Ch. 117.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and Planning Commission	As Needed

Chapter 2. Downtown St. Albans

Planning Goal 2.1 **The built form and character of Downtown St. Albans will enhance the area’s sense of place and vibrancy.**

Objective O.2.1.1 Maintain the historic form of Downtown St. Albans’ streets, sidewalks, and buildings.

Objective O.2.1.2 Ensure that all buildings are well-maintained and accessible.

Objective O.2.1.3 Enhance and preserve the quality, accessibility, and aesthetic benefits of all public streetscape improvements.

Objective O.2.1.4 Ensure that all Downtown buildings are being fully utilized for economic, residential, and cultural activities.

Objective O.2.1.5 Maintain and improve the beauty and functionality of Taylor Park.

Planning Goal 2.2 **Downtown St. Albans will thrive as a center of commerce, culture, and community life.**

Objective O.2.2.1 Ensure that Downtown St. Albans attracts private investment, including property development, location of new businesses, and the expansion of existing establishments.

Objective O.2.2.2 Ensure that Downtown is a welcoming, safe, and attractive place for residents and visitors to shop and spend time for both daily practical needs and special occasions.

Objective O.2.2.3 Maintain Downtown St. Albans as the center of civic and cultural activity in the county.

Objective O.2.2.4 Maintain Downtown St. Albans' status as a premier example of a successful historic urban center.

Objective O.2.2.5 Increase the quality and quantity of residential opportunities within and adjacent to Downtown.

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

Notable events in the revitalization and redevelopment of Downtown St. Albans:

- 2003: Creation of the St. Albans For the Future (SAFF) downtown nonprofit organization.
- 2004: Downtown Designation awarded through the Vermont Downtown Program.
- 2005: SAFF receives 501(c)3 tax-exempt status from the IRS.
- 2006: Completion of Market Analysis and Marketing Plan.
- 2009: Completion of the Downtown Master Plan.
- 2010: St. Albans Growth Center (with Downtown at the center) is designated by the State of Vermont. And first the *Kingman Klassic* car show.
- 2011: City-SAFF merger agreement results in new Downtown Board. Also, the first *Festival of Trees* holiday event is held.
- 2012: Rehabilitation of the historic St. Albans House. And the St. Albans Tax Increment Financing District is approved by the State.
- 2013: Completion of first downtown streetscape improvements along Main Street.
- 2014: Completion of new downtown Ace Hardware store. Redevelopment of the “core lot,” including a new municipal parking garage and a new office building leased to the State at 27 Federal Street. Mylan Technologies expands and purchases the old State office building.
- 2015: Completion of Hudson-to-Hoyt block streetscape improvements on Main Street.
- 2016: Renovation of City Hall with energy efficiency and accessibility improvements and a renewed focus on hosting events.
- 2017: Opening of the new Hampton Inn Hotel and completion of the Lake Street streetscape project.
- 2018: Completion of streetscape and intersection improvements at Lake, Federal, Catherine, and Market Streets.
- 2021: Completion of the new commercial building and 63 apartments at Congress & Main, 20 Congress Street, and 10 Maiden Lane. CCV² moves into the commercial space. Café Monette and the National Guard recruiting office eventually fill the first-floor spaces.
- 2022: City receives ARPA³ funds and commits them to business and housing support. Completion of the Kingman Street streetscape project. And the first *Kingman Fest* concert event. The City updates the National Register nomination for the St. Albans Historic District.
- 2023: Purchase of the Bellevue and Welden Theatre buildings. The City puts forward the proposal for the Bellevue Redevelopment Project. The Recreation Dept. assumes the operation of the theater.
- 2024: Completion of renovations to the historic Customs/Courthouse at 45 Kingman Street, adding 8 apartments.
- 2025: Completion of 72 new apartments at 175 Lake Street.

The Importance of Downtown St. Albans

Downtown St. Albans is not only the geographic center of the City but also represents a substantial portion of the municipal grand list value, contains some of our community’s most significant historic architecture, and is matched only by the surrounding neighborhoods in defining the City’s sense of place. The Downtown is a center of commerce, employment, culture, and community life for the entire county. The buildings and streetscape provide a pedestrian-scale, detailed character that sets Downtown apart from more modern commercial areas. Downtown St. Albans also has a magnetic effect as a key factor that sets the City apart from other communities in the larger region, whether for the purposes of planning a visit or seeking a new home. At the same time, the City has resolved that the rehabilitation and preservation of Downtown’s historic buildings can most sustainably be achieved through economic relevance.

² Community College of Vermont

³ American Rescue Plan Act

The former Central Vermont Railroad headquarters located at 2 Federal Street illustrates the challenge and importance of utilizing and maintaining historic buildings. With three stories and more than 23,000 square feet of space, the headquarters embodies the era during the late 1800s and early 1900s when the wealth brought in by the railroad was a strong influence on Downtown's built architecture, as prominent buildings were rebuilt with more durable materials after frequent block fires. Nevertheless, the headquarters now stands vacant, as the railroad company's presence in the community has dwindled substantially. The future renovation and habitation of this building is a priority for the City.

Likewise, the row of churches and civic buildings that lines the eastern side of Church Street exists as a beautiful framing device for Taylor Park and the boundary of Downtown St. Albans. Unfortunately, the upkeep of the churches, courthouse, and museum is a constant struggle for the resource-strapped organizations. In recent years, the entities behind these buildings have banded together to bring public attention to their maintenance and preservation needs, including the annual Church Street Festival in July.

Highlight from Stakeholder Discussions:

- There is a growing sense of alarm about the state and sustainability of all of the civic buildings and churches along Church Street.

The City's goals are to have Downtown's historic buildings fully utilized and at the same time paired with the development of new modern structures and the infrastructure and services expected by today's residents and visitors. The planning policies and programs for Downtown go to great lengths to protect its character and form while also allowing for redevelopment, new construction, and sometimes demolition that do not degrade the whole of the historic district.

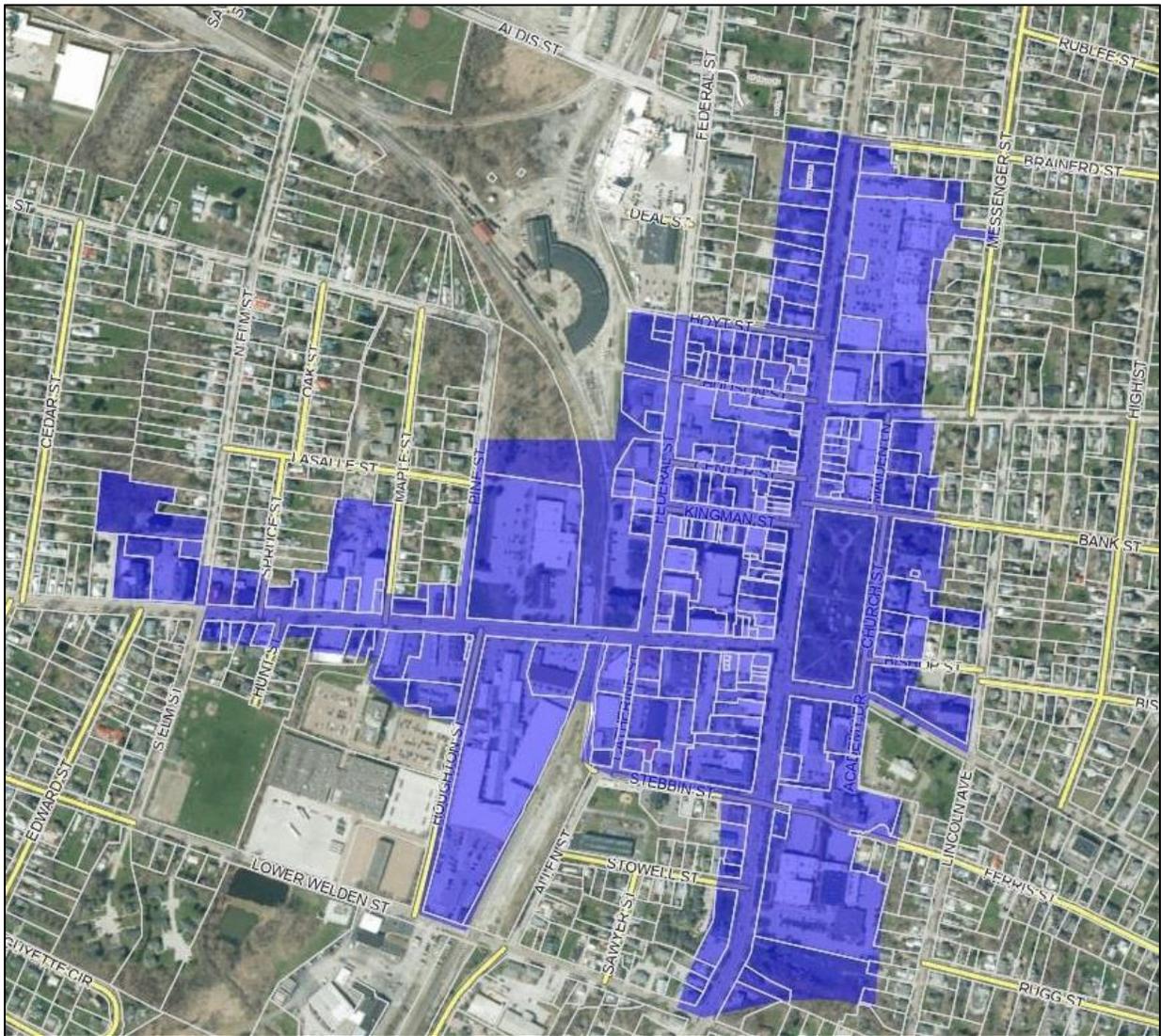
The City's efforts and investments to revitalize Downtown St. Albans are a recognition of its importance to the community. Public resources (local, state, and federal) have been invested in the Downtown's infrastructure and buildings in order to spur private investment and economic activity. Streetscape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

St. Albans For the Future and the Original Downtown Designation

In 2003, the City called for the creation of St. Albans For the Future, Inc. (SAFF) as a nonprofit organization dedicated to revitalizing Downtown St. Albans and achieving designation through the Vermont Downtown Program. Originally, SAFF proposed a map for the designated downtown (see following map) that most closely coincided with both the historic and growing areas of the City's central commercial core. Downtown designation was granted by the Vermont Downtown Development Board in 2004. In 2023, the City proposed an expansion of the designated downtown to include 12 North Elm Street, for the purpose of supporting the historic

preservation of the converted school building, now apartments. The Vermont Downtown Development Board approved the revision that year.

Today SAFF operates under a merger agreement with the City through which the City Downtown Board also acts as the Board of Directors for the nonprofit. The City staffs the board and the Downtown program. Under this model, the board does not need to spend time and energy fundraising for administrative capacity. Instead, the Downtown/SAFF Board is able to focus its attention on marketing, programming, events, and providing input on other matters relevant to Downtown St. Albans. Nevertheless, the board also manages some funds that are held directly by the nonprofit, and SAFF is able to act as a fiscal agency for events and other programs. The financial activity managed by the organization has tripled since 2017. SAFF has demonstrated the ability to actively contribute to the revitalization of Downtown St. Albans and maintain a general vibrancy that helps to keep storefronts full. Overall, it is essential that SAFF is also maintained as a viable nonprofit entity in concert with the other aspects of the City's Downtown program.



The St. Albans Designated Downtown, as of November 2025, via the Vermont Planning Atlas

New Downtown Center Designation

In 2024, Vermont Act 181 changed the framework for state designated areas, including downtowns. The City and Northwest Regional Planning Commission responded to the new designation framework by expanding the boundary of the now-named “Downtown Center” in the new regional plan being presented to the Vermont Land Use Review Board. As a pre-existing Designated Downtown, the St. Albans Downtown Center will enter as a “Step 3 Center” with the highest level of benefits under the new designation framework. These benefits include access to financial and technical resources that are directly applicable to the revitalization goals of this Plan:

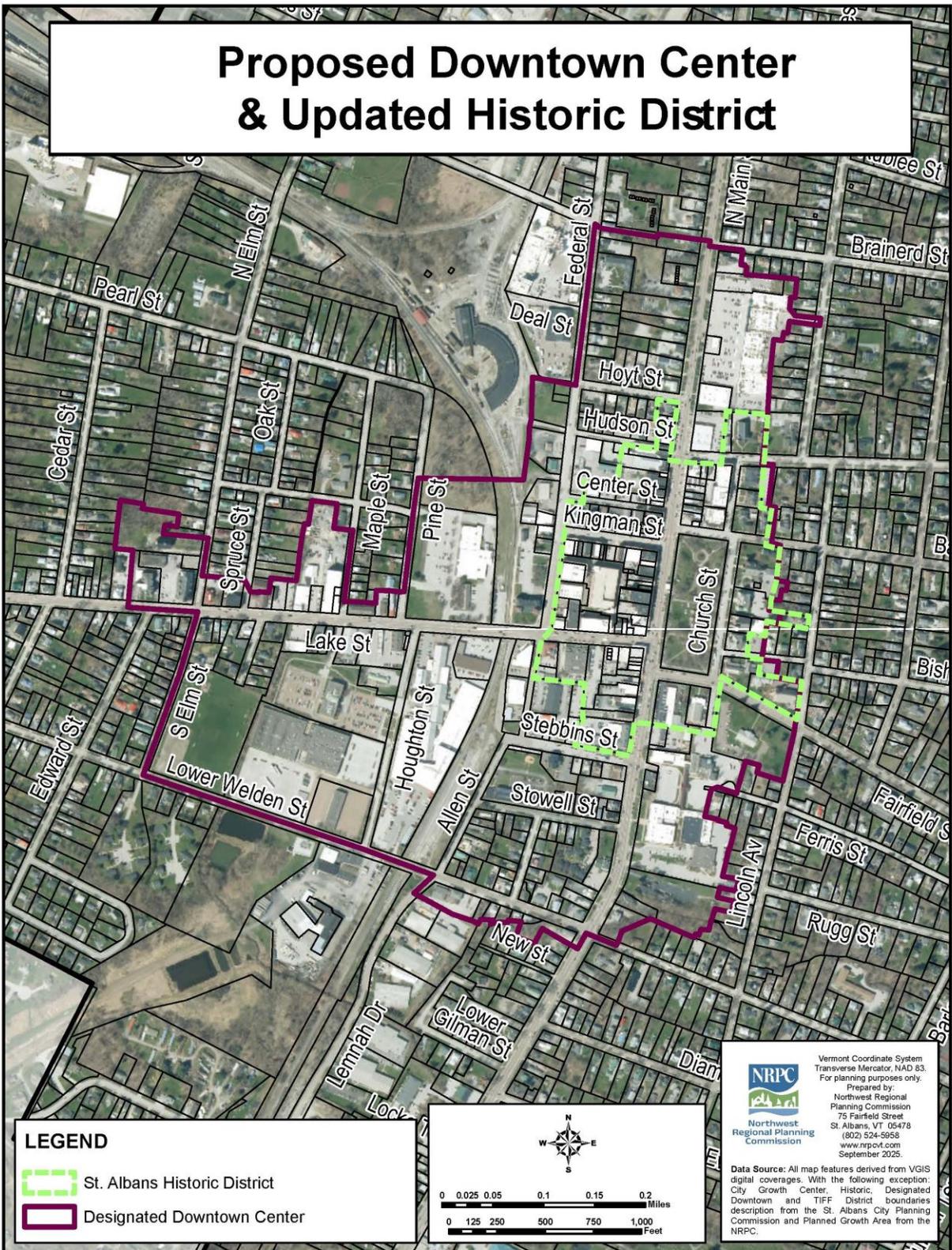
- a. Access to state historic tax credits assists property owners in rehabilitating and preserving historic buildings that contribute to the character and form of the downtown.
- b. Access to the Downtown Transportation Fund can be used to support the City’s streetscape and Complete Streets goals.
- c. Higher scoring for projects located Downtown in other grant programs, including the Municipal Planning Grant program and the Transportation Alternatives program, helps bring in financial resources for planning, marketing, and transportation improvements.
- d. Access to State technical resources, especially staff in the VT Downtown Program, is useful when advice, strategies, and consultation can help deal with particular challenges.
- e. Downtown designation originally assisted the City in achieving State Growth Center designation, which then aided the City in gaining State approval for its tax increment financing district. The new Downtown Center designation will now be a critical piece of the additional Planned Growth Area designation for much of the rest of the City, which comes with its own slate of benefits and opportunities.

The delineation of the Downtown Center can be adjusted as an amendment to the regional plan (or whenever the regional plan is re-adopted), subject to approval by the VT Land Use Review Board.

The St. Albans Historic District

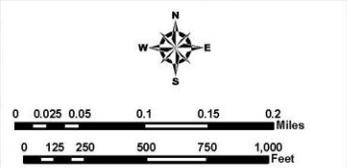
In 1979, the City submitted nomination forms to the National Park Service to create the St. Albans Historic District and to add it to the National Register of Historic Places. In 2022, the City’s new Historic Preservation Commission successfully updated the St. Albans Historic District and revised the boundaries to add seven properties. The historic district consists of roughly 111 properties and sites that make up the densest and most architecturally contributing portion of Downtown St. Albans (see following map). Ninety-three of the sites within the district are described as still possessing contributing architectural and historical features. This area of the City consists of a character and form that helps to define the community’s sense of place and culture, and many of this City Plan’s policies are dedicated to its preservation. The historic district is also given special consideration in some areas of the Land Development Regulations as currently written.

Proposed Downtown Center & Updated Historic District



LEGEND

- St. Albans Historic District
- Designated Downtown Center



Vermont Coordinate System
 Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.
 For planning purposes only.
 Prepared by:
 Northwest Regional
 Planning Commission
 75 Fairfield Street
 St. Albans, VT 05478
 (802) 524-5958
 www.nrpvt.com
 September 2025.

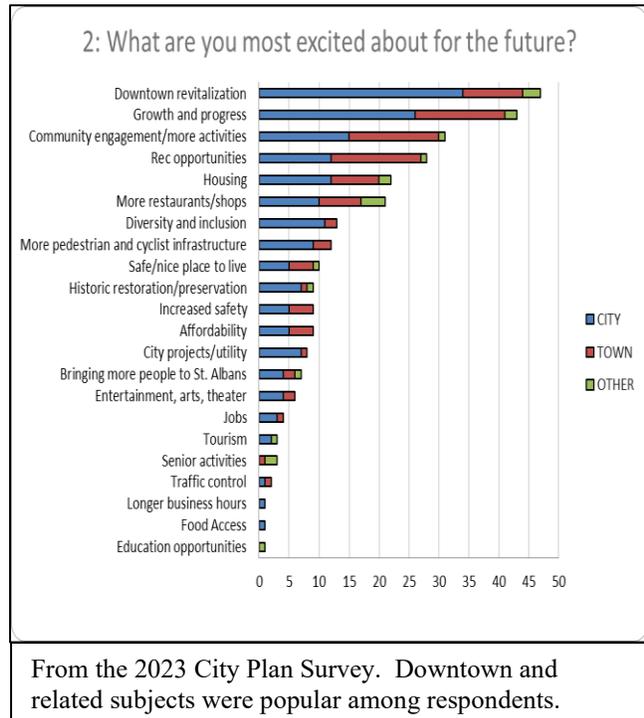
Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. With the following exception: City Growth Center, Historic, Designated Downtown, and TIFF District boundaries description from the St. Albans City Planning Commission and Planned Growth Area from the NRPC.

Facilitating Downtown Events

Numerous public events occur in Downtown St. Albans throughout the year, and feedback from businesses, residents, and visitors is that these activities are an important part of commerce and community life. Beyond SAFF and the Downtown program, multiple City departments are directly involved in facilitating and assisting multiple events throughout the year. Investments in events can include:

- Fiscal agency granted by SAFF, when required.
- Coordination and volunteer assistance provided by City staff and board members.
- Assistance from City Public Works in providing barricades, traffic cones, waste receptacles, and other items needed for events.
- Assistance and overtime provided by the City Police Dept. when coverage is required.
- Assistance from multiple City departments when a road closure is part of an event.
- Joint marketing activities provided by the City Downtown program via social and print media.

The City and SAFF are directly involved in putting on many events during the course of the year, including the Summer Concert Series, Spooky Saturday, and the Holiday Raffle. Other events are led by other organizations or volunteers with varying degrees of assistance from the City Downtown program, including Kingman Fest, the Church Street Festival, and the Festival of Trees. Additional events, such as the Vermont Maple Festival, the Klassic Car Show, the Running of the Bells, and the Holiday Tractor Parade, are entirely self-run, yet still rely heavily on City assistance and coordination to take place in Downtown. Event schedules can be found at www.downtownsaintalbens.com and the Downtown St. Albans Facebook page.



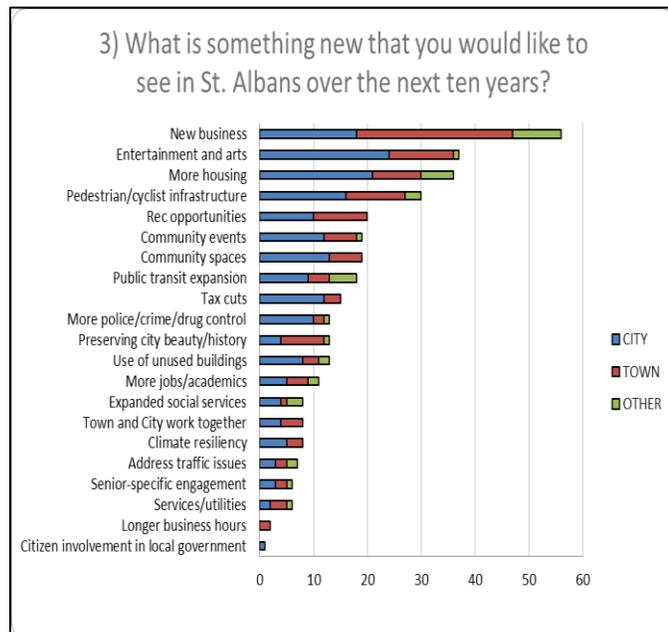
Investing in Downtown

Over the past decade, the City’s redevelopment strategy has been informed by the principle that “the risk of doing nothing is greater than the risks associated with directly supporting community and economic development.” The City has put significant resources, e.g. tax increment financing, redevelopment funds, state/federal grants and loans, and ARPA funding, toward addressing market failures that keep businesses and private developers from investing in our community. The results speak for themselves: more than \$31 million in public funds from various sources has been spent on Downtown properties and projects, and that has been answered with nearly \$97 million in private investment. The City’s redevelopment activities

span a wide spectrum. A large-scale example would be the millions of dollars spent in preparing the site for the Congress & Main project, so that the construction of the final buildings would be financially feasible for the development partners. On the smaller scale would be the \$6,900 in ARPA funds that were spent on façade improvements for the new Bootlegger Bikes store, so that neighboring buildings would benefit, and neither the property owner or business would have to add those expenses to operating costs or rent. Since record-keeping began in 2011, more than \$493,000 has been spent on façade and signage improvements Downtown, primarily with historic tax credits or City redevelopment funds. Furthermore, the City committed to focusing its allotment of 2021 federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds on business-support activities that typically aren't eligible for other state and federal grants. Nearly \$1.5 million of the City's ARPA funds have been spent on renovations, rental assistance, and other financing to bring new businesses to at least nine empty downtown storefronts and to support the creation of new housing. As the ARPA funds are spent down, the City will lose a unique and flexible resource that was able to be spent on projects typically ineligible for common state and federal grants and loans.

Future Opportunities and Challenges for Downtown St. Albans

The COVID-19 pandemic was as disruptive for Downtown St. Albans as any other historic commercial center in the country. Luckily the disruptions included as many opportunities as challenges, if not more. The post-COVID devaluation of commercial space has affected Downtown and the rest of the City; for example, the hundreds of jobs lost when U.S. CIS vacated their offices on Lower Welden Street. Remote working trends mean that fewer employees are coming to work at places like A.N. Deringer and Peoples Trust Company, while other offices have closed or down-sized in some Downtown spaces. At the same time, the pandemic shut-down meant that many more local residents were staying in the community to patronize shops and restaurants during the day. This trend has continued with post-pandemic remote work.



From the 2023 City Plan Survey. Another example of how Downtown-related themes and activities were popular among respondents.

The City has shifted toward a residential growth strategy to ensure adequate foot traffic Downtown and to grow the pool of local customers. This includes new housing units created at Congress & Main and 45 Kingman Street, and proposed behind the Bellevue Building and on the Fonda site. At the same time, the City continues efforts to retain offices like the U.S. Passport Center and services like the UPS Store that bring many visitors Downtown on a daily basis.

New remote working trends may necessitate rethinking what the future of professional space needs to look like and what the City can do to enable remote workers to want to live here. The shift to resident growth means improving communication, transportation, and connectivity between the City and the rest of the community and the world, as well as retail and restaurants.

The City also invests in maintaining a beautiful and safe sense of place in Downtown St. Albans. Recently the City has been budgeting \$125,000 in general funds annually to support landscaping, decorations and maintenance for the Downtown streetscape and Taylor Park. Continuing this level of support will be essential to preserving Downtown as a pleasant place to visit.

Additional investments will likely be required to maintain quality of life and a sense of safety and accessibility Downtown in light of the aging population, the housing crisis, and community substance use disorder. A growing number of residents and visitors will have accessibility limitations when visiting Downtown, and the City may have a role in providing access solutions to businesses and amenities.

The City and other community partners may also need to adjust efforts to provide social services and security for community members who are in crisis in the Downtown area. Many social supports are located within Downtown. This has been beneficial in many respects for the broader community and for any community members who are immediately located Downtown and require the services. However, there are lingering concerns about whether concentrating the services for community members in crisis may be incompatible with the perception of a safe and welcoming atmosphere for the residents and visitors that is an existential requirement for Downtown businesses. There should be a conversation about locations and solutions for social services that would be beneficial both for the Downtown and the greater community. There must be a way forward for the City to be a recovery friendly community while avoiding significant conflicts with Downtown revitalization.

It is also likely that the City will have to explore additional electrical charging solutions in various Downtown locations, as electric vehicles become more prevalent. Relatedly, an increase in the use of electric scooters, bikes and similar single-person vehicles is predicted to present both challenges and opportunities for Downtown’s ability to safely accommodate multiple modes of transportation.

Policies and Actions for Downtown St. Albans

Planning Goal 2.1	The built form and character of Downtown St. Albans will enhance the area’s sense of place and vibrancy.
Policy P.2.1.1	Efforts to identify, protect, and preserve important historical and architectural resources within the City will be welcomed and supported where appropriate.
Policy P.2.1.2	City regulations will allow very high residential densities and refrain from requiring off-street parking in the Downtown core of the City, as appropriate.
Policy P.2.1.3	City regulations will direct new construction to be sensitive to context and historic architecture and patterns.

Policy P.2.1.4	The permitted and conditional uses allowed Downtown will be compatible with the type of economic activity that is most conducive to the vibrant and active use of historic districts in today’s commercial climate.			
Policy P.2.1.5	In the central historic blocks of Downtown, regulations will direct residential uses to upper floors, rather than first floors, where retail and food service uses are preferred, except in the case of properties that have neither historically nor recently possessed retail storefronts.			
Policy P.2.1.6	City regulations will first favor re-use and restoration of existing historic structures over demolition for new construction.			
Policy P.2.1.7	If demolition of historic structures is proposed, City regulations will put the burden on the applicant to show the compelling and unique improvements that the development will offer for the public good and the sustained maintenance of the overall Historic District.			
Policy P.2.1.8	City regulations will maintain the strong urban form of Downtown St. Albans, including the provision of safe and accessible pedestrian corridors, dense development, reduced setbacks or the lack thereof, taller buildings, and the utilization of public parking rather than requiring off-street parking.			
Actions		Form of Action	Lead Party	Timeline
Action A.2.1.1	Continue the Downtown façade and signage improvement program and other forms of financial and technical assistance for buildings and businesses Downtown.	Program	City Staff and Council	Ongoing
Action A.2.1.2	Use design review and sign review as tools for preserving the look and feel of Downtown and the Historic District, and apply new learning and standards, as appropriate.	Regulation	City Staff, Council, and Planning Commission	Ongoing
Action A.2.1.3	Promote and facilitate the use of state and federal historic tax credits and other programs that can be used by property-owners to rehabilitate historic structures, as well as make them safer, more energy efficient, and more accessible.	Program	City Staff	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.2.1.4	Capitalize on the historic form and character of Downtown St. Albans in marketing materials.	Program	City Staff, Downtown Board	Ongoing
Action A.2.1.5	Explore the concept of disallowing homeless shelter uses and other social services in the historic center of Downtown and expanding their allowance in other suitable and accessible areas in the City.	Regulation	City Staff, Council, and Planning Commission	1-3 Years
Action A.2.1.6	Update the master plan for Taylor Park, as necessary, and use capital programming and other resources to improve the park’s infrastructure, functionality, and natural environment.	Program	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise

Action A.2.1.7	Increase the accessibility of the downtown streetscape, e.g., adding handrails and other solutions for the steps along the eastern block between Congress and Bank Streets.	Program	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise
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Planning Goal 2.2	Downtown St. Albans will thrive as a center of commerce, culture, and community life.			
Policy P.2.2.1	Economic growth will be encouraged and prioritized in the Downtown area.			
Policy P.2.2.2	Public infrastructure improvements will be used as a means to strengthen the downtown area and to attract private investment.			
Policy P.2.2.3	The principles of Smart Growth and Complete Streets will be implemented wherever possible.			
Policy P.2.2.4	The City will seek to capitalize on the ability to locate jobs, housing, and community events in Downtown St. Albans.			
Policy P.2.2.5	City regulations and initiatives will encourage infill development and redevelopment.			
Policy P.2.2.6	Downtown’s suitability as a location for social services must not harm the impression of safety and order felt by shoppers, residents, and visitors.			
Policy P.2.2.7	City regulations and initiatives will enable sustainable grand list growth and tax increment revenue in the Downtown.			
Policy P.2.2.8	City regulations and initiatives will ensure motorized, non-motorized, and public transit connections to and throughout Downtown.			
Policy P.2.2.9	The City will support multimodal connections to Downtown via sidewalks to the neighborhoods, pedestrian/bicycle connections to the MVRT and other trail networks, public transit on the roadways, and rail service along existing rail corridors			
Policy P.2.2.10	The City’s State Downtown Designation, soon to have the new label “Step 3 Advanced Center” will be supported and maintained. The City will look for opportunities to adjust the boundaries of the designation when it may further the revitalization of Downtown St. Albans or other community goals.			
Policy P.2.2.11	The City will implement and support processes for providing public art in Downtown St. Albans.			
Policy P.2.2.12	The City will support and join efforts to facilitate and encourage tourism from Quebec, including the re-establishment of Amtrak train service to Montreal with a stop in St. Albans.			
Policy P.2.2.13	The City will implement and support Downtown design and placemaking activities to facilitate the safety and security of visitors and to provide multigenerational and multi-ability access to businesses and amenities.			
Policy P.2.2.14	The City will invest resources, as appropriate and able, into ensure that numerous community events occur Downtown on a regular basis.			

Policy P.2.2.15	The City will continue the operation of the Welden Theatre to the best of its ability and will support it with continued investment and/or with a solution that transitions the theater to new owner who can make a long-term commitment.			
Actions		Form of Action	Lead Party	Timeline
Action A.2.2.1	Operate a well-supported Downtown revitalization program and partner with St. Albans For the Future to maintain Downtown St. Albans' Step 3 designated status.	Program	City Staff, Council, and Downtown Board	Ongoing
Action A.2.2.2	Market Downtown St. Albans as a prominent facet of our community's brand.	Program	City Staff, Downtown Board	Ongoing
Action A.2.2.3	Continue to expand and maintain streetscape improvements Downtown and seek a diverse array of funding sources to do so.	Projects	City Staff	Ongoing
Action A.2.2.4	Utilize funding and other resources available for brownfield clean-up activities.	Projects	City Staff	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.2.2.5	Use the planned Federal Street Multimodal Connector improvements as an opportunity to provide a pedestrian/bicycle linkage to the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail.	Project	City Staff	3-5 Years
Action A.2.2.6	Make Taylor Park available as the site of the Farmers Market.	Program	City Staff and Council	Ongoing
Action A.2.2.7	Engage in efforts to provide more attractive and effective means of connecting rail and transit passengers with Downtown St. Albans, including improvements at the Amtrak station.	Projects	City Staff, Council, and Downtown Board	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.2.2.8	Continue to invest in City Hall and the Welden Theatre and position them as venues for meetings, programs, arts, performances, and/or events.	Program	City Staff and Council	Ongoing
Action A.2.2.9	Explore and implement opportunities and processes for installing public art Downtown.	Program	City Staff, Council, and Downtown Board	1-3 Years
Action A.2.2.10	Continue the numerous means through which the City supports Downtown events. Seek mutually beneficial solutions to ensure the sustainability of the City's participation.	Program	City Staff and Council	Ongoing and as Opportunities Arise
Action A.2.2.11	Explore the opportunities and solutions for providing wi-fi, 5G data, or similar wireless services Downtown, with a focus on Taylor Park.	Project	City Staff, Council and Downtown Board	2-4 Years

Action A.2.2.12	Explore opportunities for preserving pedestrian safety and accommodating new modes of travel associated with electric bikes, scooters, etc.	Project	City Staff, Council and Downtown Board	2-4 Years
Action A.2.2.13	Analyze and interpret crime data from the Police Dept. to track trends on types and frequency of incidents and compare to the surrounding area.	Project, Program	City Staff and Downtown Board	1-3 Years, then Ongoing

Chapter 3. Our Neighborhoods

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

Objective O.3.1.1 Prevent long-term property vacancies, housing blight, and illegal activities in neighborhoods.

Objective O.3.1.2 Ensure that homes are viable and well-maintained residences.

Objective O.3.1.3 Connect our neighborhoods to our parks, businesses, schools, and recreational resources.

Planning Goal 3.2 Our neighborhoods will play a significant role in attracting and retaining residents.

Objective O.3.2.1 Maintain and perpetuate the high degrees of architectural character and pedestrian focus that our neighborhoods have inherited throughout their history.

Objective O.3.2.2 Maintain the ability of residential parcels to meet the needs of modern households.

Objective O.3.2.3 Maintain a healthy tree canopy and system of greenbelts in City neighborhoods.

Objective O.3.2.4 The City’s neighborhoods retain their remarkable historic aesthetic and are an accessible source of pride to the residents that live there.

The City of St. Albans could be described as a “downtown surrounded by neighborhoods,” although a true analysis of land uses would result in more detail. Nevertheless, the City’s neighborhoods are equally as important as historic Downtown St. Albans in their role in establishing our community’s sense of place.

The paradox of our neighborhoods is that the most distinct aspects of their form and design are primarily the products of bygone necessities of historic development, and yet they provide far more inherent value and quality of life to residents than if they were subject to the development pressures of today’s car-focused economy and construction cost pressures. In other words, the City’s primary mission is to preserve the historic layout and design of our neighborhoods while maintaining their market viability and responding to the current housing crisis.

Benefits of a Bygone Era

The City’s residential neighborhoods are some of the oldest in the county. As shown in the Housing chapter, nearly half of the City’s housing units were built in 1939 or earlier, which is

double the rate for Franklin County. From the wealthy estate lots to the workforce housing neighborhoods, there were a few common aspects of life that influenced their development:

1. Vehicles (even horse-drawn) were a distant luxury and the need for pedestrian access was reflected in sidewalks, walkways, and prominent front entrances.
2. Front porches for sitting and socializing reflected the fact that neighborhood life was one of the primary sources of entertainment and stimulation of the day.
3. Large yards were used for gardening and leisure play.
4. Windows were a primary source of light and heating/cooling, and thus they were large and plentiful on the facades of many homes.
5. Street trees were an important source of passive cooling from shade.
6. Small-scale neighborhood retail and groceries were prevalent throughout areas that were otherwise residential.

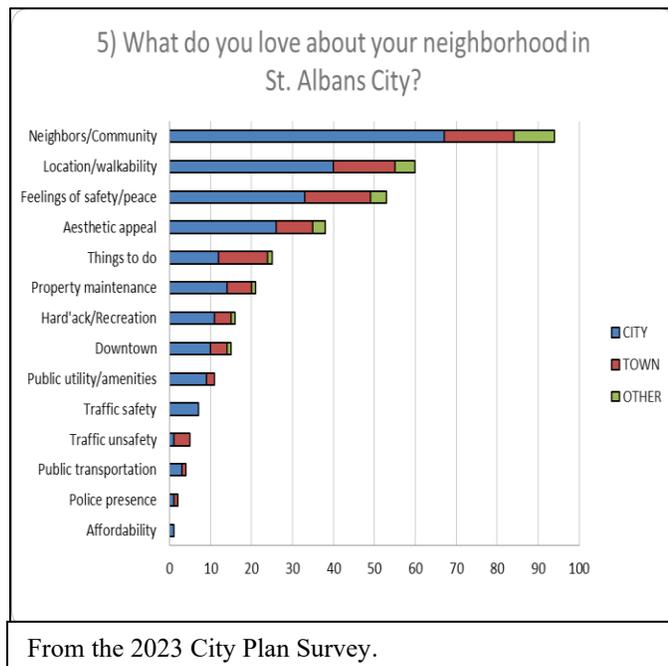
Responses from the 2025 City Plan Survey:

- A majority of respondents felt that it was important to maintain the current look and feel of the buildings in their neighborhood.
- A little over 43% of respondents seemed willing to see more people and housing in their neighborhood, versus nearly 39% who seemed unwilling.

Maintaining the Benefits of City Neighborhoods Today

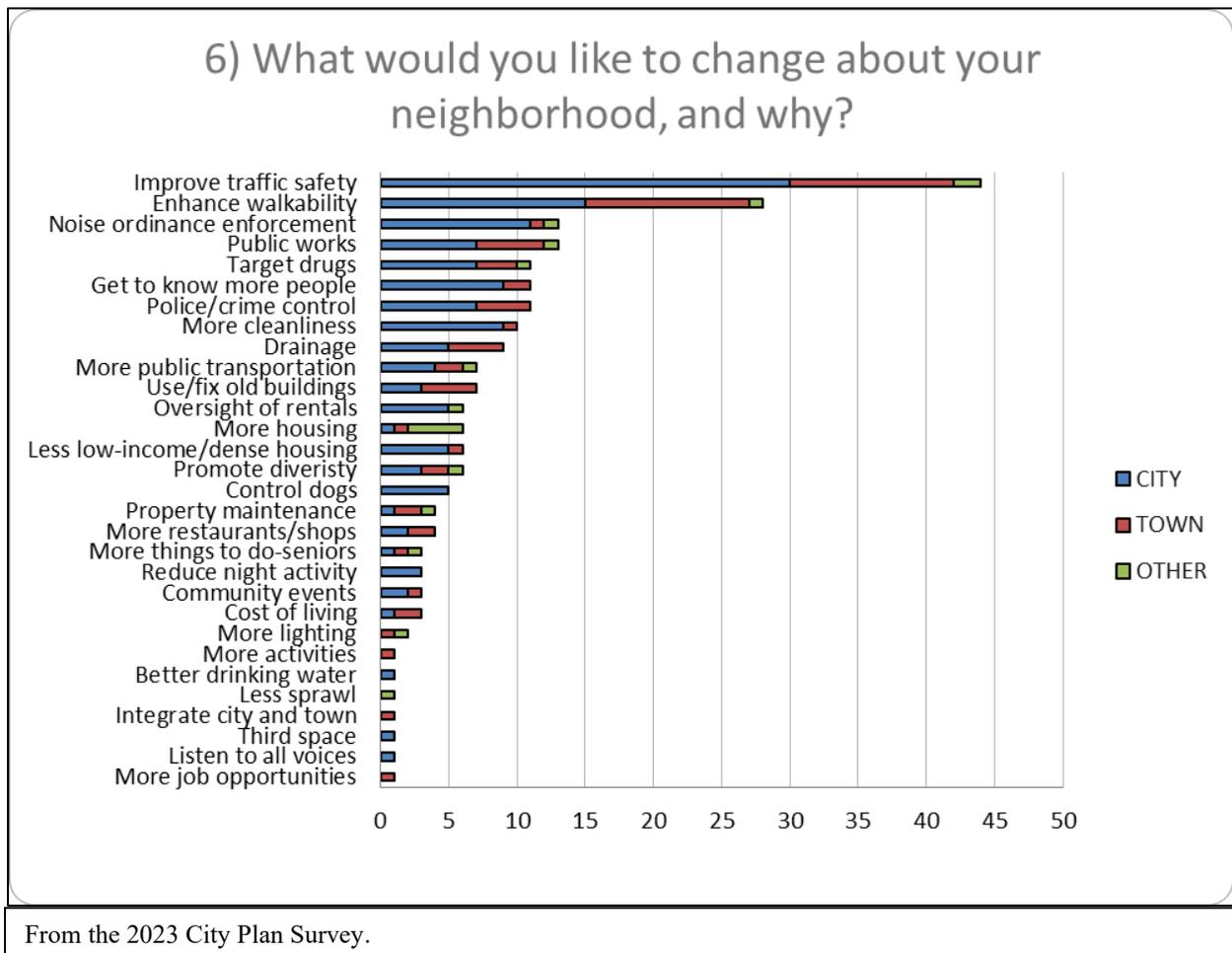
If the City’s residential neighborhoods were all constructed today, there would be many other powerful interests competing for car-focused streets and lots, fewer sidewalks, entrances that favor parking over pedestrians, less fenestration in the interest of cost, and lots that maximize buildings over yards and open space. Another fundamental difference is the fact that the average household size in the City has decreased over time, e.g., roughly one person less in 2020 than it was in 1960 (see Housing chapter).

While our neighborhoods cannot be treated as museums, and sadly, many historic homes may succumb to eventual wear and tear, the City should ensure that renovation and new construction preserve the distinct and beneficial aspects of our historic residential areas. In previous decades, the



City’s regulations used density limits as a proxy to limit the development pressures in neighborhoods and ensure that their built form would be preserved. Unfortunately, it has also been demonstrated that density limits and restrictions on multi-family housing can be used to limit equity and keep certain households out of neighborhoods. That is antithetical to the City’s goals of being a welcoming community and providing multiple housing options for any household. As municipalities attempt to respond to the housing crisis and increased residential densities are forced by new state statutes, the City should continue to explore new ways to direct and incentivize appropriate neighborhood renewal and development, and ensure the preservation of historic homes whenever possible.

The City’s regulations should be adjusted in anticipation of increased development pressure in our neighborhoods and of population increases with more people living in close proximity to each other. As is well-known in municipal services, people living close to each other and changes adjacent to properties can lead to challenges and disagreements. However, this might be able to be an opportunity for the vibrancy and social capital of our neighborhoods. Regulations should also explore ways to allow the reestablishment of small-scale retail and grocery stores that have since disappeared.



Policies and Actions for the City’s Neighborhoods

Planning Goal 3.1	All City neighborhoods will be safe, vibrant, and connected places to live.			
Policy P.3.1.1	The City will maintain neighborhood streets and sidewalks that are safe and accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists, and other travel modes.			
Policy P.3.1.2	The City will take advantage of opportunities to expand the neighborhood sidewalk network.			
Policy P.3.1.3	The City will maintain the residential dwelling unit primacy of our neighborhoods by only allowing other uses where beneficial and compatible, such as home occupations, recreational space, childcare, bed & breakfasts, and neighborhood grocery stores.			
Policy P.3.1.4	The City will target appropriate incentives and regulatory enforcement to support the upkeep and improvement of housing and to add value to our neighborhoods, with particular attention paid to compliance in rental units and the mitigation of public nuisance properties.			
Policy P.3.1.5	The City will encourage and support housing connected to schools, safe areas for physical activity, and healthy food access via safe walking and biking routes and public transportation.			
Policy P.3.1.6	The City will hold property owners and tenants accountable for their roles in ensuring safety and quality of life in our neighborhoods.			
Policy P.3.1.7	The City will discourage or prohibit through-truck traffic, “airbrakes,” speeding, and other nuisances and safety risks in residential areas.			
Actions	Form of Action	Lead Party	Timeline	
Action A.3.1.1	Use City redevelopment funds and other methods to improve properties that are not being addressed by the private market and convert them back into contributing aspects of their neighborhoods.	Projects	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.3.1.2	Reconstruct aging neighborhood sidewalks. Once a neighborhood’s sidewalks have been rebuilt, pursue a maintenance plan to deal with damaged or shifted sidewalk panels as they arise.	Program	City Staff	Ongoing
Action A.3.1.3	Pursue new sections of sidewalks and curbs in order to expand the network and to provide safe off-street pedestrian access for all of our residential neighborhoods.	Projects	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise

Action A.3.1.4	Ensure that the City’s streetlights provide adequate illumination in our neighborhoods and request new lights from the electrical utility when needed. Respond to complaints of excessive light and collaborate with property owners to address these issues without compromising the neighborhood’s overall illumination.	Program	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.3.1.5	Review and amend the various uses allowed in our residential districts to ensure that they are primarily residential, while other supportive and beneficial uses are allowed as appropriate.	Regulation	City Staff, Council, and Planning Commission	1-3 Years
Action A.3.1.6	Continue the City’s rental registry and inspection program and the enforcement of the Public Nuisance Property ordinance in order to ensure the maintenance of safety and quality of life in rental housing.	Program	City Staff and Council	Ongoing
Action A.3.1.7	Explore new revenue sources and programs for home improvement funding and implement as appropriate.	Program	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.3.1.8	Establish truck routes through the City to divert through-truck traffic out of neighborhoods.	Regulation	City Staff and Council	2-4 Years
Action A.3.1.9	Encourage and facilitate neighborhood events and gatherings, as appropriate.	Program	City Staff and Council	Ongoing

Planning Goal 3.2	Our neighborhoods will play a significant role in attracting and retaining residents.			
Policy P.3.2.1	Parking shall not be allowed in City greenbelts and on front lawns. Parking areas in front of residential housing shall be discouraged and only allowed when other parking options are not realistically feasible.			
Policy P.3.2.2	The City shall prioritize the planting of trees in the greenbelt and along streets. Street trees shall be managed for public safety, longevity, aesthetics, and the prevention of nuisances.			
Policy P.3.2.3	Residential regulations shall be designed, implemented, and/or supported in ways that recognize the need to maintain the residential viability of the historically small or crowded parcels in our neighborhoods.			
Policy P.3.2.4	Increases in allowed housing densities shall not be allowed to diminish the architectural character and pedestrian focus of our neighborhoods.			
Policy P.3.2.5	The City will protect the beneficial aesthetic and ecological aspects of neighborhood streetscapes.			

Actions		Form of Action	Lead Party	Timeline
Action A.3.2.1	Market the quality of the City’s neighborhoods, as well as the City’s associated quality of life efforts.	Program	City Staff	Ongoing
Action A.3.2.2	Use City resources, when appropriate, to re-establish and maintain greenbelts and find alternatives to "grandfathered" greenbelt parking.	Program	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.3.2.3	Support historic rehabilitation of the existing housing stock with incentives, inventories, and recognition, as appropriate.	Program	City Staff, Council, PC ⁴ , HPC ⁵	1-3 Years
Action A.3.2.4	Strengthen the City's ordinances concerning the protection and management of street trees.	Regulation	City Staff and Council	1-3 Years
Action A.3.2.5	Work with overhead utilities and their contractors to ensure that street tree pruning operations are as limited as possible and used only in cases of clear and imminent conflict.	Program, Regulation	City Staff and Council	1-3 Years
Action A.3.2.6	Increase the City's capacity for street tree management and retain the services of consulting certified arborists.	Program	City Staff and Council	1-3 Years
Action A.3.2.7	Explore form-based codes or similar design regulations for residential districts in the City that do not preclude the ability of landowners to maintain property.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and Planning Commission	2-4 Years
Action A.3.2.8	Regulate parking for the purposes of public safety, quality of life, neighborhood aesthetics, and prevention of nuisances.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and Planning Commission	Ongoing

⁴ Planning Commission

⁵ Historic Preservation Commission

Chapter 4. Housing

Planning Goal 4.1 City residents can access and afford safe housing that meets the needs of their household.

Objective O.4.1.1 All residents of the City of St. Albans have access to affordable, safe, and sanitary housing.

Objective O.4.1.2 The City will have housing available to meet a broad range of needs.

Objective O.4.1.3 Universally accessible or otherwise ADA compliant housing units in the City will increase over time.

“Vermont is suffering a housing crisis.” This is a phrase often repeated by politicians, government officials, employers, social service providers, and others throughout the state. A dearth of adequate and affordable housing across the State is one of the primary active public policy challenges at the time of the development of this City Plan, and it is an issue that is likely to linger for many years.

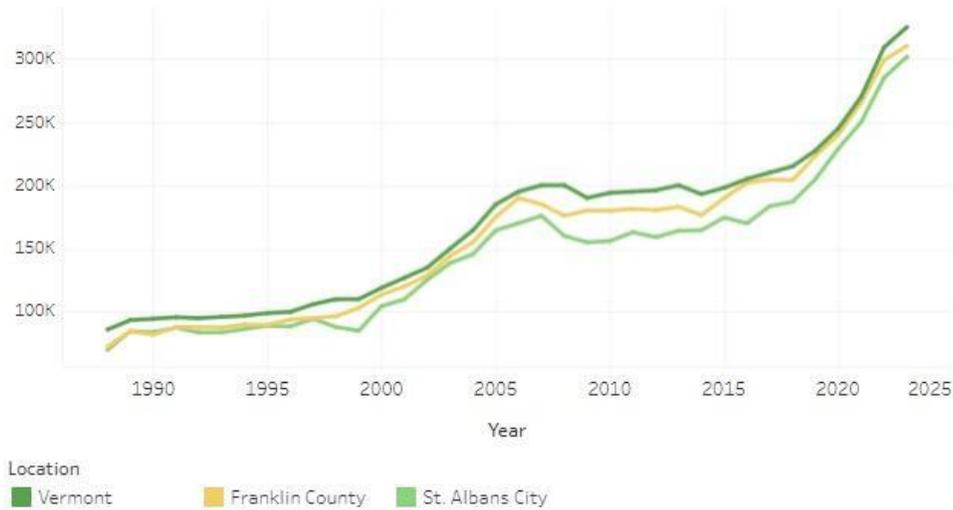
Safe housing is an essential need for everyone who lives in Vermont. St. Albans is proud to report that we are committed to increasing housing density and development where appropriate in our city. We recognize that like, all communities, St. Albans has a role to play in providing safe, affordable housing.

There is a wealth of public data available to illustrate the housing crisis, including that Vermont has the highest per capita number of people without homes in the country. People seeking to move to Vermont describe a gauntlet of finding and affording appropriate housing. Employers state how challenging it is to find homes for new workers moving into or across the state.

The causes of the housing crisis are a combination of factors resulting in the net growth of housing stock not matching the net growth of households, and housing prices outpacing wages and wealth.

Local data shows that the City is experiencing the same trends as the rest of the state. In 2017, when the last City Plan was adopted, the median home sale price in the City of St. Albans was \$183,500. In 2023, the median home sale price was \$301,500, and the trend line mirrors the state and Franklin County.

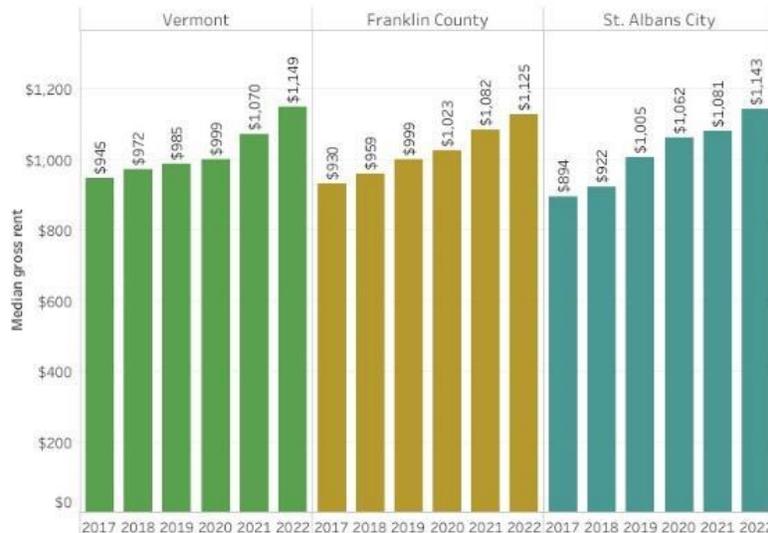
Median home sale price
 Vermont, Franklin County, St. Albans City
 Home type: All



Source: VT Dept. of Taxes Property Transfer Tax 1988-2023 presented at www.housingdata.org

Likewise, gross rent costs in the City have matched state and county increases.

Median gross rent estimates



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey presented at www.housingdata.org

The Northwest Planning Commission’s 2022 Housing Needs Assessment⁶ analyzed various data points to conclude that 7,600 households in Franklin County and Grand Isle County were facing an unmet need of being able to find and/or afford adequate housing. The 2025 Vermont Housing Needs Assessment conducted further analysis and assigned housing targets for each region,

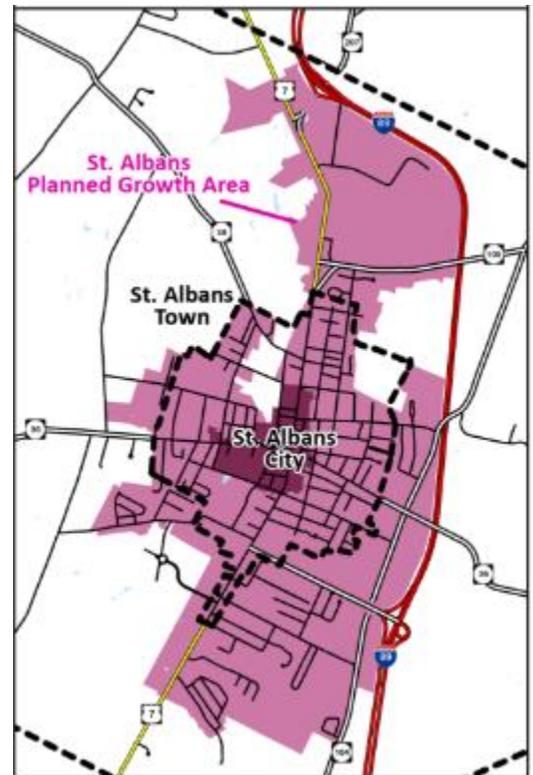
⁶ This document will be included as an appendix to the City Plan.

which were then split into municipal targets by NRPC. These targets set goals for new units needed by 2030 and 2050 to address immediate needs and accommodate future growth. Each target is a range with a lower and upper scenario.

Housing Targets: St. Albans Planned Growth Area						
Area	Current Housing Units (1/1/2025)	Current % Housing Growth per Year (2020-2025)	2030 Target		2050 Target	
			<i>Units</i>	<i>% / year</i>	<i>Units</i>	<i>% / year</i>
St. Albans City & Town PGA	4,752	0.5%	347 - 236	1.5 - 2.3%	2,188 - 4,321	1.9 - 3.7%
St. Albans City PGA	3,388	1.0%	116 - 175	0.7 - 1.1%	729 - 1,440	0.9 - 1.8%
St. Albans Town PGA	1,442	0.7%	231 - 351	3.3 - 5.0%	1,459 - 2,881	4.2 - 8.2%
Northwest Region	28,686	0.7%	2144 - 3249	1.5 - 2.3%	6,755 - 13,315	1.0 - 1.9%

At the regional level, St. Albans City is mapped as part of a Planned Growth Area that spans portions of both the City and the Town. Recognizing that the Town portion of the Planned Growth Area has a larger area with more room to grow, the housing target for the City is 1/3 of the overall Planned Growth Area target. Although the City is more built up than the Town, housing goals can be achieved through infill development of remaining open parcels and small-scale “missing middle” growth in existing neighborhoods.

Additionally, the City will have the opportunity to opt in to a Tier 1B exemption for the Downtown Center and Planned Growth Area, which would provide Act 250 exemptions for housing developments of 50 units or less on 10 acres or less. The City Council passed a resolution opting in to Tier 1B status in September 2025. The City can also apply for Tier 1A status, which would grant the area a complete Act 250 exemption for all projects. Reducing these regulatory barriers could further encourage new housing in the City. Tier 1A is explored in more detail in the Land Use chapter.



The Need for Adequate Housing

Our community’s collective quality of life, public safety, and sense of prosperity all depend upon providing adequate housing for the City’s residents, including those who are currently without regular shelter. Housing is only adequate when it is accessible, safe, clean, reliable, and affordable for those living there. Furthermore, there should be a sense that future housing

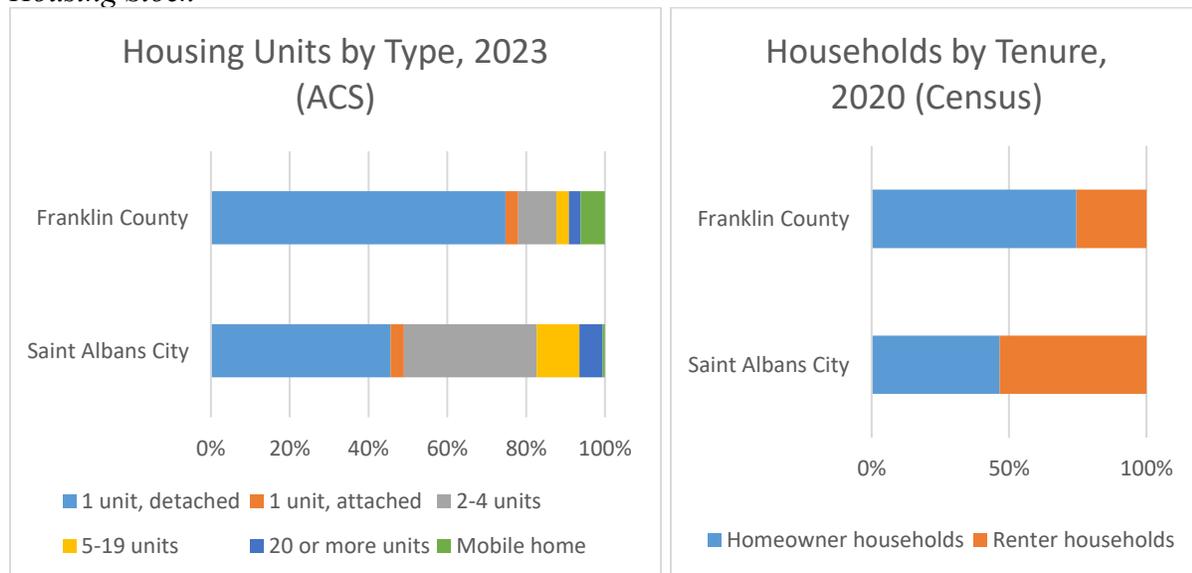
options are available for community members as their needs change and their wealth increases or decreases. Without adequate housing, our other goals for City residents, such as health and wellness, civic engagement, safe decision-making, welcoming of new community members, and economic participation, become nearly impossible.

Housing Data

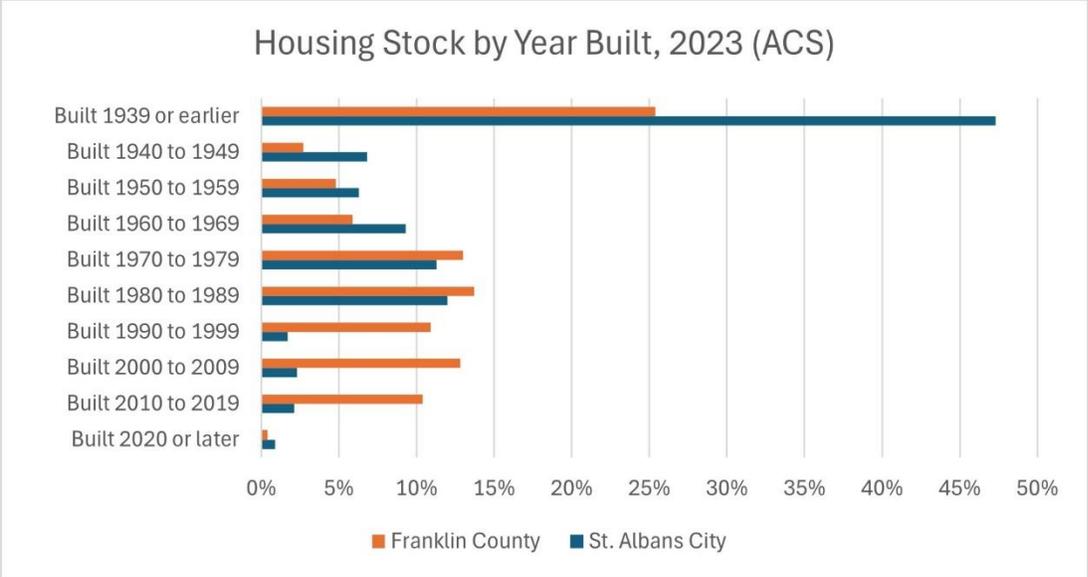
A large amount of research has been done on housing needs and trends in Vermont. The 2022 Northwest Regional Housing Needs Assessment identifies trends in housing data at a regional level, and the 2025 Vermont Housing Needs Assessment identifies housing data trends at a state level. The purpose of this section is to discuss additional trends that are specific to St. Albans City that inform our housing policies.

Note that some of these data points rely on the American Community Survey (ACS), which is based on a sample of the population and can have a high margin of error for smaller communities. Wherever possible, 2020 Census data is used instead of the 2023 ACS.

Housing Stock



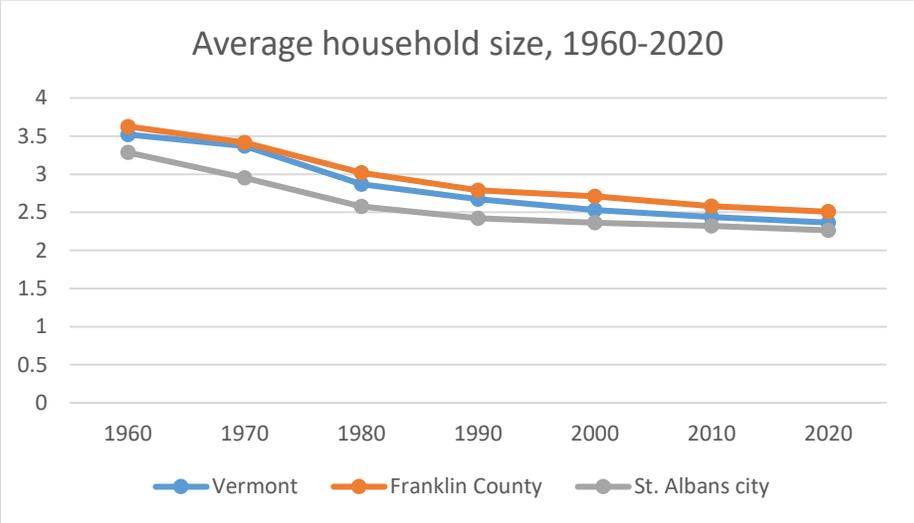
St. Albans City has a unique role within the region as a center of higher-density rental housing. According to the 2020 Census, 53% of households in the City are renter-occupied, and single-family detached houses account for only 46% of housing units. That ratio of renter- to owner-occupied housing is likely to continue. While owner-occupied housing seems to be on a slight rise in the City (1,314 declared Homesteads in 2016 versus 1,343 in 2025), a much larger proportion of new housing permits in the last decade have been for rental units. Within Franklin County, St. Albans City accounts for 14% of the population but contains 32% of the county’s rental housing and 46% of the county’s multifamily housing units. St. Albans City has an important role in providing a diversity of housing types that are currently rare elsewhere in the region.



On average, St. Albans City’s housing stock is older than the surrounding region. According to the American Community Survey, nearly half of housing units were built in 1939 or earlier, which is double the rate for Franklin County. When comparing this data, St. Albans City did not experience the same growth from 1990-2020 as the rest of the region. However, in recent years, the City has been building new housing at a greater rate. From 2020 to 2025, the City built 124 new housing units, which included half of the region’s new multifamily units.

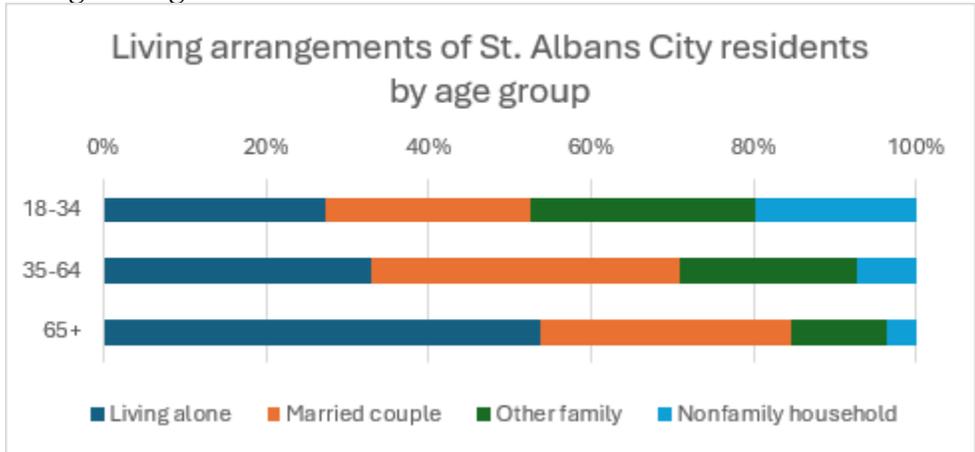
According to the American Community Survey and the grand list, St. Albans City has no seasonal housing units.

Household Size



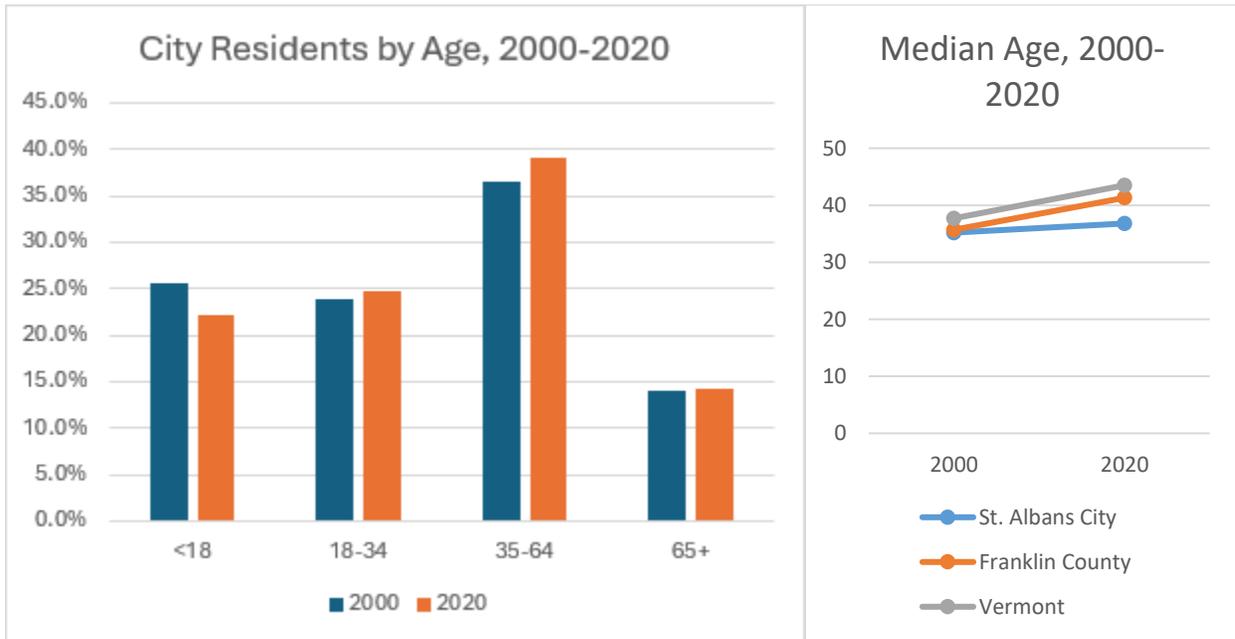
Similar to statewide and regional trends, average household size has declined in St. Albans City. This is anticipated to continue region-wide between 2020 and 2040. As household size decreases, a greater number of housing units are needed to house the same population.

Living Arrangements



Living arrangements of current residents can offer insight into potential unmet demand for housing in the region. In 2020, the Census Bureau estimated that nearly half of City residents age 18 to 34 in the region were living with others (not alone or with a spouse/partner). Residents age 18 to 34 who are living with others (not alone or with a spouse/partner) are considered ‘underhoused’ because it is assumed that some percentage of these residents would prefer other living arrangements but are unable to find affordable housing that meets their needs. Overall, a lack of affordable housing may be inhibiting the ability of younger residents to start their own households. Census data shows that the number of households with children has decreased by about 300 since 2000.

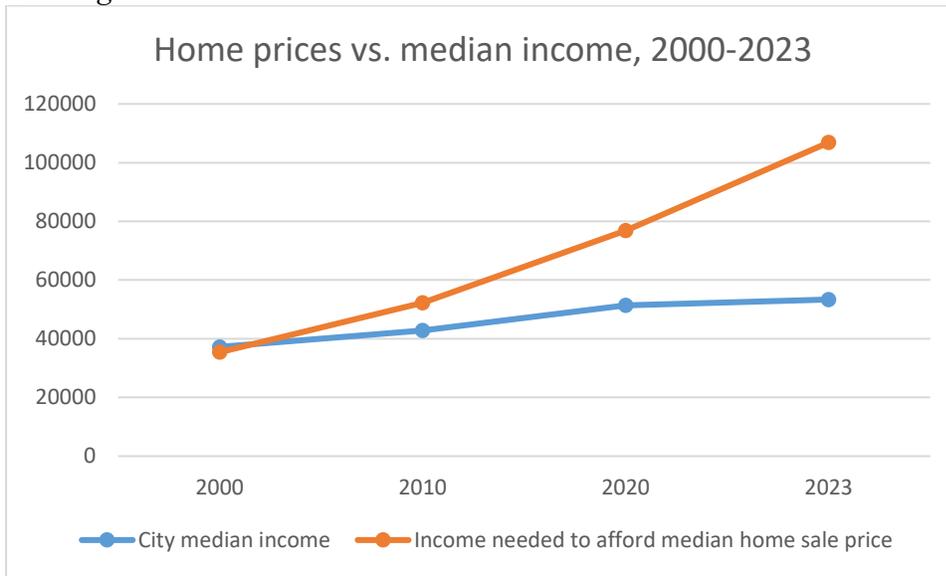
Age



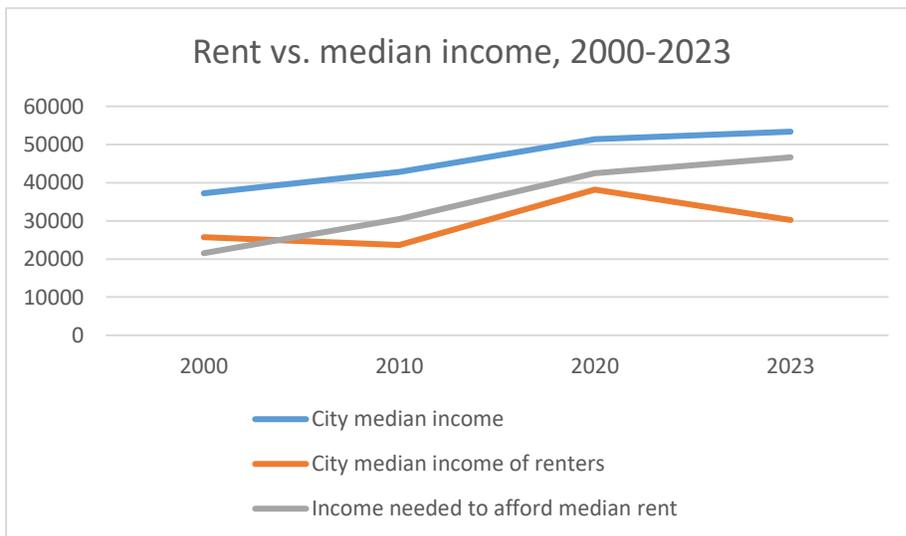
Unlike other places in Vermont, the proportion of City residents age 65 and over has not increased substantially in recent years. The median age has risen slightly from 35.2 to 36.8 since 2000. This can be attributed to a slight decrease in the proportion of children under 18 and an

increase in the 35-65 age group. The City’s median age is significantly lower than the Franklin County and the Vermont median. However, it is still important to ensure that the City’s older residents have adequate housing options available. The Census Bureau estimates that over 20% of residents over the age of 65 have some form of disability. Providing seniors with accessible opportunities to downsize within their community could lead to a mutually beneficial situation where larger housing units are opened up for families.

Housing Costs



The gap between median income and homeownership costs has grown at an accelerating rate over the past two decades. The median sale price of a primary residence in St. Albans City was \$319,450 in 2023. According to the Vermont Housing Finance Agency, a household would need an income of at least \$106,858 to afford this price without being cost-burdened. The city median household income in the same year was \$53,370, which means that this price is unaffordable to most City residents. In 2023, over 40% of homeowners with a mortgage reported spending over 30% of their monthly income on housing.



The cost of renting is lower than owning a home, but the median income of renters in the City is also lower than the median for homeowners. In 2023, the median income for renter households was \$30,196, 43% lower than the overall City median. Data shows that there is generally a high rate of cost burden for renters. In 2023, 57% of renters reported spending over 30% of their income on housing. The median rent in 2023 was \$1,166.

Overall, the City’s median household income is lower than most surrounding communities. State and federal definitions of affordable housing for St. Albans City are based on median household income for the Burlington-South Burlington Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The MSA median household income was \$95,497 in 2023, significantly higher than the City’s median. The resulting Fair Market Rent for St. Albans City is \$1,476 for a 1-bedroom apartment. It is important to be aware that affordable housing projects and programs that rely on this definition of affordability may still not meet the needs of City households.

What Can Be Done About the Housing Crisis?

There is an important role for City policies and actions associated with ensuring adequate housing, and then there are also other local and regional partners with essential parts to play. One mantra heard around the state is “Housing First,” essentially a recognition of how important adequate housing is to all other aspects of modern life. However, there are others, including leaders of housing agencies, who subscribe to the statement, “Services First,” in light of the fact that a broad array of social services is truly necessary to ensure that community members can access and maintain adequate housing and continue to have their overall needs met. Furthermore, there is a need for some community members for safe housing combined with effective social services, such as recovery homes for those with substance use disorder.

As a partner in addressing the housing crisis, the City’s role is strongest in the realms of regulation, redevelopment, infrastructure, and public safety. In this City Plan’s goals, objectives, policies and actions related to housing, the reader will find that the City is tasked with playing direct roles in the following types of items:

1. Ensuring that land use regulation does not hamper housing development where it would be appropriate. Supporting large-scale multifamily housing on vacant and underutilized lots and infill development in existing neighborhoods, including accessory dwelling units.
2. Providing for a safe community.

Highlights from Stakeholder Discussions:

- There is not enough adequate, affordable housing available in the community.
- Conflicting input that local social services primarily benefit community members and do not attract large amounts of people from other areas to St. Albans, but also that most of the county’s unhoused population is sheltered in and around the City.
- There is a need for more emergency shelter space for children. The City should increase access to shelter space in general.
- There are unhoused community members who simply prefer to live in tents, and that will always be a factor. The City should find a place for the unsheltered to set up tents.
- As they age, City residents are more likely to move into more manageable housing options if they don’t have to leave their community.

3. Creating and maintaining good multimodal connections between residential areas and other community services.
4. Acting as a development partner to add housing supply that the community needs.
5. Supplying water, sewer, and other municipal services that allow for housing growth, including outside the City, such as water and sewer service to St. Albans Town and Swanton.
6. Providing and managing green spaces and recreational areas within the city to support higher-density housing zones that may have limited public space for residents and to provide more integrated neighborhoods.

Since the adoption of the 2017 City Plan, the City has supported multifamily redevelopment efforts for a net increase of 173 units of subsidized, market-rate and senior housing. The City has also been directly involved in the construction and renovation of several neighborhood homes. In addition, City leadership has stated a goal of forming development partnerships to build 200 more units of workforce housing in the next five years, including at the Fonda and Bellevue sites. Furthermore, this City Plan will set out policies and objectives to enable increases in allowed neighborhood housing densities in appropriate areas.

There are other local and regional organizations whose financing and expertise are meant primarily for the provision of social services, specialized/subsidized housing, and emergency shelter. The City can coordinate with these organizations wherever possible. Example organizations include:

- Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity
- Samaritan House and Tim's House
- Champlain Housing Trust
- Other member organizations of the Franklin Grand Isle Housing and Homelessness Alliance
- Cathedral Square
- Franklin Grand Isle Restorative Justice
- Habitat for Humanity
- Vermont State Housing Authority
- Spectrum Youth and Family Services
- New emerging entities, like Hope Grove Recovery House

Looking Ahead

The current wisdom is that the State simply needs more of all types of housing today. However, eventually there may have to be a discussion about overbuilding in the housing market or focusing too many resources on one type of dwelling, such as 1- to 2-bedroom multifamily rental, versus other types of housing like senior living, 3- or 4-bedroom, condominiums, single-family housing, 2- to 4-unit structures, etc. The current recommendation is to respond to the financial sustainability of the market demand for multifamily rental housing. The assumption is that there is an adequate housing stock of other various types that will be freed up by a shift of households to new apartments. For now, the focus should remain on new multifamily and

context-appropriate “missing middle” housing in neighborhoods, with an eye toward also encouraging other forms of development.

The City will play a critical role in the ability of the region to achieve its housing targets. Under the new Act 181 framework, the City’s Downtown Center enables the Planned Growth Area intended to enable the substantial housing targets to both the City and the Town. The City, and the Town to a smaller degree, is more likely to facilitate the creation of new large multi-family development than any other community in the region. At the same time, the City should ensure that a broad range of housing options exists in the City and that residents can evolve their housing experience without having to leave the municipality. For instance, one result of the stakeholder conversations in preparation of this plan was the wisdom that aging community members are more likely to transition to the housing that meets their changing needs if they do not have to leave their community as part of the move. The development of more multi-family, “missing-middle” housing is desired, but conversion projects should not significantly erode the broad spectrum of single-family ownership opportunities that exist in our neighborhoods. We want existing and new residents to be able to live and work in the City because they can afford to, but we don’t want them to have to leave the municipality to find the type of housing that they want to move up to as their wealth grows. Homestead declarations and other data should be monitored to track the long-term effect of housing development on the availability of single-family opportunities in the City.

Responses from the 2025 City Plan Survey:

- 85% of respondents owned their home, signifying that the survey responses were skewed toward that group.
- A third of respondents stated that they could foresee having to change their living situation in the future.
- A majority of respondents had a **low confidence** that they would be able to find an adequate place to live in the City or Town of St. Albans if they had to find a new home.

Policies and Actions for Housing in the City

Planning Goal 4.1	City residents can access and afford safe housing that meets the needs of their household.
Policy P.4.1.1	The City will use regulations and incentives, as able, to encourage the appropriate location of childcare, eldercare, and similar services in close proximity to families in our neighborhoods.
Policy P.4.1.2	The City's home occupation/industry rules will allow for appropriate degrees of entrepreneurship and small-scale economic activity in people’s homes but still respect the residential nature of neighborhoods.
Policy P.4.1.3	The City will support the development of housing solutions for seniors and the Franklin County Senior Center, as able. The City will endeavor to include the input of community members on the types of senior housing they need or will need.
Policy P.4.1.4	The City will take property valuation methods and tax revenue implications into account when considering support for housing developments subject to housing subsidy covenants.

Policy P.4.1.5	The City's regulations will treat manufactured homes and “tiny homes” in the same manner as any other housing structure.			
Policy P.4.1.6	The City's regulations will be developed to maximize allowed housing unit density, using historic built patterns, the character of neighborhood architecture, and traffic/service capacity as "guardrails."			
Policy P.4.1.7	The City will support and provide, as able, programs and incentives for accessibility and energy efficiency retrofits.			
Policy P.4.1.8	The City will not support encampments as a solution to the housing crisis.			
Policy P.4.1.9	The City will encourage compatible infill residential development in existing neighborhoods.			
Policy P.4.1.10	The City will ensure a broad range of affordable housing types in the City, so that residents do not have to leave the municipality to seek the type of housing that they want to move up to as their needs change and/or their wealth grows.			
Actions		Form of Action	Lead Party	Timeline
Action A.4.1.1	Use the Northwest Regional Planning Commission’s Northwest Housing Needs Assessment, the housing chapter of the Regional Plan, and the new regional housing targets, enhanced with the City’s own residential permitting data, to guide future housing regulation and initiatives. Also analyze current zoning and permitting data to assess how realistic the regional housing targets are for the City.	Projects, Regulation	City Staff, Council and Planning Commission	1-3 Years and Ongoing
Action A.4.1.2	Participate in regional and statewide permitting data collection initiatives to track the City’s contribution toward addressing the State’s housing crisis.	Program	City Staff	Ongoing
Action A.4.1.3	Continue to take the lead in residential redevelopment projects and engage to address market failures through means such as acquiring site control, remediating property issues, and utilizing local financing and tax increment tools.	Projects	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.4.1.4	Use the City’s Residential Data Tool and similar sources of information to explore which neighborhoods could support increased housing density.	Project and Regulation	City Staff, Council and Planning Commission	1-3 Years

Action A.4.1.5	Assemble data and information to compare the costs and benefits of preserving and modernizing existing historic homes versus replacement with new homes that perpetuate the beneficial aspects of neighborhood form.	Project	City Staff, Planning Commission, HPC ⁷	2-4 Years
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⁷ Historic Preservation Commission

Chapter 5. The Local Economy and Development Activities

Planning **The City is a thriving economic hub of the region.**

Goal 5.1

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Objective
O.5.1.1 | Remain effective in using public-private partnerships and appropriate financial tools to address the market failures that impede local development. |
| Objective
O.5.1.2 | Ensure access to quality employment opportunities locally and around the region. |
| Objective
O.5.1.3 | Facilitate private investment with a priority in the tax increment financing district and in other areas eligible for incremental financing. |
| Objective
O.5.1.4 | Increase the percentage of the resident labor force that lives and works in the City. |
| Objective
O.5.1.5 | Ensure the redevelopment of vacant or underutilized sites, especially the Bellevue block, 100-120 Federal Street, the St. Albans Messenger building, the former railroad headquarters, and the St. Mary's Church properties. |

City Development Efforts

Over the last fifteen years, the City of St. Albans has used focused planning, public infrastructure improvements, and direct engagement with the private sector in order to initiate and encourage property investment and redevelopment within the community. The goals of these efforts are to grow the municipal grand list while increasing options for residents and visitors to live, work, and play in our community, all in a manner compatible with the most positives aspects of the City's built form and sense of place. With those goals in mind, the City's strategy is to use public funds and other resources to "level the playing field" for private development inside our community versus other areas. The City assumes a role of removing the barriers to development that typically exist in historic centers and not in other areas where the private market could invest. Examples of the City's redevelopment contributions have included:

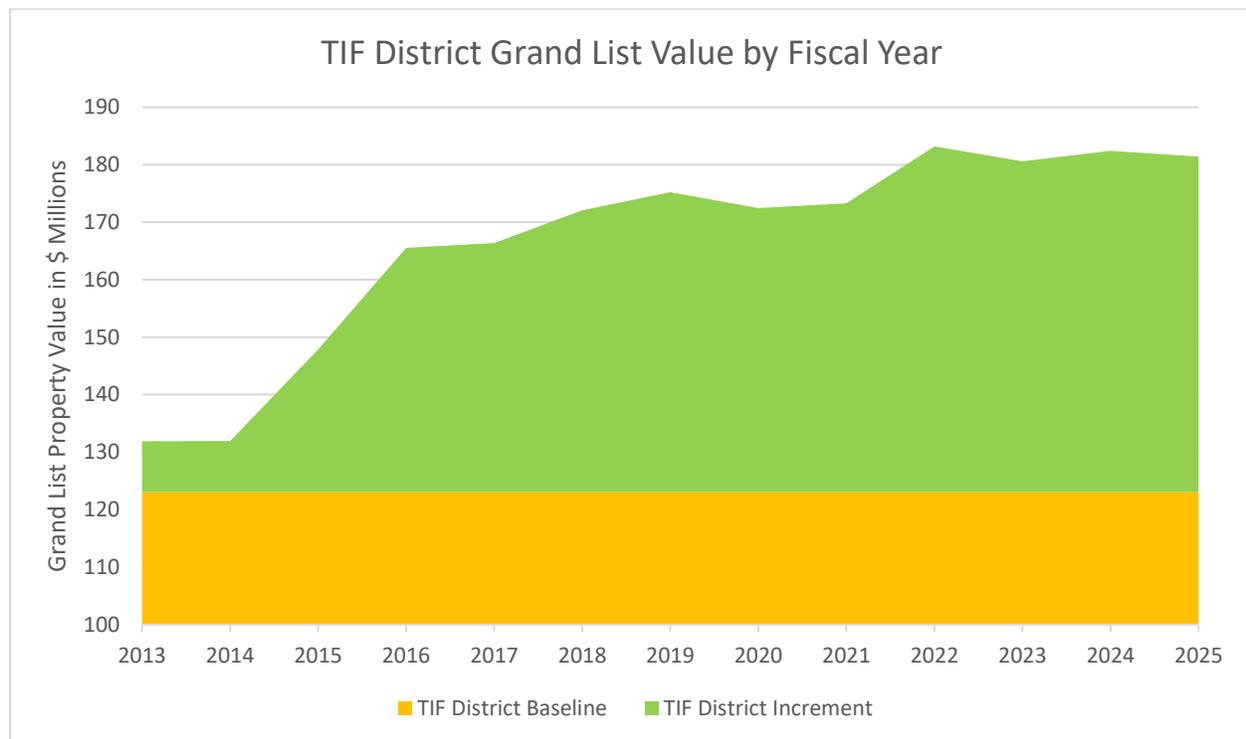
- Site control and preparation.
- Assessment and mitigation of brownfield contamination.
- Demolition and appropriate disposal of structures.
- Improvements to public infrastructure.
- Creation of off-site parking capacity.
- Specialized financing of land and capital.
- Coordinating multi-party real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

The City has been able to successfully engage in these activities while rarely using general fund dollars. Common funding sources include City redevelopment funds (not general fund), tax increment financing, and state and federal grants. For example, Chapter 2 of this plan contains

data comparing the public investments in Downtown St. Albans with the resulting private investments.

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

The economic market failures inherent in a historic center have a significant effect on the City’s redevelopment policies and programs and the solutions devised. The reliance on tax increment financing puts a high value on property values. Only increases in tax revenue can help pay off the debt for public projects that attract development and contribute to the public good. Any decreases in taxable value erode the City’s ability to use TIF for public projects. This means, for example, that the City may not use property tax abatement as a development tool, as other communities sometimes do. It also means that increases in tax-exempt property can be detrimental to the City’s efforts. The TIF district figure in this chapter and the grand list values table in Chapter 7 show the effect the TIF district has had on revenues for public projects as well as on the City’s overall grand list. The grand list began experiencing upward growth after a period of stagnation prior to the TIF district. And the TIF district has now grown by more than \$58 in incremental value as of fiscal year 2025.



The TIF district began with a baseline total grand list value of \$123 million in FY 2012. By the end of FY 2025, that grand list value had grown by 44% to more than \$181 million. Tax revenues from that incremental value are being used to pay down debt from public projects.

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

The City acted as the lead developer in another major TIF-funded redevelopment project. The "Congress & Main" project assembled the parcels surrounding 99 North Main Street, 12 Congress Street and 10 Maiden Lane, demolished buildings, most notably the 23 apartments at 10 Maiden Lane, and remediated environmental concerns. Through partnership with Champlain Housing Trust, Northwestern Medical Center, Community College of Vermont, and local developer Grant Butterfield, 63 new subsidized and market-rate apartments were built at 20 Congress Street and the new 10 Maiden Lane and 25,000 square feet of modern commercial space was opened in the Congress & Main building on North Main Street. Community College of Vermont moved into the new commercial space, and the St. Albans Police Department moved into former CCV building on 142 South Main Street, after renovations were completed. Also, the historic house at 12 Congress Street was renovated to provide three new apartments and one commercial unit.

Significant Commercial Areas in the City

The City's current B1, B2, Residential-Professional, and Service-Industrial land use districts comprise a rough north-south axis of primarily commercial and industrial uses mixed in with other civic and high-density residential uses. With Downtown St. Albans in the middle, the commercial/industrial districts most closely follow South and North Main Street, the "Federal Street Corridor" (Lemnah Dr., Allen St., Catherine St., and Federal St.), and the Railroad line. The eastern halves of Lake Street, Lower Welden Street, and Lower Newton Street are also contained within this area.

Apart from zoning districts, there are various other areas in the City, designated locally or in concert with the regional planning commission and the State, that have substantial influence over commercial development.

The Downtown Center. Delineated by the City and NRPC and subject to approval by the State Land Use Review Board. This area has seen some of the City's most intense redevelopment over the past five years. Replacing the previous State-Designated Downtown, the Downtown Center will have a larger boundary, expanded under the new framework established by Vermont Act 181 of 2024. The map below shows the new boundary.

The Planned Growth Area. Delineated by the City and NRPC and subject to approval by the State Land Use Review Board. This area will have Neighborhood Designation status under the new framework established by Act 181. Neighborhood Designation allows the City to access

certain financial and technical resources through state programs. The St. Albans City Council has also passed a resolution opting into the Tier 1B partial Act 250 exemption for the Planned Growth Area, combined with the Downtown Center. This area is also eligible for a Tier 1A complete exemption from Act 250, which the City will explore. Most of the City is included in the Planned Growth Area, excluding Aldis Hill and some industrial areas near the railroad. The Planned Growth Area also extends into adjacent portions of St. Albans Town, reflecting the City's historic and current significance as the center of commercial development in the area. This multi-community Planned Growth Area has been mapped at the regional level because of the local planning and infrastructure necessary to support future growth.

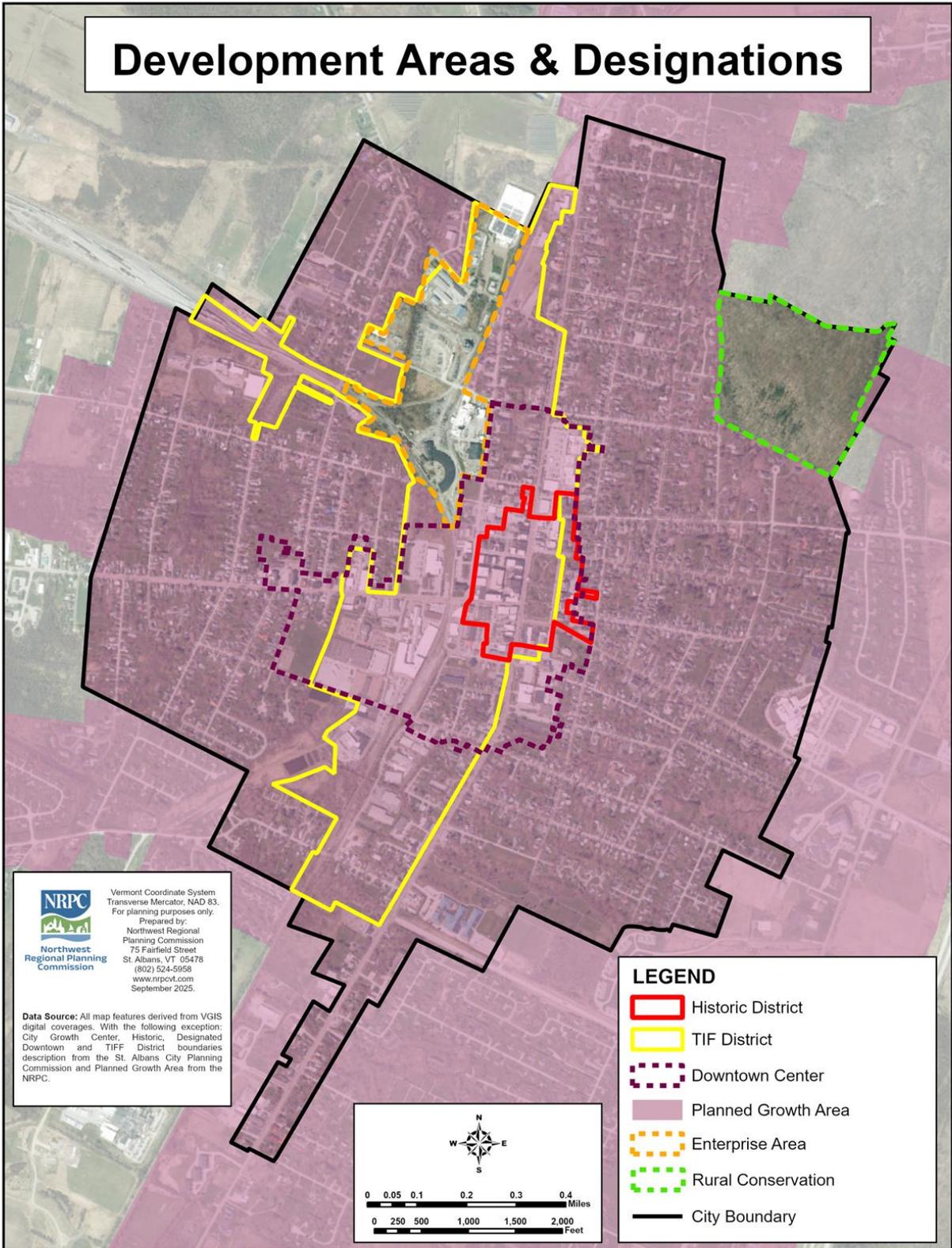
The Enterprise Area. Delineated by the City and NRPC, this area is predominated by industrial uses with some commercial mixed in. It is completely within the Service-Industrial zoning district. This area is distinct from the other designations in that it does not contain the residential and mixed uses that have been the reason that some other Service-Industrial District properties have been included in the Downtown Center or the Planned Growth Area.

The Growth Center. Designated by the State Downtown Development Board under the framework that existed before Act 181. This area was enabled by the State's designation of Downtown St. Albans and approved after the City demonstrated its ability to ensure development would occur in a manner reflecting smart growth principles and the State's statutory planning goals. As with the Downtown, the Growth Center designation enables the City to access certain financial and technical resources and was a key factor in the approval of the Tax Increment Financing District. After the approval of the new Northwest Regional Plan, the Growth Center will be phased out and replaced with the new Downtown Center and Planned Growth Area.

The Historic District. A collection of historically-significant sites that has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, and recently updated by the City. This area contains our City's historic commercial core, and it represents some of the character and form that must be preserved when redevelopment activities occur.

The Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District. In 2012 the City successfully applied to the Vermont Economic Progress Council for approval of the TIF district, within which most of the State and local tax revenues from any new grand list growth can be earmarked toward debt service on bonds for public infrastructure improvements. The City has used TIF funds toward property acquisition, site preparation, environmental remediation, streetscape improvements, and public infrastructure, such as underground utilities or the parking garage. All of these public projects associated with new private developments, such as the Downtown Ace Hardware store, the 27 Federal Street office building, the Mylan Technologies expansion, the Hampton Inn, the apartments and commercial space at Congress & Main, the renovation of 45 Kingman Street, and most recently the new Cathedral Square senior housing on Lower Newton Street. Planning is underway for the last few remaining TIF projects, including the Bellevue Redevelopment project and the Federal Street Multi-Modal Connector. It is imperative that the City maximize the creation of property tax increment in this area to support these public projects.

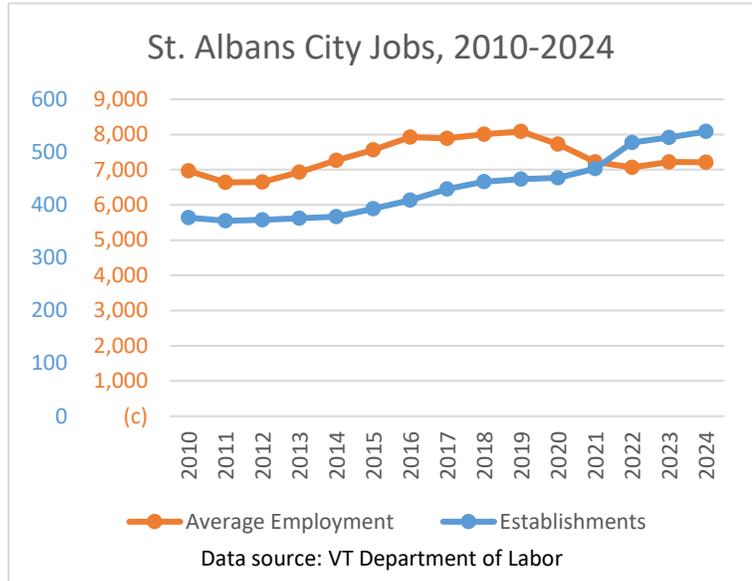
Development Areas & Designations



Jobs in the City

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

The City’s jobs represent over 40% of Franklin County’s total employment. Data from the Vermont Department of Labor shows that the number of jobs in the City has fluctuated over the past decade, including a decline of about 1,000 jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic and closure of the Customs and Immigration Facility that the City hasn’t fully recovered from, as of the latest data.



The five sectors with the most employment are trade, transportation and utilities (vast majority is retail and food/beverage), education and health services (e.g. the hospital), manufacturing (e.g. Viatris), the local and federal governments, and professional and business services (e.g. A.N. Deringer).. The City’s job spectrum is dominated by some large employers, such as Viatris (formerly Mylan Technologies), Northwestern Medical Center, the three Maple Run USD schools, and the State of Vermont. This reliance on several large employers should be noted as a concern for community resilience. For example, closure of the Customs and Immigration facility in 2021 led to a significant loss of about 600 local jobs. However, there is also a large mix of jobs at hundreds of professional offices, health care providers, shops and restaurants, and the number of small businesses seems to be increasing. Overall, there were 539 reported employers of some sort in the City in 2024, which is an increase of 20% from 2019. Because job growth has not increased at the same rate, this means that the City’s businesses are increasing in number and becoming smaller on average. The City’s 539 employers represent over a third of Franklin County’s total employers in the State report.

Highlight from Stakeholder Discussions:

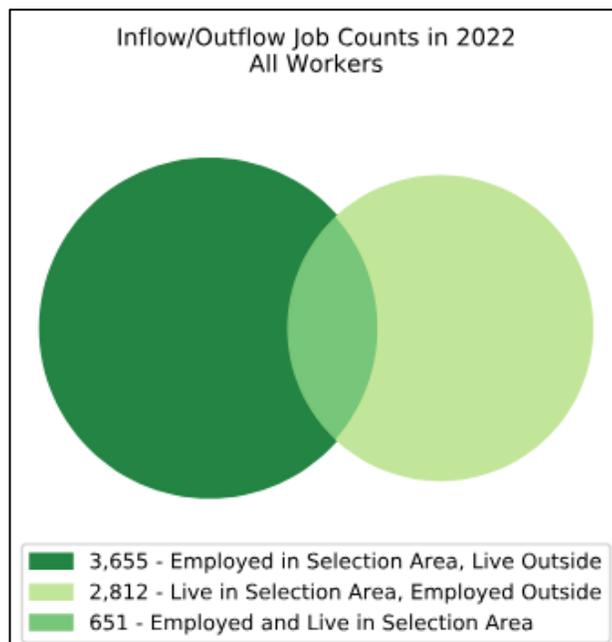
- The workforce is not a consistent and dependable pool for hiring, in terms of finding local employees or relocated new hires to the area.

Jobs in the City of St. Albans by Sector

Key Employment Sectors	2024, annual average	% change from 2019 annual average
City Total, All Sectors	7,209	-10.87%
Natural Resources and Mining	17	6.25%
Construction	104	-10.34%
Manufacturing	826	4.42%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,747	11.20%
Information	64	-25.58%
Financial Activities	172	-8.51%
Professional and Business Services	684	-37.25%
Education and Health Services	1,188	-6.90%
Leisure and Hospitality	532	-3.97%
Other services, except public administration	129	18.35%
Federal Government	692	-42.86%
State Government	263	-21.73%
Local Government	790	6.04%

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

An employment statistic that continues to vex City planning is illustrated in the pie chart below. The U.S. Census Bureau LEHD program (using the most recently available 2022 data) shows that a very small minority of the City’s resident labor force actually works in the City. This is despite the many housing units and jobs in the community. Nearly 4,000 people come in from outside the City to work here. Nearly 3,000 City residents commute to other communities. Only 651 people live and work in the City. It is assumed that the City’s broad range of employment opportunities offer many options for City residents. It is also assumed that it benefits the community to have more people living and working here, contributing more of their days here,



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

spending less time commuting, and having more time for recreation and civic engagement in the City.

As a contrast to the public data on commuting, nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the working City residents that responded to the 2025 City Plan Survey stated that they work at home or in City or Town of St. Albans.

Policies and Actions for the Economy and Development

Planning Goal 5.1	The City is a thriving economic hub of the region.		
Policy P.5.1.1	City regulations will use standards that are not prohibitive to suitable development.		
Policy P.5.1.2	The City will prioritize development in the Tax Increment Financing District and in other areas eligible for incremental financing.		
Policy P.5.1.3	Increases in tax-exempt property will be discouraged, and alternatives will be sought for any reduction in tax assessments, particularly in the TIF district.		
Policy P.5.1.4	The City will support the efforts of the Franklin County Regional Chamber of Commerce and Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation, as appropriate.		
Policy P.5.1.5	The City will emphasize customer service in the permitting and development review process.		
Policy P.5.1.6	The City will support access to a broad range of advanced telecommunications options for businesses and residences.		
Policy P.5.1.7	The City will encourage commercial development that fits the character of the surrounding area.		
Policy P.5.1.8	The City will maintain the tax increment financing district in good standing.		
Policy P.5.1.9	The City will support and advocate for future funding sources that are as flexible as ARPA funds, which could be spent on important local projects that are typically ineligible for common state and federal grants and loans.		
Policy P.5.1.10	The City supports co-working spaces, particularly those located Downtown, and other solutions that enable City residents to work remotely and avoid commuting out of the City.		
Policy P.5.1.11	The City supports the efforts of local employers to recruit employees and secure adequate housing for their workforce.		
Actions	Form of Action	Lead Party	Timeline

Action A.5.1.1	Promote appropriate development through tax increment financing, and use the taxes on the incremental property values for projects fulfilling the public good.	Projects	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.5.1.2	Promote the City as a vital regional and statewide center for business/professional services, retail, dining, education, residential use, health care, and recreation.	Program	City Staff, Council and Downtown Program	Ongoing
Action A.5.1.3	Support and/or invest in educational, health care, and municipal services and infrastructure that will aid in attracting economic development opportunities.	Program	City Staff and Council	Ongoing
Action A.5.1.4	Encourage residents and visitors to purchase goods and services from local businesses.	Program	City Staff, Downtown Board	Ongoing
Action A.5.1.5	Support programs that assist with the working capital and expansion needs of existing or new businesses.	Program	City Staff and Council	Ongoing
Action A.5.1.6	Support connections between existing businesses and the local labor force, including community members in recovery.	Program	City Staff and Council	Ongoing
Action A.5.1.7	Continue to utilize funding and other resources available for brownfield assessment and mitigation in the City.	Projects	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.5.1.8	Acquire vacant, underutilized, or blighted properties in a financially responsible manner for the purpose of preparing and marketing them for redevelopment.	Projects	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.5.1.9	Develop and launch a public relations and marketing campaign to attract private investment, new residents, and visitors. Coordinate efforts with local employer recruiting when appropriate.	Program	City Staff, Council and Downtown Program	1-3 Years
Action A.5.1.10	Pursue the public infrastructure and improvement projects proposed in the City's 2012 application for the Tax Increment Financing District, as well as any projects added upon approval of the Vermont Economic Progress Council. Also pursue public projects associated with other areas eligible for tax increment financing.	Program and Projects	City Staff and Council	Ongoing

Chapter 6. Wellness and Prosperity

Planning Goal 6.1 **Being in the City affords community members and visitors many opportunities for active and healthy lifestyles.**

Objective O.6.1.1 The City of St. Albans is positioned as one of the hubs for regional recreational resources in the county.

Objective O.6.1.2 Recreation facilities are accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists, and those with disabilities.

Objective O.6.1.3 City residents and visitors have a variety of free or otherwise affordable opportunities to recreate indoors and outdoors.

Planning Goal 6.2 **The community supports a life-long process that fosters personal wellness and opportunities to thrive.**

Objective O.6.2.1 Ensure that City residents have access to a wide variety of health care services in a number of different forms, including the services needed to avoid substance use disorder and to provide accountable and evidence-based treatment for those currently suffering from substance use disorder.

Objective O.6.2.2 Ensure that members of historically marginalized groups are included and feel that they belong and are safe.

Objective O.6.2.3 Broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure the full realization of the abilities of residents and visitors.

Objective O.6.2.4 Increase access to affordable childcare, eldercare, and similar services in the community.

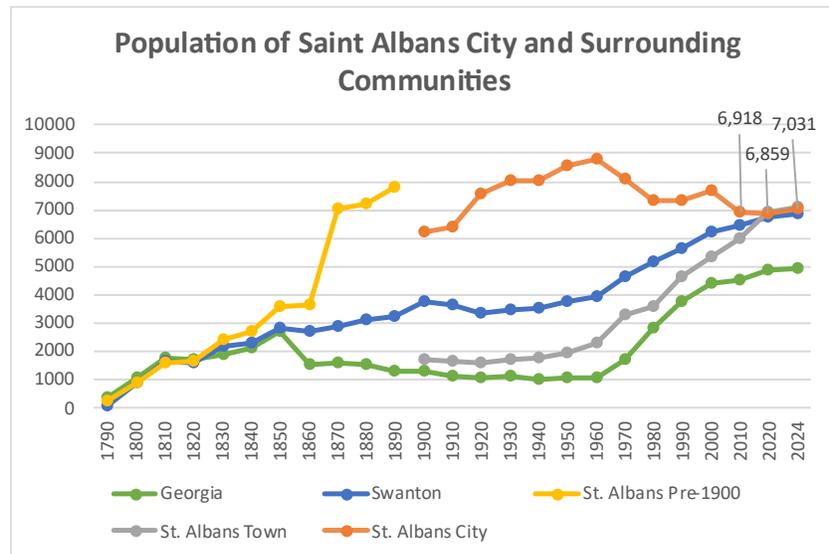
The City of St. Albans is fortunate to be home to, or adjacent to, the county’s richest array of recreational and wellness resources. The City also has access to quality educational and childcare opportunities. All of these attributes play an important part in the attraction and retention of residents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

Location of Resources

Recreational, health care, and educational resources mentioned in this chapter and located within the City can be found on the Facilities map in Chapter 7.

City Residents

The last Census of population in the City was in 2020 with a total of 6,859 residents. The City's population curve (see below graph) is typical of traditional centers in Vermont, experiencing substantial growth after its incorporation and then population decline since the mid-1900's. The City's last two censuses showed a population decline of 9.6% from 2000-2010, and another small 0.9% decline from 2010-2020. The City has never investigated or contested these numbers, although the timing and methods of these Censuses may have resulted in an under-counting of residents. The 2010 downgrade in City population influenced State of Vermont Population Projections from August 2013 (VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development), which predicted that the City's population would continue to decline by 2030. However, recent intercensal estimates from the Census Bureau and the VT Dept. of Health estimate that the City has gained back about 200 residents since 2020. The City will look to future censuses to see how reported population trends continue to develop.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, VT Intercensal Estimates

The rest of the state and county have been growing in population and are projected to grow, even if only modestly. With the many amenities that the City offers, the community should be able to attract some of this residential growth. As noted in other areas of this plan, most of the City is designated as a Planned Growth Area at the regional level.

Age and Gender

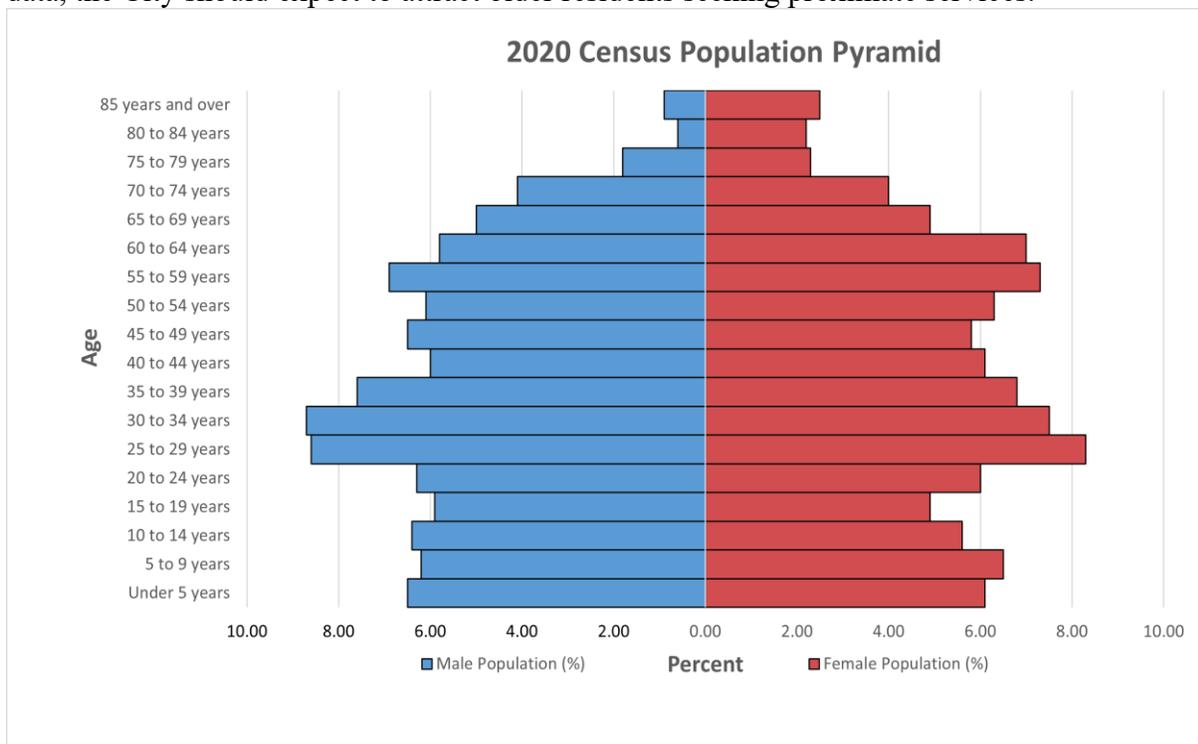
Median Age		
	2000 Census	2020 Census
St. Albans City	35.2	36.8
Franklin County	35.7	41.3
Vermont	37.7	43.5

Source: US Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing

Age Group Analysis, 2020 (%)			
Age Group	Vermont	Franklin County	St. Albans City
Under 18	18%	22%	22%
18-34	21%	20%	25%
35-64	39%	41%	39%
65+	20%	17%	14%

Source: US Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing

Age distribution is important in order to predict future service needs, especially for school capacity and senior services. The City’s median age table shows that it is younger and not aging at the same rate as the county and the state. The Age Group Analysis shows that the City has a lower proportion of its population in the 65+ age group than the county or state. Despite this data, the City should expect to attract older residents seeking proximate services.



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

Saint Albans City’s population pyramid is atypical of a Vermont community. One cannot see the “Baby Boom Bulge” (roughly the 60-80 age groups) as distinctly as one can in other

communities or in Vermont. Saint Albans' baby boomers seem to have more equilibrium with younger age groups. The 25-29 age group stands out in the pyramid as the largest overall group, accounting for 8.5% of the population.

Race and Ethnicity

St. Albans City is the most diverse municipality in Franklin County, with residents who identify their race or ethnicity as something other than white (alone) accounting for more than 13% of the population in 2020. This percentage has more than tripled since 2000, indicating that the City is becoming more diverse. More specific data is largely unreliable due to the relatively small sample size.

The City is committed to being a welcoming environment for residents of all backgrounds and recognizes the importance of Environmental Justice as defined in state law to ensure equity in all planning processes. The St. Albans City Council has appointed a Belonging, Equity and Inclusion (BEI) Committee, which works to understand the experience of historically marginalized groups and the manner in which our implicit bias can impact the delivery of City services, programs and events. In November of 2022, the City Council adopted a Declaration of Inclusion that had been developed by the BEI Committee.

Highlights from Stakeholder Discussions:

- Most socio-economic problems are magnified for people with minority or disability status.
- Increased community connections for new residents and people with minority status are likely to benefit perspectives of safety for the entire community.
- Difficulties encountered by aging community members can have a cascading effect on the rest of their family.

Residents in Need

The table below shows some key statistics on economic needs of residents from the 2019-2023 American Community Survey. It shows that there are generally people with less means and with more needs than in the county and state. Median incomes are lower for households and families. Poverty, and lack of health insurance are all higher in the City. Of particular note is the estimated 20% poverty rate and 21% family poverty rate. These data reflect a need for special social/health services, customized educational supports, and free/affordable recreation opportunities in order for the entire population to be able to thrive in the City of St. Albans. Conversely the data may also reveal that the current array of services and supports located in and around St. Albans are what is allowing residents in need to continue to reside in the area.

Sample of 2019-2023 Economic Data

	City	Franklin County	Vermont
Unemployment Rate %	1.7%	2.8%	3.7%
Median Household Income	\$53,370	\$79,078	\$78,024
Median Family Income	\$67,393	\$98,129	\$102,104
No Health Insurance %	3.6%	3.9%	3.9%
Poverty %, of all People	20.7%	10.1%	10.3%
Poverty %, of Families with Children	21.7%	11.6%	9.7%

Source: 2019-2023 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Note: Margins of error are not shown.

Recreational Resources

St. Albans community members have access to a variety of open spaces and recreational facilities. Many of the facilities located within the City are shown on the Facilities map in Chapter 7. Outdoor and indoor recreational resources managed by the City include Taylor Park, Houghton Park, Barlow Street Park, City Hall Auditorium, the Welden Theatre, and the Hard’ack Recreation Area, which is located outside the City on the eastern slopes of Aldis Hill. Since the last City Plan, the City acquired ownership of Hard’ack, which includes a vast array of recreational amenities: the year-round municipal pool, various playing fields, a playground, the skiing and sliding hills, hiking/biking/cross-country trails, the Greg Brown Lodge and event space, a dog park, and more. Privately-managed facilities within the City include the Aldis Hill Playground trails and the William Cioffi ball fields, operated by the St. Albans Little League with some facility support provided by the City as able. The Aldis Hill property is owned and managed by the Aldis Hill Playground Trust, and many of the trails and the disc golf course are connected to the Hard’ack Recreation Area.

Highlights from Stakeholder Discussions:

- There should be more “edible landscapes” in the community.
- And yes, the idea of a splash pad in a City park continues to be a popular suggestion!

There are many other recreational areas outside the City but accessible to its residents. The Maple Run School District manages the gyms and fields at St. Albans City School and the St. Albans Town Education Center, and the Collins-Perley Sports Complex. The trail head of the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail is located just north of the City boundary, and the trail is owned and managed by the State of Vermont under the advisement of the Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council. St. Albans Bay and its park are located at the end of Lake Road and are managed by the Town of St. Albans. Further beyond the City limits are Kill Kare State Park, Burton Island State Park, and Knights Island State Park, the Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge, the Long Trail and other hiking trails in the Green Mountains, various golf courses, Jay Peak Resort, Smugglers Notch Resort, Fairfield Pond, Lake Carmi, other smaller lakes and ponds, rivers, and streams.

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

Health Care and Wellness Resources

Health Care Facilities

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

Aside from regional medical centers and hospitals, there are several smaller integrated medical practices in and near St. Albans where people have access to a group of doctors and other trained staff for health needs. These include Northwestern Primary Care, St. Albans Primary Care, Northwestern Pediatrics, NOTCH (Northern Tier Center for Health) and NMC Urgent Care. Other health care providers serving the City include: Northwest Counseling and Support Services, the Vermont Health Department, Northwestern Occupational Health, VNA & Hospice of the Southwest Region, various specialists, and a variety of other private health care professionals from dentists to optometrists. BAART Behavioral Health Services operates medication-assisted opiate addiction treatment center on a parcel on the southern end of the City (spanning the City-Town border). The need for further opiate addiction treatment options has been widely recognized as a public health issue for the community. The Northwestern Medical Center Community Health Needs Assessment identifies a lack of healthcare providers as a challenge at the regional level.

Community Wellness and Social Supports

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

Highlights from Stakeholder Discussions:

- The community needs more services for substance use disorder and mental health.
- There is an expectation that the City could invest more in prevention supports.

The **Vermont Department of Health**, with a regional office at 27 Federal Street in the City, plays an important part in community health services. The regional office provides many state services and also works in partnership with local health care providers, voluntary agencies, schools, businesses, and community organizations to improve health and to extend statewide initiatives in local communities throughout the state.

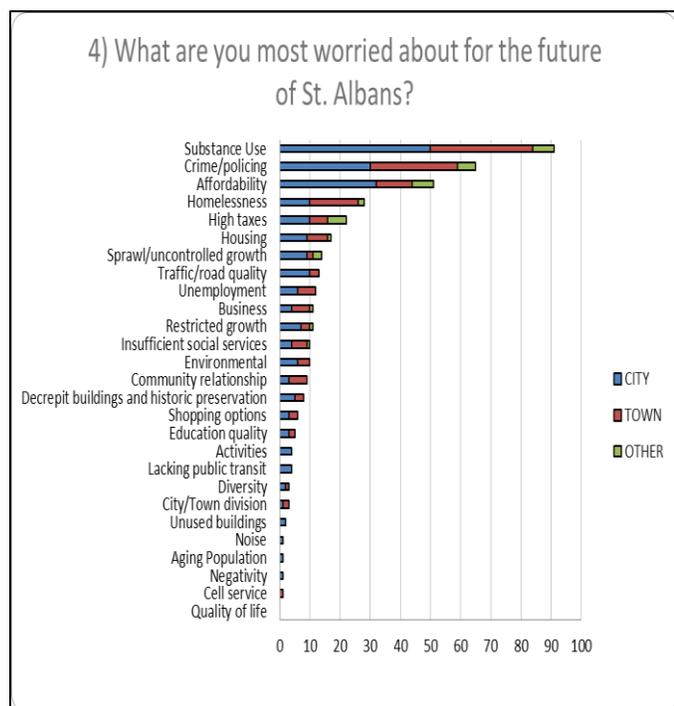
Northwestern Medical Center acts as the region’s health care hub and organizes and supports many community initiatives including alcohol/tobacco use prevention. In 2015, the City created a special Medical Institution Zoning District for the NMC property.

Northwest Counseling and Support Services is a non-profit human services agency designated as the Designated Agency for mental health programs in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. The organization provides intervention and support to children, adolescents, and adults with emotional and behavioral problems, mental illness and developmental disabilities.

BAART St. Albans, located on South Main Street just outside the City, provides medication-assisted treatment for those who suffer from an opiate-use disorder. It is the first-such treatment center in the area.

VNA & Hospice of the Southwest Region provides health care, rehab therapies and hospice services to clients in their home settings in the communities of Franklin County. Their programs and services include care for pregnant women, children and adults. Also, BAYADA is a private home health and hospice option available in the region.

Samaritan House is a non-profit organization that provides emergency shelter and transitional housing to people without other options or resources within the region. In 2008, the City received a \$600,000 grant from the Vermont Community Development program to expand their shelter in Downtown St. Albans, which was renamed “Tim’s House.” Further renovations were completed in 2023. The current capacity of the shelter is 18 people. There is still significant unmet need for emergency shelter and transitional housing.



From the 2023 City Plan Survey. Many of the themes that worried respondents the most are relevant to this chapter of the City Plan.

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

Voices Against Violence and Laurie’s House, which are also administered by CVOEO, provide shelter, crisis intervention, support and advocacy services to victims/survivors of

domestic and sexual violence in the region. The organization operates two emergency shelters for survivors of domestic violence.

Spectrum Youth Services is a non-profit which runs a daytime drop-in center and an eight-bed emergency shelter for youth ages 18-24 in St. Albans City.

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

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

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

Responses from the 2025 City Plan Survey:

- Slightly over 64% of residents responded positively concerning the degree that they felt that living in the City provides opportunities for personal and community connections.

The City's planning role.

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

- Land use policies that affect where certain uses can be located and how accessible they are to their clientele.
- Collaboration in acquiring funding or other resources for programs.
- Partnership and coordination between City services and health, wellness, or social support services.
- Advocacy or leadership on certain community issues, such as transportation options for accessing needed services.
- Contributions appropriated by the City budget.

Childcare

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

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

The Vermont Department for Children and Families regulates both licensed childcare centers and registered home family childcare programs. A query at DCF's Bright Futures Child Care Information System showed 10 licensed providers (and no others within a 5-mile radius) and 13 registered homes (with only 3 more 5 miles out). The vast majority had no vacancies. These facilities serve children with full-day childcare and/or part-day pre-school but do not include legally exempt childcare services (such as homes that provide care for no more than two families, including the provider's) or other unregulated arrangements among families and friends.

DCF's 2020 Vermont Regulated Child Care Program Report on Program Closures paints a bleak future for child care openings going forward. The report states that the St. Albans region experienced a 20% drop in childcare capacity from 2015-2020

Nevertheless, there is a significant need for child care in the City. The 2023 American Community Survey estimates that 75% of children under 6 years in the City have both parents in the workforce, and the rate for children 6-17 years is similarly high at 67%. In addition, the City assumes that childcare for the 2nd and 3rd shift is difficult to find. Vermont advocacy group Let's Grow Kids estimates that 78% of infants, 49% of toddlers, and 62% of preschoolers in Franklin County lack access to needed child care.

The City's planning role.

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

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

Educational Resources

Primary and Secondary Educational Opportunities

St. Albans City is part of the Maple Run Unified School District (MRUSD), which also includes St. Albans Town and Fairfield. PK-12 Education in St. Albans City is primarily provided by the St. Albans City School (SACS) and Bellows Free Academy (BFA) high school and Northwest Career and Technical Center. Also included in the MRUSD are St. Albans Town Education Center and Fairfield Center School, both PK-8. It should be noted that BFA also oversees the Collins-Perley Sports Complex.

SACS is located at 29 Bellows Street and serves pre-kindergarten through grade 8 with a capacity of 1,120 students. The school's principal facilities include a gymnasium/auditorium, cafeteria, library, computer lab and numerous classrooms and offices. Enrollment was 760 students in 2023 and has been variably steady over the years.

Students from the City attend Bellows Free Academy (BFA) for secondary education located at 78 So. Main Street, which has a capacity of 1,100 students and had an enrollment of 977 in 2023. The school's principal facilities include a library with both in-house and online reference material, media center with state-of-the-art technology, cafeteria, auditorium, and numerous classrooms and offices. Some athletics take place at the Collins-Perley Sports Complex, which also serves as a regional resource for sports and physical activity.

Approximately two-thirds of the BFA students come from St. Albans City, St. Albans Town and Fairfield. The balance consists of students from Georgia, Sheldon, Bakersfield, Alburgh, and other communities.

Within BFA is also the Northwest Career and Technical Center, which teaches technical job skills. Courses are offered in automotive technology, building trades, cosmetology, culinary arts, digital media, electrical and mechanical engineering, medical and human services, public safety and EMS, and ecology. NCTC serves approximately 400 students annually, most of which are post-secondary.

Alternative and Non-Traditional Education

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

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

Post-Secondary Education

Several opportunities exist for higher and continuing education in St. Albans City as well as in the region. Community College of Vermont has a campus in the City which moved to a new building downtown on North Main Street in 2021. The campus offers special interest courses and diploma programs. The University of Vermont has an Extension office in St. Albans that also provides opportunities for lifelong learning. The Vermont State University also offers a nursing program based at the Northwestern Medical Center.

There are several higher education institutions in Burlington, about 40 minutes south of St. Albans City, including the University of Vermont, Champlain College, and St. Michael's College. The Johnson and Lyndon campuses of Vermont State University and universities in Montreal are also within commuting distance of St. Albans.

The City's planning role.

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

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

Policies and Actions for Wellness and Prosperity

Planning Goal 6.1	Being in the City affords community members and visitors many opportunities for active and healthy lifestyles.			
Policy P.6.1.1	The City will support access to recreation and wellness resources to support physical and mental health for City residents.			
Policy P.6.1.2	The City will encourage development that will not significantly diminish the value and availability of outdoor recreational opportunities.			
Policy P.6.1.3	Land use regulations shall reflect the unique circumstances of the types of structures, performance measures, and uses of land associated with public recreational areas.			
Policy P.6.1.4	The City will ensure clean and healthy natural areas and open spaces, including parks and wooded areas, that contribute to the quality of the City’s environment and unique sense of place.			
Policy P.6.1.5	The City will engage in master planning and capital improvement programming for parks and similar spaces.			
Policy P.6.1.6	The City will support the concept of bicycle/pedestrian/transit access to the Hard'ack Recreation Area, the Collins-Perley Sports Complex, the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, and other recreational resources outside the City.			
Policy P.6.1.7	The City's regulations will include various allowances for personal and community gardening.			
Policy P.6.1.8	The City will maintain relationships and support for organizations that regularly use City parks, such as the St. Albans Steelers Football Program.			
Policy P.6.1.9	The City supports the recreational use and improvements at the Aldis Hill property.			
Actions	Form of Action	Lead Party	Timeline	
Action A.6.1.1	Provide nutritious food options at municipal facilities and events.	Program	City Staff	Ongoing
Action A.6.1.2	Maintain high-quality City-owned recreation facilities using the City’s capital budget and program.	Program	City Staff and Council	Ongoing

Action A.6.1.3	Identify and protect public access to non-commercial outdoor recreational opportunities, such as hiking trails and recreation paths.	Program, Projects	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.6.1.4	Preserve and enhance public spaces so that they can be sustainably used for recreation and community events.	Projects, Regulation	City Staff, Council, and Planning Commission	Ongoing
Action A.6.1.5	Promote the City as the cycling hub of Northwest Vermont with connections to Burlington, Lake Champlain, and Canada.	Program	City Staff Downtown Board	Ongoing
Action A.6.1.6	Ensure that the City’s recreation facilities are connected with safe pedestrian and bicycle routes.	Program, Projects	City Staff and Council	Ongoing
Action A.6.1.7	Engage with stakeholders to improve the street, sidewalk, and street-crossing safety of routes to schools.	Program, Projects	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.6.1.8	Implement “Complete Streets” designs whenever possible.	Projects	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.6.1.9	Develop a master plan for Houghton Park and Barlow Street Park and use capital programming to improve each park’s infrastructure and natural environment. Likewise, update the current master plan for Taylor Park, as necessary.	Program, Projects	City Staff and Council	2-4 Years
Action A.6.1.10	Expand the programs and infrastructure at Hard’ack Recreation Area.	Program, Projects	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.6.1.11	Explore the expansion of indoor recreation space, such as basketball courts, for regular free or low-cost use and located within the City or connected with bicycle/pedestrian/transit access.	Program, Projects	City Staff and Council	2-4 Years
Action A.6.1.12	Collaborate with others to improve the trails and features on Aldis Hill. Also pursue better connections to the Aldis Hill trail network via trail heads, wayfinding, parking, and pedestrian connections.	Program, Projects	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.6.1.13	Develop an inventory of bicycle infrastructure in the City and create a master plan and strategy for updating and improving bicycle amenities, connections, and safety in the community, including anticipation of e-bikes and other micromobility devices.	Project, Program	City Staff and Council	2-4 Years

Planning Goal 6.2	The community supports a life-long process that fosters personal wellness and opportunities to thrive.			
Policy P.6.2.1	Social services should be funded and resourced on a regional or statewide basis and should not concentrate the county’s client base within the City.			
Policy P.6.2.2	The City will support any opportunities to spread the provision of social services to appropriate sites throughout the region.			
Policy P.6.2.3	The City will support the network of regional community services, such as Northwest Counseling and Support Services, to help individuals and families achieve economic, social, and personal success.			
Policy P.6.2.4	The City will support substance use disorder and harm reduction services that perpetuate a sense of accountability for community members and that do not abide open drug use and disorderly behaviors.			
Policy P.6.2.5	The City will support health and resource centers, where appropriate, for those with special or unique needs, such as substance use disorder treatment centers, addiction housing, women’s/family wellness centers, and senior centers.			
Policy P.6.2.6	The City will support the Restorative Justice Center (including the Court Diversion Program) and other groups in their efforts to provide restorative responses to offending; conflict management and dispute resolution; and community forums and educational programs.			
Policy P.6.2.7	The City will support a variety of high-quality, affordable childcare, eldercare, and similar options.			
Policy P.6.2.8	The City will support access to high-quality educational and vocational training opportunities to encourage full realization of the abilities of residents.			
Policy P.6.2.9	The City will support cooperation and collaboration between the community, municipality, and schools.			
Policy P.6.2.10	The City will support the Northwest Career and Technical Center and other organizations that could provide linkages between City projects and vocational training opportunities.			
Actions		Form of Action	Lead Party	Timeline
Action A.6.2.1	Facilitate further discussion on how best to regulate controlled substance dispensaries and the retail sale of controlled substances.	Regulation	City Staff, Council, and Planning Commission	1-3 Years
Action A.6.2.2	Collaborate with local and regional partners on issues of health equity, as able.	Collaboration	City Staff, Council	Ongoing
Action A.6.2.3	Explore the need and ability to limit the outward advertisement of the sale or dispensing of alcohol, tobacco, and controlled substances City-wide or in specific areas of the community.	Regulation	City Staff, Council, and Planning Commission	Ongoing

Action A.6.2.4	Monitor any new policies of the Maple Run Unified School District that would affect which PK-8 schools City resident students would attend and provide input, wherever possible, in the interest of our children, neighborhoods, transportation issues, and public safety.	Collaboration	City Staff, Council	As Oppor- tunities Arise
Action A.6.2.5	Look for more opportunities to link City projects, like housing rehabilitation, with the Northwest Technical & Career Center and similar vocational training organizations.	Projects, Program	City Staff, Council	As Oppor- tunities Arise

Chapter 7. City Operations and Infrastructure

Planning Goal 7.1 The City’s utilities, public works, and public safety services benefit the quality of life in the community and are a source of pride to residents.

Objective O.7.1.1 Facilitate a full slate of public services, including street maintenance, fire and police protection, emergency medical services, schools, water supply, water quality, and solid waste disposal.

Objective O.7.1.2 Demonstrate responsive and constructive customer service.

Objective O.7.1.3 Ensure that city services are present, approachable, and responsive to the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.

Objective O.7.1.4 Ensure that city services have adequate access to the equipment they need.

Planning Goal 7.2 City streets, sidewalks, and facilities will efficiently and safely get people where they need to go and play a beneficial role in place-making.

Objective O.7.2.1 Provide for safe and convenient transportation systems that include infrastructure for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Objective O.7.2.2 Maintain the physical state of City streets and associated infrastructure in good condition.

Objective O.7.2.3 Ensure access to a variety of self-transportation and public transit options.

Objective O.7.2.4 Provide for “Complete Streets” designs in street and traffic improvements.

The City of St. Albans operates under a Council/Manager form of local government. The volunteer Mayor of St. Albans City is elected by the voters for a two-year term and acts as the chair of the City Council with a voice and vote in all meetings and proceedings. The City Council consists of six-members representing each of the six wards within the City and the Mayor. Council members are elected for staggered three-year terms. Regular elections are held on Vermont Town Meeting Day in March. The Council concentrates on leadership and policy decisions - ensuring that the local government is responsive to community needs and wishes. The Council hires the City Manager to manage and administer City operations. The primary divisions of City government under the purview of the Manager include finance and administration, operations and public works, the Clerk and Treasurer’s office, water and wastewater, planning and development, recreation, police, and fire. The current City

administration prioritizes customer service and public confidence in every interaction with residents, taxpayers, businesses, and visitors.



The official logo of the City of St. Albans

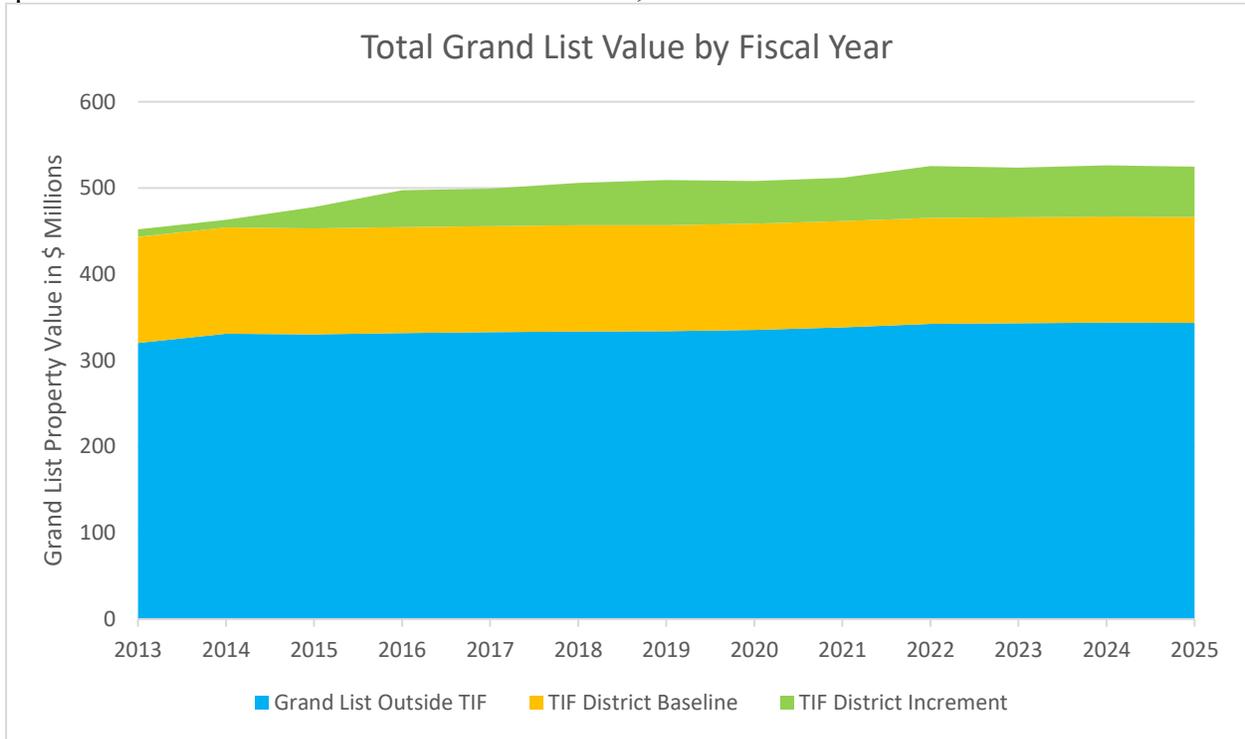
City Finances

The majority of the City’s revenue originates from property taxes. As the community grows and economic conditions and needs change, the type and quantity of services provided change and in response the municipality must adjust revenue streams accordingly. The City Council Finance Committee finalizes the budgets for the general fund and water, wastewater, and stormwater utilities to be presented to the full City Council. Revenues for the general fund budget are raised from property taxes upon City properties. Revenues for the utility budgets are raised via user fees, including in the Town of St. Albans. The City Council approves the utility budgets, typically in May or June. The Council warns the general fund budget for voter approval on Town Meeting Day.

The City’s tax base consists of taxable properties as assessed in the Grand List. Prior to fiscal year 2013, the total value of the City’s grand list had reached a period of year-to-year stagnation or decline, which was a significant concern for the ability to tax rates to raise the necessary revenues for municipal services. After the City’s redevelopment efforts spurred by tax increment financing, the grand list began to grow, both in general and for incremental revenue. The City’s total grand list has increased 16% from just over \$452 million in FY 2013 to nearly \$525 million in FY 2025. The table below shows that the grand list value within the TIF district grew substantially (37.%), but that the total property values of the rest of the grand list also grew by 7.2%.

During the city-wide reappraisal, the property value assessments were updated for tax-exempt properties as well. This updated the insurance-based values for many tax-exempt properties, which are typically inflated. The total value of tax-exempt properties equaled 6.9% of the City’s total grand list value. This is compared to 6.6% for the Town of St. Albans and 8.5% for Swanton, although it should be noted that many tax-exempt properties in those two communities are using the insurance-based method for their valuation, which are likely higher than a traditional assessment.

Another property with limited taxability is the extensive railroad parcel, which runs through the City. Under federal law, any portions of the property associated with the operational railroad are tax-exempt. During the reappraisal, a value just over \$1.2 million was assigned to the non-operating portions of the property, such as the old railroad headquarters at 2 Federal Street. But not taxable value is assigned to any other portion of the 50-acre parcel, which represents a quarter of the 195-acre Service-Industrial District, in which it is located.



City Hall

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

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

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

After the renovation, the City also secured grant and local funds to add sound and lighting systems to the auditorium.

City Hall is now a much more efficient and useful space for City government and public events. The City continues to work on maximizing the capability of the auditorium to host events.

City Communications

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

Public Works

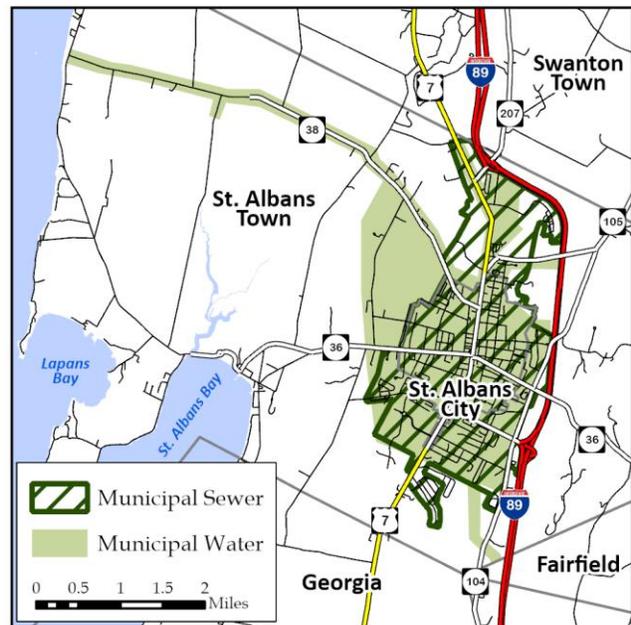
The Public Works Department manages municipal utilities and infrastructure in addition to the maintenance of municipally owned lands and buildings. These include among other things snow removal, street and sidewalk repair, water and sewer line installation and repair, landscape maintenance, and general repair of public investments. The Public Works Garage is located at 67 Aldis Street.

Water Supply

The City operates a municipal water supply system servicing the entire City, surrounding areas in the Town of St. Albans, and some properties on the other side of Swanton’s southern boundary in the areas of Route 7 and Route 207 (see accompanying map).

The City water’s system is drawn from two sources – a reservoir complex located in North Fairfax (conventional gravity fed) and Lake Champlain (via a pumping system). A reservoir on Silver Lake in Fairfax and Georgia was built decades ago to act as an emergency supply; however, the City seeks to sell that property. The reservoir complex in North Fairfax consists of the South Reservoir/Dam (originally constructed in 1873) and the North Dam (originally constructed in 1893). The Maquam Shore Water Treatment Facility was originally constructed in 1953 to supplement the City’s water supply with treated water from Lake Champlain.

Municipal Sewer & Water Service Areas



Since this map was created, there have been some minor expansions of service area, most notably the extension of water service along Route 207 for parcels just north of the Swanton/St. Albans border.

Distribution to the City is made possible by several large water mains, pump stations, two 1-million-gallon storage tanks, and miles of smaller distribution lines. The City’s water supply system has sufficient capacity for anticipated growth within the existing service area.

As this plan is being updated, the City has contracted with an engineering firm to assess the state of the dam at the Fairfax and Silver Lake reservoirs and plan for any necessary maintenance and improvements. The City is also developing a new asset management plan for water system infrastructure.

Wastewater Treatment

The City operates a municipal wastewater treatment system servicing the entire City and parts of St. Albans Town north and south of the City. The wastewater treatment plant (installed in 1930) is located on Rewes Drive north of the City in the Town of St. Albans. Wastewater and stormwater are transported to the treatment plant via a network of sewer pipes. Approximately 60% of the treated water is combined wastewater/stormwater. Disinfected effluent is discharged into Stevens Brook, which is authorized under a permit issued by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. One condition of the permit is the amount of phosphorous allowed to be discharged into the watershed. Since the 2017 City Plan, the City used an \$18 million bond to replace and/or improve equipment at the treatment plant and install a new filter system to further remove phosphorous.

The St. Albans City wastewater treatment plant has a design capacity of 8 million gallons per day (MGD), but it is currently permitted by the State to receive 4 MGD. As of 2019 the 20-year average flow was 2.7 MGD. Most instances over 4 MGD are situations when combined stormwater is being received by the system. The plant provides primary, secondary and advanced tertiary treatment to wastewater before discharging it into a marshy area of Stevens Brook, and from there into St. Albans Bay. Any flow over 8 MGD during certain events will receive solely primary treatment.

Water and Wastewater Accounts

The table below contains information on the number and types of water and wastewater accounts served by the City, both for 2017 and 2025. While the majority of all accounts are residential and are located within the City, one can see that the proportions of commercial and non-City accounts have grown. New service connections are regulated by a water/sewer allocation ordinance, which has been revised by the City Council in the past, based on the needs of the system and the City.

Year:	Water Accounts		Wastewater Accounts	
	2017	2025	2017	2025
Total	approx. 4,000	4,076	close to 4,000	3,573
% commercial	10%	13%	10%	14%
% industrial	less than 1%	less than 1%	less than 1%	less than 1%
% located outside City	33%	42%	20%	34%

Stormwater Utility

In 2018 the City created a stormwater utility, funded with an impervious-based fee assessed on all properties. The utility, combined with a new stormwater management ordinance, provides the funds and authority necessary to comply with the flow restoration and phosphorous treatment goals of the City’s Municipal Separated Storm-Sewer System (MS4) permit issued by the State. The City has developed plans for stormwater treatment facilities, including at 74 Lower Welden Street, along Lemnah Drive and along the new street proposed as part of the Federal Street Multimodal Connector.

Solid Waste Management

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

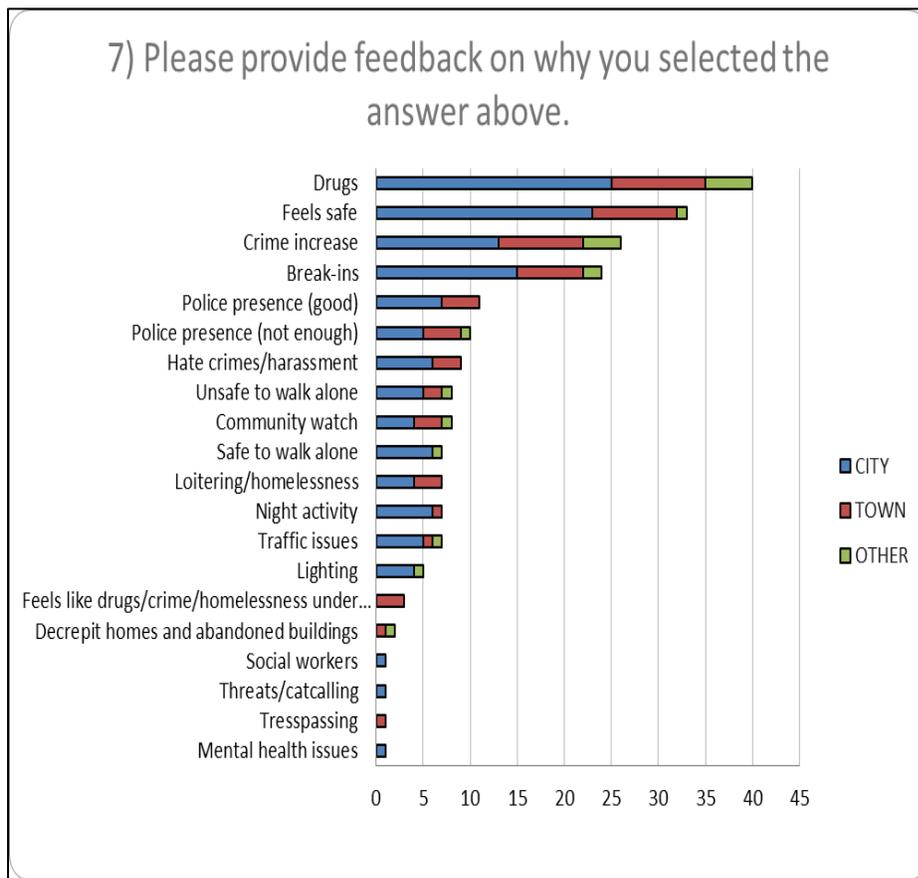
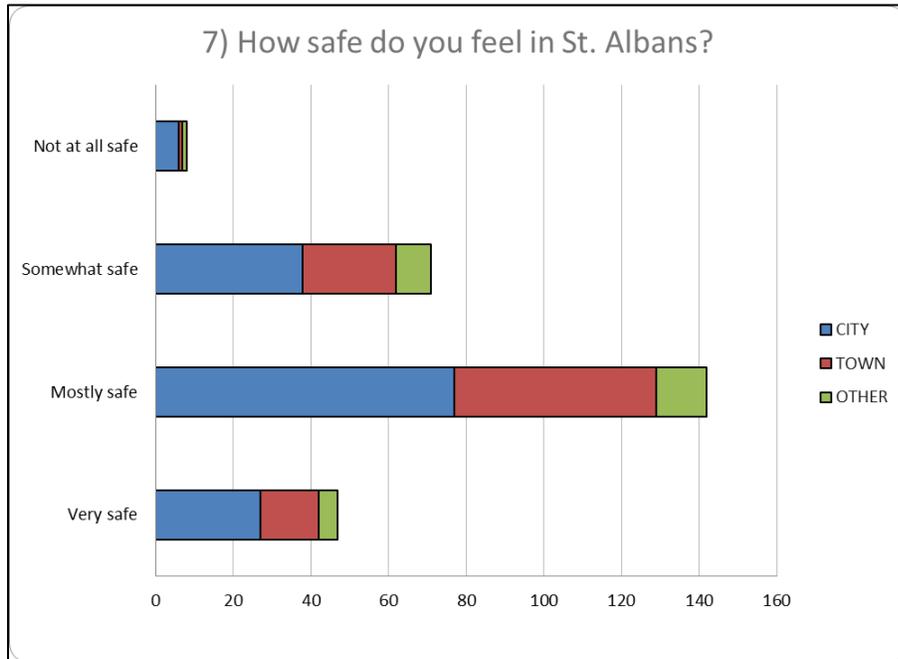
Police Department

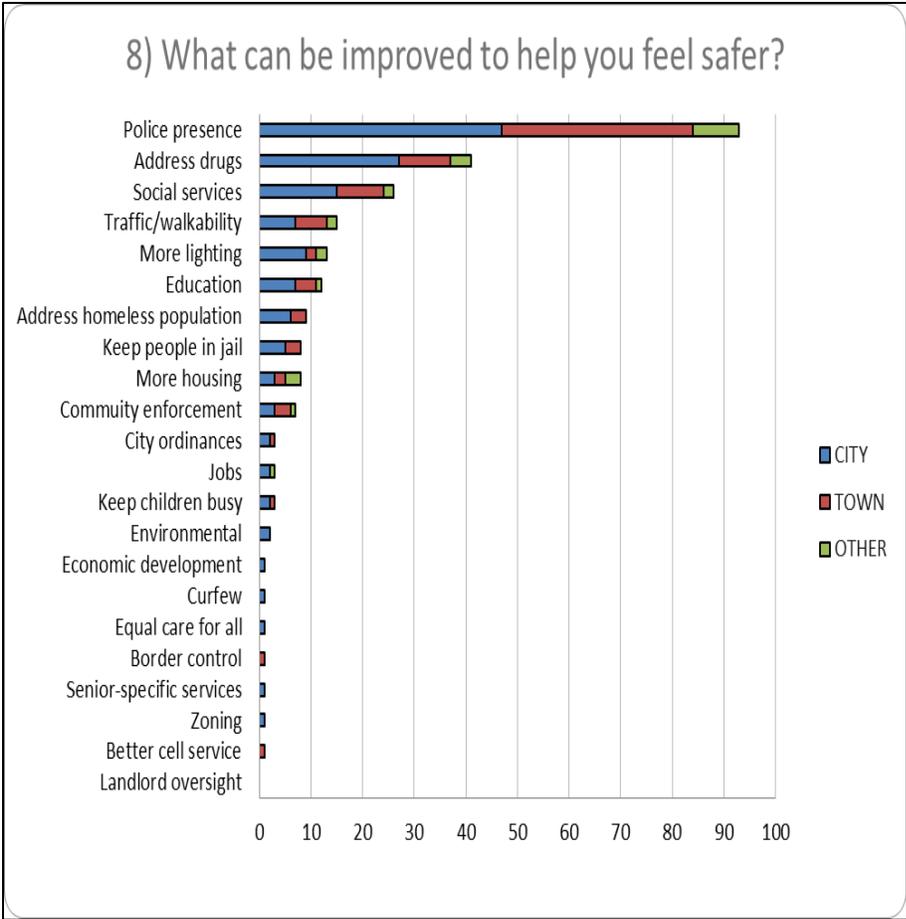
The St. Albans Police Department is devoted to providing professional and quality police services, and strives to remain effective, efficient, and responsive to the changing needs of the community, while providing a safe environment that enhances the quality of life in St. Albans. The role of the St. Albans Police Department is to provide administrative, patrol, investigative, crime prevention, dispatching and emergency management services. Since July 2024, the Town of St. Albans has contracted with the Police Department to extend police services to the Town as well as the City. That contract continues today.

The Police Department employs 25 full-time police officers. At their disposal are several marked police cars, as well as a few unmarked vehicles. Under the current contract with the Town of St. Albans, City taxpayers fund half of the Police Department budget. Also under the contract with the Town, the Police Department recently was able to reactivate a Street Crimes Unit to focus on drug-related crimes in both communities.

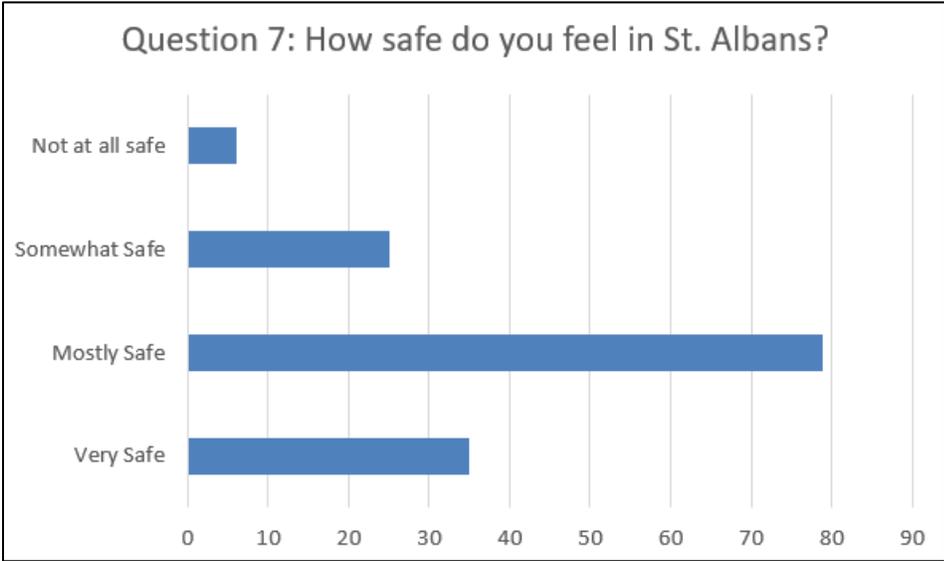
The Vermont State Police, Franklin County Sheriff, and U.S. Border Patrol also collaborate with the City Police Dept. and provide law enforcement support in certain crime cases, emergencies, and other incidents, as appropriate.

Responses from the 2023 City Plan Survey concerning feelings of safety:





A follow-up question of City residents from the 2025 City Plan Survey:



Fire Department

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

The St. Albans City Fire Department provides 24 hour per day fire and rescue service to City residents and visitors. The water system and hydrants are checked routinely to ensure adequate residual water pressure and proper functioning. There is ample water supply and pumping capacity in the event of a major fire.

The Fire Department currently budgets for 1.5 full time firefighters and has a rostered call force of 20 volunteer firefighters. The full-time firefighters also provide building inspection services and code enforcement to ensure that structures are constructed in compliance with City ordinances, Vermont Health Regulations, and Vermont Fire and Building Safety Code.

The Fire Department is located at 33 Lower Welden Street, which previously also housed the Police Department and Central Dispatching. The facility is aging and located within a 500-year flood plain. The City has long-term plans to renovate the facility or relocate the Fire Department to a different location.

Ambulance

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

Circulation, Access Management and Traffic Control

The City contains 8 miles of arterial streets (Class 1 and 2 highways) and 17 miles of collectors and local streets (Class 3 highways). At the center of the City is the intersection of US Route 7 (North/South Main Street) and VT Route 36 (Lake Street/Fairfield Street). VT Route 38 (Lower Newton Street) and the limited access St. Albans State Highway (SASH) also pass through the City. The Transportation Map in this chapter shows highway functional classification and Vermont classification in the City. The City is connected to Interstate 89 via Route 7, Route 104, and the St. Albans State Highway.

Despite the City's street network, circulation in the City is challenged by only one north-south arterial street (Main Street). The lack of alternate arterials creates traffic congestion on Main Street and is disruptive to neighborhoods as motorists use side streets as short cuts to avoid the congestion. A de facto north-south alternative to Main Street is used by motorists along Lemnah Drive and

Allen, Catherine, Market, Federal and Lower Newton Streets. This route is called the “Federal Street Corridor” for the purposes of transportation planning. Planning and design work is currently underway on the second phase of the *Federal Street Multimodal Connector*, which would significantly improve multimodal safety and traffic management along the Federal Street Corridor and construct a new direct connection to the St. Albans State Highway (SASH). The project would also include a new traffic signal where the new road would intersect with South Main Street and the SASH, a new round-about at Lower Welden-Allen-Lemnah, an improved traffic signal at Newton and North Main, and accommodations for pedestrian and bicycle safety along the corridor.

Unfortunately, the Federal Street Multimodal Connector will not be able to extend beyond Lower Newton Street. This leaves North Main Street between Upper/Lower Newton and Route 105 as a lone north-south connection between Downtown St. Albans and the commercial center north in the Town of St. Albans. This can lead to traffic congestion along this stretch of North Main Street and increased traffic along neighborhood streets to the east. These issues will likely worsen as the community continues to grow.

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

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

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

Most streets in the City have a speed limit of 25 miles per hour. The exception is Route 7 south of Diamond Street and North of Lower Newton Street, where the speed limit is 35 miles per hour.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Accessibility and Circulation

The City of St. Albans has sidewalks along the vast majority of its streets. Downtown streetscape improvements accentuate crosswalks with curb extensions, where possible. Painted crosswalks are located throughout the City. In 2016, City voters approved a bond of just under \$5 million to replace all City sidewalks in poor condition within a 3-year period. That project was completed, and now the City budgets to replace sections of existing sidewalk as needed.

Bicycle accessibility is improving in the City. In 2017, the State’s Class 1 paving program add bike lanes to either side of North and South Main Streets and Lake Street outside the on-street parking zones, within which sharrow markings will be used in the street. More work needs to be

done on both bicycle accessibility within the City and the provision of connections between the City and popular biking locations in the region.

Street Maintenance and Improvements

The Public Works Department manages an annual street maintenance and paving program, which is included in the general budget and Capital Improvement Plan. The highway budget has been set at just under \$700,000 for the past two fiscal years, and \$300,000 has been budgeted for the paving program. This funding is used for paving projects, sidewalk maintenance, street light maintenance, plowing, and line striping on an as-needed basis.

Public Works operates out of a garage at 67 Aldis Street, where all vehicles, equipment, and materials are stored. The approximate 7,000 square foot garage was built in 1979 for a City with substantially less responsibilities and equipment than it now has. According to the Public Works Director, space at the Garage is congested.

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

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

Public Parking

Public parking is an important consideration in planning a vibrant downtown and City. On-street parking is provided on most Downtown Streets with a timed limit, normally 2 hours. The City provides off-street parking in the parking garage on Hampton Lane, the lot on Lake Street, and behind City Hall on Hudson Street, managed by Parkmobile or a similar application and/or with a long-term permit program.

The City also allows on-street parking on many neighborhood streets, although this parking is subject to revisions as nuisances arise, as well as to a seasonal parking ban during winter events.

Public Transit

Green Mountain Transit (GMT) operates public transportation, in addition to elderly, disabled and Medicaid non-emergency transportation services, in the St. Albans area. They operate a Downtown Shuttle between 6:45am and 5:40pm Monday through Friday and between 9:45am and 3:30pm on Saturdays to many locations throughout the City and Route 7 North in the Town (see map). Service to the Industrial Park and deviations up to ¾ mile from the posted route are available by request. The City has some

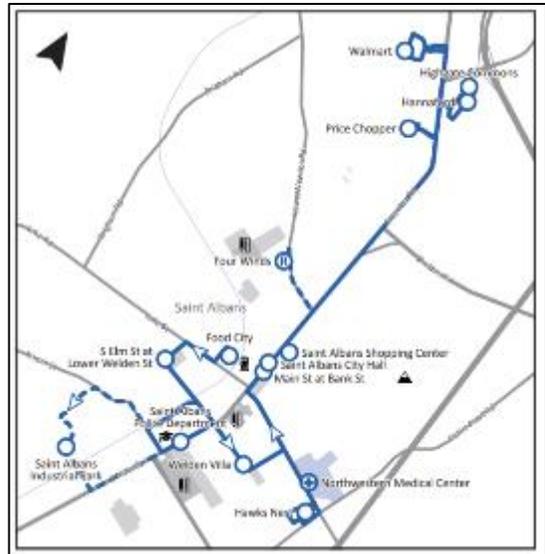
Highlights from Stakeholder Discussions:

- Transportation is an issue for many residents of the community.
- There is a desire to see more communication coming out from the City via multiple channels.

areas designated for transit stops, but they are normally shared with other uses. There are currently no bus shelters in the City.

GMT also has routes that connect St. Albans City with other areas in the region. The Alburgh to Georgia Commuter Shuttle operates once daily and stops at several locations in the City, taking riders to the Georgia Industrial Parks. The Richford to St. Albans Shuttle takes riders from Richford and other locations along Route 105 into St. Albans. The Franklin County Commuter provides service between St. Albans and Burlington. It combines two previous routes, the St. Albans LINK Express and the Milton Commuter, operating 5 runs between 5:15am and 7:55pm Monday-Friday. Finally, the Price Chopper Shopping Shuttle provides service to the St. Albans Price Chopper on Tuesday mornings, with stops in St. Albans and Swanton.

SAINT ALBANS DOWNTOWN SHUTTLE



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

In 2026, Rural Community Transportation (RCT) will assume the majority of public transit in the St. Albans area, including older adults and persons with disabilities (O&D) and Medicaid non-emergency transportation services. Green Mountain Transit (GMT) will continue to operate the Franklin County Commuter, providing access to Chittenden County.

Passenger Rail

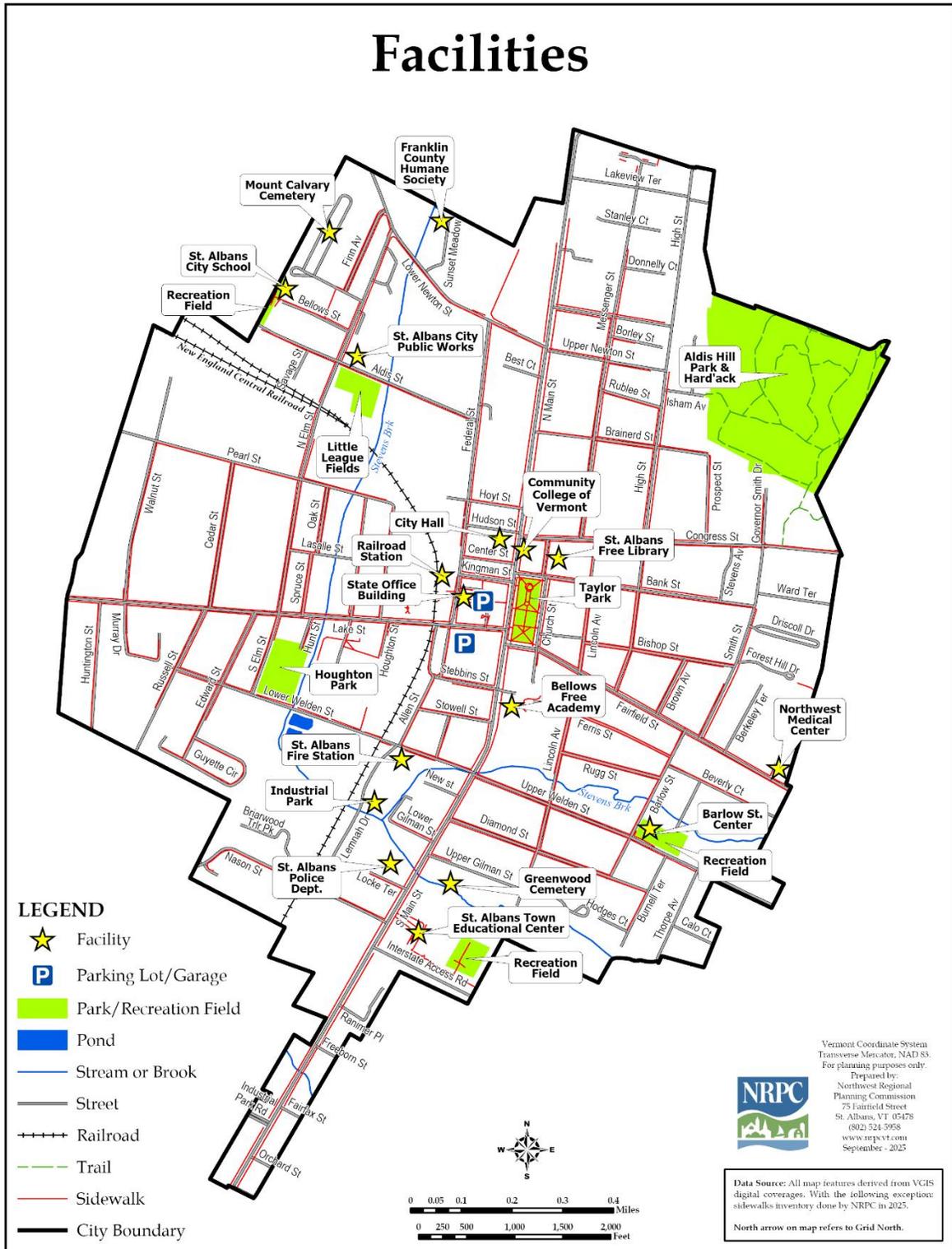
Passenger rail service is available via the Amtrak *Vermont*, which originates in the City. It provides service to Washington D.C. via New York City, Philadelphia and Baltimore, with many smaller stops along the way.

The Amtrak station is located on the property of the recently vacated Genesee & Wyoming/New England Central Railway headquarters on Federal St. The headquarters building itself is currently for sale, separately from the parcel containing the station, since Genesee & Wyoming's relocation to its new headquarters on the Fonda site.

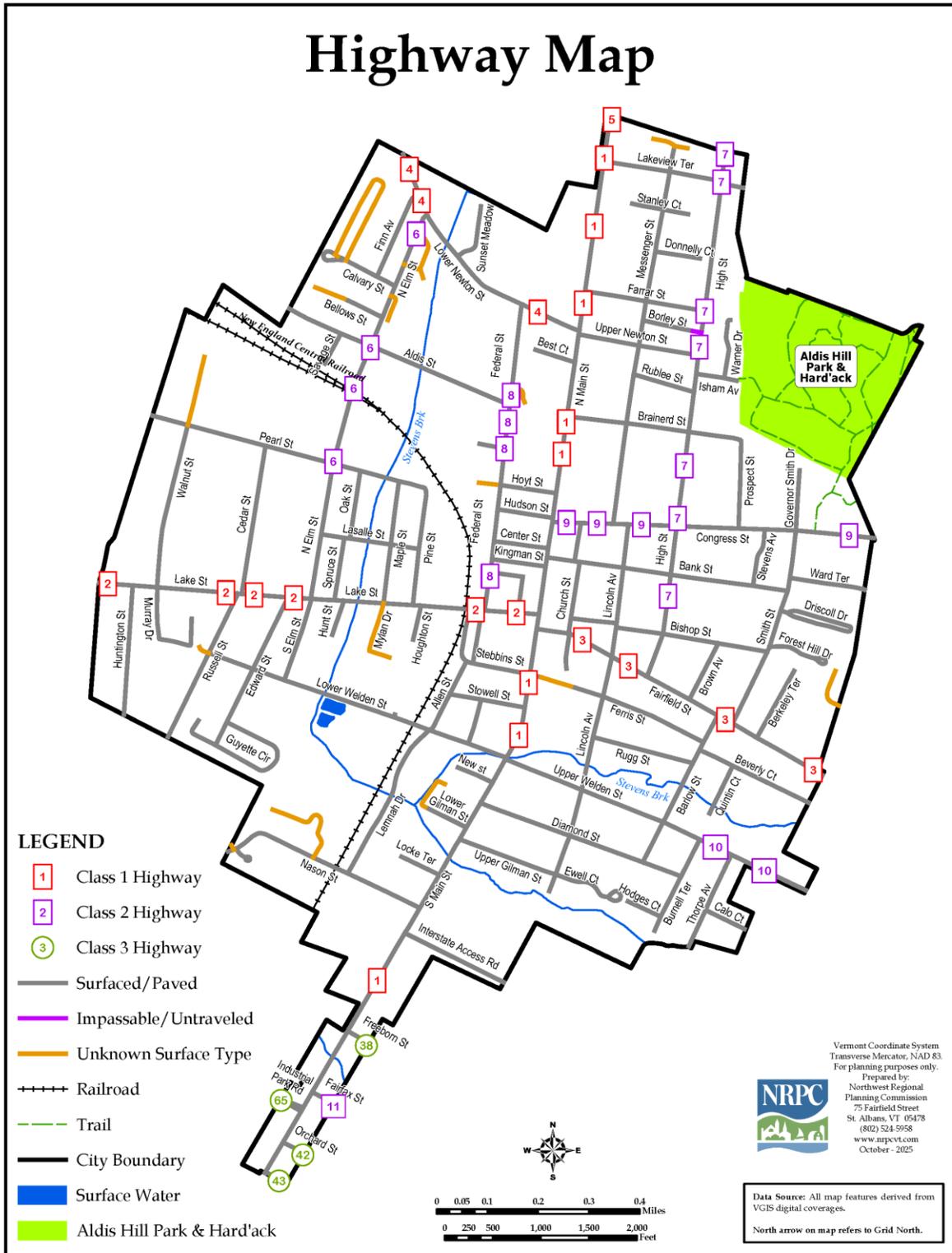
Until 1995, this passenger line was called the *Montrealer* and terminated in that city after stopping in St. Albans. The City of St. Albans, the State of Vermont, and our congressional delegation have all stated support for the return of the *Montrealer*. Current rail service to Montreal is provided by the *Adirondack*, which includes a stop in Rouses Point, NY, about 26 miles from the City.

About a decade ago, Genesee & Wyoming Railways upgraded the tracks north of the City to accommodate passenger rail service. As of 2019, all necessary agreements are in place in both the US and Canada to allow for Customs and Immigration pre-clearance on both sides of the

border, enabling extended passenger rail service. However, these facilities are still in the planning/feasibility phases.



Highway Map



Policies and Actions for City Operations and Infrastructure

Planning Goal 7.1	The City’s utilities, public works, and public safety services benefit the quality of life in the community and are a source of pride to residents.			
Policy P.7.1.1	The construction or expansion of public infrastructure will reinforce the general character and planned growth patterns of the area.			
Policy P.7.1.2	Public safety facilities and equipment will enable the Police and Fire departments to operate at optimum levels of efficiency and effectiveness.			
Policy P.7.1.3	The construction and improvement of public works and public safety facilities will be paired with private redevelopment activities, wherever possible.			
Policy P.7.1.4	City regulations will ensure the proper management of solid waste collection activities on our streets.			
Policy P.7.1.5	City public safety and public works policies and operations shall reflect the growing recognition of the benefits of belonging, equity, and inclusion.			
Policy P.7.1.6	Residents should have access to solid waste drop-off options within, or adjacent to, the City limits.			
Actions		Form of Action	Lead Party	Timeline
Action A.7.1.1	Plan for future needs of public services and construct a capital improvement program accordingly.	Program	City Staff, Council	Annually
Action A.7.1.2	Keep all City vehicles and equipment in excellent working condition.	Program	City Staff and Council	Ongoing
Action A.7.1.3	Brand all equipment with the City logo.	Program	City Staff	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.7.1.4	Explore opportunities to replace or renovate the public works facility and fire department facility, preferably paired with private redevelopment and tax increment financing.	Projects, Program	City Staff and Council	2-4 Years
Action A.7.1.5	Update and strengthen the City’s garbage collection ordinance as needed.	Regulation	City Staff, Council	Ongoing
Action A.7.1.6	Ensure the useful life of water, wastewater, and stormwater facilities by planning for needed upgrades and expansions and pursuing the necessary funding, including voter-approved bonds.	Program, Projects	City Staff and Council	Ongoing
Action A.7.1.7	Evaluate the emergency response needs of the community and expand services and/or engage in regional efforts as appropriate.	Program, Projects	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise

Action A.7.1.8	Host the Northwest Solid Waste District drop-off site at the wastewater treatment plant as long as the arrangement continues to be mutually beneficial.	Collaboration	City Staff and Council	Ongoing
Action A.7.1.9	Establish digital record-keeping and mapping processes to track and project water and sewer allocations and update the service areas.	Program, Project	City Staff	1-3 Years

Planning Goal 7.2	City streets, sidewalks, and facilities will efficiently and safely get people where they need to go and play a beneficial role in place-making.			
Policy P.7.2.1	Through-traffic will be directed through arterial and collector roads, rather than neighborhood streets.			
Policy P.7.2.2	The rate of growth in the City will not exceed the ability of the community to provide facilities and services at a reasonable cost to the taxpayer.			
Policy P.7.2.3	City regulations will limit curb cut distances and widths on streets to promote safety, good circulation, and accessibility for all modes of transportation.			
Policy P.7.2.4	Sidewalks will be clearly established, including across driveways, and kept free of obstruction in order to preserve the connectivity of the system.			
Policy P.7.2.5	Adequate public parking resources will be provided in the downtown core.			
Policy P.7.2.6	Two transportation priorities for the City will be the completion of the Federal Street Multimodal Connector and the identification of alternatives to alleviate the north-south traffic that is concentrated on North Main Street between Lower/Upper Newton Street and VT Route 105.			
Policy P.7.2.7	City regulations and initiatives will ensure access to motorized, non-motorized, and public transit transportation options.			
Policy P.7.2.8	State funding and support for roadway maintenance should be based on actual use and need and not solely on mileage per municipality.			
Actions		Form of Action	Lead Party	Timeline
Action A.7.2.1	Use a capital budget and plan to prioritize capital needs identified in this plan and in other related documents or studies, and outline the timing and financing of needed improvements.	Program	City Staff and Council	Ongoing
Action A.7.2.2	Monitor traffic impacts of new development, and consider requiring traffic impact studies.	Program, Regulation	City Staff, Council, and PC ⁸	As Opportunities Arise

⁸ Planning Commission

Action A.7.2.3	Monitor the condition of City streets and associated infrastructure through regular inventorying and assessment.	Program	City Staff	Ongoing
Action A.7.2.4	Support efforts to maintain and improve the condition of railroad crossings.	Collaboration	City Staff, Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.7.2.5	Look for new opportunities to provide new street connections, or re-establish historical ones, across rail lines.	Projects, Program	City Staff, Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.7.2.6	Expand the neighborhood sidewalk network and keep it in good condition with focused maintenance.	Projects, Program	City Staff, Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.7.2.7	Explore alternatives for interconnecting north-south corridors in the City and alleviating the “bottleneck” of North Main Street between Upper/Lower Newton Street and VT Route 105.	Projects, Program	City Staff, Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.7.2.8	Collaborate with the Town of St. Albans on projects to create bike/pedestrian connections throughout the community.	Collaboration, Projects	City Staff, Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.7.2.9	Work to extend North Main Street sidewalks and/or shared-use paths to the boundary with the Town of St. Albans and include crosswalks in that area as well. Also, work to expand the number of pedestrian/bicycle connections to the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail.	Projects	City Staff, Council	3-5 Years
Action A.7.2.10	Participate in inter-municipal and regional transportation planning to address regional traffic problems.	Program, Projects	City Staff, Council and Planning Commission	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.7.2.11	Explore increasing the classification of Class 2 roads in the City and engage in other efforts to bolster the City’s standing in terms of State funding and support for roadway maintenance.	Program, Project	City Staff and Council	1-3 Years and As Opportunities Arise

Chapter 8. Community Resilience

Planning Goal 8.1 Public services and private property in the City are resilient in the face of natural events and economic challenges.

Objective O.8.1.1 Mitigate the damage that could be caused by natural and economic hazards.

Objective O.8.1.2 Prevent fluvial erosion and flooding in the City.

Objective O.8.1.3 Prevent tree-fall damage from high winds and other causes.

Objective O.8.1.4 Adapt the community to the implications of climate change.

Planning Goal 8.2 The City’s public and private infrastructure is environmentally sustainable.

Objective O.8.2.1 Decrease the amount of water and air pollution from properties and activities in the City.

Objective O.8.2.2 Mitigate the effects of development and City operations on air quality, wildlife, significant natural and fragile areas, and important water resources, including stream corridors, aquifers, and wetlands.

Objective O.8.2.3 Make efficient use of energy, provide for the development of renewable energy resources, and reduce production of greenhouse gases and other hazards.

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

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

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

Hazard Mitigation Planning

The City is currently updating its Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan is required by the State of Vermont and FEMA before a community can access certain funds and resources for mitigation projects and after disasters. It is a good exercise in being aware of the potential unfortunate events that could occur in the City and prioritizing project to lessen the damage when disasters do occur. Unlike the emergency management or operations plans that are used in the event of a disaster, Hazard Mitigation Plans focus on what the City could do BEFORE a disaster.

The City’s Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), as updated will be considered a component of this chapter of the City Plan. When this plan is adopted, the LHMP likely will still be in the review phase. However, two key pieces of information from the public review draft of the LHMP are included below. The first is the ranking and potential impacts of natural disasters that the City should anticipate. The second is the list of recommended mitigation actions.

Hazard Impact	Probability	Potential Impact					Score	Rank
		Infra-structure	Life	Economy	Environ-ment	Average		
Wind	4	3	3	3	1	2.5	10	1
Heat	4	1.5	3	3	2.5	2.5	10	1
Wildfire	2.5	4	4	3	4	3.75	9.375	2
Fluvial Erosion	4	2	3	2	2	2.25	9	3
Ice	4	3	2	3	1	2.25	9	3
Invasive Species	4	2	2	2	3	2.25	9	3
Drought	4	2	2	2	2.5	2.125	8.5	4
Cold	4	2	3	2	1	2	8	5
Infectious Disease	3	1	4	4	1	2.5	7.5	6
Inundation Flooding	4	2	1.5	2	1.5	1.75	7	7
Snow	4	2	2	2	1	1.75	7	7
Landslide/slope failure	3	2	2	1	1.5	1.625	4.875	8
Earthquake	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	9
Hail	3	1	1	1	1	1	3	10

(Table 7 from November 2025 Public Review Draft of Local Hazard Mitigation Plan)

Mitigation Actions from November 2025 Public Review Draft of Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

Local Plans & Regulations:

1. Update Floodplain and River Corridor Regulations to comply with state and federal model language (Act 121) or prompted by the updated FEMA flood maps
2. COOP Plan (Continuity of Operation Plan)

3. Maintain enforcement of statewide building codes on public buildings
4. Review and update procurement policy to become 2CFR 200 compliant
5. Update Road Erosion Inventory, as required by MS4 and MRGP permit
6. Complete culvert inventory and assessment
7. Continue to develop Capital Management Plan from 2025 draft year
8. Establish an urban tree management program to identify trees that present fall risks to structures and utilities
9. Maintain Green Belt Tree Program and relate succession actions to ensure healthy tree canopy
10. Create a residential tree management assistance program.
11. Implement daily work accomplishment system for public works and utilities (FEMA 214 Forms)
12. Establish system for providing heating and cooling centers as needed and providing public outreach during instances of extreme heat or cold
13. Consider working with power companies to discuss how networks work and develop redundant system or upgrade to main power coming into town
14. Complete water system asset management plan.
15. Complete reservoir dam assessment.

Structure & Infrastructure Projects:

1. Relocate Fire Department
2. Acquire generators for St. Albans City School and Bellows Free Academy and assess current generator for St. Albans Town Educational Center.
3. Pursue additional projects to eliminate the combined sewer overflow and comply with the state order
4. Stormwater projects to reduce fluvial erosion - implement the Rugg and Stevens Brook flow restoration plans
5. Refurbish original 1-million-gallon water storage tank at the top of Congress Street and extend useful life.
6. Ongoing replacements of older water valves.
7. Improve Water Main Lines, Valves and Waste Water Service Lines.
8. Sell Silver Lake reservoir and associated dam and dikes.

Natural Systems Protection:

1. Floodplain Restoration/Storage projects, such as Stevens Brook Floodplain Terrace and Hungerford Property project.
2. Consider flood mitigation activities through property buyouts, elevation of structures, and other means. Example focus area is Lower Welden Street along Stevens Brook.

Outreach & Education Programs:

1. Implement mass notification system - VTAlert
2. Outreach to property owners on best practices of tree trimming on private property and educate about spotting the Emerald Ash Borer

Flood Resilience

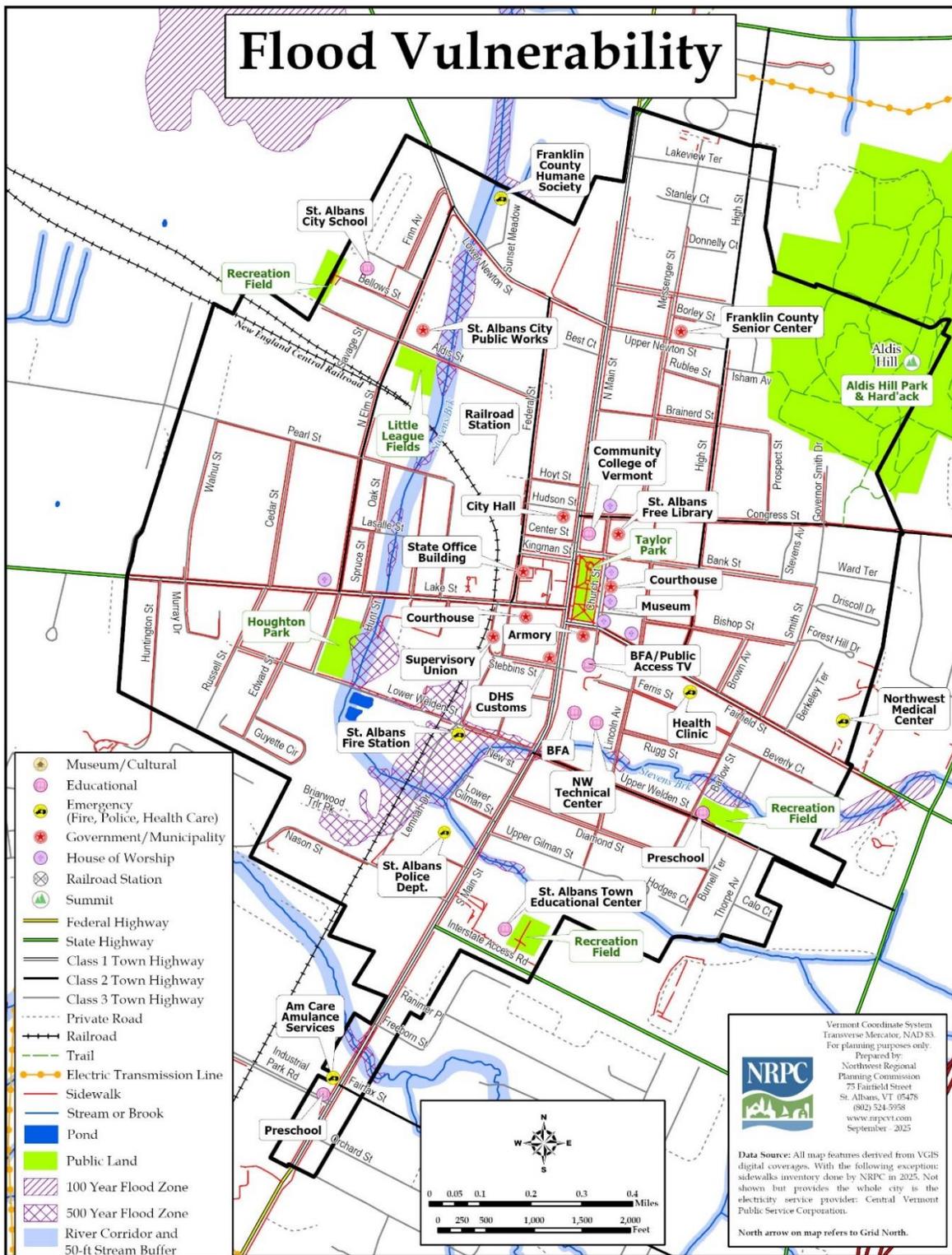
This is an area of special focus for the City Plan under State statute, and the Hazard Mitigation Plan is the most detailed source of information on this topic. The type of flooding to which the City is most susceptible would be from streams, including Stevens, Rugg and Grice Brooks as well as any intermittent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

The City's Land Development Regulations include flood hazard regulations that are meant to prevent any further development within the small 100-year flood zone. This will limit any property damage or loss of life during a flood event.

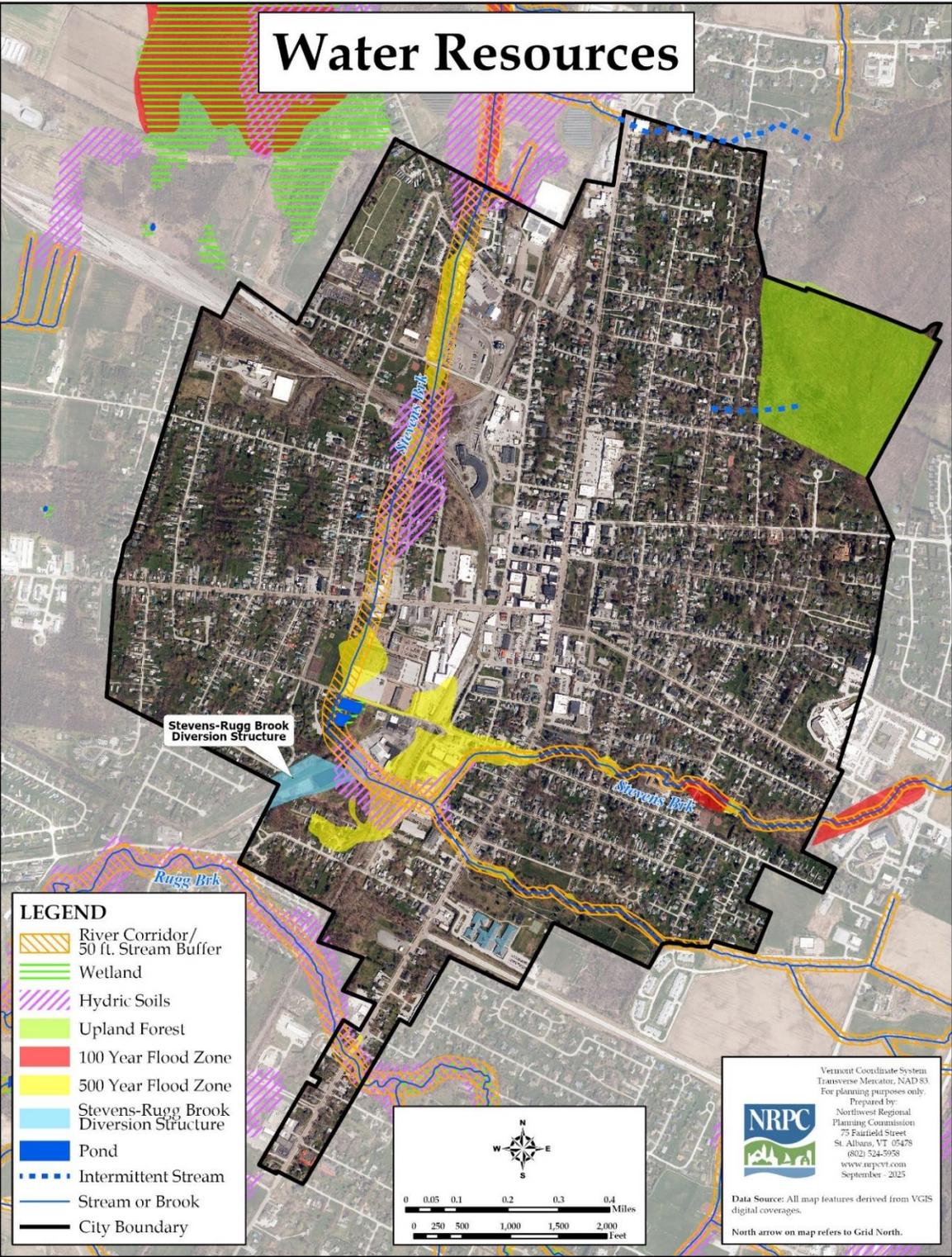
Another type of flooding that occurs in rivers and streams is fluvial erosion. Fluvial erosion occurs when fast lateral and vertical movement of streams and rivers cause erosion of the bank. To identify areas prone to fluvial erosion hazards, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources has identified River Corridors in all Vermont municipalities. For streams that have a watershed of less than 2 square miles, the Agency has created a 50-foot buffer on each side of a stream with the intention of protecting stream stability and natural flow.

As shown on the Flood Vulnerability map below, the City has two mapped River Corridors that run along portions of Rugg Brook and Stevens Brook, and two stream segments with 50-foot buffers. The City's Land Development Regulations regulate stream corridor areas within 30 feet of streams and brooks, which is required as part of its Municipal Separated Storm Sewer permit. The City could consider adopting full River Corridor regulations in the future to further protect against fluvial erosion risks.

Flood Vulnerability



Water Resources



LEGEND

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

0 0.05 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4
Miles

0 250 500 1,000 1,500 2,000
Feet

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

Prepared by:
Northwest Regional
Planning Commission
75 Fairfield Street
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September 2025

NRPC

Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages.

North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Environmental Sustainability

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

The City currently enjoys ample green spaces within our parks, lawns, and greenbelts. There is an enjoyable and beneficial tree canopy that spans the public and private lands within our community. In addition, Aldis Hill represents an area of contiguous forest; the City's only such area, in fact. In order to maintain ample green space in the City, this includes policies and programs to restrict lot coverages in most areas and encourage lawns, to protect greenbelts from erosion, and to plan for the City's parks. For the purposes of a healthy tree canopy, the City now also has a tree inventory and Urban Forest Strategic Action Plan. Chapter 9 proposes new land use districts for Aldis Hill and educational and recreational properties that will better reflect the current status of these areas and the role they serve as forests and green space.

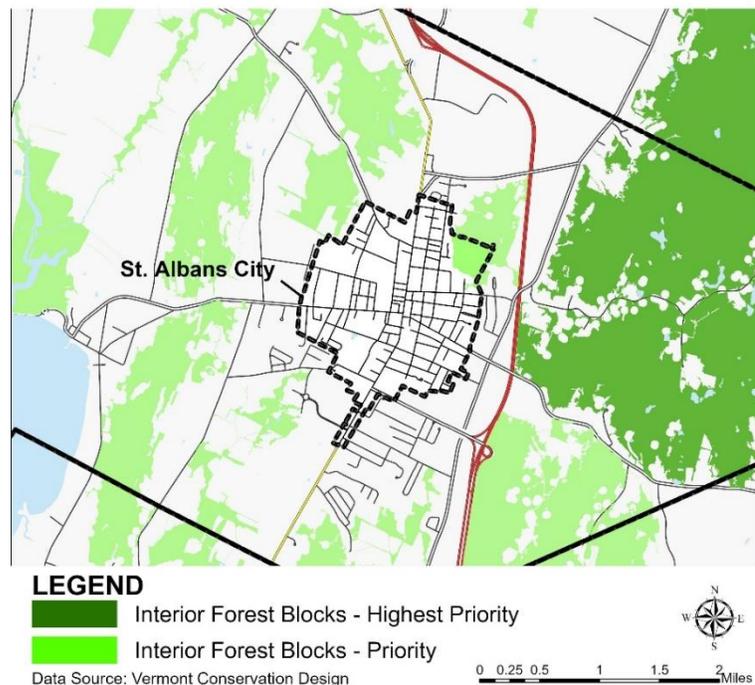
Forest and Habitat Integrity

As shown in the adjacent map, St. Albans City contains part of one priority forest block of statewide significance in the northeast corner of the City, as designated by Vermont Conservation Design. This area is almost entirely comprised of the Aldis Hill Park and Hard'Ack Recreation Area. The existing designation of this area for recreational use means the forest block is likely already well-protected from fragmentation due to development.

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

The City's stormwater system is allowed to discharge to Stevens and Rugg Brooks under a Municipal Separated Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit, which sets federal and state

Habitat Blocks



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

Stormwater Management Program

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

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

Flow Restoration Plan for Rugg Brook

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

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

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

- An infiltration area on private property on So. Main St.

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

Flow Restoration Plan for Stevens Brook

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

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

- Expanding the capacity of the stormwater facility at St. Albans Town Education Center.
- Treating stormwater in the piece of land along the western side of Lemnah Dr.
- Building a stormwater treatment facility near Rewes Dr. in the Town of St. Albans to treat run-off from areas in the City.
- Retrofitting the cooling pond area owned by Green Mountain Power on Lower Welden St.

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

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The two behaviors of City residents that contribute most to greenhouse gas emissions are vehicle use and home heating fuel.

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

Home Heating Fuel

	Vermont		Franklin County		St. Albans City	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total:	269,466	100.00%	19,605	100.00%	3,008	100.00%
Utility gas	47,955	17.80%	5,313	27.10%	1,874	62.30%
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	50,370	18.69%	3,512	17.91%	133	4.42%
Electricity	21,893	8.12%	1152	5.88%	363	12.07%
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.	107,038	39.72%	6,344	32.36%	407	13.53%
Coal or coke	425	0.16%	6	0.03%	0	0.00%
Wood	34,954	12.97%	2,676	13.65%	114	3.79%
Solar energy	1269	0.47%	57	0.29%	0	0.00%
Other fuel	4,865	1.81%	449	2.29%	70	2.33%
No fuel used	697	0.26%	96	0.49%	47	1.56%

Source: Table B25040, 2018-2023 ACS, U.S. Census Bureau. Note that margins of error are not shown.

Commuting & Vehicle Use

Included in the online appendices is commuting data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey. This data shows that 68% of City commuters drove alone to a vehicle to get to work in the period between 2018-2023, and only 18% carpooled. The carpooling figure is higher than the statewide average of 8%. No City residents were reported to commute via public transit during this period. However, with a margin of error of ± 15 , it is possible that a very small number of residents commute via public transport. Statewide, only 0.9% of commuters used public transport, so the city’s figure here generally reflects the trend across Vermont.

In terms of distance to work, there is an interesting paradox: regardless of the many employment opportunities offered in the City, local commuters are more likely to work outside their county of residence (38%) than the overall county and state figures. Perhaps more exploration could go into why more City residents don’t work locally.

Electric vehicles have potential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, depending on the source of electricity. There is a role for the City of St. Albans in helping to provide a “corridor” of electric vehicle charging stations from Vermont’s northern border, through the City, south to Burlington, and beyond. Currently there are seventeen public chargers located in the city, including thirteen level-2 chargers and four level-3 chargers. These include 2 chargers at the

Hard'Ack Recreation Area and 4 in the downtown parking garage, with the remaining public chargers being operated by private businesses.

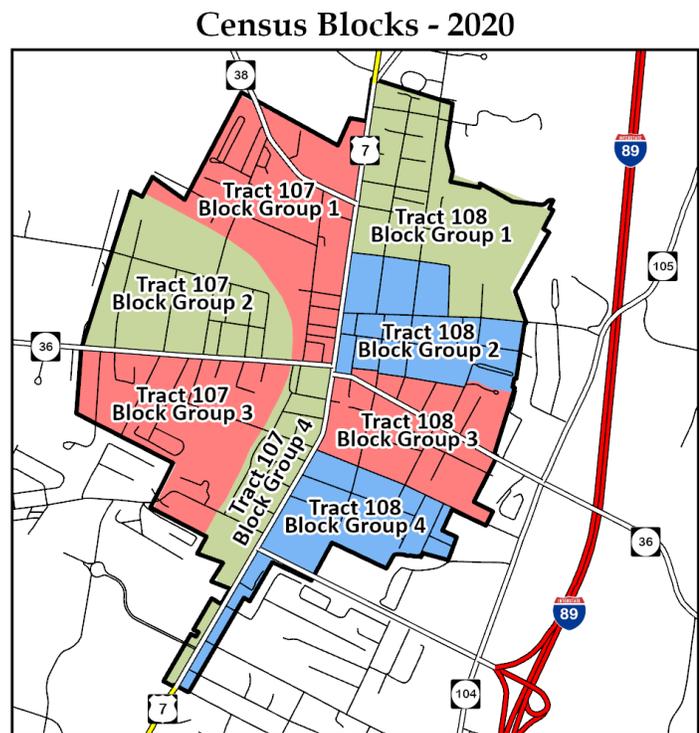
Composting

Proper disposal of food scraps by composting also helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Since the state's Universal Recycling Law (Act 148) went into effect on July 1, 2020, food scraps and yard debris must be separated from trash destined for landfills.

City residents are served by Northwest Solid Waste District and the Hudak Farm Stand, which both accept food scrap on site. NWSWD also provides home composting equipment/assistance and a home food scrap curbside pickup service in the City for a small monthly fee, as well as designated routes for businesses and institutions.

Household Energy Resilience

An important aspect of community resilience is the ability of households to acquire the energy needed for their basic needs and quality of life. In August 2023 Efficiency Vermont published *Mapping Total Energy Burden in Vermont*, which revealed that at least one Census block group in St. Albans City experienced high energy burdens (defined as combined thermal and electricity costs over 6% of median income, or above statewide average of 11%). The study's analysis was based on a comparison of regional and local average energy costs with Census income data for each block group. The average overall energy burden in the City was roughly 8.3% of average median income, with burdens in individual block groups ranging from 6.6% to 13.3%.



In the 2017 version of this report, Block Group 1 of Census tract 107 (see map), ranked fifth in the state for thermal energy burden, first for electricity burden and transportation burden, and second for overall energy burden, with total energy costs exceeding 25% of the block's median income. This most recent version of the report reflects an improvement in overall energy burdens in St. Albans City, as the City as a whole nor any of its census block groups were ranked among the most heavily burdened in the State.

However, there is a high margin of error in the data due to the small sample size. The margins of error for median income in 2021 data ranged from \$8,000 to \$48,000 across block groups. This high margin of error is the likely explanation for this change, rather than any major improvements in energy costs and/or incomes.

City Block Group Energy Burden Per Household

Census block group ID	Thermal Energy Annual spending*	as % of median income	Electricity Annual spending	as % of median income	Transportation Energy Annual Spending	as % of median income	Total Energy Annual Spending	as % of median income
Tract 107, Block Group 1	\$1,215	4.2%	\$986	3.4%	\$1,657	5.7%	\$3,858	13.3%
Tract 107, Block Group 2	\$1,215	2.3%	\$1,201	2.3%	\$2,500	4.8%	\$4,916	9.3%
Tract 107, Block Group 3	\$1,215	2.7%	\$1,208	2.7%	\$2,464	5.5%	\$4,887	11.0%
Tract 107, Block Group 4	\$1,215	2.2%	\$899	1.6%	\$2,272	4.1%	\$4,386	7.9%
Tract 108, Block Group 1	\$1,215	1.9%	\$1,13	1.6%	\$2,399	3.3%	\$4,882	6.7%
Tract 108, Block Group 2	\$1,215	**1.9%	\$961	**1.3%	\$2,045	**2.9%	\$4,358	**6.1%
Tract 108, Block Group 3	\$1,215	1.9%	\$1,048	1.5%	\$2,238	3.2%	\$4,639	6.6%
Tract 108, Block Group 4	\$1,215	3.1%	\$1,148	2.6%	\$2,269	5.2%	\$4,769	10.8%

Source: Efficiency Vermont, Mapping Total Energy Burden in Vermont, August 2023

*the original thermal energy spending data were not disaggregated by block group. All other forms of energy spending were estimated for individual block groups.

**no median income was provided for block group 2 of tract 108. These figures were calculated by averaging the median income for all other block groups in the tract.

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

Policies and Actions for Community Resilience

Planning Goal 8.1	Public services and private property in the City are resilient in the face of natural events and economic challenges.
Policy P.8.1.1	City regulations will limit further development of stream corridors and protect riparian buffer areas.
Policy P.8.1.2	The City will encourage the development of energy-efficient housing and of efficiency efforts for existing housing to reduce heating and electricity costs.
Policy P.8.1.3	The City will support the development of clean and renewable energy generation facilities that do not detract from the character and form of the area.
Policy P.8.1.4	The interests of urban redevelopment and flood resilience shall be balanced in flood regulations and as flood hazard areas are updated or delineated.

Policy P.8.1.5	Public safety shall be balanced with aesthetics and ecological services in the management of City trees.			
Policy P.8.1.6	The City will promote transportation energy conservation through efficient modes of travel and travel patterns.			
Actions		Form of Action	Lead Party	Timeline
Action A.8.1.1	Maintain energy-efficient municipal buildings and infrastructure.	Program	City Staff, Council	Ongoing
Action A.8.1.2	Participate in Public Utility Commission proceedings to ensure that the City’s interests are represented.	Program	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.8.1.3	Utilize planning, outreach, and municipal activities to efficiently address water quality requirements, including compliance with the City’s MS4 ⁹ permit and CSO ¹⁰ order.	Projects, Program	City Staff	Ongoing
Action A.8.1.4	Update the City’s Hazard Mitigation Plan on a regular basis and pursue the projects identified within.	Projects, Program	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.8.1.5	Develop and enforce flood hazard regulations in compliance with federal and state rules and update as needed.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and Planning Commission	1-3 Years
Action A.8.1.6	Implement stream corridor protection regulations and update as necessary.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC ¹¹	Ongoing
Action A.8.1.7	Use residential and commercial building code enforcement to help prevent fire events, ensure the safety of occupants and property, and to provide knowledge of when contributing structures are in states of neglect.	Program	City Staff	Ongoing
Action A.8.1.8	Develop an Enhanced Energy Plan.	Project	City Staff, Council and Energy Cmte.	1-3 Years

Planning Goal 8.2	The City’s public and private infrastructure is environmentally sustainable.
Policy P.8.2.1	City regulations and policies will mitigate the effects of development and municipal operations on the quality of air, water, and land resources.

⁹ Municipal Separated Storm-Sewer System

¹⁰ Combined Sewer Overflow

¹¹ Planning Commission

Policy P.8.2.2	City regulations will protect key natural features such as Aldis Hill, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, floodplains, streambanks, and local waterways from the impacts of development.
Policy P.8.2.3	Runoff and erosion shall be controlled during all phases of construction.
Policy P.8.2.4	City ordinances and regulations will prevent the deterioration of lawn and turf areas, both public and private, due to parking or other activities.
Policy P.8.2.5	The City values its tree canopy and will manage and enhance it.
Policy P.8.2.6	The City will advocate for sensible state and federal stormwater policies that do not contribute to a disproportionate cost burden for redevelopment and new development in Vermont’s urban areas.
Policy P.8.2.7	The City will ensure responsible management of stormwater infrastructure and seek to limit stormwater runoff as a non-point source of water pollution.
Policy P.8.2.8	City regulations will maintain lot coverage requirements that provide for areas on parcels that cannot be impervious and that encourage greenspace, except within the central business district.
Policy P.8.2.9	The City will support the concept of a “corridor” of electric vehicle charging stations from Vermont’s northern border, through St. Albans, and beyond.
Policy P.8.2.10	The City will support efforts to comply with State recycling and composting requirements while also addressing issues of neighborhood quality of life.
Policy P.8.2.11	The City will support programs that provide technical assistance, grants, and low-interest loans for residential and commercial energy efficiency upgrades.
Policy P.8.2.12	Property line setbacks in the City of St. Albans are implemented for the purposes of public safety, emergency access, aesthetics, quality of life, and avoidance of visual nuisances. Ground-mounted solar panels and solar canopies (also including solar plants as defined in 30 V.S.A. § 8002) shall be set back from property lines by at least 10 feet, or as otherwise required by 30 V.S.A. § 248(s), whichever distance is longer.
Policy P.8.2.13	Ground-mounted solar panels and solar canopies (also including ground-mounted solar plants as defined in 30 V.S.A. § 8002) shall not extend any higher than 17 feet from the ground, except for solar canopies mounted over vehicular travel areas, which can therefore be up to 24 feet tall.
Policy P.8.2.14	Solar panels (also including solar plants as defined in 30 V.S.A. § 8002) mounted to the roofs of principal buildings and accessory structures shall also be regulated for the purposes of aesthetics and avoidance of visual nuisances. Roof-mounted solar panels must comply with one of the following standards: (a) the solar panels do not extend farther than two feet above the roof surface and are mounted so as to match the degree of incline of the roof, or (b) the solar panels are located or screened so that they cannot be seen from the public right-of-way or neighboring properties by a person standing at 6 feet in height within 50 feet of the building.
Policy P.8.2.15	Solar panels (also including solar plants as defined in 30 V.S.A. § 8002) mounted to the roofs of accessory structures shall not extend any higher than 17 feet from the ground.

Actions		Form of Action	Lead Party	Timeline
Action A.8.2.1	Maintain the City’s stormwater utility and enhance capacities as necessary to fund and implement a stormwater program.	Program	City Staff and Council	Ongoing
Action A.8.2.2	Pursue projects and funding to reduce and/or store the stormwater flowing into the combined sewer system.	Projects, Program	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.8.2.3	Collaborate with other organizations and private property owners on the treatment of stormwater.	Collaboration	City Staff	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.8.2.4	Actively engage in the State’s Tactical Basin Planning process.	Collaboration	City Staff	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.8.2.5	Make use of opportunities to add electric vehicle charging stations to public parking sites.	Projects, Program	City Staff, Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.8.2.6	Implement a tree program with funds and staff expertise to inventory City trees, identify trees that need monitoring, oversee tree management activities, remove public safety hazards and nuisance trees, and annually install new or replacement trees using methods to identify optimal species and locations.	Projects, Program	City Staff, Council	2-4 Years
Action A.8.2.7	Provide resources and technical assistance for water quality solutions and drainage issues on residential lots, such as green stormwater infrastructure.	Program	City Staff	Ongoing
Action A.8.2.8	Identify significant natural and fragile areas, as well as important water resources, including stream corridors, aquifers, and wetlands, and address these areas in the Land Development Regulations.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and Planning Commission	Ongoing

Chapter 9. Land Use

Planning Goal 9.1	The City of St. Albans has a thriving commercial center and beautiful neighborhoods, providing opportunities for economic prosperity, cultural activities, personal wellness, and a variety of housing options for all walks of life.
Objective O.9.1.1	Implement the land-use oriented objectives contained elsewhere within this City Plan.
Objective O.9.1.2	Plan and regulate development to maintain the City’s historic settlement pattern of a compact urban center.
Objective O.9.1.3	Continue as an example of smart growth, with residential and commercial development concentrated in our community center and strip development avoided.
Objective O.9.1.4	Take the necessary steps to maintain the regional/State designations of Downtown Center and Planned Growth Area, which are beneficial to the City of St. Albans.
Objective O.9.1.5	Maintain the historic, unique, and/or pedestrian-scale form of areas of the City and improve and preserve a welcome and well-maintained gateway aesthetic along the major approaches to the community.

One of the most important roles of this City Plan will be to guide the regulation of land use and development in the community. The City’s Land Development Regulations are meant to directly implement any goals, objectives and policies that could be realized through the guidance, direction and encouragement of how land is used.

Land Use Districts

These are the overall land use districts proposed for the City, primarily consisting of the existing zoning districts. These areas are depicted in the following Proposed Land Use map.

Residential 8700 District Neighborhoods to be Classified by Current/Future Density (Proposed)

The purpose of this district is to maintain within the City a pleasant and uncrowded residential area, and to encourage appropriate development and/or redevelopment that will complement the existing residential land use. This area is currently dominated by Single-Household Dwellings, along with accessory uses. A variety of other residential uses, along with selected non-residential uses are allowed. The City Planning Commission has discussed intentions to perform analyses on the current neighborhood forms and densities in this district for possible inclusion in the Residential 7500 District or for the delineation of new districts, with an eye toward increasing allowed residential densities. Any changes to density rules would be informed

primarily by existing neighborhood forms, as well as State guidance to address the housing crisis.

Residential 7500 District

This district provides an area within the City for moderately dense residential development and growth, while maintaining a safe and healthy atmosphere for the district's residents. Residential uses of up to four dwelling units shall be permitted by right within this district, along with accessory uses. A variety of other residential uses, along with selected non-residential uses may be allowed as conditional uses, provided they meet all applicable standards and can be shown to be compatible with the district's objectives.

Central Business District

This district provides for a diverse range of business and service uses within the traditional business center of the City. The district is intended to protect and enhance the function of the downtown area as the primary commercial, financial, retail and governmental center of the region. It is designed to accommodate a wide variety of commercial activities, particularly those which benefit from pedestrian activity and access. Design criteria for the district are intended to protect the St. Albans Historic District and the special urban features of Taylor Park.

Overall, it is the purpose of the City's commercial districts to provide for a wide range of commercial and related activities to safeguard and enhance the City's role as the economic center of northwestern Vermont. It is also the intent of these districts to protect the historic and cultural characteristics which distinguish the City of St. Albans, and to enable a diverse range of uses, which contribute to the vitality and diversity of the economy and to expand the tax base.

Historic Downtown District (Proposed)

This district is proposed for the historic storefront blocks and civic edifices of the Downtown area. This area represents the nexus of the highest densities of commercial use and residential life, along with the critical nature of a welcome sense of place. The provision of amenities for both residents and visitors is also a defining feature of this area. Thus, this area of the City has needs for land use regulation and careful attention to compatible and incompatible uses that other land use districts do not. The delineation of this area would provide for more focused land use solutions to be implemented.

Transitional Business District

This district provides for the location of a wide range of business activities. These activities support the function of St. Albans as the primary business center in the region and provide a wide range of goods and services for local and regional needs outside the downtown area. These areas are convenient to customers, preserve the carrying capacity of streets and require the provision of off-street parking and loading. Design criteria for the district are intended to encourage the expanded use and preservation of existing buildings or new construction, alterations, and enlargements compatible with the architectural character of the district.

Residential-Professional District

This district consists of an area that balances residential uses with commercial uses, with a preference toward activities that can be accommodated within houses or structures that mirror the form of houses. This district maintains the dimensional standards and character of a pleasant high-density residential neighborhood and allows the types of uses that would historically be found where business districts transition into residential areas. Most types of residential uses are allowed, along with selected non-residential uses as conditional uses, provided they meet all applicable standards and can be shown to be compatible with the district's objectives.

Mixed Use District, Similar to Residential-Professional (Proposed)

This is proposed for areas of the City that historically exhibited higher densities and more mixed uses than they are currently zoned for today. Specifically, the corridors of Lake Street and Fairfield Street show potential for new land use regulations that are similar to the Residential-Professional, which is one of the City's most recently zoning districts, customized for similar reasons along South Main Street. This proposed delineation would also include the existing Business-Neighborhood Transition District, whose existence is largely redundant with the recent Residential-Professional District.

Multi-Dwelling Overlay District

This overlay district allows high densities of various residential uses on areas of the City that are deemed appropriate, especially on commercial and industrial lots for which residential uses may be more marketable in the current real estate climate. This district is designed with standards and requirements to ensure quality of life for the residents and prevent isolation from other neighborhoods and amenities in the City.

Multi-Family District (Proposed)

This potential delineation is proposed for existing large multi-family complexes that stand out from their surrounding areas, typically in the Residential 8700 District. The purpose of this district would be to ensure that these existing uses do not suffer excessively from any issues of nonconformity with their existing zoning district. If so, changes would be proposed.

Service-Industrial District

This district provides for the location of a wide variety of service, industrial, manufacturing, distribution and research facilities providing employment opportunities and broadening of the tax base of the City. These locations provide good transportation and infrastructure access. Due to the location of the district adjacent to residential areas, buffering shall be required to minimize conflicts between non-residential uses and residential districts.

Medical Institution District

This district provides a suitable location for health services of regional importance and associated uses. The district is currently dominated by the Northwestern Medical Center hospital. This district provides good transportation and infrastructure access. Due to this district's proximity to residential uses, special attention should be paid to the prevention of nuisances, such as noise and odors. Due to the location of the district at the eastern gateway to the City, ample setbacks are provided along frontage, and special attention should be paid to lot and building design.

Civic and Recreation District(s) (Proposed)

This area consists of schools, parks, cemeteries and natural areas that are largely nonconforming within their zoning district, typically within the Residential 8700 District. The goal would be to analyze the typical needs and benefits of the existing uses in these areas and propose changes necessary to do not suffer excessively from any issues of current or future nonconformity. In the case of the Aldis Hill property, particular attention would be paid to ensuring the quality of the area as a Habitat Block identified by the State of Vermont.

Flood Hazard Overlay District

The purpose of this district is to minimize future public and private losses caused by development in flood hazard areas. Designation of this district is also required for the City's continued eligibility in the National Flood Insurance Program. Included in this district are all areas of special flood hazard as shown on the latest National Flood Insurance Program maps.

Design Review Districts

These are the design review overlay districts proposed for the City, primarily consisting of the existing districts. These areas are depicted in the following Proposed Design Review Districts map.

DR1 – Traditional Downtown

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

DR2 – Downtown Expansion

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

DR3 – Residential

Provides residential housing adjacent to the traditional downtown and is intended for the preservation and enhancement of its historic pattern, architectural scale and green space. It is characterized by dense, compact development with a mix of housing types. Similar setbacks, footprints, scale, mass and height are expected to continue. Existing vegetation and the pedestrian-oriented environment shall be maintained. Emphasis shall be placed on the preservation of the tree lined boulevard quality of Main Street and the surrounding streetscape. Low-intensity business activity is permitted at residential scale, which includes home occupations or professional offices that are unobtrusive and fit within the character of the neighborhood. New development and redevelopment in these neighborhoods shall reflect the existing and desirable patterns of size, scale, footprint and massing as well as historic architectural patterns and materials.

DR4 – Gateway

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

Expansion of Design Review along Fairfield Street and Lake Street (Proposed)

This proposed change is noted in the Proposed Design Review District map and suggests extending a design review overlay along Fairfield Street and Lake Street properties, from the current design review districts to the City boundary. The primary purpose of this change would be to preserve a gateway aesthetic along these two major through-ways into the City, much like the Gateway Design Review Districts on North and South Main Street.

Exploration of Expanding Design Review for New Downtown Center (Proposed)

This proposed change is noted in the Proposed Design Review Districts map and suggests reviewing the design review requirements associated with Step 3 centers and ensuring that the entirety of the new Downtown Center would be adequately covered.

Federal Street Design Review Alteration (Proposed)

This proposed change is noted in the Proposed Design Review Districts map and suggests one of two options:

1. removing properties on Federal Street and Lower Newton Street from the DR3 design review district or
2. adding design review overlay to properties on the western side of Federal Street.

Currently there are properties on Lower Newton Street and Federal Street that are included in the DR3 design review district. However, these properties are not part of the North Main Street “gateway.” Furthermore, many of the properties in this area are located across Federal Street from properties that are not required to go through design review. Therefore, there is a regulatory procedural disparity between either side of the street. In general, it is unclear what design review would accomplish in this area unless the properties on the western side of Federal Street were brought into the design review overlay. Therefore, the Plan is suggesting that change either be made or that the other properties on Federal Street and Lower Newton Street be removed from the DR3 design review district.

Conservation of natural resources and rare features

The Vermont Natural Resources Atlas lists three areas of the City for special concern:

1. The area of the Aldis Hill Playground is shown as a Priority 3 Habitat Block. This area is proposed for a new land use zoning district that will preserve its forested status.
2. The eastern half of the City is included in the range of the federally-endangered Northern Long-Eared Bat. The City’s tree program and the preservation of the Aldis Hill property should provide benefit to the bat’s existence in the community.
3. There is an indication of a rare, threatened or endangered animal in the area of Cedar Street. While exact details are not readily public, Agency of Natural Resources staff informed the City that the animal in question is a State-endangered species of bat. Also, despite the siting, the neighborhood does not exhibit what is understood to be necessary roosting habitat for the species. Therefore, no City policy or action is proposed at this time.

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

City, to the fullest extent possible. The City Ordinances currently prohibit groundwater extraction within the City limits.

Opportunities for Exemption from Act 250

Since its inception, the statewide regulatory structure of Act 250 has provided many benefits for development in Vermont. However, the law has also been the subject of perennial discussions on whether its broad application across the state, with limited variation based on local context, should be customized to better serve Vermont’s land use needs. Act 181 of 2024 created a framework for designating areas in Vermont that could pursue exemption from Act 250 regulation.

Interim Exemptions from Act 250

With the passage of Act 181, certain areas of the City are subject to interim exemptions from Act 250 for residential development. The Designated Downtown is subject to an unlimited exemption for housing projects, while the Growth Center is subject to an exemption for projects of up to 75 dwelling units. These exemptions do not apply within river corridors and flood hazard areas. These interim exemptions are scheduled to expire on January 1, 2027.

Tier 1B Partial Act 250 Exemption for Housing

Act 181 established a path toward two “Tier 1” exemptions from Act 250. “Tier 1B” is an exemption up to 50 units of housing (including mixed-use) on tracts of land involving 10 acres or less. This exemption is available for any areas that have the new “Center” or “Neighborhood” land use designation under the Act 181 framework. For the City, that would include the Downtown Center and the Planned Growth Area depicted earlier in this plan. The City Council passed a resolution opting in to Tier 1B status in September 2025. The City’s Tier 1B exemption will take effect on December 31, 2026, provided that the new Northwest Regional Plan is approved by the VT Land Use Review Board (LURB) prior to that date, and other aspects of eligibility are maintained, such as:

- The City Plan is adopted, along with approval and confirmation of the City’s planning process by NRPC.
- The City has the required flood hazard and river corridor bylaws for relevant parcels.

Tier 1A Full Exemption from Act 250

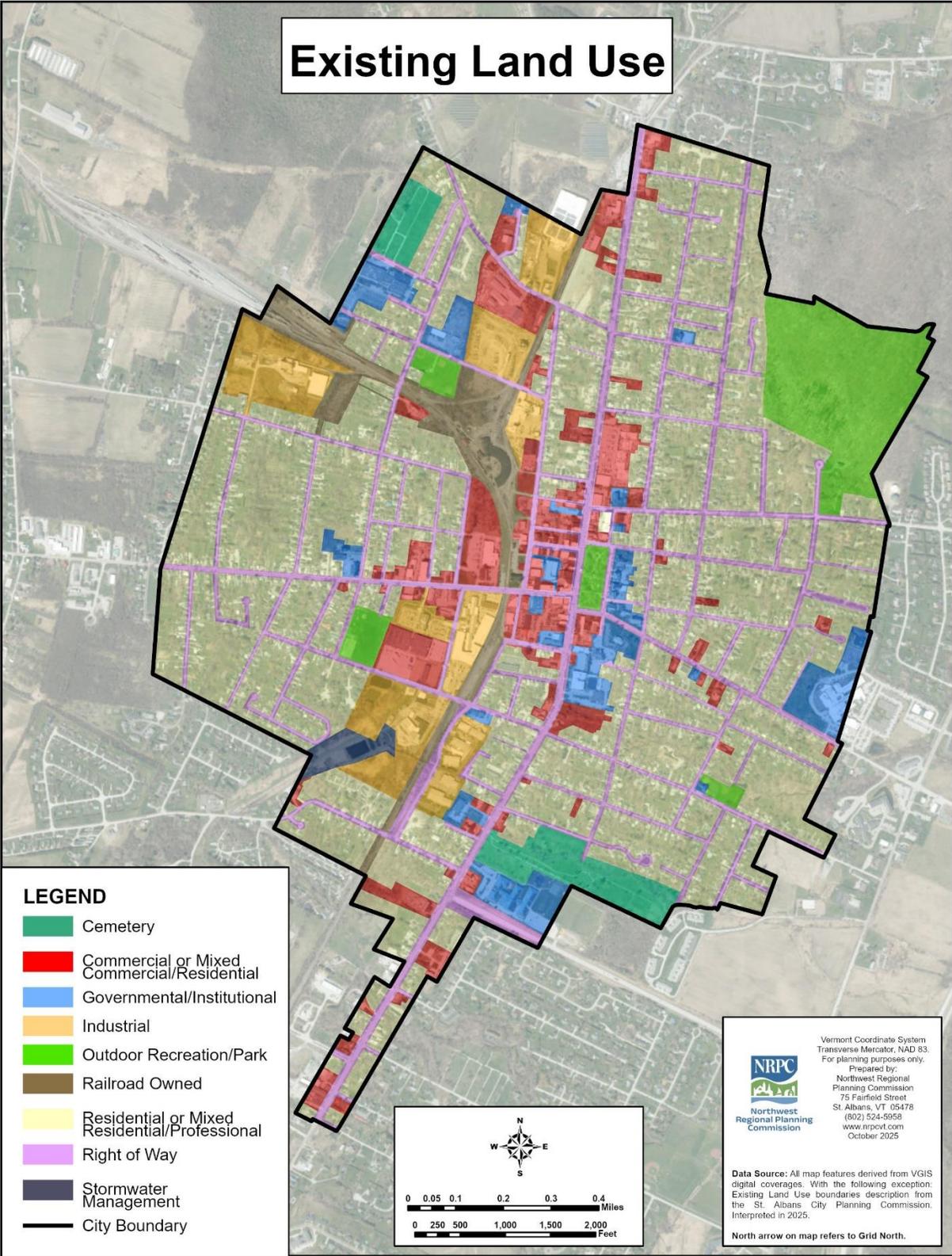
A full exemption from Act 250 will be available for the City’s Downtown Center and Planned Growth Area via “Tier 1A” status. The City would have to go through an application process with the LURB to achieve Tier 1A status and demonstrate assurances that development will be regulated in the following ways:

- ✓ Ensure compact settlement orientated toward pedestrian activity, including an identifiable center with higher density than the surrounding area.

- ✓ Enable a variety of housing types, businesses, services, and facilities all within close proximity and interwoven within the area.
- ✓ Ensure that the transportation system provides or will provide a hierarchy of appropriately designed facilities for pedestrians, bicycles, automotive vehicles, and public transit, if present.
- ✓ Ensure open spaces within the Tier 1A area that incorporate natural features and undisturbed areas as well as historically compatible squares, greens, landscaped streets, greenways, and parks woven into the pattern of the center.
- ✓ Include provisions for public buildings, open spaces, and other visual features that act as landmarks, symbols, and focal points for community identity.
- ✓ Govern the arrangement, building bulk, form, design, character, and landscaping of sites to ensure compatibility of buildings and other improvements.
- ✓ Provide for public and private buildings that are oriented toward streets and further maintaining or creating a defined edge around the Tier 1A area.
- ✓ Provide for a minimum of four-story buildings within a portion of the Tier 1A area.
- ✓ Adopt river corridor and flood hazard area bylaws consistent with or stronger than State statutory requirements.
- ✓ Sustain the historic character of the area.
- ✓ Ensure no jeopardy to rare species or adverse modification to significant natural communities and compliance with State and Federal Threatened and Endangered species regulations.
- ✓ Demonstrate capacity by providing available water and wastewater allocations in the proposed Tier 1A area or planned capacity.
- ✓ Incorporate the overview and enforcement of any existing Act 250 permits in the area.

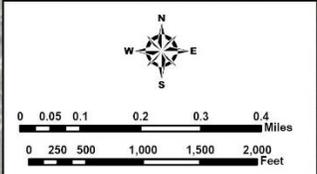
That is a substantial list of considerations that City regulations and services will have to consider, along with any additions that might be made as the LURB finalizes the application process. Nevertheless, it is likely that the benefits of exemption from Act 250, and the avoidance of redundant and irrelevant criteria, are worth the regulatory revisions and additional work that will be required. The City may also find that there is benefit to emulating and customizing some Act 250 criteria that aren't currently considered in the local Land Use Regulations.

Existing Land Use



LEGEND

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



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

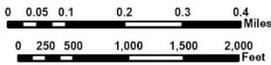
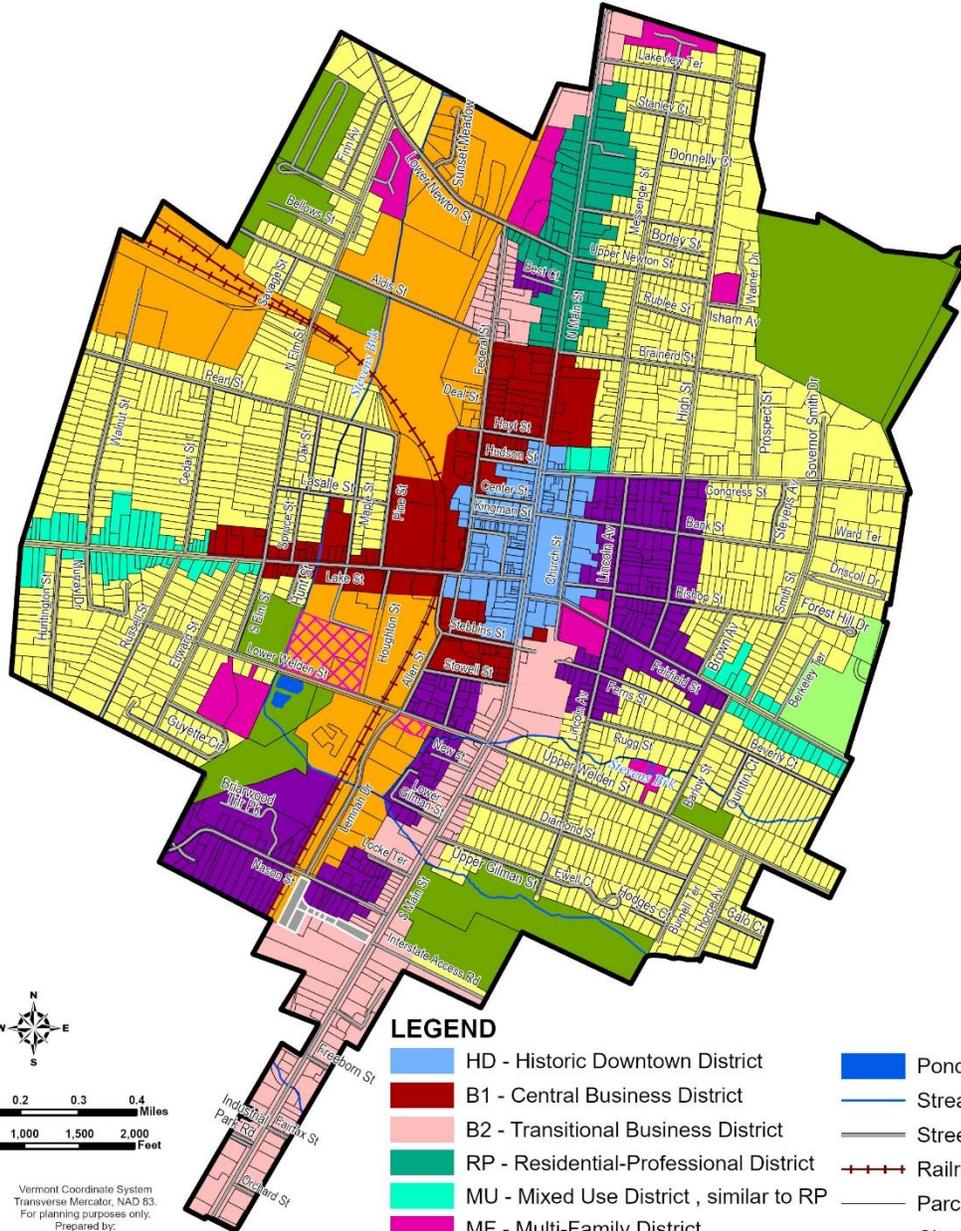
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 www.nrpcvt.com
 October 2025

NRPC
 Northwest
 Regional
 Planning
 Commission

Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. With the following exception: Existing Land Use boundaries description from the St. Albans City Planning Commission. Interpreted in 2025.

North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Proposed Land Use



Vermont Coordinate System
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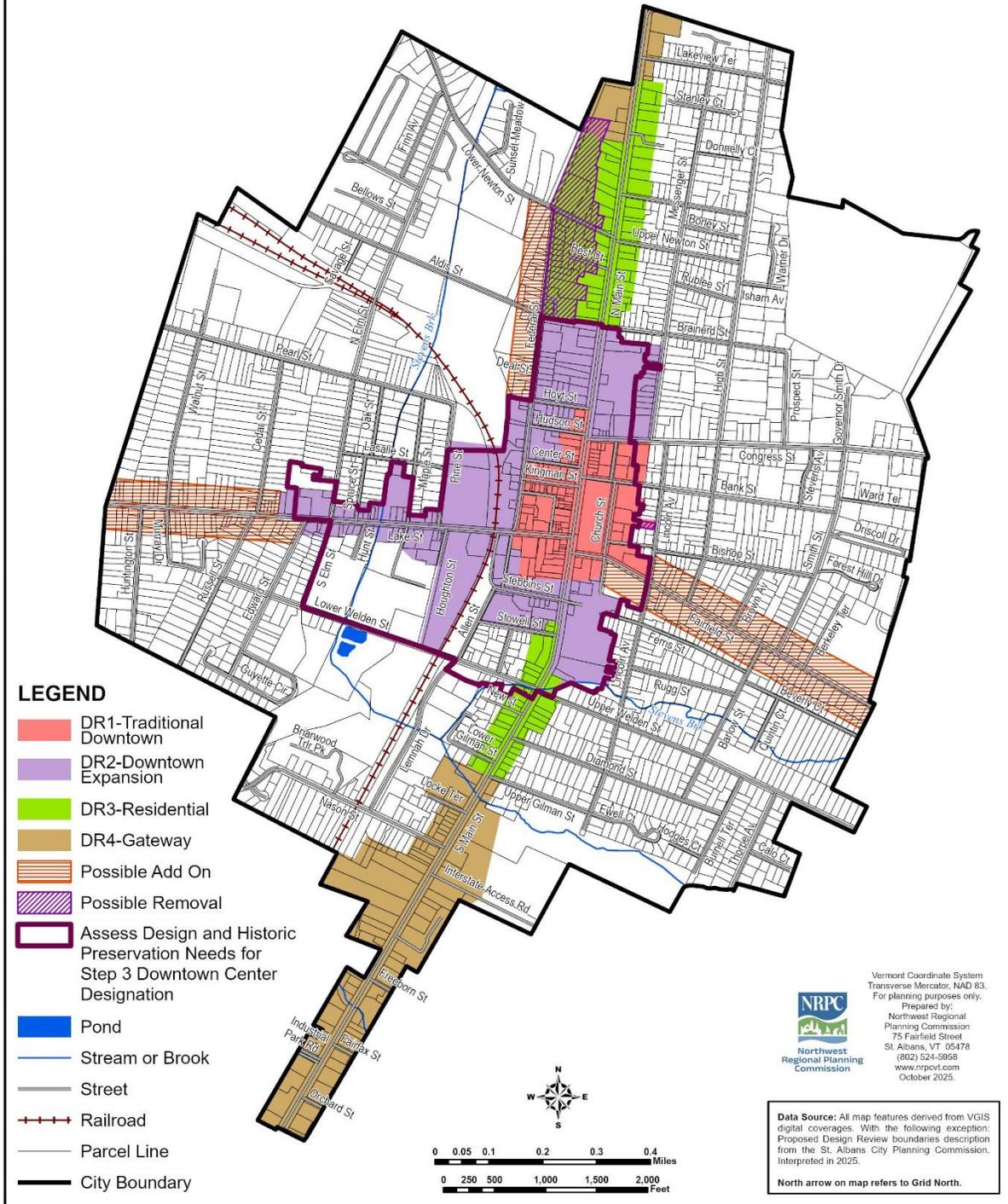
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North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

LEGEND

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| HD - Historic Downtown District | Pond |
| B1 - Central Business District | Stream or Brook |
| B2 - Transitional Business District | Street |
| RP - Residential-Professional District | Railroad |
| MU - Mixed Use District, similar to RP | Parcel Line |
| MF - Multi-Family District | City Boundary |
| R75 - Residential 7500 District | |
| CR - Civic Recreation District | |
| MI - Medical Institution District | |
| S-Ind - Service-Industrial District | |
| ROW - Connector Right of Way | |
| Classify Neighborhoods by Current/Future Density | |
| Multi-Dwelling Overlay District | |

Proposed Design Review Districts



Land Use Policies and Actions

Planning Goal 9.1	The City of St. Albans has a thriving commercial center and beautiful neighborhoods, providing opportunities for economic prosperity, cultural activities, personal wellness, and a variety of housing options for all walks of life.			
Policy P.9.1.1	The City will implement the proposed land use maps included in this City Plan, explore changes in the areas indicated, and amend the Land Development Regulations accordingly.			
Policy P.9.1.2	The City will enforce land use regulations in a fair, equitable, and responsive manner that inspires public confidence.			
Policy P.9.1.3	The City’s land use districts will reflect a community with a vibrant urban core, mixed uses (including industrial where appropriate) along main thoroughfares and historic rail corridors, and surrounding residential neighborhoods.			
Policy P.9.1.4	The City will avoid the unnecessary creation of legal nonconformities when revising the rules governing land use districts.			
Policy P.9.1.5	The City will adjust zoning districts in order to accommodate transitional areas along district boundaries, institute desired existing land use patterns and/or new aspirational patterns, preserve the gateways into the City, recognize special types of land use (such as educational and recreational), and take advantage of beneficial redevelopment activities.			
Policy P.9.1.6	The primary purposes of the current Residential Districts are to provide for appropriate neighborhood-form residential areas.			
Policy P.9.1.7	Commercial natural resource extraction is discouraged within the City and should be considered for prohibition.			
Policy P.9.1.8	Off-street parking requirements will reflect updated vehicle usage data and allow for permit applicants to propose and justify parking needs for developments.			
Policy P.9.1.9	Land use regulations will allow for residential use of former and existing commercial/industrial areas as market forces allow.			
Policy P.9.1.10	Land use regulations will require setback areas in order to promote aesthetics, health of natural resources, neighborhood form, avoidance of nuisances, and the general quality of life in the City.			
Policy P.9.1.11	The City will regulate curb cuts and other aspects of access management to ensure that new residential development does not outpace traffic/service capacity, especially on small neighborhood streets.			
Policy P.9.1.12	The City benefits from our designation as a Certified Local Government with the VT Division of Historic Preservation and the National Parks Service.			
Actions	Form of Action	Lead Party	Timeline	
Action A.9.1.1	Explore the prohibition of commercial natural resources extraction in the City.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC ¹²	2-4 Years

¹² Planning Commission

Action A.9.1.2	Establish new education and recreation districts to better reflect the needs of current uses.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	1-3 Years
Action A.9.1.3	Update off-street parking requirements to reflect available vehicle usage data and allow for permit applicants to propose and justify parking needs for developments.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	2-4 Years
Action A.9.1.4	Create a recreational zoning designation for the Aldis Hill Playground Trust property that also achieves protection of the State-designated Priority Interior Forest Block.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	1-3 Years
Action A.9.1.5	Update the City’s residential districts to reflect current densities with information from residential density analysis tools and other sources.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	1-3 Years
Action A.9.1.6	Keep incompatible uses from being immediately adjacent to neighboring properties, such as structures that house animals.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	Ongoing
Action A.9.1.7	Explore new avenues for regulating curb cuts and access management on small neighborhood streets.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	1-3 Years
Action A.9.1.8	In cases when the DRB has special consideration of waivers and allowances (such as height and number of accessory structures), clarify the language to ensure that their review only pertains to certain questions and that all other relevant standards should still apply.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	1-3 Years
Action A.9.1.9	Update mobile home park rules and include tiny homes.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	1-3 Years
Action A.9.1.10	Create allowances for cottage courts and similarly unique forms of residential development.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	1-3 Years
Action A.9.1.11	Create a historic downtown zoning district.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	1-3 Years
Action A.9.1.12	Adjust the allowed location of homeless shelters and similar social services in order to balance community wellness with performance conflicts.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	1-3 Years
Action A.9.1.13	Retire the Business-Neighborhood Transition District by assigning properties to the Residential-Professional District.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	1-3 Years
Action A.9.1.14	Clarify the definitions of Bed & Breakfast and Lodging House and review which districts they should be allowed in.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	1-3 Years

Action A.9.1.15	Simplify accessory structure rules and keep the housing of animals away from neighbors.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	1-3 Years
Action A.9.1.16	Explore integrating the number of kitchens/kitchenettes and the number of bedrooms into the regulation of residential uses.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	2-4 Years
Action A.9.1.17	Explore the establishment of design review, and historic preservation in neighborhoods.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	2-4 Years
Action A.9.1.18	Explore allowing higher residential densities, gateway design review and more mixed uses on Fairfield Street and Lake Street.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	1-3 Years
Action A.9.1.19	Establish new education/recreation zoning districts.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	1-3 Years
Action A.9.1.20	Increase the opportunities for administrative amendments to site plans and subdivisions, e.g., for accessory structures, landscaping, and de minimis changes.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	1-3 Years
Action A.9.1.21	Ensure compatibility with state/federal flood hazard and river corridor requirements.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	1-3 Years
Action A.9.1.22	Review the legislative intent of the “existing small lot rule” in light of new State allowances for residential densities.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	1-3 Years
Action A.9.1.23	Explore solutions for the unique circumstances of corner lots, such as relaxing setback rules for parking.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	2-4 Years
Action A.9.1.24	Explore the creation of land use standards and other policies required for Tier 1A Act 250 exemption status. Establish and emulate any provisions of Act 250 criteria that would benefit redevelopment and quality of life in the City.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	1-3 Years
Action A.9.1.25	Be active in the regional planning process to delineate the Future Land Use Map and the designated areas.	Collaboration	City Staff and Planning Commission	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.9.1.26	Maintain the City’s Certified Local Government status in good standing.	Program	City Staff, Council and HPC ¹³	Ongoing
Action A.9.1.27	Explore ways to simplify the Design Review process and add more direction for administrative decisions. Develop a list of approved materials and/or colors. Perhaps rescind the regulation of color, altogether.	Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	2-4 Years

¹³ Historic Preservation Commission

Chapter 10. Our Role in the Region

Planning Goal 10.1 **The City’s role as the region’s largest historic growth center will be a source of mutual benefit.**

Objective O.10.1.1 Contribute the City’s unique urban perspective to intermunicipal, regional, and statewide efforts.

Objective O.10.1.2 Be open to collaboration and the provision of services to adjacent municipalities when mutually beneficial.

Objective O.10.1.3 Work creatively with other municipalities and organizations.

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

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

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

The St. Albans Town Plan was reviewed during development of the City Plan in order to identify rates and patterns of growth along the City’s borders. Growth in adjacent areas of the Town has relied heavily on the extension of City infrastructure. This growth on the City’s outskirts and in the Town’s northern growth center has benefited the community with new housing and employment opportunities, but it has also created the potential for development that could compete with some of the City’s key commercial interests in the Downtown and TIF district. Regardless, the City and Town work jointly in many areas, when mutually beneficial, such as with the current police coverage contract. The City will continue to pursue coordinated planning and development efforts with the Town as appropriate.

Over the past two years, the City Planning Commission and St. Albans Town Planning Commission have held several meetings together to discuss recent planning efforts and project updates that jointly affect and benefit both municipalities. Both planning commissions are committed to continuing the constructive dialog to share ideas and the benefits of collaboration and coordination. This dialog has contained absolutely no indication of the generational inter-community adversity that used to grace newspaper headlines over the decades. The result is an atmosphere in which any potential conflicts and incompatibilities in land use regulation between the two municipalities can be discussed in a solution-focused manner. Likewise, joint goals between the communities are freely shared, such as the need for multimodal transportation connections and the expectation that both municipalities share the need for allowing new housing development, as able.

While the City has no implicit concern regarding distinct differences in land use at the City-Town boundary, the ultimate goal would be to avoid situations in which allowed uses in one municipality would have immediate detrimental impacts on the bordering uses in the other, such as traffic, noise, and other measurable factors. For instance, both parties should avoid allowing dense commercial uses in one municipality that require connecting through smaller streets and/or residential neighborhoods in the other municipality to get to the regional transportation network.

The City is active on several NRPC subcommittees and advisory committees, including the Brownfield Revolving Loan Steering Committee and the Plan & Policy Committee. It is important for the City to lend its unique perspective to regional planning activities and programs.

The City’s administrative capacity and familiarity with project management and state/federal funding sources have also benefited the region in many ways. Since 2017, the City has been the municipal sponsor for Champlain Housing Trust to access U.S. HUD block grants via the Vermont Community Development Program in order to fund the regional Home Repair Loan Program. Recently the City acted as the sponsor for EECBG funds, which would allow NRPC to carry out energy and transportation planning in the region.

Policies and Actions Concerning Our Role in the Region

Planning Goal 10.1	The City’s role as the region’s largest historic growth center will be a source of mutual benefit.
Policy P.10.1.1	The City will consider the use of resources and the consequences of growth and development for the region and the state, as well as the community in which it takes place.
Policy P.10.1.2	The City will consider the impact of proposed plans, regulations, and land use decisions of other municipalities and express concerns when incompatibility is apparent, especially when adjacent to residential districts.

Actions		Form of Action	Lead Party	Timeline
Action A.10.1.1	Participate with adjacent communities in grants, studies, and projects that address mutual inter-municipal goals and connections, such as sidewalk networks and recreation infrastructure.	Projects	City Staff, Council and Planning Commission	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.10.1.2	Share or contract for resources, infrastructure, and services with other municipalities when practical and mutually beneficial.	Collaboration, Programs	City Staff and Council	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.10.1.3	Collaborate with other municipalities and organizations to address important regional issues that are priorities to the City.	Collaboration, Projects	City Staff, Council and PC ¹⁴	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.10.1.4	Collaborate with adjacent municipalities on land use decisions and initiatives to prevent and reduce commercial strip development.	Collaboration, Regulation	City Staff, Council and PC	As Opportunities Arise
Action A.10.1.5	Continue to provide access to Vermont Community Development Program funds for the Champlain Housing Trust's regional Home Repair Loan Program, as long as the grant administration does not detract from regular City functions.	Program	City Staff and Council	Ongoing
Action A.10.1.6	Seek appointment of City representation to regional and statewide entities whose realms of influence can directly affect municipal functions or the community's prosperity.	Collaboration	City Staff and Council	Ongoing
Action A.10.1.7	Engage with land use planning and regulation in the Town of St. Albans to avoid land use incompatibility that could be immediately detrimental between municipalities.	Collaboration	City Staff and Planning Commission	Ongoing

¹⁴ Planning Commission