

Natural Resources and Land Use

Goals & Objectives

1. Allow South Hero to grow in a responsible way, with respect for its unique characteristics, natural beauty and rural environment in a manner which encourages and nurtures South Hero's sense of community and civic pride.
2. Support agriculture that follows best environmental management practices.
3. Ensure the compatible coexistence of development with major ecologically sensitive areas, such as wetlands, natural areas, Lake Champlain, scenic views and historic sites.
4. Enable mixed use of residential, agricultural, light industrial and/or commercial developments to flourish in the Town.
5. Encourage commercial and small, light industrial development within or adjacent to the designated Village Centers and along Route 2 and Route 314 in a way that maintains the beauty of the entrances to the Town from the east and west and prevents strip development.
6. Take advantage of existing or historical hamlets where appropriate.
7. Increase public awareness of the unique characteristics of South Hero in an effort to help preserve those characteristics for future generations.
8. Maintain adequate public access to the lake in an environmentally responsible manner.
9. Support efforts to reduce pollution and cleanup Lake Champlain, groundwater and air quality.
10. Re-evaluate and prioritize the "scenic views" list with consideration of how it can support protecting scenic views in the Town's Development Regulations.

Strategies

1. Restructure the Town's Development Regulations to define and include the Proposed Land Use Areas of Village Core and Village Neighborhood.
2. Evaluate making provision for a Town Center with adequate capacity to host the Town Offices, recreation fields and other functions and facilities as the need develops. Commercial enterprises, in a public/private partnership or just private, should also be included in the evaluation.
3. Support purchase and/or donation of development rights to maintain agriculture and important natural areas outside of the village areas.
4. Encourage agricultural easements in subdivisions and promote Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) where soils are suitable.
5. Require that "building envelopes" be defined for house sites in subdivisions to ensure coexistence with wetlands, natural areas, and farmland.
6. Define "village core" area and "village neighborhood" area in the zoning regulations, encourage development in those areas and take steps to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, and enforce appropriate speed limits.
7. Support, encourage and inform the public about innovative solutions for safe sewage disposal.
8. Support the development of retail, hospitality and service-based businesses best suited to serve the needs of residents, seasonal residents and the tourist population.
9. Reconsider the lot size limitations in zoning regulations.

10. Support and participate in Federal, State and local efforts to improve water quality in Lake Champlain. Ensure Town Development Regulations support that effort.
11. The Town Planning Commission and Conservation Commission should stay up to date on State and federal regulations concerning wildlife, wetlands, natural areas, and water quality. Furthermore, the Commissions should determine how best to regulate these areas and monitor the effectiveness and enforcement of town regulations.
12. The Town shall support, seek out and apply for State, federal and private grants for the protection of natural areas, wetlands, scenic areas, recreation areas, and wildlife habitat.
13. The Town shall support donations, leases, and other private, voluntary ways to protect natural areas, wetlands, scenic areas, recreation areas, and wildlife habitat.
14. Town zoning and subdivision regulations shall be strictly and consistently enforced. All Town officials should be well-informed about these regulations.
15. In the Town Development Regulations, provisions shall ensure that development compatibly coexists with the following special environmental areas:
 - a. Natural areas, especially significant fossil sites
 - b. Critical habitat on the outer islands
 - c. Public access areas on the lake shore
 - d. Lake Champlain shoreline i.e., wetlands, including the “Crick” and the area of Round Pond
 - e. Scenic views
 - f. Flood plain areas
16. Ensure that the conversion of seasonal homes to year-round use meets local zoning standards and results in safe and adequate sewage disposal, water supply, and road access.
17. To protect the Lake Champlain shoreline and recognize its diverse and unique character, the Town Planning Commission and Conservation Commission shall keep apprised of lakeshore land use and identify shoreland areas that may be treated differently in the Town regulations.
18. Support State of Vermont efforts to minimize pollution to the Lake and groundwater.
19. Work cooperatively with the newly created Conservation Commission where appropriate.

Natural Resources

The character and capacity of development in South Hero is physically influenced by topography, geology, soils, groundwater and surface water. This chapter provides a basis to understand the physical character of the town and its limitations and suitability for development. The Vermont Geological Survey, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey, Vermont Significant Wetland Inventory and other resources provide valuable information on the town’s natural resources. This information can be viewed at <https://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/anra5/>.

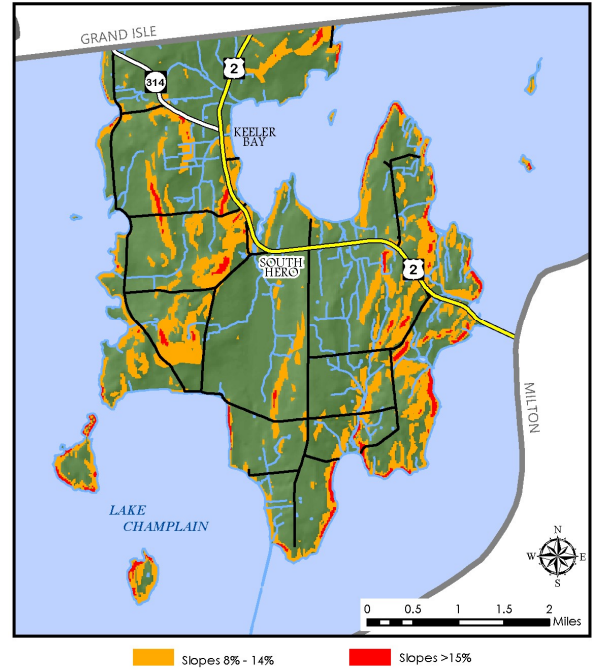
Topography and Geology

South Hero is comprised of the southern portion of South Hero Island and the 7 outer islands of Providence, Stave, Fish Bladder, Cedar, Kellog, Sawyer and Carlton’s Prize. South Hero is primarily

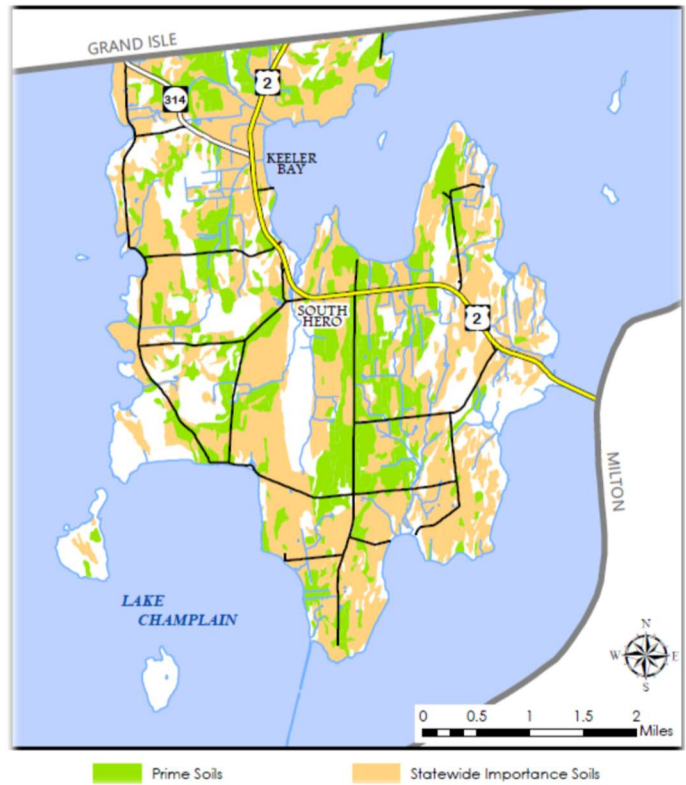
low and flat with a few ridges and hills. The highest point in South Hero is a rounded hill reaching 279 feet above sea level about 1.8 miles southwest of South Hero Village. There is a small amount of land on hills and on the shorelands that have steep slopes over 15%. Development in these areas could result in destabilization and environmental damage, and therefore should be avoided.

The town is within the Champlain Lowlands physio-geographic region and has been shaped by historic ice ages and seas. As a result, there are many geologic sites of interest in South Hero. Fossil evidence may be found in many rock outcroppings throughout the town as much of the rock is in layers of sediments put down over millions of years. Lessor Quarry, located south of Sunset View Road approximately 0.25 miles from Route 2, is made up of Ordovician limestone about 450 million years old. It consists of thick layers of dark blue-gray limestones with fossils and occasional thin layers of shale. The site is used for research and field trips by UVM and other area students, however, it is on private land and permission must be granted before visiting the site.

STEEP SLOPES



PRIMARY AGRICULTURAL SOILS



Soil and Earth Resources

Agricultural Soils. Soils that have the highest potential for agriculture based on soil physical and chemical conditions are mapped by NRCS and known as primary agricultural soils. The NRCS soil survey places soils in value groups that determine whether they meet various types of primary agricultural soils. Map X shows highest value Prime soils and second highest value Statewide Importance soils for agriculture. Not surprisingly, South Hero is made up almost entirely of soils that have good potential for agriculture. The town’s efforts to concentrate growth in villages and to carefully site limited development in the rural areas will help to preserve agricultural soils.

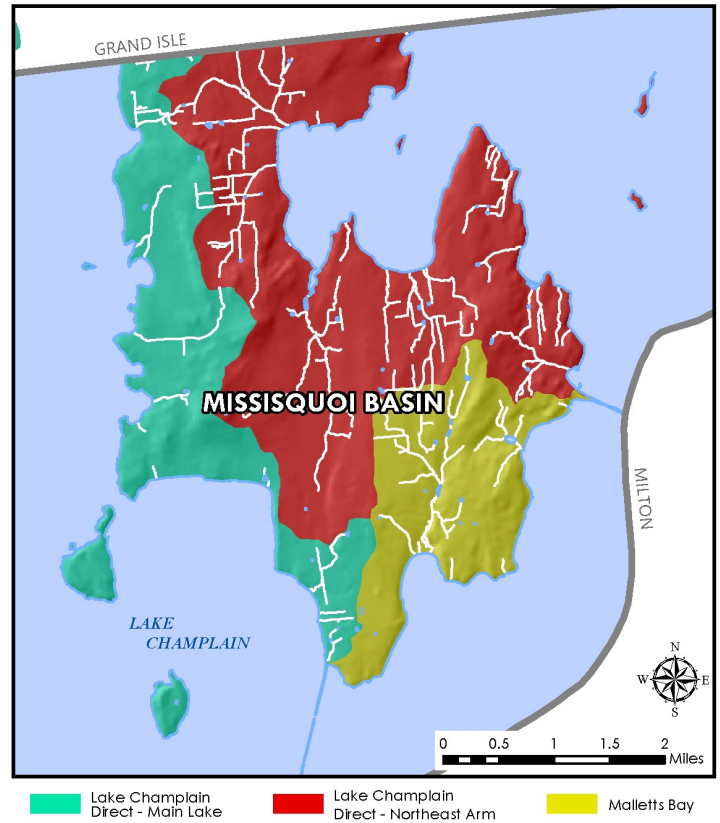
Earth Resources. Earth resources, including sand, gravel and stone, are important resources particularly for use in construction and road maintenance. Mapped soil data from the NRCS shows limited potential for sand and gravel extraction in the Town.

There is one mapped quarry in the area where there is sand and gravel potential. The Town of South Hero acquires sand and gravel from Highgate, gravel from North Hero, and salt is sourced from Barrett’s Inc. Given the limited potential in town, the likelihood of finding suitable property for a municipal sand/gravel quarry is not favorable unless the Town looks outside its borders. Despite this limited potential, it is important to ensure that any quarry, public or private, is properly designed, engineered and managed. Zoning standards shall include performance standards for extraction, noise, dust, hauling, reclamation and bonding to minimize impacts to neighbors. Proper end of life reclamation shall also be required.

Water Resources

Streams and Drainage. South Hero falls into the “Northern Lake Champlain Direct” watershed. Water from a series of unnamed streams and wetlands generally flow directly into Lake Champlain and needs to be monitored for excess phosphorus and other lake pollutants.

WATER RESOURCES



Factors such as, larger rivers flowing into Lake Champlain, including the Lamoille (Colchester) and the Winooski River (Winooski), and overflows from the Burlington area can negatively affect the quality of water on the south end of South Hero Island. Flow from St. Albans Bay can negatively affect the Inland Sea area of South Hero from the Sandbar Causeway north around Kibbe Point into Keeler Bay and north to the Grand Isle Town border. Many homes get their drinking water directly from the Lake along the entire South Hero shoreline.

Groundwater.

Some South Hero residents rely on groundwater wells for drinking water. The Town’s limited aquifer sources should be protected to ensure good water quality. Some wells in South Hero are impacted by hydrogen sulfide gas and residents may choose to treat their wells to address this.

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

Map X shows the location of wetlands mapped by the Vermont Significant Wetland Inventory; however, this map is not completely accurate or comprehensive and currently being updated. The State is working to improve the map by revising inaccurate wetland locations and adding new wetlands to the inventory, specifically those that are over a half-acre in size, that are connected to water, that are a vernal pool or headwater, and that contain significant natural communities, or rare species habitat.

The two most significant wetlands in South Hero are the South Hero Marsh Wildlife Area (the “Crick”) and the Round Pond Natural Area. The South Hero Marsh Wildlife Area outlets on the north side of U.S. Route 2, just west of South Hero Village, and extends southerly nearly to West Shore Road. The “Crick”, roughly 100 acres in size, is mostly wooded with deciduous trees. Round Pond is situated near the shoreline, northeasterly of the intersection of Landon Road and East Shore Road. The pond is mostly open water; the wetland is more extensive and includes some marshes northerly along the shoreline. The area is an important protected nesting area for loons.

Lake Champlain. South Hero not only depends on the Lake Champlain for drinking water, fishing, swimming, boating and other recreational pursuits, but for its identity and sense of place. Summer tourism and property values are tied to its health and beauty. The Lake attracts businesses with a work force that appreciates the Lake’s natural beauty and Vermont’s working landscape.

Unfortunately, too much pollution is reaching Lake Champlain. Stormwater runoff travels into rivers, streams or directly into Lake Champlain from agricultural land, roads, parking lots, lawns, athletic fields, buildings, industrial facilities, forest harvesting operations, and streambank erosion.


Wetlands in Vermont are classified as Class I, II, or III based on the functions and values which they provide. Development on a Class I and II wetlands requires a VT Wetlands permit from the Department of Environmental Conservation.



View of Rond Pond.

During periods when Lake Champlain is in flood stage, septic systems near the Lake are in danger of flooding and contributing to the pollution problem. Wastewater treatment plants off Island, in particular Burlington, Winooski, and St. Albans are an additional source of water pollution to Lake Champlain’s waters. South Hero recognizes the importance of clean water, a clean Lake Champlain and the negative impact a polluted Lake Champlain has on the State’s economy. South Hero supports efforts to decrease and stop all polluting of Lake Champlain.

Phosphorus is one of the nutrient pollutants found in stormwater and arguably the greatest threat to clean water in Lake Champlain. Too much phosphorus pollution stimulates excessive growth of algae and nuisance aquatic plant growth. Of particular concern is the toxic cyanobacteria, also called blue-green algae, that can turn the water green, release a horrid odor and make people and pets’ sick. For waters not meeting Vermont State Water Quality Standards, needed pollutant reductions are identified through Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). Tactical basin plans describe how these pollutant reductions will be achieved by outlining priority projects or actions, based on monitoring and assessment data, to protect or restore specific waterbodies. South Hero is within the Northern Lake Champlain Direct Basin (Basin 5), which completed a Tactical Basin Plan in 2020. The Plan recommends that South Hero complete a stormwater management plan to identify ways to limit nutrient loading from stormwater.

 Respondents to the 2022 South Hero Town survey strongly supported efforts to improve the water quality of Lake Champlain. Over 70% supported developing a stormwater master plan for the village area and more than two-thirds supported exploring municipal wastewater management in the village areas.

Stormwater Management. In South Hero, stormwater infrastructure consists of a series of catch basins, culverts, lines, and swales that transport stormwater to outfall points in Lake Champlain. Stormwater is a major cause of the impaired water quality in Lake Champlain. As noted above, the Tactical Basin Plan recommends that South Hero prepare a stormwater management

plan to identify ways to further manage and treat stormwater before it makes it way to Lake Champlain.

Modeling has identified Keeler Bay for high phosphorous loading and as a result it is a priority for remediation and restoration. Stemming from this data and planning, the South Hero Land Trust and Grand Isle Natural Resource Conservation District are leading a Keeler Bay Action Plan, with funding from the Lake Champlain Basin Program.

Picture of Keeler Bay



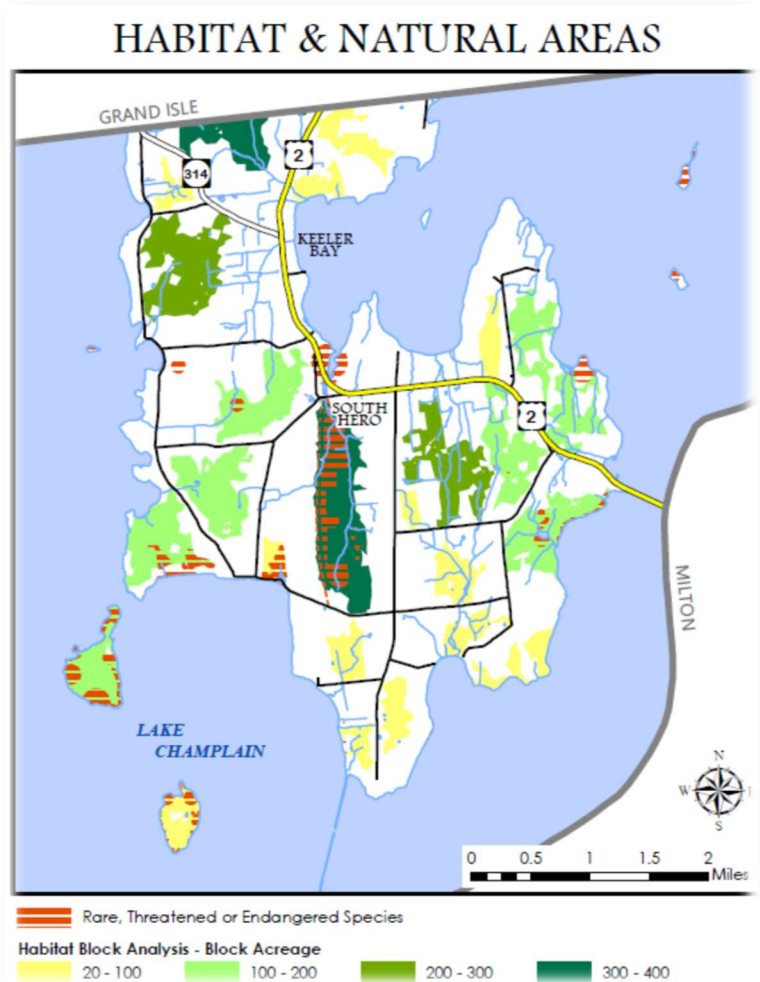
This new stone lined ditch on Kibbe Point Road was funded by Grants In Aid in 2022 and will reduce erosion and improve stormwater infiltration.

The State issues a Municipal Roads General Permit, first in 2018 and again in 2023 to achieve significant reductions in stormwater-related erosion from municipal roads, both paved and unpaved. It covers discharges of regulated stormwater for town highways (Class 1-4) and municipal stormwater infrastructure associated with town highways. Municipalities are required to implement a customized, multi-year plan to stabilize their road drainage system. Funding through the Grants In Aid program is available for implementation projects.

Another way that South Hero can work on limiting the amount of stormwater that makes its way to Lake Champlain is to require that developments incorporate Low-Impact Development (LID). LID controls stormwater runoff at the lot level aiming to keep rainwater on-site before slowly releasing it. Examples include limiting impervious surface and green infrastructure techniques, such as rain gardens, rain barrels, and sites designs that allow maximized on-site infiltration of stormwater.

Habitat Blocks, Wildlife Corridors and Forest Land

Wildlife is an important natural resource and an indication of a healthy, sustainable environment. The most important wildlife habitat blocks in South Hero consist of wetlands. The highest ranked habitat block is the area around the Round Pond Natural Area, while the largest habitat block is the Roy Marsh Wildlife Management Area that runs behind South Street from Route 2 to West Shore Road. The majority of both these areas are already protected as conserved land. Continuing to preserve these and the smaller habitat blocks is a priority for the Town. Over time, even low-density rural development and roads can fragment these areas, threatening the health, function and value of these forest areas.



South Hero has scattered areas of forested land, including mature forest, wetland forests, and young forests that are growing up from old farm fields and pastures. The Champlain Islands support growth characteristics of Central Woodlands, such as shagbark hickory, basswood, several maple varieties, beech and red and white cedar.

The predominant woodland variety is ash, exceeding 50% coverage in some parts of town. The invasive Emerald Ash Borer beetle (EAB) first infested South Hero in 2018. While EAB has spread into most of Vermont’s counties, its population is low and it has infested only a very small percentage of the state’s total ash trees. Managing the movement of infested ash material will slow the spread of EAB and allow time for planning, monitoring, and research. The Town should plan for removal of dead and diseased trees on Town property, which includes town road ROW’s under proper slow the spread protocol, and private landowners should be aware of the impact on their property.

Air Quality

Air quality is generally high throughout Vermont, especially in rural communities such as South Hero. Motor vehicles are the largest source of air pollution in Vermont, which can create localized areas of poor air quality where traffic is congested. Air quality can also be impacted by weather patterns which carry pollutants from other areas. All efforts should be taken to maintain good air quality in South Hero.

Scenic Areas

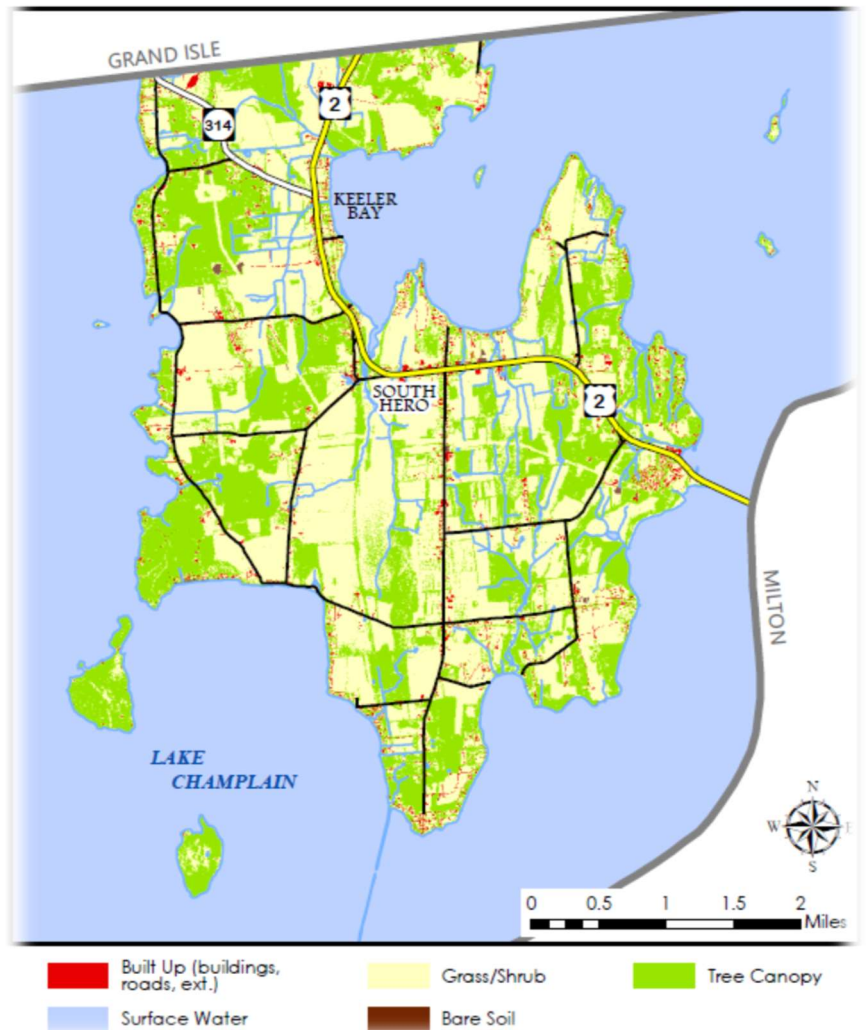
Designated Scenic Views. A scenic view is a publicly accessible area where an important and characteristic open vista may be viewed by the public. Scenic views may be from public roads, public recreation areas and from the lake. Many years ago, the Special Island Environment Committee found 14 scenic views and ranked them from 1 to 4, with 1 being the best. (Described below and shown on Map X). The Town will need to develop review standards in the South Hero Development Regulations to ensure that development is planned and sited with limited impact to these identified scenic views. A full list of scenic views can be found in Appendix A.

Land Use

Current Land Use

Land use in South Hero consists of two village areas along Route 2 and rural areas with dispersed residences, working farms, home based and agricultural businesses, wetlands and open land. These uses are bounded by Lake Champlain with its small beaches, marshes, rocky shoreline, lakeshore residences and seasonal homes.

CURRENT LAND USE



The Town’s history is rooted in agriculture, and over a quarter of the Town’s acreage is used for this purpose. The South Hero Land Trust works to preserve forest & farmland in South Hero. Over 19% of land in South Hero is preserved through one of the land trusts in the state. The amount of farmland in the town has remained relatively consistent since 2013.

South Hero has a significant seasonal tourism industry with a large number of summer homes and camps located along Lake Champlain, in addition to a few marinas, public boat launches and a town beach. Roughly 13% of all land is used for seasonal dwellings, with 91% of those parcels being located on the lakefront. The number of seasonal residences listed with the town has remained relatively consistent from 2013 to 2020.

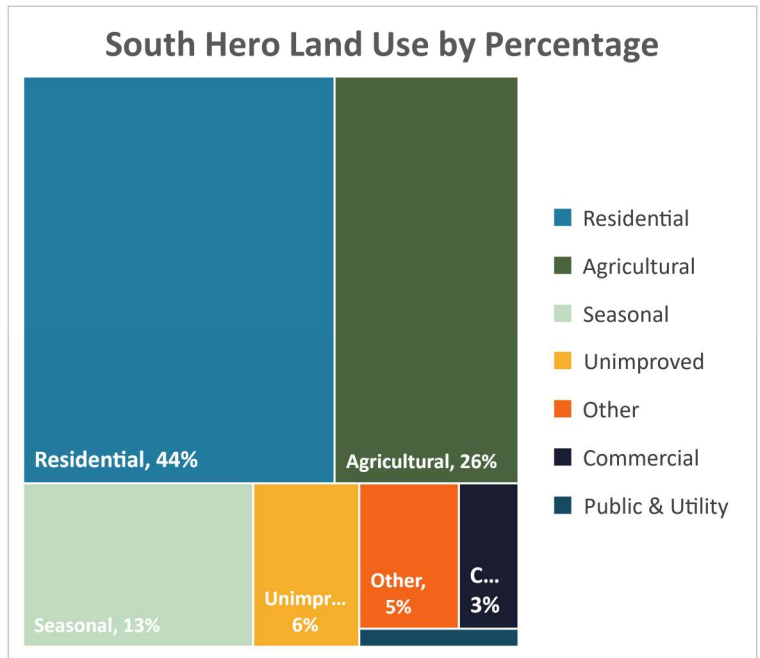
South Hero’s two village areas, South Hero Village and Keeler Bay Village, are located at two junctions along Route 2. The villages consist of a mix of residential, commercial and public land uses at a higher density than the rest of Town.

Outside of the village areas, residential development is located on larger rural lots integrated with agriculture, open land and wetland areas. Nearly half of all land in South Hero is in residential use, with an average parcel size of 5.5 acres. However, this number may be skewed by a few very large lots; of the 75% of residential properties on less than 6 acres, the average acreage is 1.7 acres. 33% of all residences are located on the lakefront.

Considerations for Future Land Use

Planning for Villages.

South Hero’s village areas are important community centers with a mix of housing types and a variety of municipal services and businesses. The Town of South Hero has made a concerted effort to plan for responsible growth in the community that will enable the town’s rural, island character to continue into the future. The Town recognizes that the town’s rural island countryside and its vibrant villages go hand in hand. By planning for and regulating development to be concentrated in the town’s villages, the Town is concurrently setting policy to limit the intensity of development outside the villages. The town first adopted village zoning districts and associated regulations in 2020. The Town is currently studying whether municipal wastewater management is a possibility, which is critical to allow for concentrated residential



development, infill and commercial development. The Town is also engaged in a scoping study to make the village more walkable, safe for bicyclists and pedestrians and the streetscape more inviting. The 2023 South Hero Town plan makes further recommendations on how to continue shaping and implementing the vision for South Hero’s Villages.

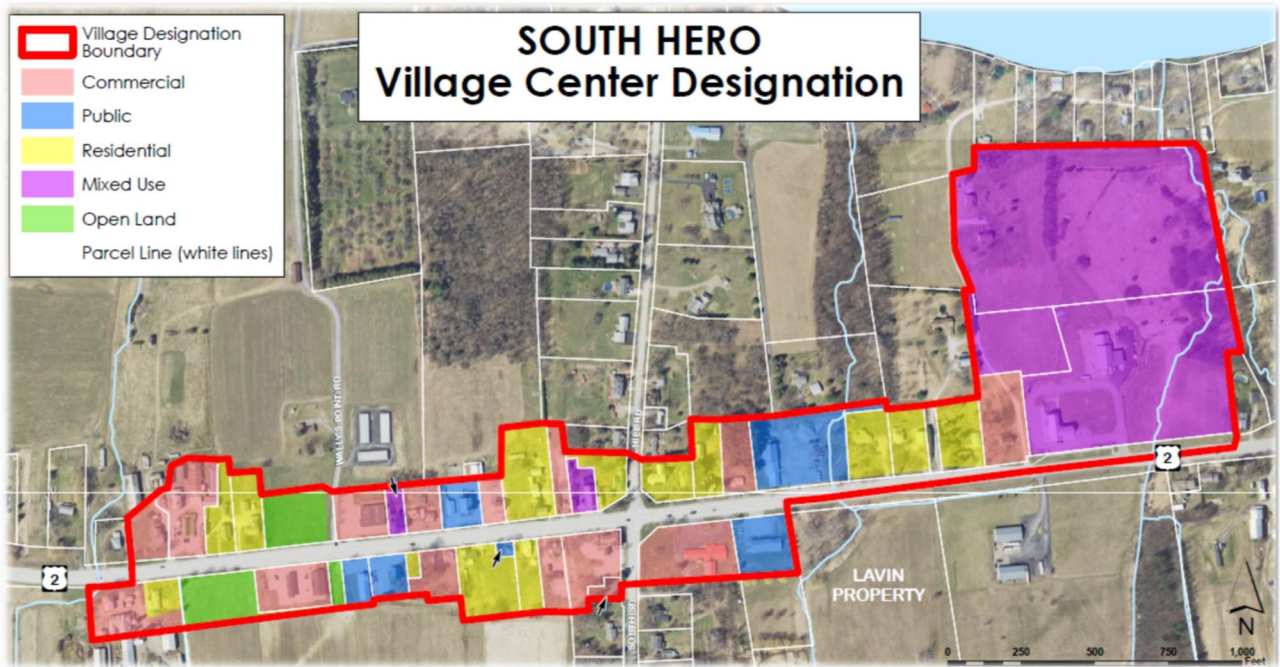
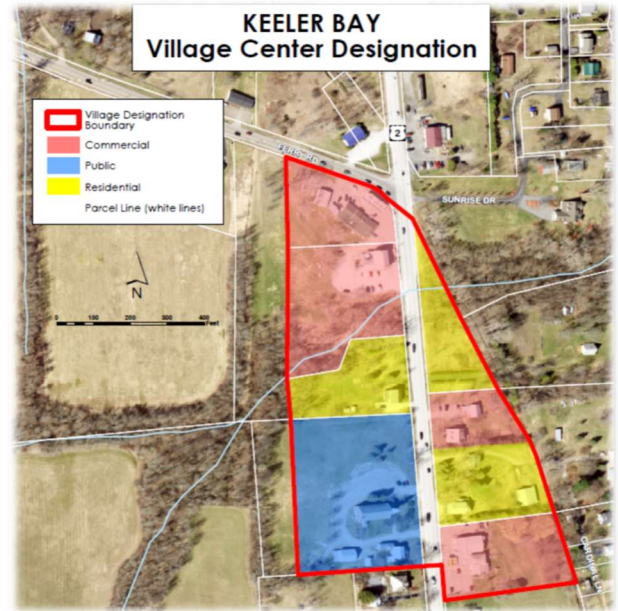
Vermont has established a framework of “designations” to offer incentives that encourage communities to maintain vibrant concentrated settlements separated by rural countryside. These programs provide a variety of incentives for development in the designated areas. Each program has a set of unique goals for making vibrant places. South Hero Village and Keeler Bay both have Village Center Designation (VCD). The village designation boundary is similar but distinct than the village core planning area boundaries.

Village Center Designation supports small town revitalization with a variety of tax credits to support improvements to historic properties and priority consideration for several state grants. The VCD program has helped the Town of South Hero receive several State Grants including a Municipal Planning Grant to help create this Town Plan. Village Center designation is an important tool to further the town’s goals for a vibrant historic village center in South Hero Village and Keeler Bay Village.

Village Center Designation makes the town eligible for a designated Neighborhood Development Area, another state designation program that provides incentives for residential neighborhoods within or adjacent to village centers. Community scale or municipal wastewater treatment is a requirement. If municipal wastewater is development, the town should consider applying for a neighborhood development area.



performance and site design standards, and ensure



Commercial and Industrial Development. Commercial and industrial development in South Hero should be of a scale and impact appropriate for the Town’s rural character. There are no areas in town designated exclusively for commercial or industrial uses. As a result, heavy industry is not appropriate in the town. Most commercial and light industrial uses are encouraged in or adjacent to the villages, however the particular use will determine the appropriate location. All commercial and light-industrial uses will have appropriate review standards that protect the scenic beauty of the Town, protect the quality of life for nearby residences and businesses through robust

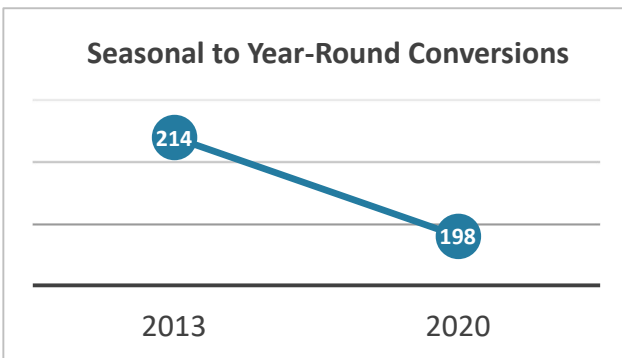
compatibility with the resources that the Town is trying to protect. Light-industries in particular will adhere to standards that ensure any manufacturing, fabrication, processing, assembly, storage or warehousing does not interfere with the character of the area. Home occupations will be encouraged throughout the Town provided they fit in with the surrounding neighborhood. All uses must demonstrate that they have adequate road access. The Town is working on developing a comprehensive definition of light-industry to include in the development regulations to further the Town’s vision for development.

Agricultural Development. Farms of all types are encouraged to remain on primary agricultural soils in the Town of South Hero. The best locations for farms are designated as primary agricultural land on **Error! Reference source not found.** The Town encourages compatible home occupations and accessory on-farm businesses on farms, such as farm stands, value added agriculture enterprises, storage operations in barns, and bed and breakfasts. When a farm designated as prime agricultural land is proposed for subdivision, the Town will work with the owner/developer to locate house sites in a way that protects as much of the prime agricultural land as possible.

Seasonal Development. The seasonal home community is important to the character of the Town of South Hero; however, there is a trend of seasonal to year-round conversion. Places that once were only occupied in the warmer months are now occupied year-round. Conversions in places where there is a dense pattern of seasonal homes along the shoreline and where soils for septic systems are poor and road access is limited can be problematic for a variety of reasons. To protect the water quality of the lake, to enable safe and efficient access to properties, and to protect the scenic beauty and fragile character of the shoreline, the Town will take measures within its authority to ensure properly functioning septic systems, year-round road access for emergency vehicles, and adequate lake shore and yard setbacks. Beyond local authority, Act 172, the Shorelands Protection Act passed by the Vermont Legislature in 2014, imposes State standards and permit requirements that limits new development and tree cutting within 250 feet of the lake.

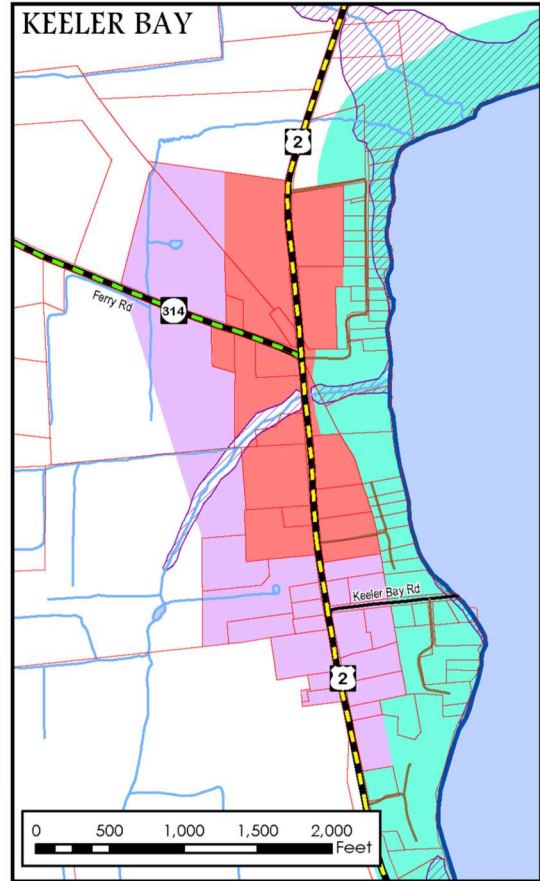
Land Use Planning Areas

Land use planning areas lay out a framework for implementing zoning districts and associated standards for land use and development in the town. The following proposed land use maps illustrate the boundaries of five planning areas, in addition to a conservation and flood hazard overlay, while the following purpose statements prescribe in general terms, the amount, intensity and character of land use and development intended for the area. Zoning, other municipal regulations and ordinances will further the intent of the proposed land use planning areas by establishing zoning districts and appropriate zoning and subdivision standards of review. The permitting of new development shall take into the consideration the appropriate timing or sequence of land development activities in relation to the provision of necessary community facilities and services, such as wastewater and water infrastructure.



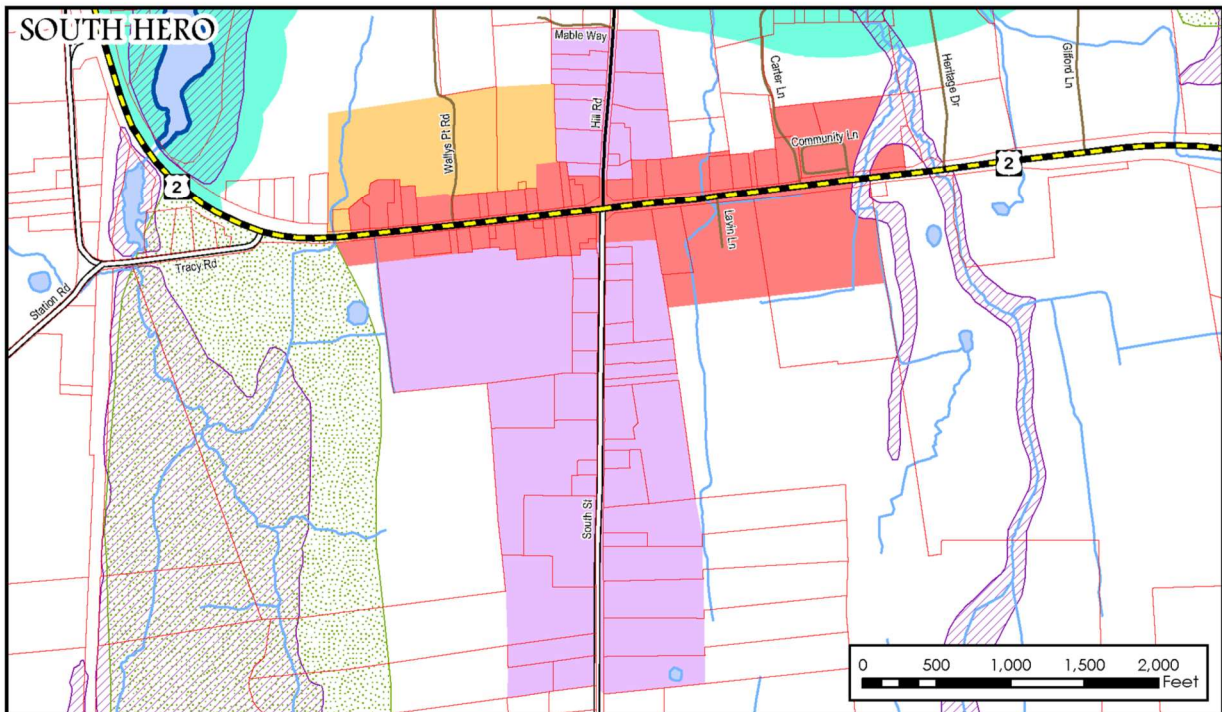
PROPOSED LAND USE Village Insets

LEGEND	
Planning Area Features	Transportation Features
Village Core	Federal Highway
Village Neighborhood	State Highway
Under Consideration	Class 2 Town Highway
Shoreland	Class 3 Town Highway
Residential	Class 4 Town Highway
Conservation	Private Road
Flood Hazard	Surface Water Features
Other Features	Shoreline
Town Boundary	Stream or Brook
Parcel Boundary	Lake or Pond

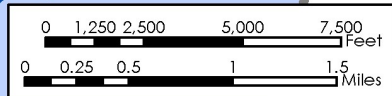
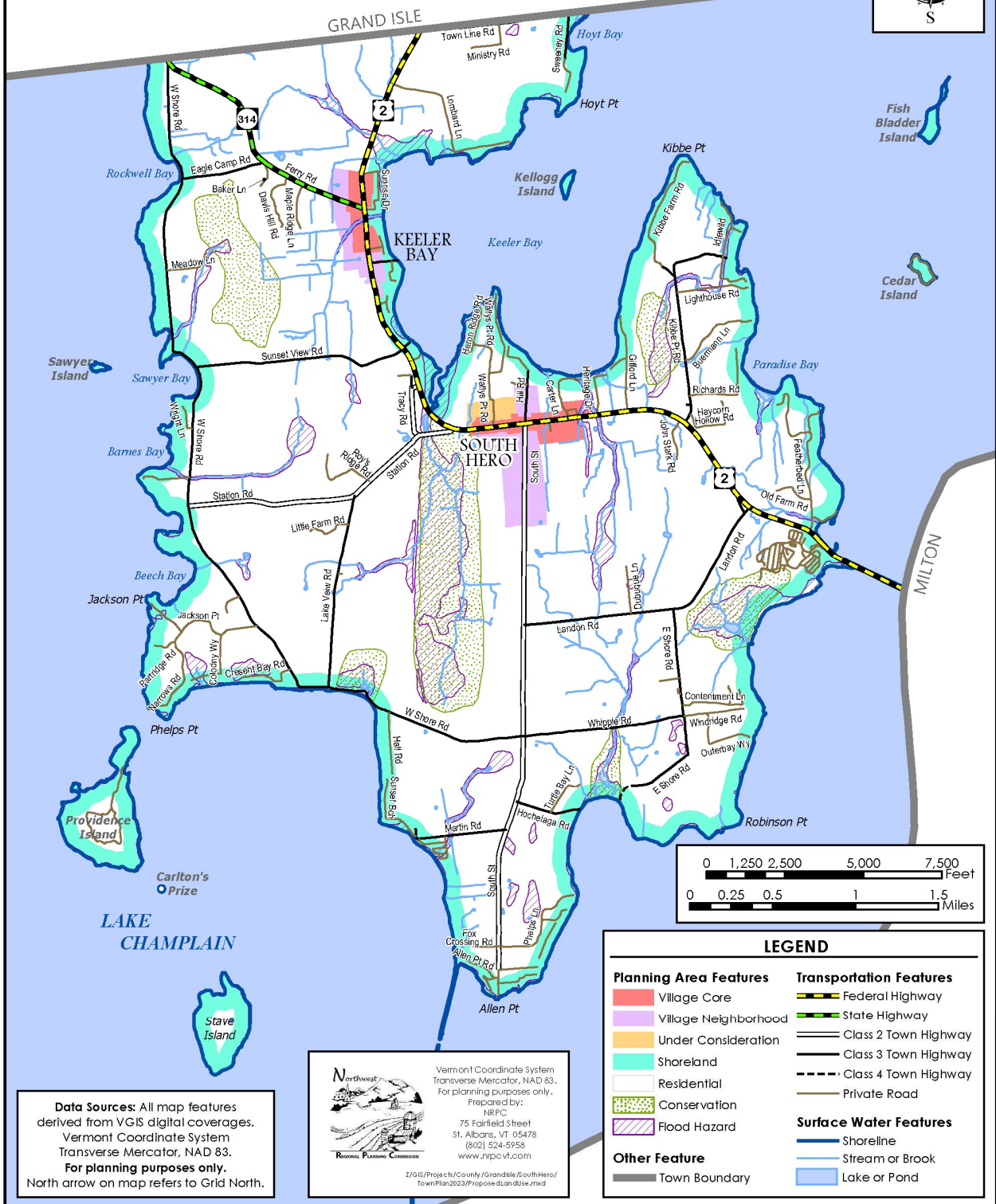
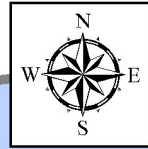



 Vermont Coordinate System
 Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.
 For planning purposes only.
 Prepared by:
 NRPC
 75 Fairfield Street
 St. Albans, VT 05478
 (802) 524-5958
 www.nrpc-vt.com

Data Sources: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. Vermont Coordinate System Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.
For planning purposes only.
 North arrow on map refers to Grid North.



PROPOSED LAND USE Town of South Hero



LEGEND	
Planning Area Features	Transportation Features
 Village Core	 Federal Highway
 Village Neighborhood	 State Highway
 Under Consideration	 Class 2 Town Highway
 Shoreland	 Class 3 Town Highway
 Residential	 Class 4 Town Highway
 Conservation	 Private Road
 Flood Hazard	Surface Water Features
Other Feature	 Shoreline
 Town Boundary	 Stream or Brook
	 Lake or Pond

Data Sources: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. Vermont Coordinate System Transverse Mercator, NAD 83. For planning purposes only. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

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

Z:\GIS\Projects\County\GrandIsle\SouthHero\TownPlan2023\ProposedLandUse.mxd

Village Core Land Use Planning Area Purpose Statement. The purpose of the Village Core Land Use Planning Area is to provide a mixed use, concentrated core of South Hero’s traditional village centers. The planning area encompasses the historic village settlement area in addition to adjacent undeveloped land allowing for growth. Historic buildings are an important significant contributor to village character and should be preserved when possible. New development shall be consistent in siting and scale with the surrounding historic structures in the villages.

A mix of residential, commercial and public uses are intended to be located in the village core and should be designed and sited to further traditional village center characteristics such as walkable, pedestrian-friendly streets, sidewalks and walkways; human-scale buildings with architectural details, landscaping and lighting; an integrated street network; shops and services intermixed with homes; a variety of commercial establishments from retail shops to home businesses, professional offices, and tourist services; places for the community to gather for social and cultural events; and government services. Some small, low-impact industries may be appropriate.

To accommodate the planned density and intensity of use in the village core, a municipal wastewater system that allows for collective rather than individual onsite treatment is necessary. The Town is currently engaged in assessing the feasibility of a municipal wastewater system (see Section X for more information).

Village Neighborhood Land Use Planning Area Purpose Statement. The purpose of a Village Neighborhood Land Use Planning area is to accommodate walkable neighborhood adjacent to the village core areas. Village neighborhood planning areas are primarily residential in nature at a higher density than the rural residential area, but with less density than the village core. Home occupations and some limited commercial establishments may be integrated but with less intensity than in the village core. The planning area consists of historic residences along main roads in addition to land available for new development. New roads shall be constructed to create an

interconnected, walkable network and residences will be oriented to the street. It is intended that if a municipal wastewater system is developed it would be made available to the village neighborhood in addition to the village core.

Rural Residential Land Use Planning Area Purpose Statement. The purpose of the Rural Residential Land Use Planning Area is to provide for rural residential and limited business land uses at lower densities than the village neighborhood to preserve the traditional working landscape and to maintain South Hero’s rural character. Rural residential, small-scale commercial and light industrial land uses shall be balanced with the natural landscape of meadowlands, agricultural fields, wetlands and Lake Champlain views. Home-based occupations and agricultural related enterprises are common throughout the Rural Residential Land Use Planning Area.

Development shall be carefully sited and designed to limit impacts on important natural resources, including; primary agricultural soils, habitat blocks, wildlife corridors, wetlands and other natural areas. Locating development along field and forest edges, limiting the length of roads and driveways and clustering development are all good strategies to minimize impacts. Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) are a regulatory tool that can provide incentives for development that is designed to meet these goals, such as clustering development on smaller lot sizes and conserving the undeveloped portion of the subdivision. Conservation easements, use value appraisal/taxation and other methods that protect important natural resources, particularly primary agricultural soils are supported.

Shoreland Land Use Planning Area Purpose Statement. The Shoreland Land Use Planning Area includes land within 500 horizontal feet measured from the mean water level (95.5 feet above sea level) on the shoreline of Lake Champlain within the Town of South Hero. The purpose of this Land Use Planning Area is to carefully evaluate development in order to protect water quality, scenic beauty and to control development along public waters in the best interest of the community. Some parcels or portions of parcels within this district may be limited in their suitability for development.

Conservation Overlay Land Use Planning Area Purpose Statement. The purpose of Conservation Overlay Land Use Planning Area is to limit development in sensitive natural areas. Included are areas of state identified wetlands, floodplain and other sensitive resources as identified in the South Hero Town Plan with limited suitability for development.