

North Hero Town Plan 2015

**As Approved by the
Voters of North Hero
(June 2, 2015)**

Prepared by the North Hero Planning Commission

Table of Contents

PREAMBLE: 1

PREFACE:..... 1

I. THE NORTH HERO MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 3

 A. Purpose of the Town Plan3

 B. Planning Process3

 C. Goals of the Town Plan3

 D. Objectives and Implementation Strategies of the Town Plan4

II. UNDERSTANDING NORTH HERO 10

 A. Our History 10

 B. Our Recent History 11

 C. Our Present..... 12

 D. Our Future 12

III. TRENDS AFFECTING NORTH HERO 14

 A. Growth and Demographics 14

 B. Planning Concerns 16

 C. Planning Elements..... 16

IV. THE LAND USE PLAN 37

 A. Village District 37

 B. Rural District..... 38

 C. Conservation District 38

 D. Shorelands District 38

 E. Off-Islands District 38

 F. Flood Hazard Overlay District 39

V. COMPATIBILITY 41

Figures

- 1 – North Hero Population (1790-2000)
- 2 – Population Change from 1960 – 2000
- 3 – North Hero Population Pyramid (2000)
- 4 – Median Sale Price of Primary Residences Sold (1997 – 2007)

Tables

- 1 – U.S. Census North Hero Population Characteristics for 1990 and 2000
- 2 – North Hero Housing Unit Statistics (1980, 1990, and 2000)
- 3 – North Hero Elementary School Population (2000 – 2008)
- 4 – North Hero Commuter Flow (2000)
- 5 – Business Establishments in North Hero by Industry (2007)
- 6 – Occupations of North Hero Employed Population (2000)
- 7 – Affordability Gap for Homeownership Costs in North Hero
- 8 – Affordability Gap for Rental Costs in North Hero

Text Boxes

- 1 – North Hero Road Inventory by Class
- 2 – VTRANS Functional Classification for Significant Travel Corridors

Maps

Base Map – Page 2; Facilities and Utilities – Page 20; Transportation – Page 23; Critical Areas – 27; Current Land Use – 36; and Proposed Land Use – 40.

PREAMBLE:

Before there can be zoning regulations there must be a town plan. Before there can be a town plan there must be some degree of understanding of the town's past and it's present. Without this any planning for the future would be without substance, subject to change for no other reason than somebody wanting to do something regardless of its impact on neighbor, community, environment or economy.

With the above in mind the Planning Commission has written a North Hero Town Plan (hereinafter the "Town Plan"), taking into account State and Federal regulations and the needs, desires and concerns of the community expressed by its citizens.

The Commission has used the "Just and Prudent Man" theory in its deliberations: Simply put, it means what a just and prudent man would do in a given situation. It has endured the test of time and courts of law.

PREFACE:

LEGISLATION AND PROCEDURES RELATING TO MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Under the Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act, Title 24, Chapter 117 (hereinafter the "Act") a planning commission shall:

"Prepare a plan and amendments thereof for consideration by the legislative body and review any amendments thereof initiated by others as set forth in subchapter 5 of this chapter." 24 V.S.A § 4325(1).

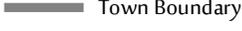
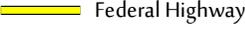
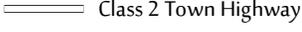
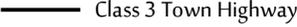
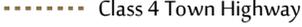
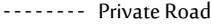
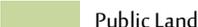
This responsibility is important because the Act provides that "any municipality which has adopted and has in effect a plan and has created a planning commission under this chapter may implement the plan by adopting, amending, and enforcing any or all of the bylaws ... provided for in this chapter." 24 V.S.A. § 4401.

After the plan is submitted to the legislative body by the Planning Commission, the legislative body shall hold one or more public hearings not less than thirty or more than 120 days thereafter. 24 V.S.A § 4385(a). Should the legislative body decide to amend the Town Plan submitted by the Planning Commission, then not later than 15 days prior to the final public hearing the suggested amendment shall be submitted to the Planning Commission. 24 V.S.A. § 4385(b). After the final public hearing, the legislative body may adopt the Town Plan. 24 V.S.A § 4385(c).

BASE MAP

Town of North Hero

LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|----------------------|
|  | Cemetery |  | School |
|  | Access Area |  | Town Boundary |
|  | Federal Highway |  | Class 2 Town Highway |
|  | Class 3 Town Highway |  | Class 4 Town Highway |
|  | State Forest Highway |  | Private Road |
|  | Stream or Brook |  | Lake or Pond |
|  | Public Land |  | Wetland |



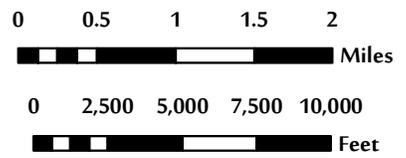
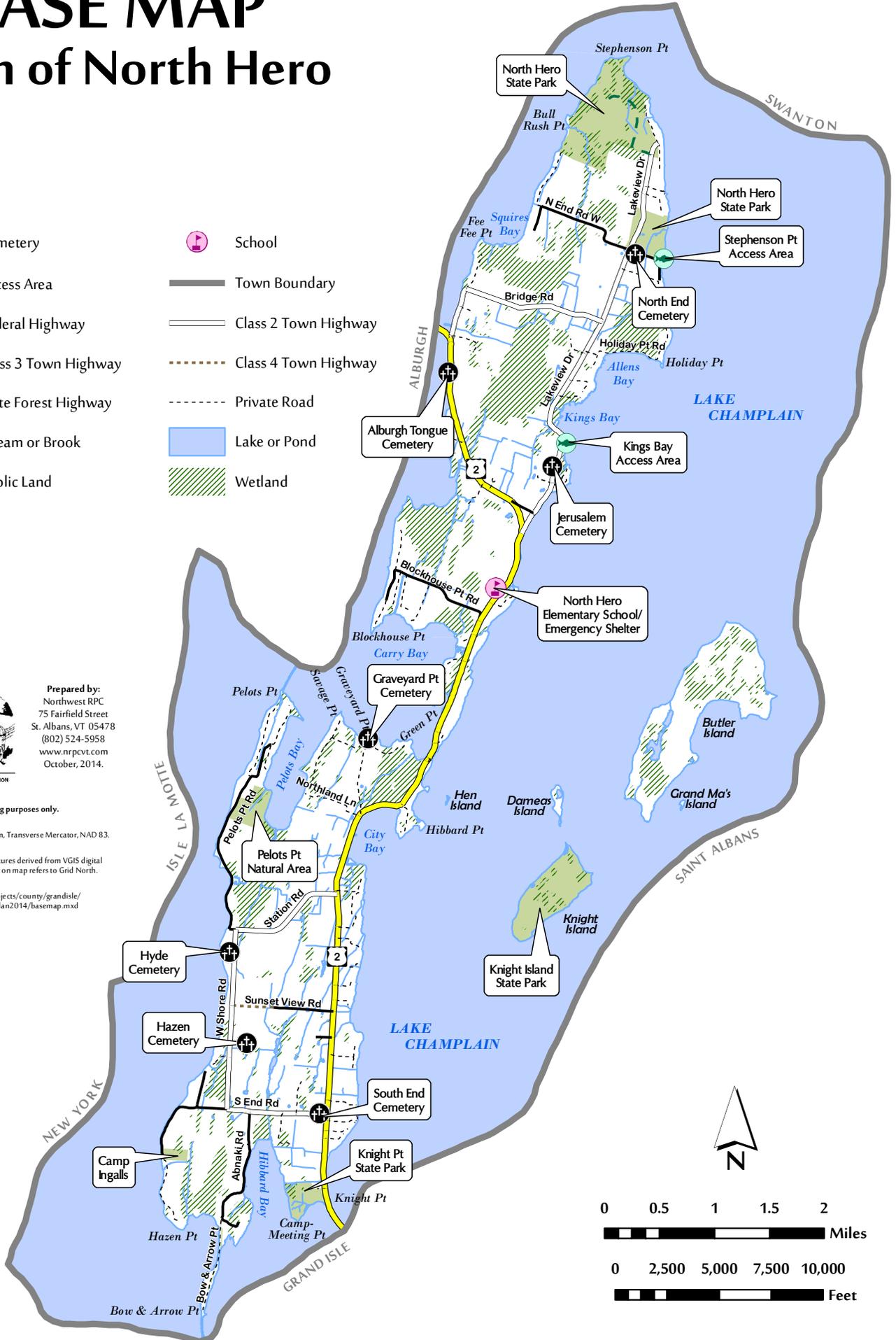
Prepared by:
Northwest RPC
75 Fairfield Street
St. Albans, VT 05478
(802) 524-5958
www.nrpcvt.com
October, 2014.

For planning purposes only.

Vermont Coordinate System, Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.

Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Location: z:/gis/projects/county/grandisland/northhero/townplan2014/basemap.mxd



I. THE NORTH HERO MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Town Plan will provide a framework of goals and objectives to preserve the community and the environment and to allow the Town to regulate growth. A cooperative effort between all towns in the county will ensure attainment of our aspirations. This plan is believed to be in conformance with the plans and development trends of adjacent municipalities.

A. PURPOSE OF THE TOWN PLAN

The purpose of the Town Plan is to provide a statement that allows the Town to integrate and project future development through a rational process of planning, whereby we can understand and control our future. Thus, the people of North Hero should determine the nature and timing of any future development.

The planning and zoning must reflect the needs of the community. One need is to plan for growth. A further purpose of the Town Plan is to ensure that when growth occurs it does so on our terms, at the time and place and in the manner we prefer. The Town Plan is designed to give the Town guidance both for now and into the future.

B. PLANNING PROCESS

The Town of North Hero is engaged in a planning process led by the Planning Commission and set forth in this Town Plan, to guide community decision making and actions. A Town plan serves as a foundation for implementation devices such as the North Hero Zoning Bylaws and capital planning. It also serves as an important function in the evaluation of major development under Vermont's Land Use and Development Law, Act 250.

North Hero first developed a town plan in 1973, which was then updated in 1978 and then not until 1993. North Hero began a consistent planning process with a 1998 plan update. Plan updates followed in 2003, 2009 and now in 2015.

Citizen participation is important in all levels of the planning process. North Hero takes special care in making sure opportunities for citizen involvement are advertised throughout plan updates and other planning projects.

C. GOALS OF THE TOWN PLAN

The goals and the objectives listed below define our Town Plan and the direction of North Hero planning. The goals were developed from an understanding of our history and the townspeople, from assessment of economic profiles and larger economic factors and from an acute appreciation of the surroundings.

1. To preserve the unique rural and small town character of North Hero.
2. To protect the quality of the environment and the lake.
3. To maintain the visual character and aesthetic setting of North Hero.
4. To maintain the community and to enhance the sense of community in North Hero.
5. To foster quality growth and controlled development in North Hero.
6. To engage in a continued, coordinated and comprehensive planning process and to encourage active citizen participation throughout the process.
7. To assure the safe and efficient use of both town and state utilities, facilities and infrastructure.
8. To maintain a comprehensive mapping system of North Hero.
9. To regularly review public and private incentives, grants, and other incentives as tools to promote Town goals and address local needs.
10. To promote safe, healthy and affordable housing located conveniently to employment, services, retail centers, and educational and recreational facilities as well as park and ride.
11. To promote increased awareness and use of renewable energy resources as well as the conservation of existing energy resources.
12. Encourage and foster an all hazards disaster resilient community where the loss of life, injuries and damages to public infrastructure that result from disasters are minimized.

D. OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES OF THE TOWN PLAN

1. **Community Life.** Activities consistent with our small town community including community life, recreation, and agriculture should be maintained and promoted.
 - a. Support existing farms and forests through the creation or diversification of new farming activities and the development of markets for local products.
 - b. Cooperate with state and federal agencies that seek to protect farms and natural areas.
 - c. Maintain compatibility of architectural design on additions to structures within the village.

- d. Attract businesses that are compatible with the village setting that will draw people and activities together.
2. **Public Lands.** Promote town owned land and parks as high quality public resources.
 - a. Provide and maintain access to public buildings, land, waters and recreational opportunities.
 - b. Encourage use by the Townspeople.
 3. **Planning as a Continual Process.** Maintain a continuing planning process.
 - a. Maintain an active ongoing planning process that addresses immediate concerns and seeks to reduce future problems through forward thinking.
 - b. Maintain town goals, policies, and objectives that further opportunities to obtain State and Federal grants.
 4. **Open Space Preservation.** Increase the amount of land with no or limited development.
 - a. Study ways to mitigate the burden of property taxes on agricultural, forest and other open lands.
 - b. Support State sponsored tax programs that encourage preservation of open space.
 - c. Use the State and Town permit process to have appropriate lands set aside for open space.
 5. **Historical Preservation. Encourage the** protection, preservation and maintenance of significant historical sites, structures, and development patterns within the village and town.
 6. **Community Education.** Maintain a commitment to educational opportunities.
 - a. Make available educational services to all members of the community regardless of age.
 - b. Support educational programs and education related activities.
 - c. Plan for improvements or changing needs in educational facilities and programs relative to anticipated growth.
 7. **Cultural Community.** In order to maintain the quality of life in North Hero, a sense of our cultural heritage should be fostered. See facilities and utilities map of North Hero (pg. 20).
 - a. Support the arts activities and organizational efforts.
 - b. Support groups who are currently preserving the cultural heritage of North Hero, such as the Historical Society, Library and Chamber of Commerce.
 8. **Recreation.** Provide a variety of recreation programs and facilities directed towards children, adults and seniors.

- a. Improve and develop Town facilities, picnic areas, hiking trails and activity fields at Camp Ingalls and Pelots Nature area which enrich the lives of our children, families and seniors through programs and activities.
- b. Seek out cooperative efforts in providing recreation opportunities with other agencies and public government, including the YMCA, Island Arts, sportsmen, boating, bicycle and pedestrian groups, County and Town Recreation Committees, and State and Federal Agencies.
- c. Encourage and support the re-activation of the North Hero State Park.
- d. Create access to the lake for community members in the form of non-fishing boat ramps and a public beach.
- e. Encourage pedestrians and bicyclists to use our town facilities and roadways with particular attention to access in the Village. Because of the narrow state highway right of way, bicycle and pedestrian access along the highway should be supported with additional signage, pavement markings and limited speed.
- f. Support private land owners' efforts to preserve the lake for recreational use.

9. Environmental Protection. To identify, protect and preserve important natural and historic features and maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife and land resources.

- a. Critical natural resources including, wildlife, wildlife habitats, the lake, the marshes and swamps and the shorelands shall be protected from ecological and scenic degradation and undue adverse impacts from development. See critical areas map of North Hero (Pg. 27).
- b. Review development proposals for compatibility with the land's natural features, the Town's natural resources, scenic features, historic and geological features, land capabilities, rural character, and impact on the lake.
- c. Allow for appropriate uses and concentrations of development within each zoning district in accordance with district purpose statements.
- d. Support the State of Vermont in its effort to adequately permit on-site water and wastewater systems.
- e. Acquire donations, easements, or development rights in important natural resource areas for the Town, State, and/or an appropriate land conservation organization.

10. Aesthetic Preservation. Protect the scenic and unique rural island character of the Town.

- a. Protect access to local scenic resources including roads, waterways, views, and important landscape features.
- b. Encourage the maintenance of farmland, open land, and natural areas.

11. Renewable Energy Resources. The development of renewable resources shall be encouraged.

- a. Encourage energy conservation and an energy efficiency program in an effort to preserve natural resources and reduce costs.

- b. Encourage energy efficient construction design, including stands of trees and passive solar gain.
- c. Encourage the repair, restoration, or replacement of town structures with new more energy efficient technologies.
- d. Support efforts to implement renewable energy, including incorporating renewable energy in all new construction of Town buildings and the review of utilizing town properties and buildings, such as the maintenance building for renewable, particularly solar, installations.

12. Economic Community. Encourage the development of a diverse economic base.

- a. Promote recreational industry as an important economic resource for the Town and especially activity in the fall, winter, and spring.
- b. Encourage extension of use of State Parks in winter and greater numbers of activities and concessions in State Parks.
- c. Encourage the development and expansion of businesses and industries in appropriate locations to achieve maximum economic benefit with minimal environmental impact.
- d. Support a viable commercial recreation industry that encourages seasonal diversification and multiple uses.
- e. Support groups who are currently preserving the cultural heritage of North Hero.
- f. Encourage multiple and extended uses of existing recreational facilities.
- g. Promote and encourage the continuation of agriculture.
- h. Encourage a variety of different economic opportunities.
- i. Support the continued presence of marinas in the Town as a significant part of the local economic mix.
- j. Ensure regulation of land development in North Hero does not negatively impact the availability of safe and affordable childcare.
- k. Maintain village center designation status for the Village District and encourage businesses to take advantage of the various tax credits made available through this designation program.

13. Housing. Encourage an adequate supply of quality housing options for all segments of the population.

- a. Allow for multi-family dwellings where appropriate.
- b. Use Planned Unit Development ("PUD") to incentivize affordable housing.
- c. To see that new and rehabilitated housing meets minimum safety and sanitary standards.
- d. Encourage a balance of affordable housing as new units are developed.

14. Settlement Patterns. Encourage the development of land consistent with the Town's unique rural island character and physical landscape. See current land use/land cover map of North Hero (Pg. 36).

- a. Encourage planned unit developments.

- 15. Rate of Growth.** Encourage growth at a rate that does not exceed or impair the Town's ability to provide quality services including schools and roads.
- a. Support volunteerism as the major source of many community services. If we are to remain a vibrant community, the whole community must concern itself with community services, and an important aspect of this is participation in community affairs.
 - b. Consider future needs of the Town in relation to the school, library, cemeteries and other public facilities and services.
 - c. Phase implementation of large development projects.
 - d. Include consideration of revenues from developments such as a onetime initial assessment for start-up costs, thus relying on impact fees and property taxes to maintain Town services.
 - e. Collaborate with the Selectboard on capital planning in accordance with state statute.
- 16. Land Use.** Protect the historic integrity and character of the village area, and the unique rural island character townwide. See proposed land use map of North Hero (Pg. 40).
- a. Discourage commercial strip development.
 - b. Manage development at a low-density along the Lake Champlain Shoreline to preserve the beautiful, pristine resource for future generations.
 - c. Encourage clustered development outside the Shoreline District to facilitate the preservation of the rural countryside that characterizes North Hero.
 - d. Changes made to pre-existing, non-complying structures should not increase the degree of non-compliance.
 - e. Encourage marinas to allow public access to the lake.
- 17. Planning Process.** Maintain a coordinated, comprehensive planning process and policy framework to guide municipal decisions.
- a. Pursue planning cooperation with other county towns.
 - b. Participate as an active member of the Regional Planning Commission.
 - c. Encourage citizen participation at all levels of the planning process.
 - d. Consider the use of resources and the consequences of growth and development for the municipality, in addition to the larger region and the state.
- 18. Transportation.** Route 2 is the lifeline of North Hero and should allow people, goods, and services to move safely and efficiently along the Route 2 corridor. See transportation map of North Hero (Pg. 23).
- a. Encourage a variety of transportation modes on Route 2 to include recreational users, commuters, thru truckers, bicyclers, pedestrians, and agriculture with attention to safety and speed.
 - b. Consideration should be given to the economic importance of Route 2 both locally and countywide.

- c. Transportation patterns should enhance the quality of life and sense of community in North Hero.
- d. Bicycle traffic on Route 2 is increasing and opportunities to improve bicycle access and safety should be sought when improvements are made on Route 2.
- e. Work closely with Vermont Agency of Transportation ("VTRANS") to identify problems and solutions on Route 2. Despite its age, implement the remaining relevant projects identified in the 1998 Route 2 Corridor Study, including:
 - 1. Identify safety issues.
 - 2. Revisit areas for cross-walks.
- f. Implement the Lake Champlain Byways Corridor Management Plan.
- g. Work with NRPC and the Chamber of Commerce to identify economically viable uses for Route 2.
- h. Assess ways to reduce traffic impact on local and recreational use by enforcing speed limits at a local level.
- i. Subdivisions along Route 2 should require limited access to Route 2 and zoning ordinances should be written to this standard.
- j. Support the use of Town-owned parking areas by Off-Island District residents.

19. Flood resiliency. Encourage North Hero to become a flood resilient community.

- a. Avoid new development in any identified flood hazard, fluvial or lacustrine erosion, and river corridor protection areas. If new development is to be built in such areas, it should not exacerbate flooding and fluvial or lacustrine erosion.
- b. Encourage the protection and restoration of floodplains that attenuate and moderate flooding and fluvial or lacustrine erosion.
- c. Encourage flood emergency preparedness and response planning.

II. UNDERSTANDING NORTH HERO

As a Town we see our past in terms of the future. Two important traditions are strong. Although isolated, North Hero has always been part of a flow. We have been able to balance change with an ability to preserve continuity and values -a sense of community. From this sense of community, a second strong tradition of community action has been built. It is the dynamics of these two traditions that North Hero seeks to continue as a basis for planning our future development.

A. OUR HISTORY

North Hero Islands are strategically located in Lake Champlain, which for centuries was an important link in the vast inland waterway from the Atlantic to the interior, both north and west. Samuel de Champlain, for whom the lake is named, claimed it for France in 1609 before the Dutch and Puritan settlements. Throughout the French and Indian Wars and then in the American Revolution, the Champlain Islands were fortified for defense of the waterway. The British manned a blockhouse in 1777, on what is now Blockhouse Point, which they retained for thirteen years after the Treaty of 1793 established the island as American territory.

North Hero has been valuable real estate since 1779 when the Green Mountain Boys petitioned Vermont Governor Chittenden for a grant of the two large Champlain islands as payment for military service. Ethan Allen was one of the petitioners and tradition tells us that he, with his "bashful and shy nature", named the Islands the Two Heroes in honor of himself and his brother, Ira. The Two Heroes were eventually called the South Island and the North Island, the latter consisting of the present Town of North Hero.

Settlement of North Hero was slow. Although the land had been divided into farm lots for the original grantees, many of them chose to sell off their rights or let them go to pay taxes. However, in 1783 when Jedediah Hyde surveyed the Two Heroes, he noted in his journal that several settlers had built houses.

Enos Wood was apparently the first to come. Among those settling here before 1790 were Nathan Hutchins, his son, Nathan Jr., John Knight, Nathan Hazen, Benjamin Butler, Jedediah Ladd and John Brownson. The United States Census for 1790 lists 31 families. The population grew to 54 families by the 1800 census.

The first Town meeting for North Hero was held on March 17, 1789. The South Cemetery was purchased from John Knight and Nathan Hazen for \$2.00 at the 1790 meeting. In 1793, the Town was divided into four school districts. The first school house was built around 1803. That year Jedediah Ladd built the first store, located south of the present stone courthouse, which served additionally as post office and jail.

In 1806 the first session of the Grand Isle County court was held in his establishment. The Grand Isle County Courthouse was built in 1824 and 1825. Constructed of "good Isle La Motte Marble" with walls 2 feet thick, it included a single jail cell and a single debtor cell.

During the next century, North Hero grew in cycles. After the 1830's, the population declined with the move to open the new Western Frontier. North Hero became "back east." Since the Civil War, North Hero has grown economically. With the advent of the railroad and the inter-island ferry service, growth accelerated. It was during this time that our island grew as a resort too.

During the mid-twentieth century, North Hero's population declined as it did in all rural areas. Most recently, as pressures of urban development and rapid transportation have increased, North Hero has begun to grow again.

The community of North Hero contains a significant collection of historic structures, as listed on the National and State Historic Register (one on the National and fifty-four on the State), ranging from stores, cabins, and barns to farm complexes. You can discover some of these places in the book North Hero Then and Now and by visiting the Town's historic society "The Hookenspoon".

B. OUR RECENT HISTORY

North Hero's recent history demonstrates growth through planned community action. The commitment of the Town's people in our projects and our way of looking at ourselves is an important part of this Town's Plan. Through projects, one can sense the importance of the involvement in the way the community develops.

Town commitment is shown in community action in projects like the building of the Town Hall starting in 1929. This helped to create a sense of community. Today the school and organizations like 4H are important elements of our community. Moves to preserve historical buildings are initiated as important reminders of our history. This sense of our past is shown by the Village Players Group. The focus of community activity around our beautiful library continues the tradition of community service.

The North Hero Volunteer Fire Department and Grand Isle Rescue also exemplify this tradition of community action. Started in 1947, the Fire Department represents commitment of time and service, which continues today. Gustave Oman started the department with a sign-up sheet in stores and within two years the department was building the first station with volunteer labor and had purchased its first fire truck. Time, community support and personal commitment provided support for this community venture.

C. OUR PRESENT

Today, volunteers continue to be a strong element of the community. Although they provide essential service, they also serve to focus an important sense of identity and purpose in the community.

North Hero continues to show vitality, not only in its economic growth but in growth of the quality of North Hero as a community. Community action, which involves our people, produced that quality that we wish to preserve as part of the growth process.

The scenic character of North Hero could best be described as quiet open farmland surrounded by attractive waterfront areas with spectacular mountain views. The Town itself, located on the crescent of City Bay, combines the best features of a typical Vermont village with the advantage of waterfront living.

North Hero is the only Shire Town in Vermont with no village green, perhaps because of our historical feeling of the importance of our lake. The buildings are attractive and consistent with the overall impression of peaceful rural charm, a commodity much in demand by summer visitors. As a result of this demand, the population of North Hero varies greatly with the season. Tourism and second home residences are attracted by the beauty of our lake and the pastoral setting and continue to be important in the growth of North Hero.

D. OUR FUTURE

The future of North Hero must preserve the quality of the rural, recreational character of the Town while allowing growth. It must preserve the quality of community, including the excellent services and facilities we now enjoy. Thus, Officers, Commissioners, and Directors of the Town should be involved in planning and consideration of future needs on a continual basis.

Most important, North Hero must protect the environment because it's the single most important factor in the quality of life. The quality of the lake must be considered in every aspect of planning and zoning. All growth must be compatible with preservation of lake quality. Although environmental quality can be compatible with growth, the quality of the environment must be preserved.

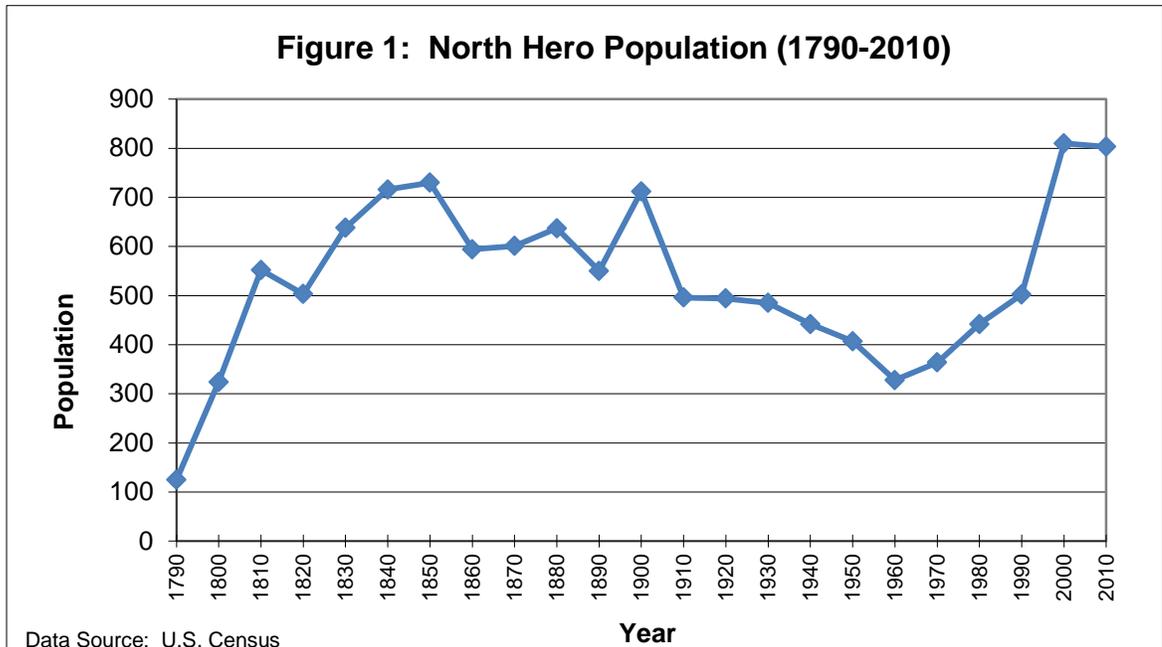
Also important is the maintenance of the Village Center. The character of our Town is defined, in part by the Village. Although not all businesses are high profile, numerous small offices and enterprises collectively preserve the core of our Town. The dozens of people who work in or come daily to the Village preserve the economic dynamic of our Town. The Post Office and Courthouse, as well as the many small businesses in the village are important in preserving our small Town charm.

The future must rest on the quality that the townspeople of North Hero value strongly such as the quality of community, life, recreation, and the environment.

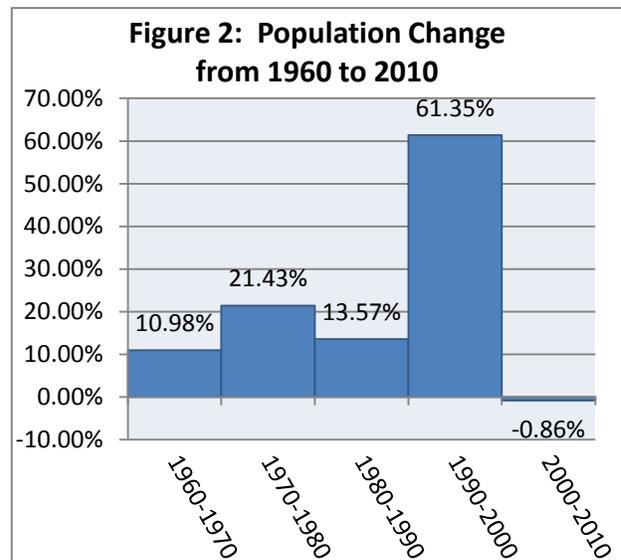
III. TRENDS AFFECTING NORTH HERO

Many pressures affect North Hero. Planning must involve careful, continual consideration. While the pressures of development and recreation are clear, unanticipated pressures will occur. The Town Plan reflects our general concerns rather than specific ones.

A. GROWTH AND DEMOGRAPHICS



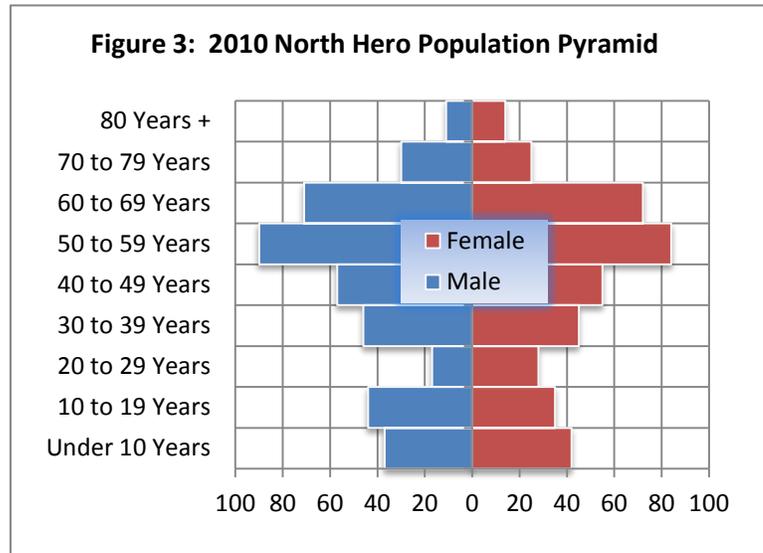
Historic U.S. Census reports show that the population in North Hero was just over 100 residents and growing at the turn of the 18th Century when the Census was first taken. It continued to grow until the mid 1800's, after which the town began a period of population decline until 1960 (Figure 1). Beginning in 1960, the Census shows that North Hero again had a growing population through the year 2000 when it reached 810 residents. From 2000 to 2010, the population decreased slightly by 7 people.



The next U.S. Census will be taken in 2020, after which updated population data for North Hero will be available. In the meantime, we have estimates and

projections. The 2008 to 2012 American Community Survey (ACS) estimate shows North Hero at a population of 871, much higher than the 2010 Census figure. The ACS figure is a five year estimate based on a small sample size, so it has a high margin of error. The Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development completed 2020 and 2030 population projections based on the 2010 Census figures taking into account migration patterns in the 2000's. These figures show North Hero's population increasing and then decreasing again at 827 in 2020 and 811 in 2030.

The median age in North Hero was 49.7 in 2010, up from 42.9 in 2000 (Figure 3). Recently, most of the growth has been in people in their 50's and 60's. By and large, this segment of the population is not having children. Conversely, the segment of the population of primary childbearing age is decreasing (Table 1).



U.S. Census - North Hero Population Characteristics for year:			
	1990	2000	2010
Total Population	502	810	803
24 years old and below	157	216	173
25 years to 44 years old	172	216	175
45 years to 59 years old	86	223	232
60 years old and above	101	155	223

Over half of North Hero's housing unit stock is made up of seasonal housing units. From 1980 to 2000, the percentage of seasonal housing units decreased, and then remained constant at 59% from 2000 to 2010 (Table 2). This may indicate that the conversion of seasonal units to year-round use is declining. The historic development pattern of small lots and dense seasonal homes along the lakefront presents challenges for year round conversion. Soil conditions in North Hero are often unable to accommodate the required increase in septic system

capacity. In addition, lot sizes are commonly too small to accommodate expansions to small seasonal cottages.

Table 2			
North Hero Housing Unit Statistics			
	1990	2000	2010
Total Housing Units	743	906	966
Owner Occupied YR Housing Units	138 (19%)	283 (31%)	316 (33%)
Renter Occupied YR Housing Units	35 (5%)	50 (6%)	33 (3%)
Seasonal Housing Units	523 (70%)	535 (59%)	573 (59%)
Data Source: U.S. Census			

B. PLANNING CONCERNS

North Hero believes that growth should be regulated. To continue to provide the quality of community, the Town must be able to develop and expand services to accommodate new townspeople. Our concerns include:

1. Sudden changes in school population would adversely affect the Town of North Hero, although this is unlikely to happen in the near future.
2. Increased use of services, especially volunteer services such as fire and rescue, town facilities and roads could make provision of these services difficult without proper planning.
3. Unregulated growth could adversely affect Town efforts to protect critical natural resources and the environment.
4. The growing senior population places unique demands for services that can be difficult to provide in the rural, small and somewhat isolated location of North Hero, including public transportation, senior housing, access to health services and senior focused leisure activities.

C. PLANNING ELEMENTS

1. Education and Educational Facilities

The North Hero Elementary School helps provide for the educational needs of our community. The Town maintains a K-6 elementary school and a pre-school within the North Hero School Building and offers school choice for students in grades 7-12.

The current North Hero Elementary School is utilized year round and has been a focus of education as well as recreation and municipal services to the entire population. The North Hero Town office is located within the school building with an adjoining conference room that provides a meeting place for several municipal boards. The school grounds are open to the public and

include a basketball court, soccer field, multiple play structures, community garden and a groomed half mile walking path.

North Hero Elementary is able to offer a wide variety of activities and programs despite its small size, through local support, volunteers and a grant funded after-school program. The curriculum is a grade level based, district-wide program coordinated through the local Supervisory Union. In addition to the curriculum, the school offers a library, art, music, physical education, special education services, guidance services, counseling services and speech and language services. Competitive soccer and basketball teams are offered as well as various club activities.

The school and the community work closely together to create a positive relationship. The community utilizes the building for large meetings, voting, community meals, and recreational activities. The school building is a designated distribution point for the Vermont Department of Health in the event of a county wide emergency.

The elementary school's current capacity is 125 students, which is sufficient capacity to serve the school population into the future.

Table 3	
Elementary School Population	
Year	Elementary Population
2000-2001	74
2001-2002	65
2002-2003	66
2003-2004	61
2004-2005	75
2005-2006	70
2006-2007	68
2007-2008	48
2008-2009	52
2009-2010	58
2010-2011	59
2011-2012	57
2012-2013	53
2013-2014	53
Data Source: VT School Reports	

2. Library

The North Hero Library was first voted into existence in 1913 and was housed in different homes for many years. When the Community Hall was built, the Library was housed in the basement and remained there for approximately 40 years. In 1979, the Town voted to appropriate funds to restore the old school house for the Library, where it remains today. With beautiful windows and pressed metal ceiling, this building is a valuable historical building as well as an educational facility. The Library is administered by a Board of Trustees. This board is in charge of managing the use of the building, creating library policy, hiring a librarian, and insuring that library services remain relevant by offering the modern technologies expected in today's society. The library also strives to coordinate programs

with the school librarian. The valuable services provided by the Library are essential to the Town.

3. Recreational Facilities

Recreation in the Town of North Hero is essential to our wellbeing, our sense of community and our economy. Recreational opportunities support local businesses, tourism, state and town parks and our Island economy. Recreational activities such as hiking, bicycling, boating, as well as summer sports, arts and nature camps, contribute to our personal health and the general cohesiveness of our town.

The Recreation Committee manages recreation programming in North Hero and is funded from the Town of North Hero, grants, and donations. The Town maintains two natural areas, Camp Ingalls, purchased in 1974, and Pelots Point Natural Area which was deeded as Glebe land as part of the original land grant in 1779. Both were developed for educational and recreational purposes. Camp Ingalls and Butternut Hill are maintained jointly with The Lake Champlain Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. Both of these natural areas are extensive natural preserves; and include six miles of walking trails and nature preservation management activities, and interpretive activities. Pelots Point Natural Area includes 2 miles of wooded walking trails and hunting access from October to December.

There are also four (4) state parks in North Hero, Knight Point State Park, Knight Island, Bow and Arrow State Park and North Hero State Park, although North Hero State Park is not maintained and Bow and Arrow State Park is a small and undeveloped section of the former rail bed which is used as the road to Bow and Arrow Point. Knight Point and North Hero State Parks are commonly used for walking and cross country skiing. Knight Island is accessible only by boat and also features remote camp sites.

The North Hero State Park serves as a valuable recreation opportunity. Renewed use of the North Hero State Park is an important planning goal. A joint effort between the Town and the State could address mutual planning goals. The Town has identified the need for access to the lake for swimming, boating and general recreation activities. North Hero does not have a place where Townspeople who do not own beach front can go. With the closing of the Park, the Lake Champlain Paddlers' Trail, established in 1996, also does not have a place accessible to launch or connect with suppliers since the Trail guide lists the North Hero State Park. Additionally, North Hero property owners living on Butler Island do not have public access to get to and from their homes. North Hero State Park has fully developed roads, handicapped access, walking, bicycling, and boating features. The park is an ideal and valuable North Hero resource. Reactivating the North Hero State Park to

serve as lake access for townspeople and to promote the recreational economy is a priority.

The Town owns the northern section of the rail bed on Pelots Point. Currently this property is undeveloped except for an unmarked walking path. The land has a Town owned beach at the northernmost section. The removal of part of the causeway is being considered as a way to mitigate pollution in Missisquoi Bay. The Town should maintain its interest in this land as part of a future recreational site.

The Recreation Committee also offers extensive recreational programs directed towards children, adults and seniors, including summer camps, school programs, as well as support to other groups including CIDER, Island Arts, the North Hero Historical Society and the North Hero PTYO Halloween Party. The Community Hall is also seen as an important recreational center (see discussion on the Community Hall below for more information).

4. Town Facilities and Services

Community Hall. The North Hero Historical Society has renovated the Community Hall. Thanks to community action, private donors and several substantial grants, the Hall's original exterior was restored, the roof replaced, and the interior updated with a catering kitchen, a meeting room, office space and handicap accessible restrooms on the lower level. These restrooms are open weekends from May until October for the convenience of travelers. On the upper level the stage was expanded and acoustical tile installed in the ceiling of the Hall. Stage lights were added and a sound system purchased. The recently air conditioned space is the only indoor venue of its kind in the Islands. Many local groups and others use the Community Hall for cultural events and private parties bringing large numbers of people to local businesses. The Vermont Community Foundation manages The North Hero Community Hall Fund, a fund left to the Historical Society by a generous benefactor. The amount available for use each year from the fund must be matched by The North Hero Historical Society and used only for capital improvements to the Hall.

Town Offices. The North Hero Town Offices are located in the Elementary School. Two excess classrooms are utilized to provide space for the Town Clerk/Treasurer, Listers and Zoning Administrator and room for board meetings and voting. This space is anticipated to be sufficient to serve the needs of the Town for many years.

FACILITIES & UTILITIES

Town of North Hero

LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------|--|-------------------------|
| | Government/Town | | School |
| | Fire Station | | Courthouse/Police Dept. |
| | Place of Worship | | Cemetery |
| | Access Area | | Town Boundary |
| | Federal Highway | | Class 2 Town Highway |
| | Class 3 Town Highway | | Class 4 Town Highway |
| | State Forest Highway | | Private Road |
| | Stream or Brook | | Lake or Pond |
| | Public Land | | Wetland |



Prepared by:
Northwest RPC
75 Fairfield Street
St. Albans, VT 05478
(802) 524-5958
www.nrpcvt.com
October, 2014.

For planning purposes only.

Vermont Coordinate System, Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.

Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Location: z:/gis/projects/county/grandisland/northhero/townplan2014/facilitiesutilities.mxd



Fire and Rescue. North Hero has a volunteer fire department, providing firefighting and marine rescue services to the town and mutual aid to neighboring towns' fire departments as needed. The department is housed in two facilities, Oman Station located in the village and North Station located about four miles north of the Village.

Grand Isle Rescue provides emergency medical services for North Hero and Grand Isle. Grand Isle Rescue operates out of its station in Grand Isle with two fully equipped ambulances and with volunteer crew members.

Both Grand Isle Rescue and the North Hero Volunteer Fire Department are indebted to their volunteers for giving of their personal time to respond to calls. Both fire and rescue services continually seek to attract new volunteers to ensure adequate staffing to respond to community needs.

Public Works. The Public Works facility (North Station) is located four miles north of the Village. It is a dual purpose facility housing town and fire department vehicles while providing meeting and storage space. The facility is inadequate in size and showing its age. The town has established a North Station Renovation/Replacement fund and has a planning committee evaluating the town's future needs.

Recycling and Waste Transfer Station. North Hero is a member of the Northwest Vermont Solid Waste District (NWSWD). NWSWD maintains a recycling and waste transfer station located on town owned property (362 West Shore Road). Solid waste, various recyclables and organics are accepted.

5. Sewage and Water

Wastewater is treated by on-site septic systems, which are regulated by the State of Vermont Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division of the Agency of Natural Resources.

Potable water has been available since 1996 and is supplied by the North Hero Water Treatment Facility. Our treated water originates from Lake Champlain. Some property owners utilize drilled wells, springs and grandfathered lake lines, which are regulated by the State of Vermont Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division of the Agency of Natural Resources.

As we all draw water in some fashion from Lake Champlain source protection is vital. The North Hero Water Treatment Facility now serves over 600 properties. New water system users continue to come online at an average of 10 per year. The facility currently has four water filters that can produce 450 gallons per minute. Planning is currently underway for the future addition

of a 5th filter. Summertime usage continues to increase. For example, the water department services approximately 3,000 users during the summer versus 800 the other parts of the year. The facility has reservoir storage capacity of 150,000 gallons. The Water Board has had engineering completed and has leased land from the State of Vermont in the event a water tower (mid-island) becomes necessary in the future. Finally, it continues to promote responsible system maintenance, water conservation and education to keep the cost of water as stable as possible.

6. Transportation

With the abandonment of the Rutland Railroad and the subsequent sale of all railroad property and rights of way, the only means of transportation for the Town of North Hero is by highway.

North Hero has one Federal Highway passing through it. U.S. Route 2 is the north-south route connecting the island by bridges to the Town of Grand Isle in the south and the Town of Alburgh in the north. The 1990 Functional Classification of this approximately ten mile stretch of Route 2 is minor arterial. For geographical reasons it would be next to impossible to construct any parallel north-south highway to help alleviate the growing traffic congestion on Route 2 and for environmental reasons, highly undesirable. The Town maintains over 18 miles of class 2, 3, and 4 highways throughout the remainder of town (See Transportation Map Pg. 23).

Text Box 1

North Hero Road Inventory by Class

Town Highways

Class 1 – 0.00 miles
 Class 2 – 9.43 miles
 Class 3 – 8.66 miles
 Class 4 - .10 miles

Total Town Highways – 18.19

Federal and State Highways

U.S. Route 2 – 9.34

Total Federal & State Highways – 9.34

Total Highways – 27.53

VTRANS Policy and Planning Division, as reported August 15, 2014

Text Box 2

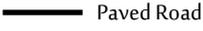
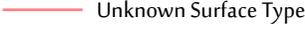
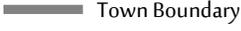
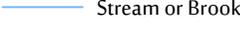
VTRANS Functional Classifications for Significant Travel Corridor

Road	Functional Classification
Route 2	Rural, Minor Arterial
Bridge Road	Rural, Major Collector
Lakeview Drive	Rural, Major Collector

TRANSPORTATION

Town of North Hero

LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|----------------------|
|  | Federal Highway |  | Class 2 Town Highway |
|  | Class 3 Town Highway |  | Class 4 Town Highway |
|  | Paved Road |  | Gravel Road |
|  | Unknown Surface Type |  | Town Boundary |
|  | Stream or Brook |  | Lake or Pond |



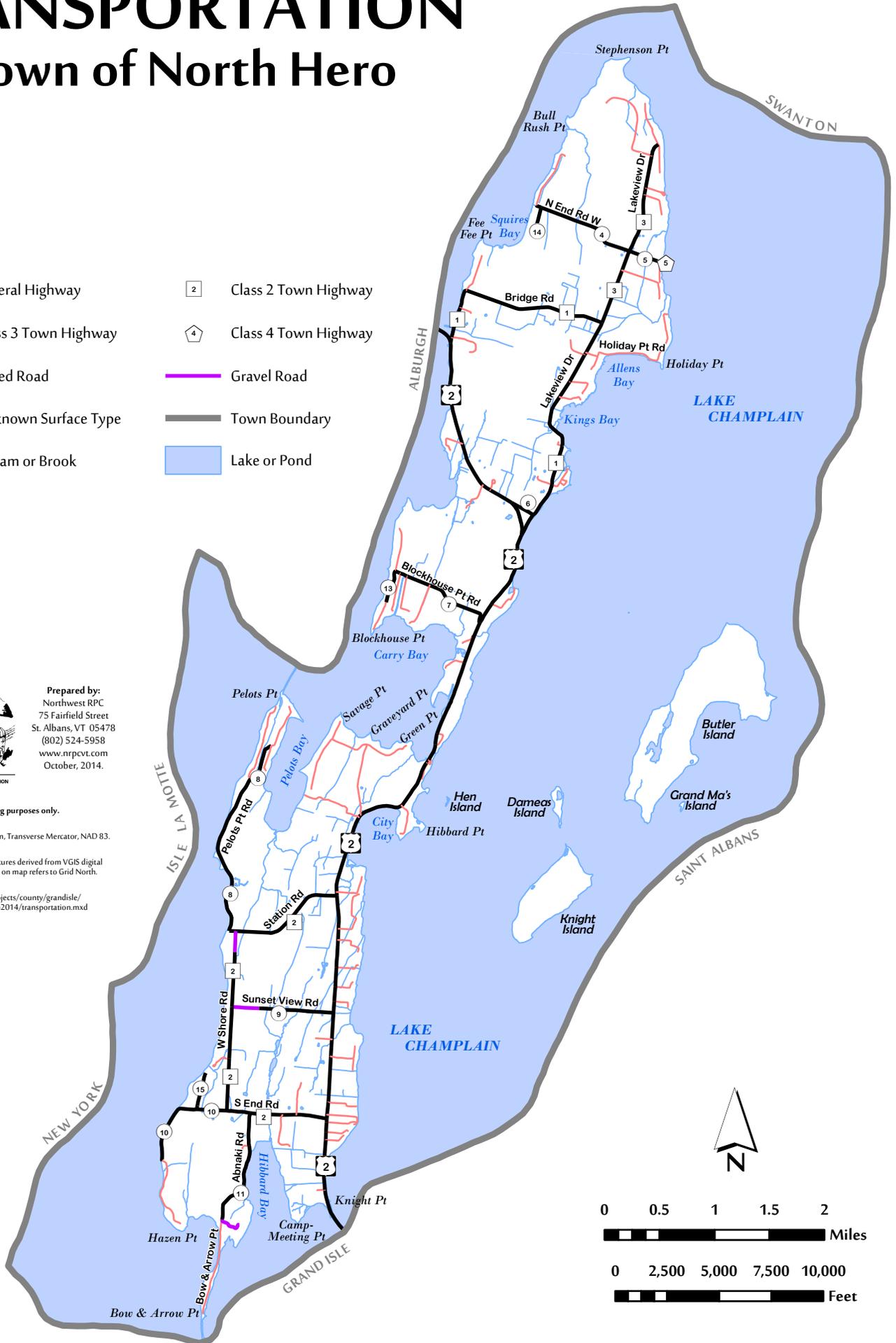
Prepared by:
Northwest RPC
75 Fairfield Street
St. Albans, VT 05478
(802) 524-5958
www.nrpcvt.com
October, 2014.

For planning purposes only.

Vermont Coordinate System, Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.

Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Location: z:\gis\projects\county\grandisle\northhero\townplan2014\transportation.mxd



Close to 50% of North Hero workers traveled between 20 and 24 miles to work and just over 30% traveled between 25 and 50 miles to work in 2011. According to the 2008-2011 American Community Survey estimate, 14.3% of North Hero workers carpooled.

Table 4	
North Hero Commuter Flow, 2011	
Less than 10 miles	17%
20-24 miles	47.7%
25-50 miles	30.5%
Greater than 50 miles	4.8%
Total Primary Jobs	377
Data Source: 2000 U.S. Census	

This percentage would increase with the addition of a park and ride facility and better access to public transportation in the County. The closest park and ride facility is located at Exit 17. The feasibility of a park and ride was discussed but is not an option at this time. This issue should be revisited in the future should the number of commuters significantly increase in future years. There is currently no bus service that passes through the Islands, except for CIDER, which provides transportation and other services to the elderly and disabled. Passengers can meet up with the St. Albans Link Express at the Exit 17 park and ride for access to Chittenden County or St. Albans.

7. The Lake and the Environment

Lake Champlain. The lake is the town's main source of drinking water, as well as the town's principal attraction for private, public, and commercial recreation. The lake is also a source of visual and aesthetic enjoyment. As a result, the single most important factor in the quality of life is the protection of the lake. All growth must be compatible with the preservation of lake quality. Water quality is impacted by stormwater and agricultural run-off, the discharge of effluents, and increased recreational use. The scenic beauty of the shorelines is in danger from shoreline erosion and the indiscriminate removal of trees and other natural vegetation. Nuisance non-native weeds are becoming a deterrent to boating, fishing, and swimming that impact our tourism base and must be addressed.

Several efforts are underway to address water quality in Lake Champlain, which will hopefully improve water quality along North Hero's shorelines. The States of Vermont and New York jointly developed a Lake Champlain Phosphorus Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) after a multi-year process that included lake modeling analyses, numerous public informational meetings, and responses to public comments. The TMDL was approved by EPA in 2002 and updated in 2010. However, in January 2011 this TMDL was then disapproved by the EPA in response to a lawsuit filed by the Conservation Law Foundation. The EPA initiated the process of developing a new TMDL for Lake Champlain in 2011, in cooperation with the State of

Vermont, which is also being referred to as the Lake Champlain Restoration Plan.

Wetlands. Wetlands are crucial to maintaining and regulating stream and surface water discharge. Wetlands store large quantities of water during periods of high run-off and gradually release water during periods of low-flow.

There are numerous swamps, marshes, and swales in North Hero's wetland systems. A unique vernal pool is found at Camp Ingalls. These systems are extensive and affect every geographical area of North Hero. Wetlands neighbor or are part of every development in North Hero. Some of the swales have been cut off from the lake by roads and other development. Some swamps are isolated by beach material during low water. Land use should address ground and surface hydrology. Flooded wetlands provide essential habitats for spawning, nesting and breeding. Nutrients are trapped in the wetlands, preventing discharge in our bays. Nutrient loads from regional run-off have had major deleterious effects on several bays. Extensive mitigation efforts conducted by residents have been required to maintain lake access from individual properties. Wetlands, especially marshes, also prevent erosion of sensitive shorelands from high water and wave action. The wetlands are particularly important for the lake ecosystem during the spring run-off and the lake at high water. Protection of wetlands continues to be an important element of our planning.

The Vermont Significant Wetland Inventory (VSWI) Map identifies a number of Class 2 Wetlands throughout North Hero (See Critical Areas Map Pg. 27). These wetlands are regulated by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.

Wildlife and Fish Habitat. Diversified wildlife helps maintain the balance of nature and plays a key role in agriculture, private recreation and tourism. In order to maintain wildlife diversity, conservation of necessary habitat must take place. Deeryards and other designated wildlife areas should be avoided when planning new development in order to avoid adverse impacts on the natural balance of the habitat.

Threatened and Endangered Species have been identified in various locations throughout the town and its outlying islands (See Critical Areas Map). A significant number of the identified sites are located within three state parks or within mapped wetlands.

Agricultural Soils. Grand Isle County has the highest percentage of prime agricultural soil (approximately 13 percent) than any county in the state. The Natural Resource Conservation Service's most recent soil survey shows that soils in the county have a high natural fertility. Prime agricultural soils have high fertility retention, high organic matter content, and high available moisture content.

Forestland. Forests are a renewable resource. Conservation of forestlands is important for wildlife habitat, stream bank and lakeshore erosion protection, and many other benefits. Proper forestry management is important to protect the resource, as wood and wood products are becoming increasingly valuable commodities. Forestry practices are generally exempt from any state or local regulations. Currently, North Hero has not formally identified and/or designated any forestlands.

Natural Areas and Features. Natural areas and features have educational, scientific, and/or recreational value to present and future residents and visitors to North Hero. These may include wilderness or semi-wilderness areas, areas with unique or unusual ecologies or topographies, unique or unusual formations, and areas or features that possess scenic or recreational value. A number of privately conserved lands, including the swamp at City Bay and the Camp Ingalls Butternut Hill Area are part of our Town's natural environment. Public properties, including Camp Ingalls, Pelots Point Natural Area, Knight Point and Knight Island State Parks, and North Hero State Park are all natural areas that contribute to the island ecosystem, some of which have received statewide designation for important habitats and unique flora.

Minerals and Other Deposits. The excavation of minerals and other deposits can be a potential economic benefit to the town. However, they can also be a potential environmental liability. If erosion is not controlled during excavation, and if the landscape is not restored after excavation has ended, the ecology of the surrounding area may be irreparably damaged. Any potential excavation proposals within North Hero will be carefully reviewed according to local bylaws.

Scenic Views, Vistas, and Roads. Scenic views and vistas provide aesthetic pleasure to both residents and visitors. They are valuable resources linked to our personal well-being and the Vermont economy and are an irreplaceable part of a community's identity. It is important to locally identify scenic views and vistas. Whenever and wherever possible these views and vistas should be visible from areas where public access is available and utilized, such as roadways, town and state-owned properties, and the shoreline. Development in or near a scenic view or vista should be in such a way as to preserve and maintain the value of the view or vista.

CRITICAL AREAS

Town of North Hero

LEGEND

-  Town Boundary
-  Class 2 Town Highway
-  Class 4 Town Highway
-  Private Road
-  Lake or Pond
-  Wetland
-  Deer Wintering Areas
-  Federal Highway
-  Class 3 Town Highway
-  State Forest Highway
-  Stream or Brook
-  100 Year Flood Zone
-  Rare, Threatened or Endangered Species
-  Public Land



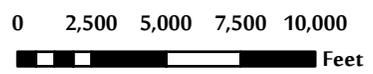
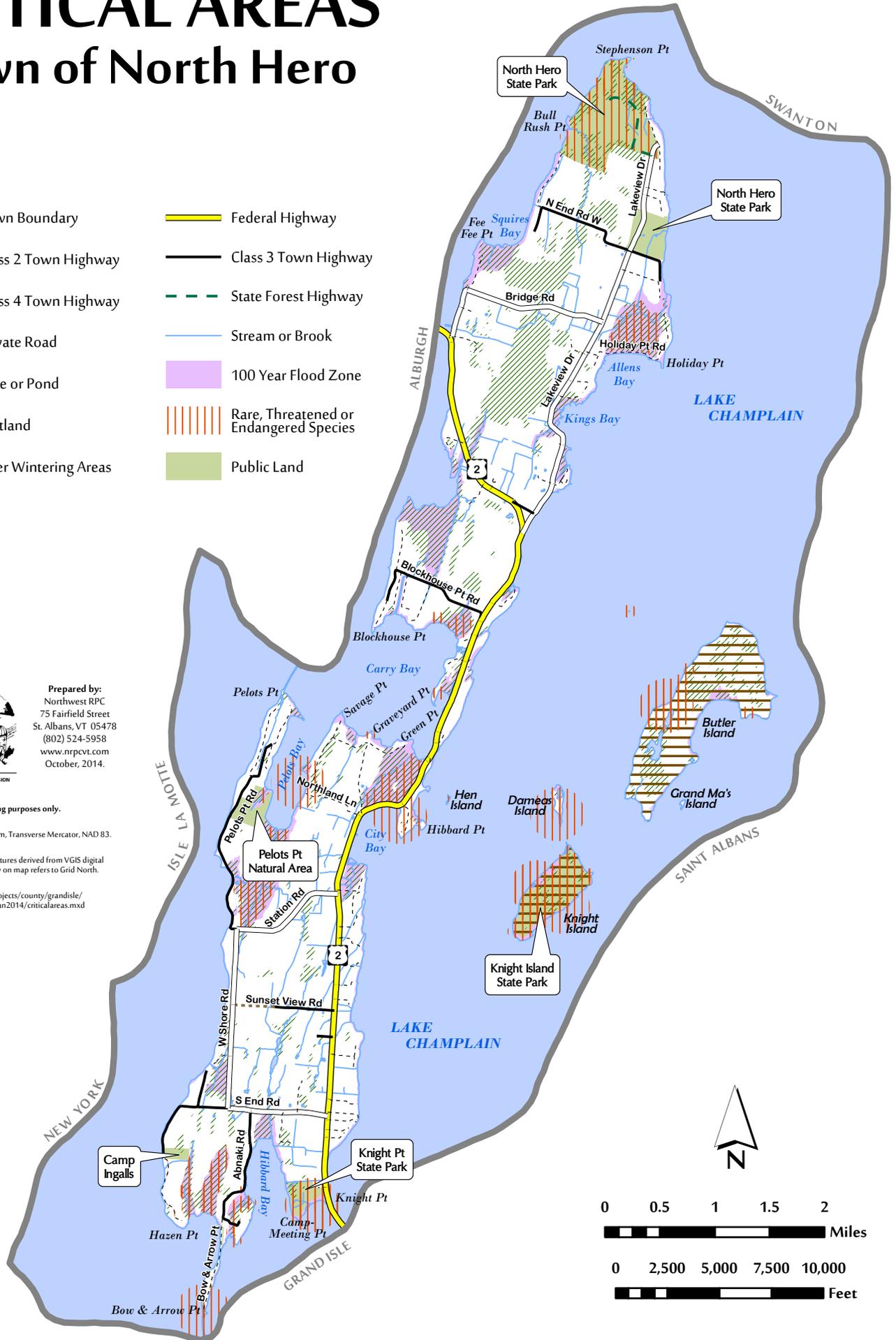
Prepared by:
Northwest RPC
75 Fairfield Street
St. Albans, VT 05478
(802) 524-5958
www.nrpcvt.com
October, 2014.

For planning purposes only.

Vermont Coordinate System, Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.

Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Location: z:\gis\projects\county\grandisle\northhero\townplan2014\criticalareas.mxd



8. Economy

Business and Industry in North Hero. Agriculture and tourism have long been important components of the economy in North Hero. While North Hero is experiencing a decrease in the number of farms, dairy farming not only remains a stable base for our economy, but also a means of maintaining the open land and rural atmosphere desired by both our recreational visitors and the permanent residents of North Hero. The economics of dairy farming seem to indicate that the decrease in dairy farming will continue, which will have a negative impact on the community and should be studied. A growing number of small farms may become an important agricultural economic factor. According to the 2002 U.S. Census of Agriculture, there were 13 farms in North Hero in 2002. Six of the 13 were between 1 to 49 acres and 7 were between 50 to 999 acres. The Census does not provide information on the type of farm at the town level.

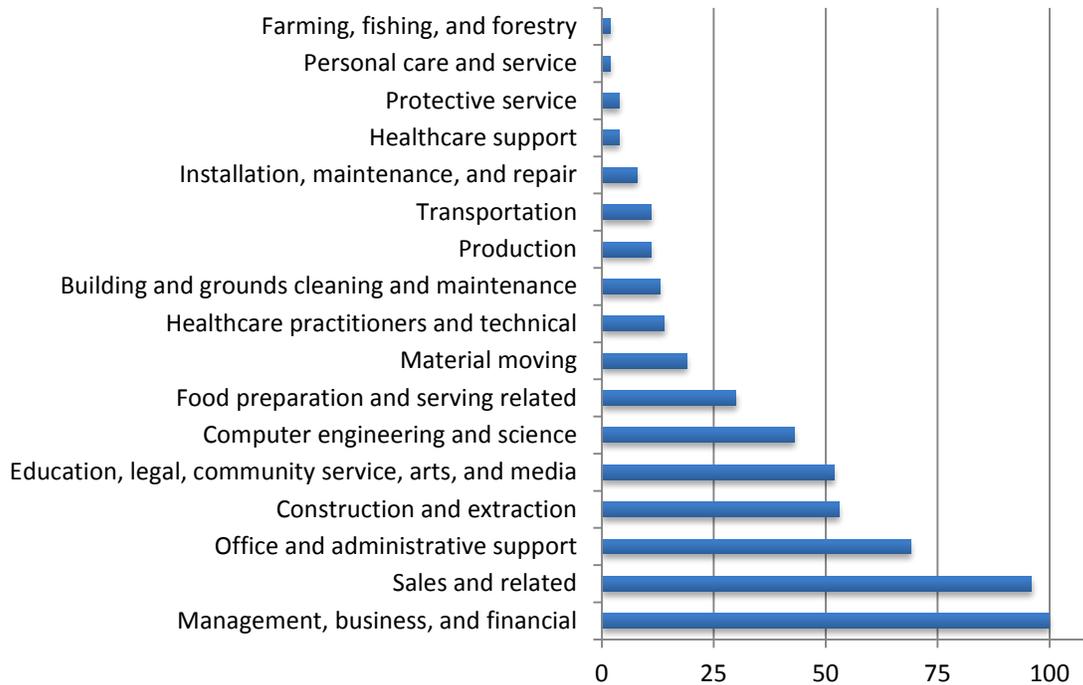
Current trends indicate that tourism is increasing in the Islands. The arts are valuable economic elements of tourism and enhance the cultural community. A number of organizations have been active in these activities, including the North Hero Historical Society, Island Arts, the Champlain Islands Chamber of Commerce, and the North Hero Recreation Committee. Taxable receipts for room sales in North Hero increased by close to 60% from 2000 to 2007 (Vermont Department of Taxes, 2008). This is about ten percent higher than the increase in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties as a whole.

In 2013, the VT Department of Labor reported 31 private business establishments in North Hero (based on the National Association Industry Classification System) (Table 5). The majority of businesses in North Hero are small home-based businesses.

Private Ownership	28
Construction	6
Other Goods Producing	1
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	5
Professional and Business Services	8
Leisure and Hospitality	4
Financial Activities	2
Other Services	2
Government	7
Federal	1
State	1
Local	5
Data Source: VT Department of Labor, 2013	

Employment in North Hero. Based on the VT Department of Labor in 2013, 440 people were employed out of a workforce of 460. North Hero residents are engaged in a wide range of jobs including agriculture, construction, production, sales, business and professional services, and health occupations. Figure 4 shows the occupations of employed North Hero residents.

Figure 4: Occupation of North Hero Employed Population (2008-2012 ACS)



9. Childcare. Childcare is a strong concern for existing and prospective families with young children, whether it means finding quality services or securing the costs of services. The average cost for center-based care in Vermont is \$191.50 for infants and \$185.96 for preschoolers per week (2012 Vermont Child Care Market Rate Survey, Vermont Department of Children and Families). High quality, affordable childcare is a critical component to supporting a stable workforce.

Many child development experts believe that children often do not have the maturity and self-care skills to be left unsupervised until the age of 12. The 2010 U.S. Census indicates that there are 79 children under the age of 10 currently living in North Hero (data is not available for the under 12 population). According to the Vermont Bright Future Childcare Information System, North Hero currently has one (1) registered childcare home and one (1) licensed center.

Of the 2 childcare options in North Hero, spots are filled with children from adjacent municipalities as well as children from North Hero. In addition, North

Hero children fill spots in adjacent communities and Chittenden County locations. Further, data on other childcare options, such as grandparents, siblings, stay at home parents, un-registered childcare homes or other opportunities, and the quality and affordability of existing services is not available. Given these data limitations, it is difficult to assess the availability and quality of childcare in the community.

It is also important to note that the childcare industry can contribute to the local economy by creating jobs and supporting a stable workforce. The accessibility, affordability, and quality of childcare may affect a parent's ability to enter and remain in the workforce and to be a productive employee.

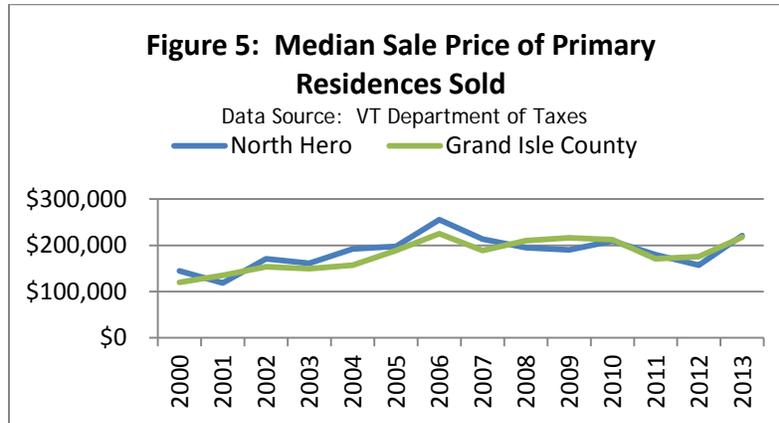
10. Housing

The best available data from the 2000 U.S. Census indicates that there is currently a diversity of homes (for ownership and for rent) of all different sizes in the Town of North Hero to meet the needs of families and nonfamilies of different sizes and types. The 2000 census showed a total of 966 housing units in North Hero. Of these units, 316 were owner-occupied year round housing, 33 were renter-occupied year-round housing, 573 were seasonal or recreational housing units, and 44 were vacant housing units (See also Table 2). While total housing units increased by over 22 percent from 1990 to 2000, growth slowed from 2000 to 2010 with a 7% increase. Seasonal housing units increased by only 2 percent from 1990 to 2000, and then increased by 7% from 2000 to 2010.

The majority of North Hero households are families (70 percent) and the average household size was 2.30 people in 2010 (down from 2.43 in 2000). The largest age-group of Grand Isle's population is from age 50 to 59 (see also Figure 3), which will typically includes "empty nesters" who may be ready to downsize to smaller homes or condominiums. In addition, the senior population is increasing and is expected to continue increasing. This larger population of seniors will need a variety of senior housing and assisted living arrangements.

The state has defined an indicator of "affordable housing" in a community as when 80% of the county median or metropolitan statistical area (MSA) median income, if it applies, consumes no more than 30% of a household income. Housing costs include the mortgage payment, taxes, and insurance for owner-occupied units and rent plus utilities for renter-occupied units. All of Franklin and Grand Isle County have recently been added to the Burlington-South Burlington MSA; however, data has not been updated to include the two counties and therefore affordability analysis uses the Grand Isle County median income. Further, using the MSA income will skew affordability analysis in North Hero due the much higher median income in Chittenden County. In 2008-2012, the U.S. Census determined the median

family income in North Hero to be \$77,083 vs. \$72,063 in the Burlington-South Burlington MSA as a whole (2009 ACS 1-year estimate). Low income households are those in which income is less than 80% of the median.



Tables 6 and 7 analyze whether housing in North Hero is affordable using the state’s indicator for affordable housing outlined above. The maximum affordable mortgage for the median income is more than \$80,000 over the median price of homes sold in North Hero during 2013. Based on this analysis, affordability does not seem to be a major issue in North Hero. Figure 5 above shows how sale prices have been increasing in recent years. Rental housing in North Hero appears to be more affordable for median and low incomes.

Table 6							
Affordability Gap for Homeownership Costs in North Hero							
		30% of Income Per Month	Taxes & Insurance	Income Available for Housing per Month	5% Down Payment	Maximum Affordable Mortgage	Median Sale Price Primary Residences
Median MSA HH Income	\$84,026	\$2,101	\$240	\$1,861	\$7,538	\$319,431	\$221,000
Low HH (80%)	\$67,220	\$1,681	\$240	\$1,441	\$5,628	\$247,093	\$221,000
Data Source: Median Household Income (2013 1-year estimate American Community Survey; 2013 median home sale price (Vermont Housing Data); taxes and insurance (NRPC estimate); all other figures computed by NRPC.							

Table 7			
Affordability Gap for Rental Costs in North Hero			
	Income Available for Housing per Month	Median Gross Rent (2000)	Rental Affordability Gap
Median MSA HH Income	\$1,861	961	\$900
Low HH (80%)	\$1,441	961	\$480
Data Source: U.S. Census, NRPC Calculations			

The Town will take steps to preserve the existing quantity of housing and investigate ways to add to the affordable housing stock.

- a. Lakeshore lots will maintain value and will continue to provide a good tax base. Pressure on lake access will increase.
- b. Land locked lots are available. Although North Hero is some distance from industrial centers and has a small seasonal economy, its demand for residential development is increasing.
- c. All land in North Hero has a limited capacity for on-site wastewater treatment.
- d. Because it is an island, North Hero's development is limited geographically. It has limited but adequate housing needs at the present. However, in view of the limitations to growth discussed in this plan, any large scale construction of housing for speculative development would be harmful to the community by overextending the capabilities of Town services and the environment.
- e. Present trends indicate that as additional seasonal homes are built that many such homes will be converted to year round dwellings.

11. Capital Budget and Program

The Town will develop a capital budget and program in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 4404(a). The capital budget and program will be the plan of capital projects proposed to be undertaken during each of the following five years. Each project will be assigned a priority. The cost of the project will be estimated, the method of financing indicated and the amount to be financed by direct budgetary appropriation or duly established reserve funds determined. Also estimated will be any amount to be received from Federal or State government, the amount to be financed by impact fees and/or the issuance of obligations. The proposed type or types of obligations will be identified as well as the period of probable usefulness for them. Finally, the effect upon Town operation costs will be addressed.

12. Development Impact Fees (24 V.S.A. § 5202)

The Town will develop a system of development impact fees on all new construction, use conversion and substantial renovation and/or additions to offset public financing of municipal and school infrastructure and services that serve both established and new development.

13. Emergency Operations Plan

North Hero has a Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) to help organize the town in case of an emergency. The EOP contains basic emergency preparedness essentials for responding to local emergencies. It includes critical phone numbers, contact persons, and critical facilities.

14. Energy

While many of the decisions regarding energy production are made outside of the town, having reliable and clean sources of energy is critical to supporting a high quality of life in North Hero. North Hero residents can influence energy consumption with methods that range from personal decisions to buy energy efficient products to public policy decisions, such as the development of land use policies that encourage tighter settlement patterns, thereby reducing the amount of energy demanded by the transportation sector.

Today, the Town mainly relies on energy resources produced off the island. The Vermont Electric Cooperative (VEC) provides electric service. Electric power distributed by the VEC originates from several different sources including large hydro (40%), natural gas or oil (38%), large wind (15%), wood (3%), small hydro (2%) and farm methane/solar/small wind (2%). A typical monthly residential bill for 500 kWh of power in 2006 was \$98.34, which is higher than equivalent bills for other electric utilities in the state.

In the northern climate of Vermont, a significant amount of energy is used for heating homes and buildings. According to the 2008-2012 American Community Survey, fuel oil and kerosene are the most popular home heating fuels at 49.2% followed by propane at 23.9%.

At the local level, concerns related to energy efficiency, conservation, and the use of renewable energy resources generally fall into four categories: town-owned or town-maintained buildings, utilities, and vehicles; private energy use in residences and businesses; development patterns and the construction and siting of buildings; and energy used for transportation.

The Town of North Hero can take the lead in promoting energy conservation by replacing fixtures and components in public buildings with energy efficient units that can save the municipality money in heating and lighting, while helping to protect the environment. The town can also work with utilities to promote energy conservation programs aimed at residences and businesses, to reduce energy demand, save money, and preserve natural resources.

The Town can also promote energy conservation and efficiency through development controls. Development that is clustered together provides for greater efficiency because fewer miles of road are needed to connect the homes or commercial buildings, school buses and snowplows travel smaller distances, and electric utility lines need not extend as far. In addition, other public services such as fire and ambulance, water, and sewage treatment, should it become a municipal service, are all made more efficient by "well-planned" new development. Carefully considered placement of a building on a lot adds to the efficiency of any new development by increasing passive solar gain and decreasing heat loss by wind.

Transportation accounts for a significant amount of energy demand, which can be reduced through conservation efforts. Public transportation, carpooling, and encouraging local and home businesses would help reduce transportation related energy consumption, and would promote economic vitality in accordance with state energy goals.

Locally generated power from renewable sources, such as solar, wind, biomass, and methane, can provide cost saving and environmental benefits for Vermont municipalities. The more power produced locally (on a household or community basis), the less dependent communities, and the state as a whole, are on purchasing non-renewable and/or non-locally produced power. This in turn reduces the impact of volatile electric and heating fuel costs on the community and the state as a whole. The Town will continue to investigate and promote alternate energy resources such as wind and solar.

15. Flood Resilience

North Hero lies within the Champlain Islands sub-basin of the Northern Lake Champlain Direct watershed. Several small streams and wetland complexes drain into Lake Champlain. Flooding has been identified as the worst natural hazard within the community. Lake Champlain rises above flood levels in the spring of each year when snow melts and also rises during major summer storm events.

Flooding is a natural occurrence and happens when water rises and inundates the adjacent low-lying land. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines a floodplain as an area of land adjacent to lakes and streams that is subject to recurring inundation or high water (See Critical Areas Map Pg. 27). The base flood elevation for Lake Champlain is 102 feet above sea level. Development within floodplains can have many potentially damaging consequences, as construction may obstruct the natural flow of water or displace soil and raise base flood elevations. A strategy to mitigate potential encroachment and flood loss is to prohibit development below base flood elevation, or set the elevation from which development is prohibited at

a level higher than the base flood elevation. Lake and river buffers can also be used as a planning tool to reduce future development in these areas. The state has recently adopted a statewide buffer regulation on all Lakes greater than 10 acres, therefore including Lake Champlain. This will essentially prohibit new clearing and development within 100 feet of the mean water level of the Lake (95.5 feet above sea level) and place limits on clearing and development from 100 to 250 feet from the mean water level.

The Town of North Hero has adopted land use regulations for special flood hazard areas as defined by FEMA on Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMS) in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents and to allow the community to participate in the National Flood Hazard Insurance Program. It is important to note that the existing FIRMS are dated January 2, 1981 and the Flood Insurance Study was published in December 1979. While this information is the best available, the hydrology that these maps are based on has not been updated since the study in 1979 and therefore does not account for shifts in shoreline or effects of development since 1979 in these areas. The FIRMS were digitized by the Northwest Regional Planning commission in 1999 to assist in planning efforts and are used to determine approximate locations. The digital version is not used for regulatory rulings.

The Agency of Natural Resource has identified all streams in the Town of North Hero as having a watershed of less than 2 square miles. As a result, the Agency recommends and the Town has already instituted a 50 foot setback on all streams to protect their stability and natural flow.

IV. THE LAND USE PLAN

The following factors have been considered in developing the Town Plan: capacity of the land for development, natural features, transportation, public services, balanced development, preservation of community, protection of existing property, community facilities, existing land use patterns, environmental and aesthetic factors, benefits of development, cost to the community, and limitations of Act 250.

The Town Plan seeks to preserve the rural atmosphere of our Town while allowing for regulated growth. To do this we should encourage cluster development to concentrate uses and balance residential uses with recreation areas to maintain open space. Each subdivision should be considered on its own merits. Use of PUDs will allow flexibility. The Planning Commission should encourage development that preserves open land.

North Hero has a variety of different kinds of public land. The State of Vermont has land such as in Pelots Point and Knight Island, fishing accesses, and the Knight's Point and North Hero state parks. The Planning Commission should encourage access to these facilities to include ensuring access to Knight's Island and supporting public events. If in the future the State withdraws support from these areas then these items should be revisited.

The following are the designated zoning districts in North Hero: Village District, Rural District, Conservation District, Shorelands District, Off-Islands District and the Flood Hazard Overlay District. The density of development is lower in the Rural District, Shorelands and Off Island Districts, and higher in the Village District. Development is prohibited in the Conservation District. Planned Unit Developments allow for concentrated development in conjunction with preserved open space and may allow for a density bonus in the Village and Rural Districts.

A. VILLAGE DISTRICT

The Village District is located along City Bay extending south to Station Road, west approximately 450 feet from Route 2, and to the north side of Northland Lane. It also extends about 850 feet west along Northland Lane. The Village District is characterized primarily by single and two-family residences, but also includes a mix of commercial, municipal and recreational uses. The density of development is low. The purpose of the Village District is to maintain and further this traditional village character. This assures that the Village will remain an attractive residential community with access to municipal and commercial activities. The possibility of a town green, additional parking off Route 2 and expanding the Village area should be explored.

The Village District has received status as a Vermont Designated Village Center, which affords the area with benefits that further the community's goals for the district. Benefits include priority consideration for state grants, priority site consideration by the State Building and General Services (BGS) when leasing or

constructing buildings, and a variety of tax credits available to commercial property owners in the district. The tax credits provide incentives to improve commercial structures in the district, which will in turn encourage revitalization and reinvestment. Priority consideration for grants allows the Town to take on planning and other implementation activities that support the Village.

B. RURAL DISTRICT

The Rural Lands District consists of the balance of land in North Hero that is not designated as Village, Shorelands, Conservation, or Off Islands District. While farming is the primary use in this District, low density residential areas, as well as recreational, commercial and light industrial uses may be approved with careful review by the DRB. Development review shall focus on siting development to maintain the rural character of this District, which consists of open agricultural land with views of Lake Champlain, the Adirondacks and the Green Mountains.

C. CONSERVATION DISTRICT

This District contains all those lands within North Hero requiring the most protection and is composed mainly of low swampy sections serving as cover and habitat for many forms of wildlife. These lands include but are not limited to Class 1 and Class 2 wetlands as defined by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and designated floodplain. These lands may be subject to regulations administered through the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) and the Town's flood hazard regulations. This area is designated as a conservation zone and all development is prohibited. Subdivision is allowed, but no parcel of land shall be created that contains less than ten (10) acres.

D. SHORELANDS DISTRICT

This District includes all land from the mean water mark of Lake Champlain (elevation 95.5 feet) inland for a distance of five hundred (500) feet. The purpose of the Shoreland District is to preserve water quality, prevent erosion, and regulate the visual character and aesthetic setting of shorelines. Low-density residential development and carefully sited commercial uses are appropriate in the Shorelands District. Building siting should take into consideration the preservation of views and include appropriate landscaping and screening.

E. OFF-ISLANDS DISTRICT

The Off-Islands District includes several small islands that are only accessible by boat, including Butler, Knight, Gull, Hen, Diadama (Dameas) and Grand Ma's. In this district, environmental concerns and the availability of Town services make these areas distinct from other areas.

F. FLOOD HAZARD OVERLAY DISTRICT

This District is established to protect the Town's flood hazard areas and consists of the 100-year floodplain as designated by the National Flood Insurance Program. The Overlay District imposes an additional layer of regulations upon the affected lands.

PROPOSED LAND USE

Town of North Hero

LEGEND

-  Town Boundary
-  Class 2 Town Highway
-  Class 4 Town Highway
-  Private Road
-  Lake or Pond
-  Shoreland District
-  Rural Lands District
-  Federal Highway
-  Class 3 Town Highway
-  State Forest Highway
-  Stream or Brook
-  Village District & Designated Village Center
-  Conservation District
-  Off Islands District



Prepared by:
Northwest RPC
75 Fairfield Street
St. Albans, VT 05478
(802) 524-5958
www.nrpcvt.com
October, 2014.

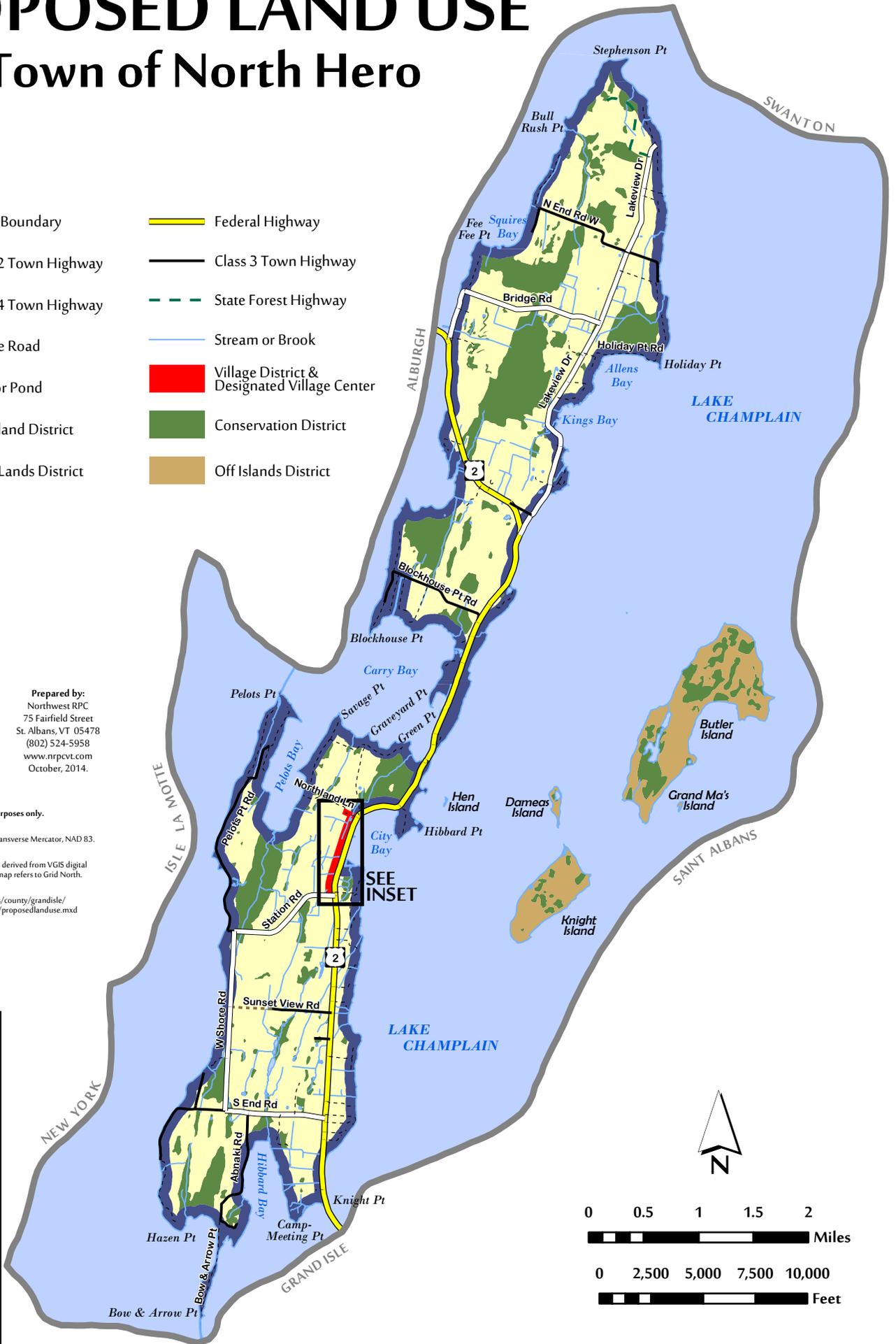
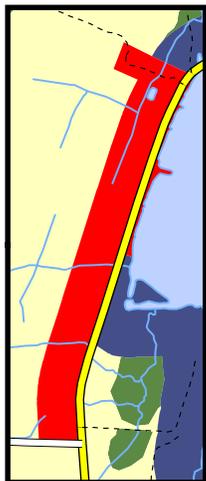
For planning purposes only.

Vermont Coordinate System, Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.

Data Source: All map features derived from VGIS digital coverages. North arrow on map refers to Grid North.

Location: z:\gis\projects\county\grandisle\northhero\townplan2014\proposedlanduse.mxd

INSET



V. COMPATIBILITY

It is important to recognize that municipalities do not exist apart from one another and that land use planning in one community can affect land use in neighboring communities. This Chapter considers the compatibility of proposed land use in this Town Plan with land use in adjacent communities.

North Hero is located in Grand Isle County, bordering Alburgh to the north and Grand Isle to the south. Route 2 is the only road that connects North Hero to other communities. However, North Hero is accessible to many communities via Lake Champlain, including communities in New York and Franklin County. While there are no compatibility issues with the plans of these communities and North Hero's plan, it is important to note the shared responsibility of improving the water quality of Lake Champlain.

The Town of Alburgh adopted its most recent municipal plan in July of 2011. The Plan identifies 7 proposed land use districts including a commercial, high density, shoreland, conservation A, conservation B, low density residential, and industrial district. Alburgh has proposed a shoreland district similar to that in North Hero to regulate development along the shoreline. Alburgh's shoreland and low density residential districts border North Hero where Route 2 crosses the town line. There are no conflicts in land use between Alburgh's proposed districts and those of North Hero in that area.

The Town of Grand Isle adopted its most recent municipal plan in February of 2012. The Plan identifies 7 proposed land use districts including a village, commercial/light industrial, commercial/recreation/shoreline, residential shoreline, rural residential/agricultural, small off-shore islands, and a flood hazard district. The residential shoreline and rural residential/agricultural districts that surround Route 2 where it crosses into North Hero are compatible with the Rural Lands 2 and Shoreland District in North Hero.