



# St. Johnsbury Town Plan

# 2017

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**VISION:** St. Johnsbury is the gateway to the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. We are committed to managing the balance between the collective residents, the dictates of its environment, and its commercial needs. We rely on individual diversity and active participation of all community segments in developing the town's growing commercial/industrial needs, outdoor recreation, public safety, and strong educational opportunities while preserving the sense of a small New England community.

**We are Community**

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Figure 1 Halloween Parade 2016

## Preface

Since the 2011 Town Plan, transformation in St. Johnsbury has gained momentum. The turn-of-the-century water and sewer lines have been upgraded, roads and sidewalks improved, studies initiated to provide safer biking and walking through Town, a new fire truck purchased, a streetscape designed and completed on Railroad Street and Eastern Avenue, and a bond vote passed to replace the screw pump for the sewage treatment plant. The Council on Rural Development Community Visit in 2015 energized citizen committee involvements and participation in revitalizing housing and the riverfront corridor has become especially popular.



Figure 2 Colors of the kingdom train rides

St. Johnsbury has been actively evolving in the last several decades from a primarily nineteenth-century industrial town to a community of people who honor the town's history of arts and culture, while enjoying local and area recreation. The need to continue this transformation was clearly identified by the community in the 2017 town plan, in the context of strong and healthy neighborhoods full of connection, activity, and commerce and people experiencing a quality of life, at home and at work that enables them to cope successfully with challenges they encounter. The chart which follows shows the various priorities described in the previous plans as compared with the current plan. Where the focus in 2011 was improved health and livability, we are now focusing on using those attributes as economic drivers. What the Town offers is special and unique. The 2017 town plan strives to enhance our assets while celebrating them, sharing them with the broader world, and building a road for the future.

## Mission Statement:

It is our mission to **maintain** and protect St. Johnsbury's assets so as to enable and sustain economic growth through new business, tourism, and creative endeavors. We are actively **evolving** to position the town for economic growth: target strong businesses and industry that advance the policies of the town; diversify our workforce; increase our housing stock for young professionals, established retirees, young families, second home owners, and residents requiring supported housing; and increase our tourism market share. We intend to execute plans that will **transform** our standard of health and well-being while supporting town policies and measuring for success and sustainability.

## Town Plan Goals and Priorities:

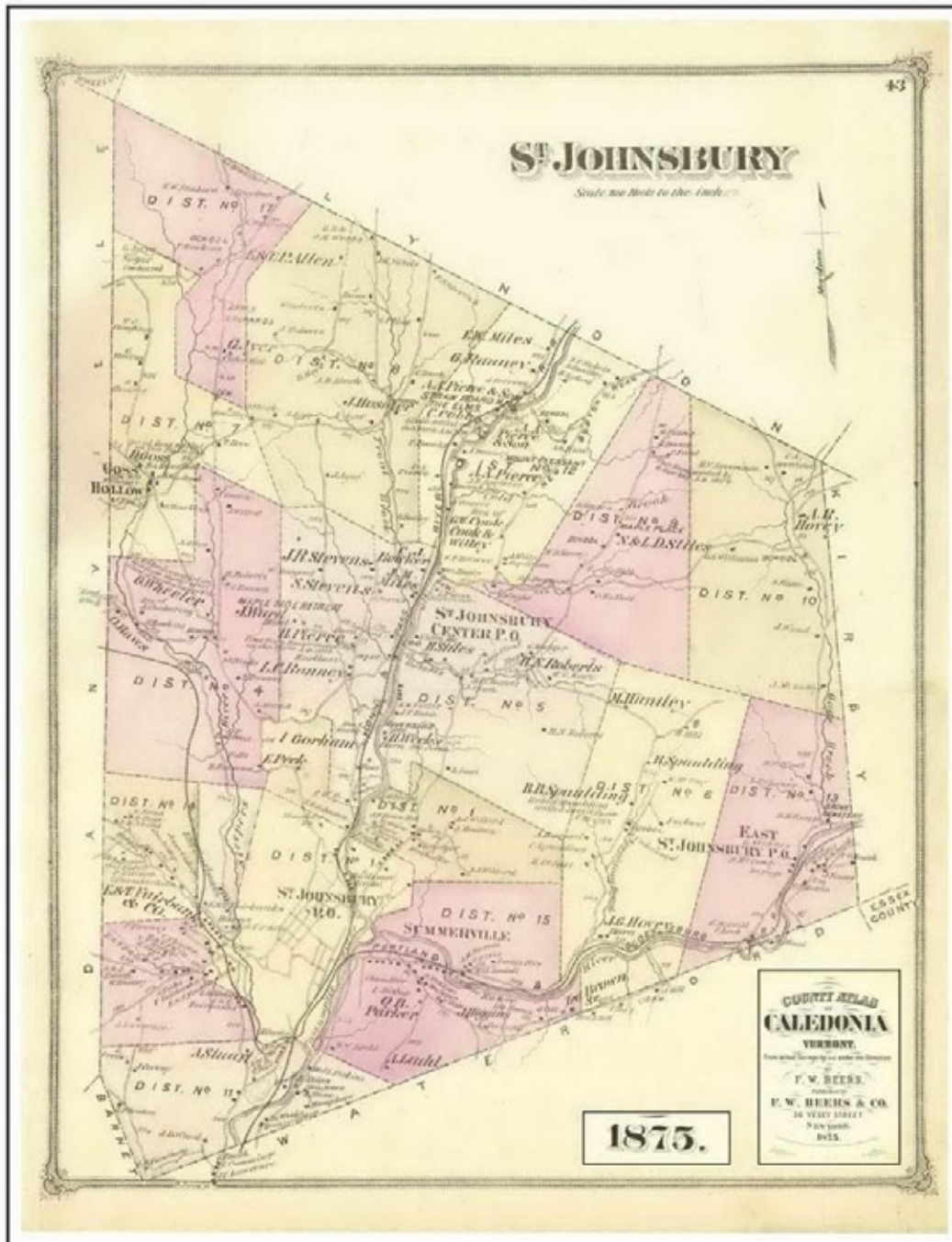
Town Plan Goals and Priorities			
	2006	2011	2017
Maintain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What we have.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main Street and other historic districts.</li> <li>• Our Arts &amp; Culture Resources.</li> <li>• Our historic buildings.</li> <li>• Our Health Destination status.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main Street and other historic districts.</li> <li>• Our Arts &amp; Culture Resources.</li> <li>• Our historic buildings.</li> <li>• Our focus on health and welfare of our residents.</li> <li>• Our focus on the top 3 business segments: Travel &amp; Tourism, Creative Economy, Industrial.</li> </ul>
Evolve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community recreation with completion of the Three Rivers Bike Path.</li> <li>• The town offices and public services building.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The downtown revitalization efforts to recover designated downtown business and diversify the resident population.</li> <li>• Riverfront areas with mixed use development that allows the community to access and enjoy the waterfront.</li> <li>• Diversification of Housing stock through incentives that change the ownership/tenant demographic.</li> <li>• Focus on water &amp; sewer upgrade plan to include all serviced areas.</li> <li>• Our Public Services to effectively support the entire town.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our housing strategy to include maintenance, obsolescence, and replacement.</li> <li>• Our sidewalk maintenance plan and budget to enhance walkability in all neighborhoods.</li> <li>• Our street maintenance strategy to share the road with safe, friendly bicycle use.</li> <li>• The Three Rivers bike trail to include a waterfront path.</li> <li>• The gateway roads in town with mixed use in-fill or replacement development that support neighborhood recovery goals.</li> </ul>

**Town Plan Goals and Priorities, continued**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Transform</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Downtown that gained designation status in 2003 with a focus on revitalization of businesses.</li> <li>• The Bay Street Riverfront with development that complements the planned bike path.</li> <li>• Residential and commercial building maintenance by off-setting costs with tax incentives.</li> <li>• The Economic Development Business acquisition model to recognize and target businesses that retain or add \$\$ to the local economy while providing jobs that sustain economic growth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The community by recovering and re-establishing our once vibrant and interconnected neighborhoods.</li> <li>• Increase our sense of well-being by creating a walkable and bike friendly community.</li> <li>• Community recreation by connecting our parks and recreation facilities and infilling with green spaces and pocket parks.</li> <li>• Capital budgets by establishing short and long term plans and reserve accounts that fund scheduled maintenance and replacement of town and Enterprise Fund infrastructure: e.g. sidewalks, streets, roads, lighting.</li> <li>• Economic Development to target growth in three priority business segments: Travel &amp; Tourism, Creative Economy, Industrial.</li> <li>• The resident demographics by increasing young professionals and families while supporting and engaging our youth and aging population.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The population demographic projections by balancing the age and income demographic.</li> <li>• Economic Development with defined goals and measures that direct work to define, promote, develop, and implement priority projects that increase growth from targeted industry sectors (see 2.5 E).</li> <li>• The tax burden on residents to allow more discretionary income in each household through additional, sustainable sources of revenue for the Town.</li> <li>• The downtown revitalization to include the Main Street fire site, Historic buildings, public services, and increased parking capacity.</li> <li>• Senior and Professional housing close to shopping and recreation areas.</li> <li>• Connect the Designated Downtown with riverfront areas for recreational uses.</li> </ul>



## History:



St. Johnsbury, settled in 1786, is the largest and most important town in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom, an economic and cultural center and the county seat for Caledonia County. The Town lies at the meeting of the Moose, Passumpsic, and Sleepers rivers and at the junction of Interstates 91 and 93 and U.S. Routes 5 and 2. Freight runs on the Freight runs on the Washington County Railroad, a subsidiary of Vermont Railroad, and the

Caledonia County Airport and the Northeast Kingdom International Airport are regionally accessible. The Town is named for Hector St. Jean de Crevecoeur, an influential supporter of young America. No other town in the world is named St. Johnsbury.

Much of our 19th-century wealth came from Thaddeus Fairbanks' invention of the platform scale, which by the 1860s was being exported as far away as India and China. Fairbanks Scales still maintains a plant in St. Johnsbury. Other wealth came from maple syrup and related products and from lumber and wood products.

For a town of 7,500, approximately the same population as 100 years ago, we are disproportionately rich in educational and cultural institutions. St. Johnsbury Academy, a private school founded in 1842, is our town high school and provides both high-quality college preparation and high-quality vocational training. About one quarter of the students are boarding students who arrive each year from approximately 30 different countries. Year-round live entertainment ranges from a community theater and weekly summer concerts by the town band (founded in 1830) to readings by best-selling authors and performances by world-renowned dancers, actors, visual artists, and musicians.

St. Johnsbury is surrounded by natural beauty complemented by agriculture. Our farmer's market is thriving. Named the best small town for adventure by National Geographic for our access to a diversity of outdoor recreation — street and off-road cycling, hiking, canoeing and kayaking, mountain biking, skiing — St. Johnsbury attracts tourists and vacationers year-round.

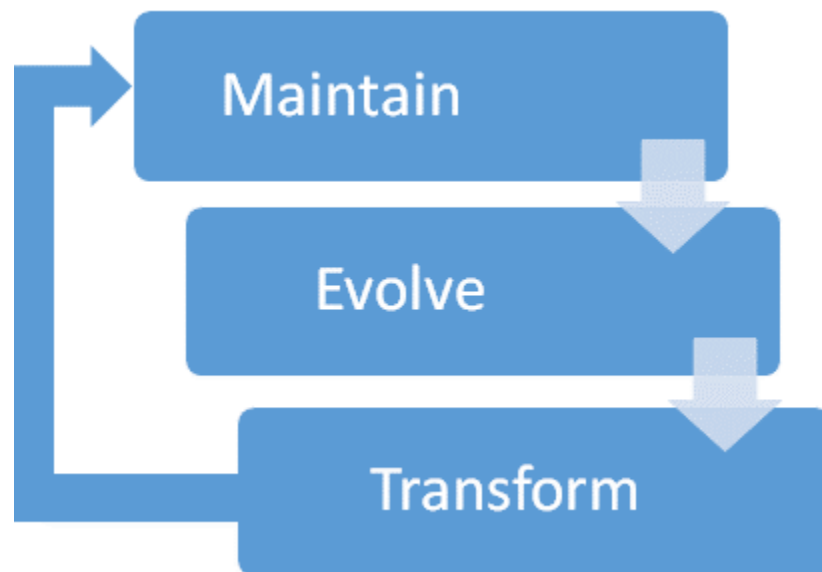


Figure 3 Brantview Mansion

## Town Plan Goals

Rural economies will face enormous challenges in coming decades, and St. Johnsbury is no exception. We need to understand and seize opportunities presented by changing economic conditions, increased automation, and global trade that depress demand for industrial labor; an aging population that increases demand for specialized services; and continued acceleration of the digital revolution that requires up-to-date connectivity and allows more widespread use of remote offices and telecommuting.

This Town Plan, with its policies and initiatives, is organized around three goals: maintaining what we have already achieved, evolving (preparing to transform) areas of the Town that need improvement, and transforming aspects of the town where comprehensive changes are needed to support the town goals and policies. While maintaining the work of past transformations, we continue to prepare for the future and do the work of transforming that which will eventually be maintained. This is the ongoing cycle of moving from planning to implementing and sustaining the ongoing accomplishments of the Town that enables us to transform what and who we are, to increase the opportunity for every household to improve its quality of life.



## 2017 Select Board and Planning Commission Members

### Select Board

Jeffrey Moore, Chair  
Timothy Angell, Vice Chair  
Kevin Oddy  
Thomas Moore  
Jamie Murphy

### Planning Commission

Susan Cherry, Chair  
Ben Copans, Vice Chair  
Willie Nickerson, Clerk  
Jim Brown  
Ed Behr  
Amy Davis, Esq.

## Schedule of Meetings which formed the 2017 Town Plan

April 8, 2015 – Community Visit Process – Step 1 (Fairbanks Museum, Grace Methodist Church, North Congregational Church)  
May 12, 2015 – Community Visit- Step 2 (St. Johnsbury School)  
June 4, 2015 – Community Visit – Step 3 (Resource meeting – Fr. Lively Center)  
June 23, 2015 –Town Plan Kick off Public Meeting 6-8 PM (St. Johnsbury Welcome Center)  
July 7, 2015 – Hazard Mitigation and Flood Resilience Committee  
July 29, 2015 – Community Visit committee chair meeting (NVDA)  
August 4, 2015 – Historic and Environmental Conservation Committee  
September 1, 2015 – Housing, Neighborhoods, and Recreation Committee  
October 6, 2015 – Public Infrastructure (Public Service, Utilities, Transportation) Committee  
November 3, 2015 – Health, Human Services, and Education Committee  
December 1, 2015 – Energy Efficiency and Sustainability Committee  
January 5, 2016 – Economic Development Committee  
January 28, 2016 – Community Visit Committee Chair Meeting 12-1 (Town Offices)  
February 2, 2016 – Land Use Committee  
February 29, 2016 –Town Plan information session preceding the Town Meeting information session (St. Johnsbury Town School)  
May 26, 2015 – Public Community Visit follow up information session (St. Johnsbury School)  
October 3, 2016 – Planning Commission Open House Information and feedback session –Town Plan draft presented  
3rd Tuesday of each month, Planning Commission Regular Meetings; Town Plan was on the agenda  
Tuesday, Dec. 20, 2016 – 6:00 PM – Planning Commission Public Hearing on Town Plan approval.  
Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2017 – Select Board received draft of Town Plan  
Monday, January 30, 2017 – First Select Board Public Hearing  
Tuesday, April 25, 2017 – Second Select Board Public Hearing  
Monday, May 8, 2017 – Select Board approved the Town Plan at its regular meeting.

## **GOAL 1.0: Maintain and protect St. Johnsbury's assets so as to enable and sustain economic growth through new business, tourism, and creative endeavors.**

St Johnsbury was incorporated from three thriving villages (St. Johnsbury Center, East St. Johnsbury, and St. Johnsbury Village) that were connected by three rivers as well as a north-south traffic corridor that goes from Connecticut to Canada and an east-west traffic corridor that goes from Burlington, Vermont to the Maine Coast. The town's land use regulations adopted in 2014 promote the 2011 Town Plan goals to revitalize our compact village centers and their neighborhoods while reconnecting them with mixed use development along our major corridors (Route 2 and Route 5). These pedestrian and bicycle friendly mixed use districts establish compact growth areas for residential units and businesses.

Our excellent high school, St. Johnsbury Academy, is available through school choice to students from Barnet, Waterford, Concord, and Monroe. The academic environment, enriched by the presence of large numbers of foreign boarding students, sends students to Ivy League as well as other colleges, and provides skills for a variety of vocations. Our population is educated and motivated, which results in an effective workforce. Our neighborhoods are safe. Our healthcare system, centered on Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital, is strong. We are in our fifth year of renewing and improving our potable water, sewer, and storm water infrastructure under the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Project, while working to meet Vermont goals for hazard resiliency and energy efficiency. (The CSO project may be a twenty to thirty-year project that could cost up to \$80M to complete.) In the Town's current combined sewer system, flows from small rain events are passed through the sewer treatment facility where sediment and pollutants are removed. The CSO project, upon completion, combined with the new storm water infrastructure work (under the Clean Water Act) will prevent high volume of wastewater combined with storm water from exceeding the capacity of the treatment facility. When this occurs, untreated water discharges directly to nearby streams, rivers, and other water bodies.

St. Johnsbury has many handsome buildings, including fine homes, museums, and a grand Victorian railway station, now home to the town offices and Welcome Center. The business sector includes manufacturing and distinctive retail shops. The Town's cultural life centers on four major institutions. The recently expanded Fairbanks Museum (1889) focuses on natural history, with more than 75,000 specimens, plus a planetarium. The St. Johnsbury Athenaeum (1871) houses the town's library collections, with 35,000 volumes as well as an art gallery (unique because unchanged since its opening) with important paintings of the Hudson River School, including Albert Bierstadt's "The Domes of Yosemite." Catamount Arts (1975) presents films, art exhibits, and, through its division of Kingdom County Productions (KCP Presents), performances by nationally and internationally known artists. St. Johnsbury History and Heritage Center (2015) at 421 Summer St. acquires and preserves historic collections and conducts purposeful educational programs that interpret the rich heritage of St. Johnsbury.

Residents and visitors also enjoy nearby Burke Mountain, Cannon Mountain, and Jay Peak; they hike, bike, and snowmobile local and regional trails; they swim, boat, and fish our rivers and lakes, and they hunt on local lands.

The Town shares an industrial park with the Town of Lyndon on the north boundary. There are two additional, smaller industrial areas: one is located on Route 2 E and the other is on the southern boundary along Route 5. The town water reservoir is located in Waterford. Each of the neighboring towns contract emergency dispatch services through St. Johnsbury Dispatch while most surrounding towns are equipped to provide mutual support for fire emergencies. The Special Services District (as identified in map inset on page 50 of Appendix D) is supported by and funds the St. Johnsbury Police Department while the Vermont State Police provide services to surrounding districts.

We recognize that state and regional projections are forecasting static population growth with an increased percentage of senior and decreased percentage of young professionals outside of Chittenden County; we believe, however, that St. Johnsbury has an opportunity to reverse the trend as it focuses on the renewed quality of life, new business segment growth, attractive housing and neighborhoods, vital downtown, and proximity to world class recreational facilities.

This section of the town plan describes our policies and initiatives that meet State and Regional Planning (NVDA) goals while enabling the town to return to and maintain a baseline for Community-wide health and well-being by taking care of what we have and keeping this foundation strong in order to build upon it and provide for future growth.



Figure 4 View of St. Johnsbury Center Village

1.1 Land Use Policy: Interconnect our open lands and compact villages with established neighborhoods, mixed use districts, recreational areas, and essential services.

INITIATIVES:

- A. Maintain and protect the natural and historic features of the town landscape
  - 1. Maintain and preserve landmark historic and cultural institutions and locations, including archeologically and naturally sensitive areas.
  - 2. Ensure that alternative and renewable energy generator fields (i.e.: solar and wind) are placed so as to maintain and preserve the historic character of the compact village and views of rural country side.
  - 3. Ensure that communication towers are placed so as to maintain and preserve the historic character of the compact village and view of rural countryside.
- B. Maintain and protect community connections and walkability including:
  - 1. Safe pedestrian walkways and crossings for all ages.
  - 2. Infill with parks and mixed use structures that connect neighborhoods to downtown and essential services.
- C. Maintain the Town's parks and outdoor recreation areas for four-season use.
  - 1. Lamoille Valley Rail Trail
  - 2. Three Rivers Recreation Trail
  - 3. Town Forest hiking trails
  - 4. Arlington Woods hiking trails
  - 5. Kingdom South Project (Private trails from Danville to St. Johnsbury)
  - 6. Fred Mold Park and ADA accessible fishing pier
  - 7. Neighborhood parks:
    - a. Arnold Park (and fountain)
    - b. Four Seasons Park (Main and Summer Streets)
    - c. Depot Square Park
    - d. Pat and Chet Buck Memorial Park (Portland St.)
    - e. Pearl Street Park
    - f. Peter and Polly Park (East St. Johnsbury)
    - g. Ramsay Park (Arlington)
    - h. South Park
    - i. Federal Street Park
- D. Maintain Rural Lands on hillsides and along roadsides outside the compact villages while developing business within the Designated Downtown, Industrial Park, and proposed village centers of East St. Johnsbury and St. Johnsbury Center.

1.2 Public Services, Utilities, and Infrastructure Policy: Sustain a safe environment throughout St. Johnsbury while effectively limiting the expansion of resources that will be expensive to maintain.

- A. Maintain the staffing and equipment needs of the Special Services District Police and Town Fire Departments
- B. Maintain the staffing and equipment needs of the Town Public Works

Department required for maintaining our current roads and sidewalk infrastructure.

- C. Provide continued support for fire safety and public safety community education programs: conduct annual test of Emergency Operations Plan that integrates the requirements of all municipal services; continue restorative work encouraging community voice in public safety matters.
- D. Develop a priority list of street and sidewalk repair and maintenance projects.
- E. Upgrade water and sewer infrastructure to ensure service levels are maintained in all neighborhoods according to the ongoing CSO Program Plan.
- F. Maintain and support the source protection plan for the public water supply at the Styles Pond watershed.
- G. Maintain a records management policy and off-site storage capability for town and vital records.
- H. Provide on-going professional development for elected and employed town staff and for appointed commissions.
- I. Maintain the drug prevention program through the Drug Task Force and community work of the Drug Abuse Resistance Team (DART).
- J. Maintain the Town's connection with the collaborative accountable health care work of Northern Vermont Regional Hospital (NVRH).



Figure 5 Main St. in the spring



### 1.3 Housing, Neighborhoods and Recreation Policy: Maintain safe housing and recreational facilities within neighborhoods to meet the diverse needs and livability of St. Johnsbury residents.

- A. Maintain and enhance the single- and multi-family homes and residential units in our residential neighborhoods for income-supported residents, young professionals, established retirees, young families, and second-home owners.
- B. Implement vacant-to-value and other programs that reduce the number of vacant and abandoned buildings in town.
- C. Enforce town housing and fire codes.
  - 1. Establish code compliance education program for property owners.
  - 2. Provide reasonable incentives for code compliance and property remediation for both commercial and residential property owners (Incentives could include – but not limited to – access to revolving loan funds, grant opportunities, and limited term residential tax stabilization).
  - 3. Maintain a current inventory of commercial housing units.
  - 4. Include GIS Mapping of designated growth areas.
  - 5. Provide effective property management awareness for landlords.
- D. Provide rights and responsibility awareness for tenants.
- E. Maintain community gardens and parks in each neighborhood.
- F. Maintain recreational programs for all ages in partnership with St. Johnsbury Academy.
- G. Extend Three River Recreational Path north along the Passumpsic riverfront to connect Summerville and Downtown neighborhoods according to the June, 2017 Municipal Planning Grant Concept (See A:1 Land Use in Appendix A).
- H. Develop a downtown renewal plan that includes the Eastern Avenue and Main Street neighborhood infill, building renovation, business growth, and diverse types of housing units.



Figure 6 On the Porch at St. Johnsbury House



Figure 7 St. Johnsbury School and Kiwanis Pool

#### 1.4 Education Policy: Provide high quality PK-12 and workforce educational services which support anticipated population projections and the developmental needs of all students and workers.

- A. Maintain programs within and between community teaching facilities (such as Catamount Arts, St. Johnsbury Academy, Fairbanks Museum, and area colleges) that enhance learning for academically average and gifted as well as special needs students.
- B. Maintain family support programs that enable all students to learn effectively at school.
- C. Maintain active participation in regional workforce training programs (e.g. St. Johnsbury Academy, Northern Vermont University, etc.).

#### 1.5 Economic Development Policy: Invest in business and industry with access to jobs that increase median income of St. Johnsbury households, support diverse employment opportunities, and contribute to the quality of life and well-being of all residents.

- A. Consolidate an effective set of measurements for on-going monitoring and annual reporting of each economic goal that includes median income, employment, industry, and age demographics.
- B. Target businesses that are sustainable and financially stable and also increase growth in the top three (3) business segments targeted for growth: Travel and

- Tourism, Creative Economy, and Industrial/Manufacturing.
- C. Connect St. Johnsbury's downtown to visitors of surrounding area attractions.
- D. Enable re-use of historical and viable industrial, commercial, and mixed use buildings for staff housing and incubator complexes that support entrepreneurial initiatives such as artisan studios and other start-up businesses, while they reach profitability.
- E. Support comprehensive and continuous medical care to maximize health outcomes.
- F. Assess feasibility of including a percentage of site development costs as community art and /or recreation for public use.

**1.6 Transportation Policy: Maintain safe, efficient, convenient, and environmentally sound transportation alternatives to in-town and intercity jobs, schools, shopping districts, and activities, and enable mass transit alternatives.**

- A. Maintain safe municipal parking lots for daily and overnight parking needs.
- B. Maintain safe bicycle and pedestrian routes throughout the Town.
- C. Support funding opportunities for commuter mass transit to and through regional and state-wide towns and cities.

**1.7 Energy Policy: Increase energy self-sufficiency and decrease dependency on external energy providers by stimulating the development of alternative energy sources for the Town and its residents while keeping dark-sky standards in mind.**

- A. Maintain dark-sky standard and energy efficiency in parking lots and other high density lighting fixtures, while continuing to light sidewalks for pedestrian safety.
- B. Designate preferred locations for siting renewable energy fields and community energy generators.
- C. Perform energy audits on municipal buildings and make necessary improvements.
- D. Integrate Baseline measurements for state energy standards (Act 174) into the municipal dashboard as well as the municipal ordinances and bylaws.

**1.8 Hazard Mitigation and Flood Resiliency Policy: Protect the natural environment and minimize risk to natural habitat, property, and people.**

- A. Maintain the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan (Approved by FEMA August 8, 2016)
- B. Minimize risk to individuals and property by amending bylaws to include model standards for flood plain, river corridor and wetlands management that restrict new development and substantial redevelopment within flood hazard areas and river corridors.
- C. Maintain flood plain manager certification.

**1.9 Preservation and Conservation Policy: Protect the buildings, waterways, wetlands, valleys, hillsides, and historic sites that represent our natural resources, history, heritage, and scenic beauty.**

- A. Maintain and renovate the Town's historic buildings and sites.

- B. Maintain and protect our natural landscapes and historic buildings, waterways and hillsides, preserving our scenic resources.
- C. Collect and display items relevant to the history of the Town and its people.
- D. Maintain our mixed use districts and downtown designation.
- E. Continue to maintain and enhance the quality of the town's existing settlements and neighborhoods by expanding availability of tax incentives and other benefits available through state neighborhood, village and/or growth center designations for the Summerville neighborhood, the Hastings North neighborhood, the Village of East St. Johnsbury, and the Village of St. Johnsbury Center (see Downtown Area Base Map in Appendix D).

**1.10 Financial Policy: Sustain service levels across all infrastructure and capital budget actions with established reserves, while stabilizing the real property tax burden of residential and commercial property owners.**

- A. Stabilize property values.
- B. Continue upgrades to wastewater and water treatment facilities.
- C. Continue combined sewer overflow (CSO) elimination program.
- D. Combine sidewalk, roadwork, bike and pedestrian upgrades with all CSO projects where feasible.
- E. Combine beautification projects with all CSO projects where feasible.
- F. Evaluate and develop bridge maintenance and replacement plans.



Figure 8 St. Johnsbury Hills from Interstate 91

## **GOAL 2.0 Position the Town for economic growth: target strong businesses and industry that advance the policies of the town; diversify our workforce; increase our housing stock for young professionals, established retirees, young families, second home owners, and residents requiring supported housing; and increase our tourism market share.**

St. Johnsbury is positioned at a crossroads for recreation, business, transportation, and commuting. It is located next to the White and Green mountains and is a place where travelers come to relax and share in our natural, cultural, historic, and recreational assets. In addition, we have Kingdom Trails, Burke Mountain, the Danville Corn Maze, and cross-country ski trails at our finger tips. These attractions for regional, national, and international visitors can be tapped into to increase our tourism market share. Over the last five years, local restaurants and attractions such as bowling, golfing, theater and films, Dog Mountain, Maple Grove, outdoor recreation, and year-round cultural programs, have increased their revenue through visitor outreach. These are just some of the attractions and activities that make St. Johnsbury the perfect location for people to base their stay while experiencing all the Town and the region have to offer.

Positioning the Town for economic growth includes increasing the value of our housing stock, developing and expanding our local and regional education to strengthen our workforce, and further strengthening the vitality of our neighborhoods with improvements in the infrastructure as the Town obtains appropriate funding. We continue to seek greater energy efficiency and resiliency throughout the town, and are expanding our infrastructure goals to improved management and storage of town records. These programs are all in process, and are part of the evolution that positions us to be the best that we can be and where people will want to live, work, and play.

### **2.1 Land Use Policy: Interconnect our open lands and compact villages with established neighborhoods, mixed use districts, recreational areas, and essential services.**

- A. Integrate bus stops, bike racks, and American with Disabilities Act (ADA) access into the development and redesign plans and projects for all public spaces where practical.
- B. Implement public transportation to local and area recreational facilities and natural resources.
- C. Upgrade amenities at all playgrounds, parks, forests and trails.
- D. Identify and place wayfinding signage to parks and recreation facilities, including access along local waterways.
- E. Work with residents and landowners to provide recreational access to the Passumpsic, Sleepers, and Moose rivers, and engage companies and businesses to

- sponsor scheduled riverfront clean up.
- F. Identify preferred locations for renewable energy fields.
- G. Bring existing town ordinances and bylaws into compliance with the Clean Water Act.

## 2.2 Public Services, Utilities, and Infrastructure Policy: Sustain a safe environment throughout St. Johnsbury while effectively limiting the expansion of resources that will be expensive to maintain.

- A. Make St. Johnsbury's attractions and events more accessible for visitors and residents by mapping trails to points of interest and facilities throughout town.
- B. Evaluate the effectiveness of each public service building and plan for upgrades, reconfiguration, and/or replacement.
- C. Evaluate the sustainability of mutual aid agreements with regional towns.
- D. Follow best management practices for road construction and maintenance to meet water quality standards.
- E. Evaluate the effectiveness of all operating procedures and adjust where needed.
- F. Revisit and initiate intersection studies for major crossroads; integrate bike lanes and signage for safe walkability and cycle-ability.
- G. Work with Northern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) to identify the gap in broadband services in town and assess its impact on projected growth in defined areas.
- H. Quantify the value of volunteer work done for beautification, parks and trees within Town spaces.
- I. Prioritize areas targeted for growth, and plan for improved infrastructure.

## 2.3 Housing, Neighborhoods, and Recreation Policy: Maintain safe housing and recreational facilities within neighborhoods to meet the diverse needs and livability of St. Johnsbury residents.

- A. Leverage the findings of the July, 2017 Housing Study and Assessment to target development, redevelopment, and infill to increase the availability of housing for young professionals, established retirees, young families, second-home owners, and income-supported residents and meet or exceed all statutory fair housing, energy efficiency, waste management, storm water runoff, and hazardous mitigation requirements for the diverse St. Johnsbury residential needs.
- B. Address the housing and shelter needs for the full continuum of care.
- C. Engage neighborhoods in on-going dialogue about community development.
- D. Evaluate and assess the placement of local parks, recreation, and community gardens in each residential neighborhood.
- E. Recognize the recreational benefit of completing the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) for the benefit of St. Johnsbury; and advocate for funding the project's completion. (Reference: VT Trails and Greenways Council)

- F. Implement quarterly town-wide communication to inform residents of community development priorities, initiatives, and activities.
- G. Pursue State Village Center Designation for St. Johnsbury Center and East St. Johnsbury; and consider State Neighborhood Designation for neighborhoods that support the Designated Downtown and Village Centers.
- H. Develop a riverfront renewal plan for a designated growth area located adjacent to the designated downtown district and along Bay Street.
- I. Connect each of the neighborhoods, village centers, and shopping districts with safe walking and biking routes.

#### 2.4 Education Policy: Provide high quality PK-12 and workforce educational services which support anticipated population projections and the developmental needs of all students and workers.

- A. Address facility and growth needs of the schools in the region based on the results expected from strategic and transformative initiatives.
- B. Support strong educational programs, enrichment activities and activities beyond the school day for all students in PK-12.
- C. Assess regional workforce training programs to determine gaps against the business and industry projections.
- D. Address the need for a multi-generational community center that was identified in the 2015 Community Visit (i.e., with afterschool programs, mentoring, gathering spaces).
- E. Track post-graduate performance and residency.

#### 2.5 Economic Development Policy: Invest in business and industry with access to jobs that increase median income of St. Johnsbury households, support diverse employment opportunities, and contribute to the quality of life and well-being of all residents.

- A. Measure and increase the median income in order to reduce the number of families living below the poverty level.
- B. Quantify the economic performance in St. Johnsbury.
- C. Make workforce development a priority for St. Johnsbury.
- D. Implement a business outreach initiative that highlights St. Johnsbury's quality of life (i.e. education, low crime rate, clean air, clean water, healthy foods, affordability, and access to world class outdoor recreation).
- E. Target agricultural, agritourist, bio-medical, bio-technical, outdoor recreation, and forest industries as highlighted growth sectors in NVDA's Regional Plan.
- F. Coordinate and utilize the available resources for targeted business development across all segments (i.e. telecommuting, business start-up, retail, industrial, and hospitality).
- G. Establish and implement an internal and external communication strategy aimed at strengthening existing businesses and recruiting new businesses.

- H. Develop and implement a vacant-to-value program for unoccupied municipal buildings.
- I. Work to grow economic development incentives (i.e. Tax Stabilization, Tax Increment Financing, Home Buyer Incentives, Public Utility Incentives, etc.).
- J. Ensure responsible development using tools such as a Health Impact Assessment, which could maximize the positive health impacts of proposed policies, programs, or projects.

## 2.6 Transportation Policy: Maintain safe, efficient, convenient, and environmentally sound transportation alternatives to in-town and intercity jobs, schools, shopping districts, and activities, and enable mass transit alternatives.

- A. Project growth needs for municipal, park-and-ride, and visitor parking in residential and mixed use districts.
- B. Bring road maintenance plans into compliance with Clean Water Act by identifying all hydrologically connected roads.
- C. Revisit the town's parking policy in order to best serve area residents and support commercial and retail activity.
- D. Establish a Walk-Bike Advisory Committee for St. Johnsbury.
- E. Assess and develop safe bicycle and pedestrian routes throughout town.
- F. Define a phased mass-transit implementation strategy and plan.
- G. Support grants for mass transit commuter transportation to and through regional and state-wide towns and cities (Interstate 93 has direct mass transit connections to job markets all the way to Boston, Littleton, Plymouth, Concord, Manchester, Burlington, and Cambridge).
- H. Implement or locate bus stop shelters at mass transit and ride-share parking lots.
- I. Quantify the benefits of commuter rail to and through St. Johnsbury.

## 2.7 Energy Policy: Increase energy self-sufficiency and decrease dependency on external energy providers by stimulating the development of alternative energy sources for the Town and its residents while keeping dark-sky standards in mind.

- A. Partner with alternative energy companies, land owners, and utility companies to site alternative sources of energy that reduce utility costs to the neighborhoods.
- B. Develop Energy Plan to meet the Vermont State goals and standards of 90 % renewable energy by 2050.
- C. Position the Town to meet statewide energy goals by leveraging creative financing programs for residents.
- D. Coordinate with existing energy efficiency programs for residential, commercial, and institutional energy savings.



- E. Bring existing Town ordinances and bylaws into compliance with recent standards for Acts 64 (Clean Water), 154 (Water supply), and 174 (Energy siting).
- F. Clarify and document the role and responsibility of town energy coordinators.

## 2.8 Hazard Mitigation and Flood Resiliency Policy: Protect the natural environment and minimize risk to natural habitat, property, and people.

- A. Reduce flood hazards and maintain good water quality by:
  - 1. Undertaking mitigation measures for existing structures and infrastructure, and
  - 2. Assuring long-term protection of the floodplain and river corridor from incompatible development and uses.
- B. Include hazard mitigation measures when retrofitting or upgrading Town facilities.
- C. Update the flood hazard section of the Town zoning bylaws with a model state flood hazard bylaw that also addresses river corridors with modifications based on local needs and input from town residents.
- D. Support all actions identified in the St. Johnsbury local hazard mitigation plan (approved by FEMA August 8, 2016).

## 2.9 Preservation and Conservation Policy: Protect the buildings, waterways, wetlands, valleys, hillsides, and historic sites that represent our natural resources, history, heritage, and scenic beauty.

- A. Determine how the Federal Certified Local Government Program (CLG) structure can benefit the economic growth policy and strategies of the town.

## 2.10 Financial Policy: Sustain service levels across all infrastructure and capital budget actions with established reserves, while stabilizing the real property tax burden of residential and commercial property owners.

- A. Assess revenue generators other than property tax to fund municipal programs such as the following:
  - 1. Local options tax, where the municipality gets 1% meals and lodging tax and the State also gives back on all state buildings; betterment and usage fees; low interest loans that go with the property.
  - 2. Betterment assessments for town infrastructure.
  - 3. Usage fees for town infrastructure, including parking.
  - 4. Include fee for service policies with user-based fees for police, fire, and public works departments.
- B. Assess the feasibility of developing a long-term control plan for CSO compliance.



Figure 9 Riverfront Corridor

### **GOAL 3.0 Execute plans that will transform our standard of health and well-being while supporting town policies and measuring for success and sustainability.**

When we look across our current assets and enhance them, we will make visible strides in new directions that benefit everyone directly or indirectly. We will mitigate flood hazards and maintain the quality of our water and help to preserve riversides for appropriate development and use. We will increase economic development; including seeking ways to leverage the rail systems that still come through town. We will expand sewer and water to areas of targeted development. And, most importantly, we will enable our young and older families and professionals to remain in town by providing opportunities to increase their standard of living and discretionary income as well as housing needs.

#### **3.1 Land Use Policy: Interconnect our open lands and compact villages with established neighborhoods, mixed use districts, recreational areas, and essential services.**

- A. Upgrade all land use regulations to reflect Agency of Natural Resources standards for flood plains, river corridors, wetlands, storm water runoff, energy efficiency, and dark sky recommendations (see Illuminating Engineering Society – [www.ies.org](http://www.ies.org)).
- B. Encourage Act 250-friendly growth, low-impact development, and green storm water infrastructure.
- C. Simplify and standardize land use definitions in zoning bylaws to categorize existing, new, and targeted businesses within renewal areas (i.e., North American Industry Classification System [NAICS] – see Appendix A).
- D. Encourage Planned Residential Development (PRD) and Planned Unit Development (PUD) within the mixed use districts along our Route 2 and 5 corridors.
- E. Locate alternative energy and cell towers only in designated preferred locations.
- F. Examine leasing town-owned land to energy companies.

### 3.2 Public Services, Utilities, and Infrastructure Policy: Sustain a safe environment throughout St. Johnsbury while effectively limiting the expansion of resources that will be expensive to maintain.

- A. Promote further development of universal broadband access where studies have shown it to be a priority for economic growth.
- B. Develop and build adequate facilities for Police, Fire, Public Works, and all town departments.
- C. Manage the capital improvement budget to reflect anticipated future equipment costs.
- D. Expand or improve water and sewer systems to targeted growth areas.
- E. Develop a centralized information hub for all community activities.
- F. Assess existing dams within the Town to determine viability for leased hydro-electric generation as one component of self-sustainability of the town to meet goals of the State Energy Plan.

### 3.3 Housing, Neighborhoods, and Recreation Policy: Maintain safe housing and recreational facilities within neighborhoods to meet the diverse needs and livability of St. Johnsbury residents.

- A. Target neighborhoods that have approved renewal plans, as the next phase for redevelopment through tax incentives, stabilization and other improvement programs.
- B. Expand interconnections between neighborhoods: bike paths, sidewalks, playgrounds, trails and parks.
- C. Implement the initiatives recommended by the 2017 Housing Study (see 2.3A).

### 3.4 Education Policy: Provide high quality PK-12 and workforce educational services which support anticipated population projections and the developmental needs of all students and workers.

- A. Develop budgets and programs for required PK-12 educational services and support needs that resulted from the projections developed within targeted economic development transformative initiatives.
- B. Strengthen the public image of all school programs and use these as a focal point for attracting families and businesses to our communities.
- C. Provide access to information for workforce training that includes high technology, engineering, and design.

### 3.5 Economic Development Policy: Invest in business and industry with access to jobs that increase median income of St. Johnsbury households, support diverse employment opportunities, and contribute to the quality of life and well-being of all residents.

- A. Engage visitors in the walkability of St. Johnsbury through implementation of walking trails highlighted by history and heritage informational signage.
- B. Encourage the completion of the LVRT and leverage St. Johnsbury as the destination for access to the trail networks that will stimulate economic activity within the community.

- C. Work with landowners to remediate brownfields sites that provide economic opportunity.
- D. Provide adequate parking capacity (visitor, residential, commercial, and event) to meet the needs of development.
- E. Pursue state and regional partnerships to ensure job growth and workforce retention.
- F. Continue to grow and strengthen targeted manufacturing businesses within the industrial park and other industrial and commercial districts.
- G. Continue to grow and strengthen other business segments that have been targeted for growth.
- H. Continue to evaluate, strengthen, and expand the diversity of retail, hospitality, and service businesses that provide visitors with pedestrian-friendly shopping, dining, cultural, and artistic experiences (including local events and activities).
- I. Identify and analyze economic factors pertaining to mass transit and rail in order to implement transportation strategies that support economic development.

### 3.6 Transportation Policy: Maintain safe, efficient, convenient, and environmentally sound transportation alternatives to in-town and intercity jobs, schools, shopping districts, and activities, and enable mass transit alternatives.

- A. Pursue economic and retail development and job market growth while maintaining or improving the economic viability of the railroads for passenger/commuter as well as freight use.
  - 1. Participate in regional and state-wide conversations concerning the economic benefits and viability of bringing passenger as well as freight rail through St. Johnsbury and drive the needed modifications to the Agency of Transportation (AOT) Rail Plan to ensure St. Johnsbury and other points in the NEK are connected with passenger rail and position the region to meet State Energy goals.
  - 2. Pursue and promote growth in jobs and job markets that are available within a 120-mile mass transit radius.
- B. Improve access to St. Johnsbury's ride-share parking from each district and neighborhood. Ideas supported by the Town include:
  - 1. Establish bus stops, ride share lots, and increased routes with more commuter-friendly schedules to increase ridership in order to meet State Energy goals.
  - 2. Partner with appropriate State and Regional agencies to implement public transportation to/from locations of commuter and visitor access; enable commuters to travel longer distances in shorter time while expending less energy (i.e., Littleton, Boston, Montreal, and increased frequency of routes to Montpelier, Burlington, Concord, NH and Boston, MA).
- C. Increase bicycle and pedestrian safety and effectiveness with appropriate lighting and clearly marked routes and signs.

- D. Create opportunities for commuters with bicycles to utilize the most direct and shortest routes between business districts.
- E. Increase bicycle parking spots within the business districts.

### 3.7 Energy Policy: Increase energy self-sufficiency and decrease dependency on external energy providers by stimulating the development of alternative energy sources for the Town and its residents while keeping dark-sky standards in mind.

- A. Work with Efficiency Vermont to measure energy efficiency base lines and improvements to bench mark St. Johnsbury's contributions in meeting State energy goals.
- B. Seek financial incentives from installers who want to site their alternative energy fields in St. Johnsbury preferred locations.

### 3.8 Hazard Mitigation and Flood Resiliency Policy: Protect the natural environment and minimize risk to natural habitat, property, and people.

- A. Establish upstream-downstream regional partnerships to support floodplain and river corridor management.
- B. Establish a Community Resilience Organization (CRO) responsible for developing a public education and outreach program around hazard mitigation and individual preparedness.

### 3.9 Preservation and Conservation Policy: Protect the buildings, waterways, wetlands, valleys, hillsides, and historic sites that represent our natural resources, history, heritage, and scenic beauty.

- A. Partner with property owners to identify and conserve targeted preservation sites and buildings and to encourage planned public access to build awareness of history and heritage and as part of a travel and tourism growth strategy.
- B. Support innovation in recycling and composting.

### 3.10 Financial Policy: Sustain service levels across all infrastructure and capital budget actions with established reserves, while stabilizing the real property tax burden of residential and commercial property owners.

- A. Measure market value trends of properties in St. Johnsbury
- B. Measure trending real property tax and revenue per capita
- C. Measure % property tax versus other use/fee based revenue for supporting town infrastructure maintenance and enhancement work.

## Identifying, Resourcing, and Monitoring Short term (1-2 years), Mid-term (3-5 years) and Long-term (5-8 years) goals:

Initiatives that fall under the authority of the Municipality will be defined, resourced, measured, and monitored by department heads with the oversight of the Town Manager. These will be reported to the Select Board on an annual basis as the Operations component of the town's economic development dashboard.

Initiatives that do not fall under the authority of the Municipality will be defined, resourced, measured and monitored by the various organizations responsible for their achievement.

The policies in Goal 1 are policies of maintaining. They would be considered on-going work of the Town and the various organizations supporting this work. The short-term goals are mostly in Goal 2. These goals are meant to prepare the change that the Town is planning to achieve. Most, yet not all, of the Goal 3 policies are within the 5-8 year long-term range.

## Relationship to Regional Plan

The NVDA Regional Plan guides future growth and development in the Northeast Kingdom through fostering economic development, preserving historic and cultural resources, guiding traditional development patterns, and addressing other quality of life issues. The Planning Commission considered the Regional Plan while drafting the Town Plan and the NVDA has reviewed the Town Plan. The St. Johnsbury Town Plan is consistent with the goals of our region.



Figure 10 Arnold Park

## **APPENDIX A: Measures and Statistics Supporting the Vision and Goals**

The Town of St. Johnsbury is the shire town of Caledonia County and the most populated in the region with a 2010 census population of 7,603. St. Johnsbury is also home to a number of industries that collectively employed 5,438 workers in 2015. The state-designated downtown and adjacent neighborhoods are dense and include buildings reflecting a range of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural styles, many of which maintain a high degree of integrity. Outside the downtown area, St. Johnsbury remains rural in character.

The goal of the 2017 Town Plan is to provide a framework from which we can build an environment that supports and enhances the quality of life for each of our residents. Therefore, it is essential to have data and statistics that quantify various elements that reflect the quality of life and economic opportunity within the community. These statistics provide important baselines and ongoing measurement for the Town to ascertain what community and economic development strategies are successfully moving us forward versus those that show little results, and drain important human and financial resources.

The residents of St. Johnsbury continue to commit a vast amount of energy and resources to community and economic development. Through continued and improved data and information gathering, the Town will become more focused and efficient with its valuable resources.

Although we cannot effectively or directly measure every resident's quality of life, there are some measures that, when viewed in the aggregate, can tell us if the town is moving in a positive direction. Included in this appendix are baseline statistics about St. Johnsbury that reflect some of the indicators related to quality of life (e.g. employment, median and average income, business revenue, grand list trends), demographics of our residents, workers, and businesses, and business opportunity. Some of the measures presented will form the basis for our Town's Community and Economic Development Dashboard that will be implemented in 2017. Measurable data will be organized into subsections that reflect our 10 categories for planning policy: Land Use; Public Services; Housing, Neighborhoods and Recreation; Education; Economic Development; Transportation; Energy; Hazard Mitigation; Preservation and Conservation; and, Financial.

### **Vermont's Quality of Life:**

Vermont ranked #2 in the 2013 Quality of Life ranking with low infectious disease rating as well as a low percentage of residents without health insurance. The crime rate and pollution are among the nation's lowest.

According to the Kauffman Index of Entrepreneurial Activity (2015), Vermont was in the top 10 states that saw more startup activity than anywhere else nationwide. In 2012, Vermont's startup rate was 520 per 100,000 adults. For entrepreneurs, serious about keeping a work-life balance, "Vermont may be the ideal place to get started."

Vermont continues to be one of the healthiest states in the continental US. It is ranked among the highest high school graduation rates in the country, has a low percentage of children in poverty, and brags of a low violent crime rate. Additionally, Vermont ranked #14 on the 2016

*Top: Residents' Views of Their State as Best Place to Live*  
How would you describe the state where you live?

	Best or one of the best possible states to live
Montana	77%
Alaska	77%
Utah	70%
Wyoming	69%
Texas	68%
Hawaii	68%
New Hampshire	67%
North Dakota	66%
Colorado	65%
Vermont	64%
Oregon	64%
Minnesota	64%

June-December 2013  
GALLUP®

list of Happiest States in America. (Wallethub.com) “According to their findings, life satisfaction, one of the two main components of happiness, increases as income rises — to a maximum of \$75,000 a year. Beyond that figure, money makes little difference in a person’s overall contentment with life.

Reinforcing those findings are the annual results of a Gallup-Healthways poll measuring global well-being. According to Gallup-Healthways, “People who make more money tend to report higher positive emotions.” But income isn’t the only determinant of personal happiness. Apart from financial security, a pleasant state of being also depends on other factors, such as one’s physical health, personal purpose and social connectivity.”

As a town, our primary objective is to leverage Vermont’s success at having some of the happiest people with the best quality of life in the country to bring additional enthusiastic, entrepreneurial, and imaginative people to live, work, and build businesses in St Johnsbury.

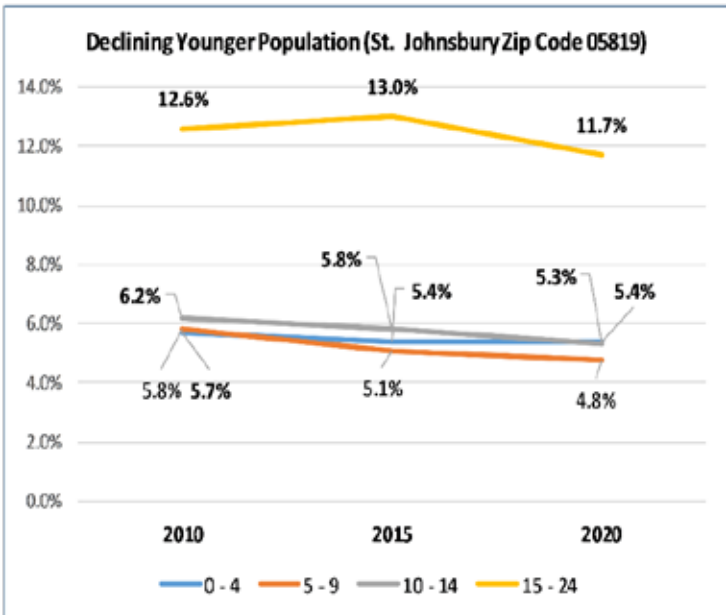
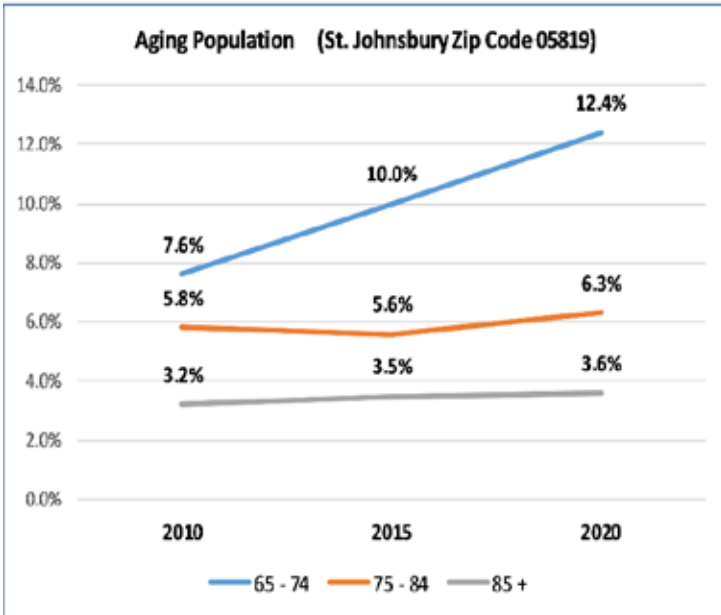
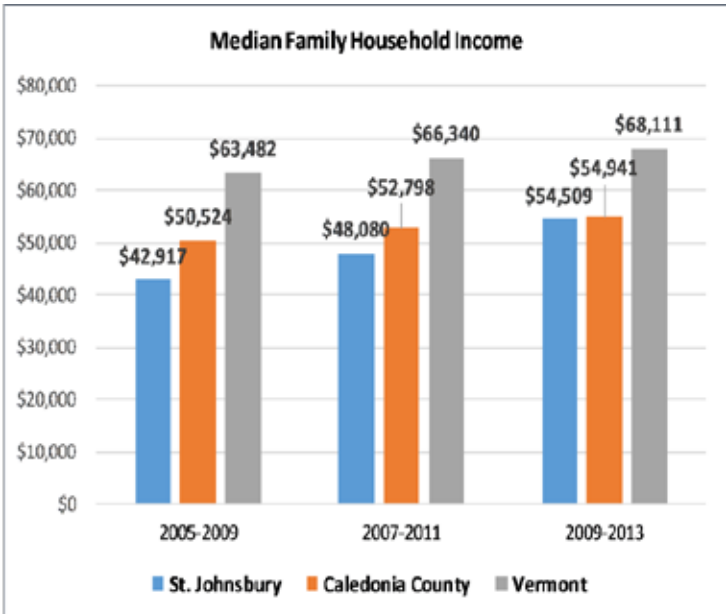
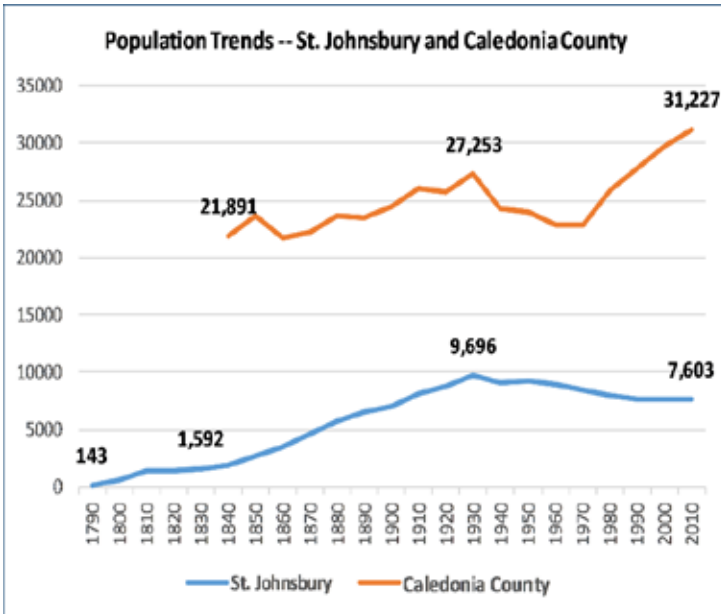


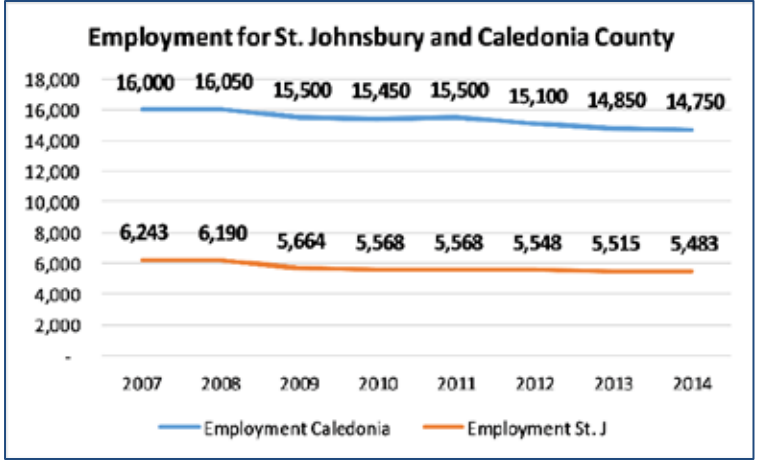
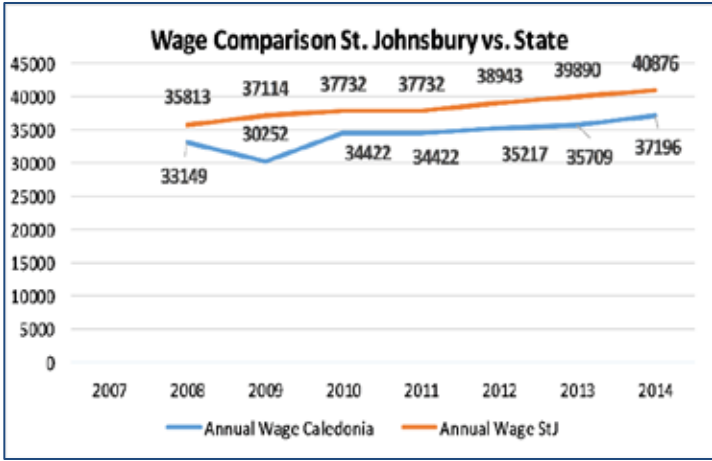
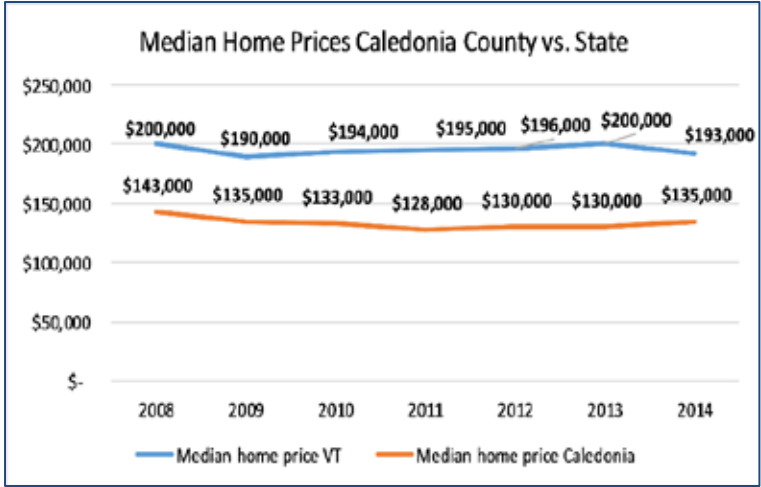
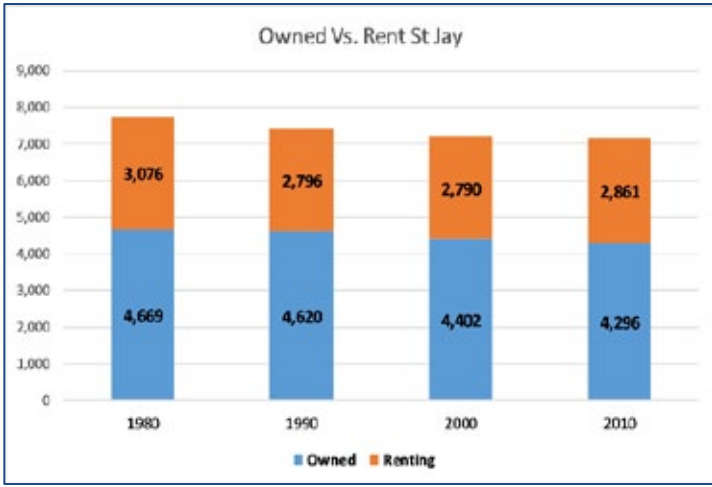
Figure 11 Farmer's Market



# St. Johnsbury Town Plan – Demographic Profile

(Data provided by the US Census Bureau and ESRI Online Business Analytics)





## A.1: Land Use

St. Johnsbury is the largest town by population in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont and serves as an educational, healthcare, cultural, and commercial center for the region. In 2006, the St. Johnsbury was named "Best Small Town" in National Geographic Adventure's "Where to live and play" feature. Growth of our population with a balanced and mixed demographic is a strategic goal that threads through each of the policies.

Land Use goals and policies will continue to maintain the compact villages, rural land, and neighborhoods that cause people to live here for generations, to bring back their families, and/or to retire. At the same time, these goals will reflect the need to change what we do and how we do it. The town recognizes that mixed-use districts minimize strip development along the major thoroughways and increase the flow between neighborhoods as well as with the business centers; that effective communications are critical to support changes in the way we do business and stay connected with our friends and families; that a balanced life-style requires recreation and community centers as well as access to our beautiful riverfronts; that risk mitigation includes protecting our wetlands, waterways, as well as our climate through active engagement with regulations that support protection of our environment.

More than half of St. Johnsbury's acreage consists of forest, providing numerous opportunities for hunting, trapping, snowmobiling, hiking, biking, bird-watching, and more. While the majority of the land in town is privately held, many landowners allow access to their land with permission, particularly for hunting and snowmobiling.

The Town has a 73 acre tract of land known as the Town Forest (or Memorial Forest) as well as a 32 acre parcel known as Arlington Woods, both with recreational trail networks open to the public, as well as several other parks available for active and passive recreation. They include Arnold Park, Main Street Park (AKA: Summer St. Common and Four Seasons Neighborhood Park), South Park, Fred Mold Park, Peter and Polly Park, and Portland Street Park (Chet and Pat Buck Memorial Park). Several of these parks contain exquisite floral gardens maintained by the volunteers of the town beautification committee. Much of the maintenance work, such as mowing, is done by the Department of Corrections under the supervision of the Department of Public Works. While cost effective, current management is often loose and maintenance is dependent on the goodwill of the community.

A Municipal Planning Grant was awarded to the Town of St. Johnsbury in 2016 by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development for the purpose of creating a site-level master plan focused on the Passumpsic Riverfront from the Portland Street Bridge south to the confluence with the Sleepers River. The plan, expected to be completed in May of 2017, will identify the best location(s) to establish public access from the downtown business district to the riverfront. The study area is immediately adjacent to the State-designated downtown. The plan will also identify compatible improvements -- for example, directional and interpretive signage, pedestrian paths, kayak landing area, bike parking, etc. The project will improve the

physical and economic environment of St. Johnsbury’s designated downtown by linking an important asset – outdoor water recreation – to the downtown experience. It is expected that this connection will enhance the recreational opportunities available on the river, will attract visitors who might not otherwise visit the downtown area, and will create a synergy that increases economic activity in the downtown. Drawing visitors from outside the Town and region is crucial to the economic health of the downtown.

Eight acres of land beyond the sewer plant are also owned by the town and were privately donated for recreation use. The Rotary Club is interested in seeing this access utilized in some way. Lack of access to the land is a barrier to its development and use. Boat access is a possibility.

Measuring land use trends against projected growth will assist town planners and residents to develop future land use goals and strategies that meet our needs while also protecting our natural resources for future generations.

**A.2: Public Services**

Public Services include Public Utility companies as well as our Municipal Service Departments: Police, Fire, and Public Works.

The Town of St. Johnsbury is served by Green Mountain Power for electric customers. According to the Vermont Public Service Board, Vermont is served by eleven cable television companies, including the two largest, Comcast and Charter, which together have more than ninety-percent of the market. Approximately sixty five percent of Vermonters either have cable TV service or cable facilities running by their homes which means they could subscribe if they chose to do so. The Public Service Board maintains a list of cable television companies authorized to operate in Vermont, with contact information. Fiber services are growing and becoming more available in St. Johnsbury.

The town has begun to inventory parking and asses the policies regarding permits and available spaces. The following inventory was done in 2016.

**Designated Downtown Municipal Parking Inventory**

<b>Town Parking Locations (Short-term &amp; Long-term)</b>	<b># Parking Spots</b>	<b>Metered Parking (Short-term)</b>	<b># Parking Spots</b>
Municipal Lot- Pearl St.	53	RR- MacDonald’s - Horizon's	64
Railroad Street Lot- (behind Taproom)	156	Main St.	55
Main Street Lot-(behind Fire Station)	77	Eastern Ave.	79
Armory (North & South)	18	<b>Total</b>	<b>198</b>
Pearl St. North (Republican Block side)	36		
Pearl St. South (Street permit parking)	10		
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>		

### **A.3: Housing, Neighborhoods, and Recreation**

Our historic neighborhoods are the backbone of our community. Their condition and contributions to the Town are a direct indicator of the health and well-being of our residents. This is reflected in the market values, vacant homes, grand-list, as well as median income. Household sense of well-being is also visible (subjectively) through the condition of buildings and yards. Some data also gives us empirical measurement of the overall health and well-being of the Town. There is a multi-faceted strategy to improve our neighborhoods that threads through many of the Town Goals and Policies. These include improving roads and sidewalks, creating job opportunities, supporting energy goals that reduce the cost of utilities, adding community parks and connections to recreation facilities, managing crime, and providing effective public transportation.

St. Johnsbury hosts a multitude of cultural and recreational activities that add to the diverse array of unique area experiences. Among these are Catamount Arts, The Fairbanks Museum, The St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, The St. Johnsbury History and Heritage Center, Stephen Hunek's Dog Mountain, and the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail. St. Johnsbury also boasts of first class hiking, biking, hunting, fishing, camping, bird watching, golf, skiing, snowmobiling, and pristine beauty. Kingdom Trails and Burk Mountain Resort are among other area attractions.

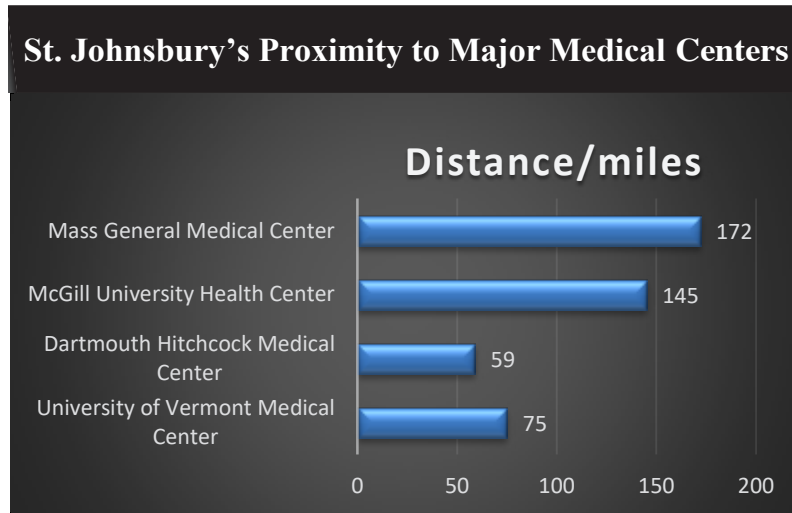
The organized recreation activities for the town are managed through a contract with St. Johnsbury Academy. Activities and camp experiences are available for all ages as well as fun runs and other multi-generational activities throughout the year. St. Johnsbury School, St. Johnsbury Academy, Catamount Arts, The St. Johnsbury Athenaeum and The Fairbanks Museum serve as venues for many of the children's and summer camp activities and experiences. Parks are maintained by the Town of St. Johnsbury under the budget of the Public Works Department. Neighborhoods are becoming more involved in the planting of gardens and park maintenance. The beatification committee is appointed by the Select Board and has a small budget for flowers and decorations throughout the year. Maintaining and growing our diverse array of experiences continues to be a top priority of our Town Plan.

In addition to the Town's forests and parks, visitors entering St. Johnsbury are greeted by signs claiming "St. Johnsbury- Where Rivers and People Come Together." Located in the Connecticut River Watershed, St. Johnsbury has three rivers converging in its downtown- the Sleepers, Passumpsic, and Moose rivers. The potential for water-based recreation, particularly on the Passumpsic, has yet to be fully developed, although decent portages currently exist at the river's various dams as well as on the Connecticut River, of which all of the above are tributaries. St. Johnsbury continues to improve its water and sewer infrastructure, which increases the health and attractiveness of the watershed.

With the aid of Green Mountain Power, a fully ADA accessible fishing pier was built at Fred Mold Park. With the completion of the Three Rivers Recreation Trail which connects South Main St. to the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, there is now a need to connect recreation trail traffic to the downtown area as well as the riverfront corridor.

### A.3. 1: Healthcare

St. Johnsbury is home to the Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital (NVRH). NVRH takes pride in being a community, not for profit, acute care, and critical access hospital. NVRH is one of two Vermont hospitals designated as baby *friendly*™ by the United Nations. NVRH provides primary and preventive care, surgical and specialty services, inpatient and outpatient care and 24 hour physician-staffed emergency services. St. Johnsbury is centrally located and in close proximity to major medical centers.



The Town recognizes that walkability, bike-ability, and access to recreation facilities, while good for our health, are also major factors for both Community Development and Economic Development.





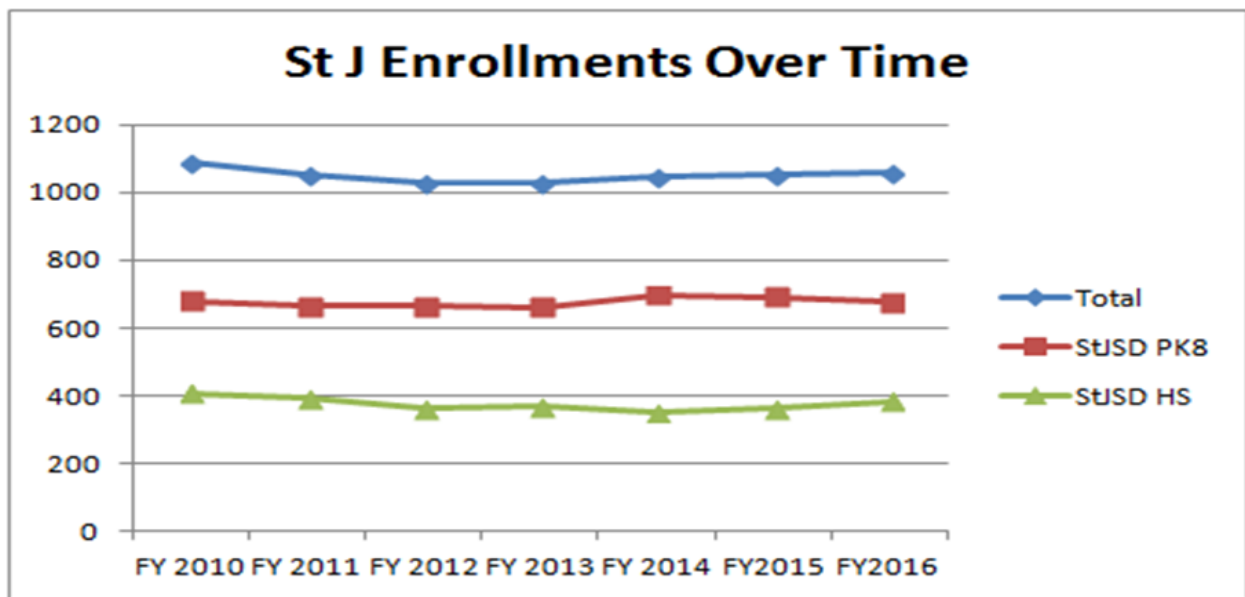
## St. Johnsbury Town Plan - Housing Profile

St. Johnsbury Housing Fact Sheet	St. Johnsbury		Caledonia County		Vermont	
St. Johnsbury Population	7,603		31,227		625,741	
Total population occupied in housing units	7,157		29,882		600,412	
Total population in owner-occupied housing units	4,296		22,843		444,608	
Total population in renter-occupied housing units	2,861		7,039		155,804	
Owner Occupied Units	1,967		9,166		182,537	
Renter Occupied Units	1,380		3,325		74,467	
Ave. People/Rental Unit	2.07		2.12		2.09	
# of households	3,158		12,553		256,442	
# of Households receiving public assistance	283	9.0%	669	5.3%	11,311	4.4%
# of Families	1,870		8,153		160,360	
Population Below the Poverty Level	1,134	14.9%	4,236	13.6%	70,873	11.3%
# of occupied rental units that lack complete plumbing facilities	14	1.0%	69	2.1%	533	0.7%
# of occupied rental units without complete kitchens	14	1.0%	60	1.8%	1,532	2.1%
Total workforce (16+)	3,665		14,983		316,127	
% of residents (16+) that working outside St. Johnsbury	39.0%		63.5%		65.4%	
Moved into units prior to 2005	74.5%		70.6%		65.6%	
# vacant housing units for rent	155	11.2%	340	10.2%	5,635	7.6%
Renter occupied housing with 1 unit	14.8%		26.7%		27.0%	
Renter occupied housing with 2 units	8.2%		10.0%		16.0%	
Renter occupied housing with 3 or more units	73.5%		53.7%		51.4%	
Common Level of Appraisal (CLA)	1.0612		N/A		N/A	
Median gross rent (all units)	\$626		\$683		\$875	
Median Rental as % of Income	40.6%		34.3%		31.1%	
Median age renter-occupied buildings/ yrs.	77		77		55	
Median age owner-occupied buildings/ yrs.	63		43		41	
Average price of a primary residence sold (2015)	\$115,087		\$147,646		\$227,217	

Data set aquired from Vermont Housing Data: [www.housingdata.org](http://www.housingdata.org) (last updated Sept. 16, 2016)

#### A.4: Education

St. Johnsbury continues to provide residents with first class education opportunities and ranks very high in school graduation rates. Our goal as a town is to enable each student to achieve their personal best by making a diverse set of educational programs available in a safe and healthy environment that continually engages students. While declining enrollments are a primary concern statewide, enrollments at the PK-8 school, and at the high school level, have held steady over the last ten years.



In 2016, approximately 100 K-8 students were enrolled at Good Shepherd Catholic School and 30 were home schooled. The remaining students attended the St. Johnsbury School.

St. Johnsbury is a school choice town. In 2016, 960 grade 9-12 students from all over the world chose to attend St. Johnsbury Academy. St. Johnsbury Academy is an independent coeducational boarding and day secondary school, founded in 1842. A nonprofit institution, the Academy is governed by a self-perpetuating, 21-member Board of Trustees. The student body of more than 960 (Grades 9-12 plus a postgraduate year) is enrolled in college-

preparatory and technical education programs. The Class of 2016 graduated 255 with 89% going to college, 2% to the military, and 9% directly into employment. The highest GPA in the class of 2016 was 95.86 (not weighted).





## A. 5: Economic Development

The focus of economic development is within our high density areas including the designated downtown, areas adjacent to our designated downtown, the industrial park, and our village centers (St. Johnsbury Center and East St. Johnsbury). Incentives that are available to us through our foreign trade zone, Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) Zone, and designated downtown will help us catalyze economic growth. Village center designation in St. Johnsbury Center and East St. Johnsbury Village will provide incentives for economic growth in those outlying areas.





## St. Johnsbury Town Plan - Business Climate

### Foreign Trade Zone #286:

Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) has been granted Foreign Trade Zone Status by the US Department of Commerce for the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont (NEK).

#### What does this mean for you and your business?

- Reduced costs of production by reducing and/or eliminating duties, tariffs, and customs fees
- Improved cash flow
- Alignment with the Vermont Brand and a quality of life that only Vermont delivers
- A skilled and dedicated workforce
- Close proximity to major US and Canadian markets and distribution centers (Boston, New York and Montreal)

For more information please go to: [www.nvda.net](http://www.nvda.net)



### Rural Economic Area Partnership Zones (REAP Zone)

- The NEK is one of five REAP zones in the U.S., identified because of its rural isolation and lack of local capital.
- Priority consideration is given for REAP Zone applications submitted for funding through USDA Rural Development
- \$68 Million of investments have been made possible by REAP Zone designation.

For more information go to: [www.nekcollaborative.org](http://www.nekcollaborative.org)



### Vermont Downtown Program

Since 1999 Downtown Designation has provided communities with financial incentives, training and technical assistance supporting local efforts to restore historic buildings, improve housing, design walkable communities and encourage economic development by incentivizing public and private investments.

Municipalities that receive designation collaborate with local non-profit downtown organizations supporting efforts through funding, staff, partnerships and volunteers. The downtown program utilizes the Main Street Approach which is a proven strategy that encourages communities to take steps to enact long term change, while also implementing short term, inexpensive activities that attract people to the downtown and create a sense of enthusiasm and momentum about their community. Once designated, staff provides training and resources to assist the municipality and the downtown organization to help familiarize managers, board members and local officials with the downtown program and how to best develop an action plan for downtown community revitalization.

St. Johnsbury has been a member of Downtown Program since 1999 and its active committees include;

- Economic Restructuring Committee;
- Design Committee;
- Promotions Committee;
- Organization Committee.

Committees meet monthly and if you are interested in participating please contact [director@discoverstjohnsbury.com](mailto:director@discoverstjohnsbury.com) or call (802) 748-8575 for details.



## St. Johnsbury Town Plan - Business Climate (cont.)

### Designated Downtown Program

### Benefits

#### Downtown Designation Benefits

The program supports local revitalization efforts across the state by providing technical assistance and state funding to help designated municipalities build strong communities. Once designated, the community will be eligible for the following benefits.

##### 10% Historic Tax Credits

- Available as an add-on to approved Federal Historic Tax Credit projects.
- Eligible costs include interior and exterior improvements, code compliance, plumbing and electrical upgrades.

##### 25% Facade Improvement Tax Credits

- Eligible facade work up to \$25,000.

##### 50% Code Improvement Tax Credits

- Available for up to \$50,000 each for elevators and sprinkler systems and \$12,000 for lifts.
- Eligible code work includes ADA modifications, electrical or plumbing up to \$25,000.

##### 50% Technology Tax Credits

- Available for up to \$30,000 for installation or improvements made to data and network installations, and HVAC (heating, cooling or ventilation systems) reasonably related to data or network improvements.

##### Downtown Transportation Fund

- Eligible to receive loans, loan guarantees, or grants up to \$100,000 for capital transportation and related capital improvement projects.
- Grants may not exceed 50% of a project's cost.

##### Traffic Calming and Signage Options

- Authority to post speed limits of less than 25 mph to help calm traffic and make the downtown a more pedestrian-friendly environment.
- May erect and post informational signs to help guide visitors to downtown and to significant historical, educational, recreational or cultural landmarks.

##### Priority Consideration for State Grants and Siting of State Buildings

- Priority consideration for Municipal Planning Grants, Vermont Agency of Transportation Grants and funding from Vermont's Community Development Program.
- Priority site consideration by the State Building and General Services (BGS) when leasing or constructing buildings.

##### Special Assessment Districts

- May create a special assessment district (also known as special benefits district or business improvement district) to raise funds for both operating costs and capital expenses to support specific projects in the designated Downtown.

##### Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) Eligibility

- Communities may also designate Neighborhood Development Areas within ½ mile from the downtown district. Qualified projects are:
  - Exempt from Act 250 regulations and the land gains tax.
  - Eligible for, once designated, reduced Agency of Natural Resources review fees.

##### Act 250

- No permit fees and special downtown process with reduced criteria.
- Qualified mixed use-housing projects are exempt from review.



## St. Johnsbury Town Plan - Business Climate (cont.)

### Tax Stabilization

During the spring of 2016 the St. Johnsbury Town Manager's office worked to develop a tax stabilization program that incentivizes investment while protecting the value of the Town's Grand List. This incentive is a win-win opportunity for both businesses accessing this incentive and the Town who benefits from increased property tax revenue with little risk to the existing tax base.

During the spring of 2016 graduated stabilization schedules were presented in a public forum to both the Select Board and residents which highlighted stabilization schedules and how they impact both businesses and the Town's grand list.

A Tax Stabilization Committee was formed and an application process was developed that provided a process for applications to be submitted, reviewed, and recommended to the Select Board (see below).

#### **TOWN OF ST. JOHNSBURY TAX STABILIZATION GUIDELINES**

##### **Requests**

All requests for tax stabilization shall be made in duplicate with copies addressed to the Tax Stabilization Committee and the Assistant Town Manager, or such other person as the Town Manager may designate. Requests must be made in the form of an application (see below) no less than forty-five (45) days prior to the start of construction. In all cases, requests must be made in writing no later than forty-five (45) days prior to April 1st when the Town property values are required to be set by Vermont State statute.

##### **Negotiation of Agreement**

The Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, or an appointed representative of the Town will meet with the applicant to review the initial application and shall schedule a meeting for the applicant to meet with the Tax Stabilization Committee to review and determine an appropriate stabilization agreement to recommend to the Select Board

**Tax Stabilization Philosophy:** St. Johnsbury Tax Stabilization Program provides incentives to foster sustainable business development. The specific goals of the program are: 1) to create jobs, 2) increase our tax base 3) increase economic activity in our community, and 4) address vacant and blighted property.

**Purpose:** The intent of these guidelines are to establish criteria to be used by the Town of St. Johnsbury, Administrative staff, Tax Stabilization Committee, and Board of Selectmen when evaluating applications for tax stabilization.

##### **Eligibility Criteria:**

A. Whereas, at its 1964 Town Meeting, Town passed a duly warned resolution authorizing its Select Board under certain conditions to enter into contracts with new and existing owners, lessees or operators of industrial and commercial real and personal property for the purpose, among others, of fixing and maintaining the valuation of the of the real and personal property of such persons for a period of up to ten years.

The Town of St. Johnsbury shall stabilize taxes in accordance with and pursuant to Title 24 V.S.A., Section 2741.

B. Stabilization shall be considered for:

1. Construction and/or renovation of new commercial or industrial property.
2. Occupying vacant commercial property.
3. Renovation of blighted or vacant property into industrial/commercial use.
4. New machinery and equipment only if it is considered *Real Property*

(Tax stabilization Guidelines cont.)

C. When considering a tax stabilization request, the Board of Selectmen shall review the following criteria:

1. The number of full time-permanent jobs to be created.
2. The number of part-time permanent jobs to be created.
3. The number of temporary full and part-time jobs to be created.
4. The total investment in buildings, machinery, and equipment by the business.
5. The impact to the overall tax base. Specifically, the increase in the Grand List for the potentially stabilized property.
6. The financial stability and condition of the applicant at the time of application.
7. Whether the project is new or existing property.
8. Whether the project addresses a vacant &/or blighted property.

D. **Special Consideration:** The Town of St. Johnsbury may offer special consideration to any businesses meeting the following criteria: 1) creating permanent full-time jobs, 2) offer wages and benefits at or above the average for that sector as determined by the latest data available through the Department of Employment and Training, 3) increase the grand list for the Town of St. Johnsbury, 4) make improvements to vacant or blighted properties.

All applicants requesting *Special Consideration* will be required to quantify the economic impact on St. Johnsbury and the surrounding area and describe how these benefits warrant *Special Consideration*.

The Select Board was granted the legal authority in 1964 (Article 20) to fix and maintain the valuation of real and personal property in the grand list for the purpose of "fixing and maintaining the rate of tax applicable to such real and personal property, or for the purpose of fixing the amount of money which shall be paid as an annual tax upon such real and personal property, pursuant to the provisions of Vermont Statutes Annotated, Title 24, Section 2741".

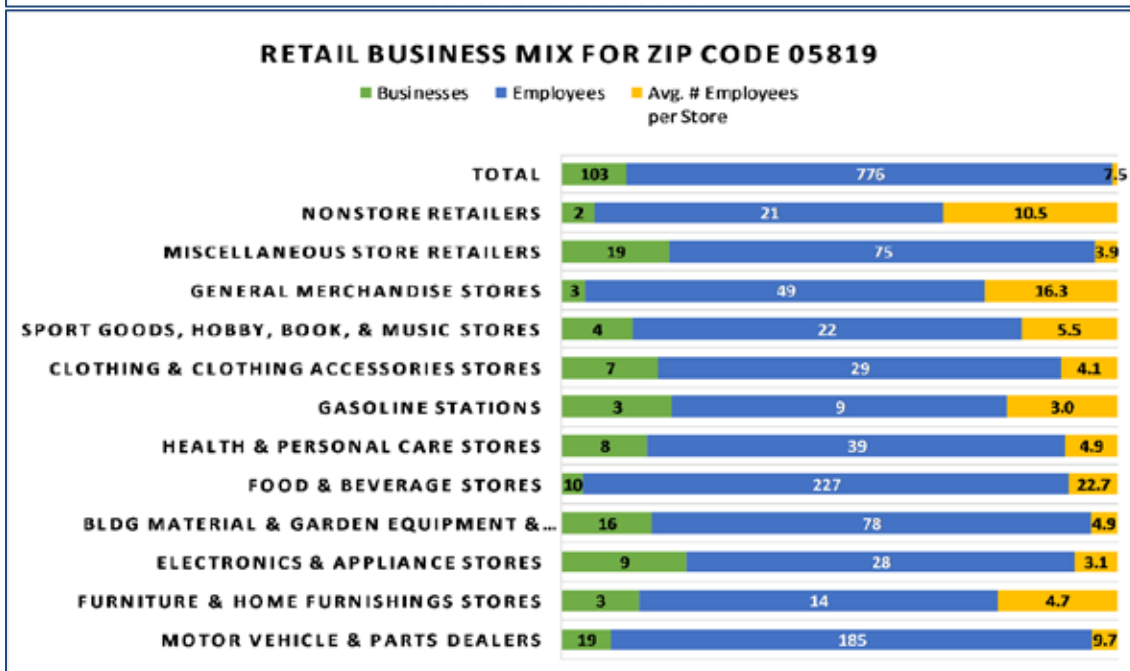
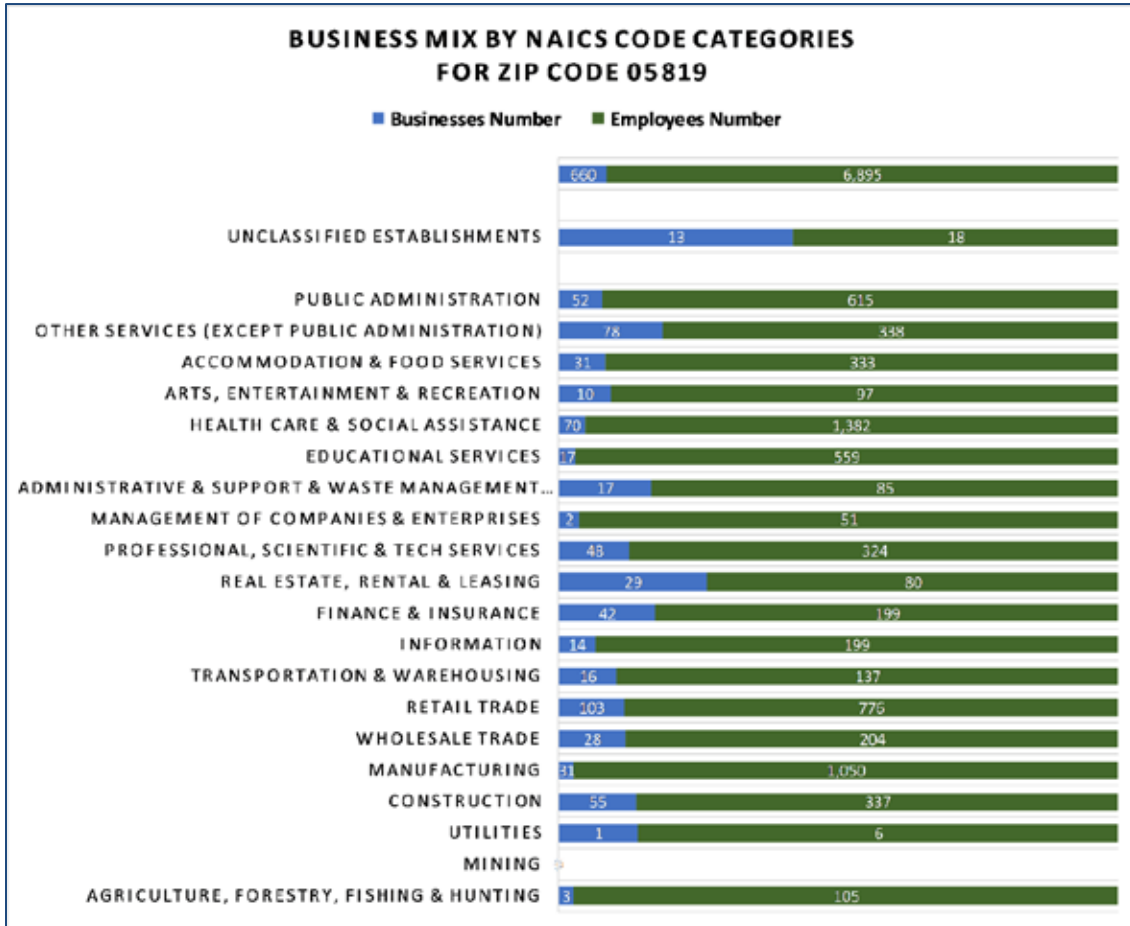
E. All tax stabilization requests will require applicant to submit the *Owner(s) and/or Guarantor(s) Personal Information Form*. All applicants will be subject to the provisions set forth in the tax stabilization agreement. Annual reporting will be required by the company participating in a tax stabilization agreement to ensure that employment and economic impact thresholds are being met. Employment and economic impact thresholds must be maintained in order to continue with the scheduled tax stabilization.



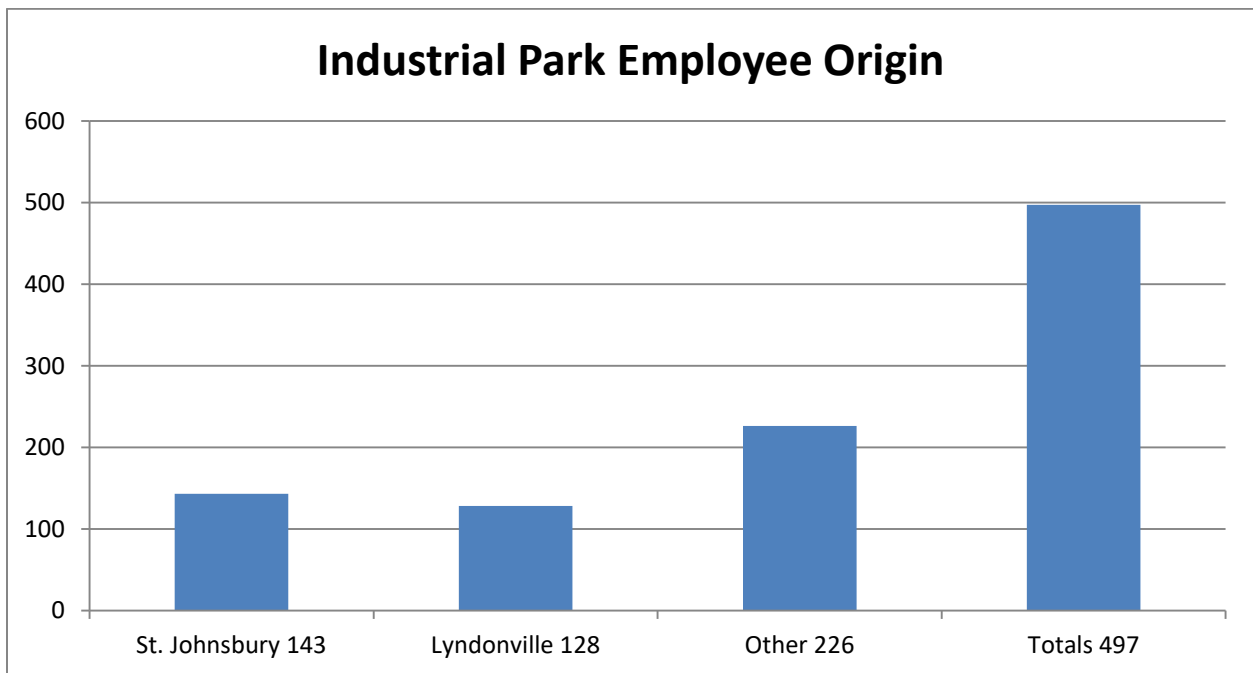
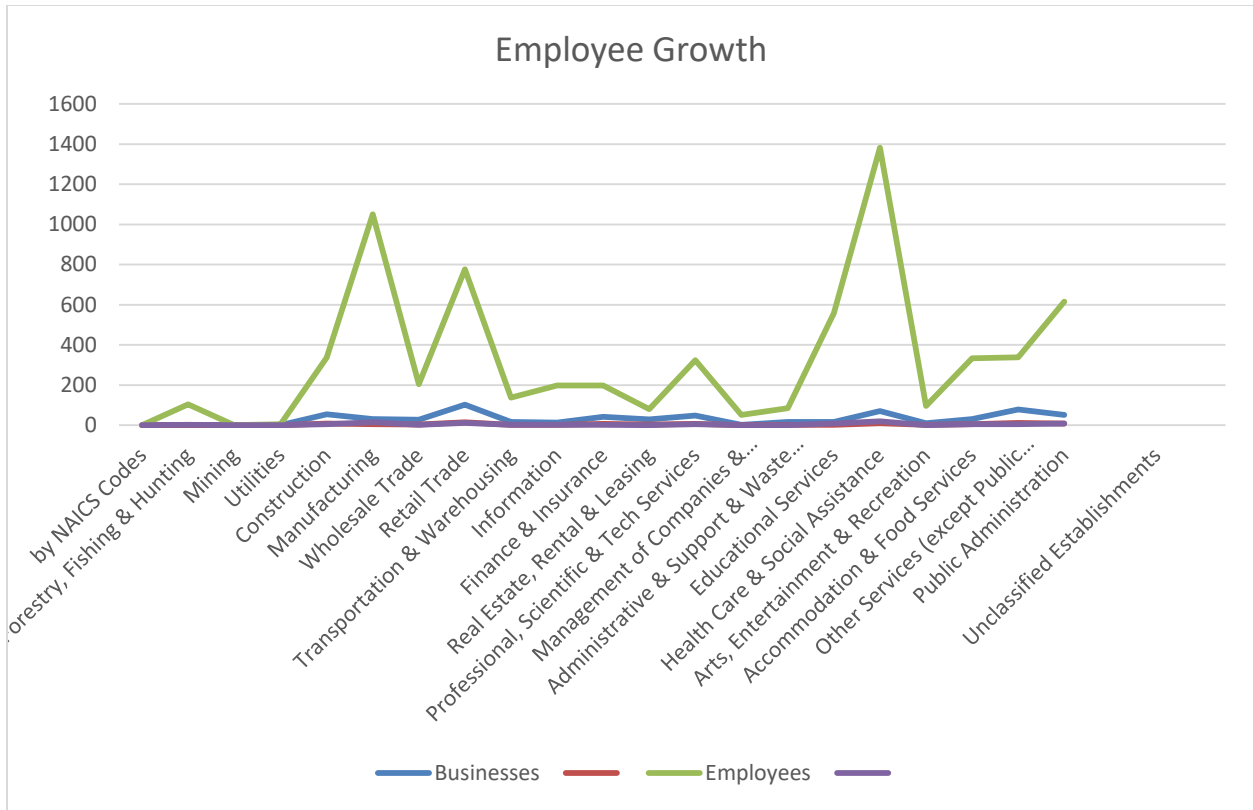
Figure 12 Stephen Hunek's Dog Mountain Sign

## Business Mix and Employment by Zip Code: 05819

(Data ESRI Business Analytics)



<b>2014-15 St. Johnsbury Industrial Park</b>		
<b>Business Name</b>	<b># of Employees</b>	
AMERICAN COMMERCIAL EQUIP & SUPPLIES	2	
RIVER GARDEN KITCHENS OF VT	1	
BLACK RIVER PRODUCE	4	
AECOM/URS	0	
SIMPLY NEW ENGLAND DISTRIBUTORS	0	
STATE OF VT/DEPT OF CORRECTIONS	3	
CORNER MEDICAL – HITCHCOCK CLINIC	33	
LYNDON WOODWORKING	87	
NSA INDUSTRIES, INC	82	
TWINSTATE SITEWORK, INC	0	
UPS	63	
VERMONT AEROSPACE MANUFACTURING, INC	90	
LITTLE DIPPERS DOODLE DAYCARE	27	
DEAD RIVER CO.	19	
AMERIGAS	7	
FRED'S PROPANE AND HEATING OIL	18	
FASTENAL COMPANY	3	
NORTHEAST KINGDOM PROCESSING, LLC	6	
VERMONT CUSTOM GAGE	5	
RURAL COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION	40	
ST. JOHNSBURY DEVELOPMENT FUND BLDG	0	
RADIANTEC COMPANY	7	
<b>Total Employees</b>	<b>497</b>	
<b>Employees by Town</b>		
St. Johnsbury	143	28.8%
Lyndonville	128	25.8%
Other	226	45.5%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



Industrial Park Employee Town of Residence and Number of Employees



## Travel and Tourism Business Segment

Visitor spending in Vermont increased from \$1.615 billion in 2007 to \$1.82 billion in 2013. A 1% year over year increase in Vermont visitors drawn to St. Johnsbury would be an opportunity to incrementally increase business revenues by \$18.2 million each year with direct spending by visitors. These direct dollars spent by visitors would exponentially increase the local economy as the employees of these businesses spent income locally. *(The charts below show Vermont Travel and Tourism Actuals and how visitor dollars are directly spent by type of business)*

### 2013 Actual Visitor Spend and Revenue Opportunity

#### The Vermont Travel & Tourism Industry - 2013

##### Quick Facts

- Visitors made an estimated 12.8 million person trips\* to Vermont for leisure, business or personal travel.
- Direct spending by visitors for goods and services: \$1.82 billion. Vacation homeowners spent an additional \$670 million.
- Visitor spending supports an estimated 30,000 jobs for Vermonters (approximately 8.0% of all Vermont jobs).\*\*
- Visitor spending contributed \$318 million in tax and fee revenues to the State of Vermont.
- Sectors of the Vermont tourism economy, like retail and dining, are 1-2 times more dependent on visitor spending than the national average.

\*A 'person trip' accounts for each individual in a travel party. If an individual makes multiple trips, he or she is counted as a visitor on each trip. A person trip is a more accurate measure of overall visitor traffic.

\*\*All Vermont jobs\* refers to the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) job counts.

##### Visitor Spending & Traffic Counts by Season

	Lodging Receipts (\$Millions)	Percent of year's total	Percent weekend traffic
Winter (Dec – Mar)	156.91	36.40%	36.40%
Spring (Apr – May)	47.08	10.90%	10.90%
Summer (Jun – Aug)*	116.77	27.10%	28.70%
Fall (Sep – Nov)	110.1	25.60%	23.90%

\*Does not include camping; summer traffic is more evenly distributed through the week than in other seasons.

##### Person Trips by Type

(12.8 million total person trips)

• Out-of-State Overnight	43.0%	(5.5 mil.)
• Drive Through Day	39.1%	(5.0 mil.)
• Out-of-State Day	18.0%	(2.3 mil.)

##### Domestic Person Trips by Origin

	Overnight visitor home state	Second home owner primary residence
• New York	25%	13%
• Massachusetts	14%	17%
• New Jersey	8%	9%
• Florida	7%	7%
• Connecticut	6%	21%
• Other states	34%	18%
• Vermont	7%	15%

##### Visitor Spending by Activity

(\$1.82 billion total)

• Lodging	23.6%	(\$ 430 mil.)
• Food & Beverage	22.0%	(\$ 400 mil.)
• Amusement/Recreation	16.5%	(\$ 300 mil.)
• Shopping	12.1%	(\$ 220 mil.)
• Gasoline	8.2%	(\$ 150 mil.)
• Groceries	8.2%	(\$ 150 mil.)
• Misc. Travel Expenses	7.7%	(\$ 140 mil.)
• Vehicle Rentals	1.6%	(\$ 30 mil.)

##### State of Vermont Tax & Fee Revenue from Visitor Spending

(\$318 million total)

• General Fund	\$115.0 million
• Education Fund	\$188.0 million
• Transportation Fund	\$15.0 million

##### Spending by Visitor Type

	Per person trip	Per person night
• Commercial lodging	\$840	\$118
• Using second homes	\$495	\$62
• Visit friends and family	\$141	\$48
• Day trips	\$67	N/A
• Pass through visitors	\$22	N/A

##### Vermont Jobs Supported by Visitor Spending

(30,350 total or 8.0% of all Vermont jobs)\*

• Direct Wage & Salary Jobs	23,300
• Proprietors in the Industry	3,800
• Indirect Wage & Salary Jobs	3,250

\*All Vermont jobs\* refers to the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) job counts.

##### Vermont Commercial Lodging Establishments by Size\*

(1,005 total with 21,669 rooms)

# Units	# Est.	% of Total	# Rooms	% of Total
1-10	580	58%	2,699	12.5%
11-20	193	19%	3,024	14.0%
21-49	103	10%	2,837	13.0%
49+	129	13%	13,109	60.5%

\*Rental condos, private campgrounds, RV parks, marinas and state parks have been excluded from this analysis.

##### Where Overnight Visitors Stay

Friends and Family	1.9 mil.	34.55%
Second Homes	1.7 mil.	30.91%
Commercial Lodging	1.6 mil.	29.09%
Campgrounds	0.3 mil.	5.45%

##### Overnight Visitors Average Length of Stay (in Days)

Commercial Lodging	4.4
Second-home Owners	4.7
Campgrounds	3.3
Friends and Family	2.6

Press inquiries: Laura Peterson, Vermont Dept. of Tourism & Marketing, laura.peterson@state.vt.us or (802) 522-7323

More information online: [www.vermontpartners.com](http://www.vermontpartners.com)

Source: adapted from: *A Benchmark Study of the Impact of Visitor Expenditures on the Vermont Economy: 2013*. Prepared by the Vermont Department of Tourism & Marketing, December 2014.

**2003-2007 Visitor Spending and estimated business revenue opportunity for businesses if there is a 1% increase in the number of visitors to Vermont who are drawn into St. Johnsbury.**

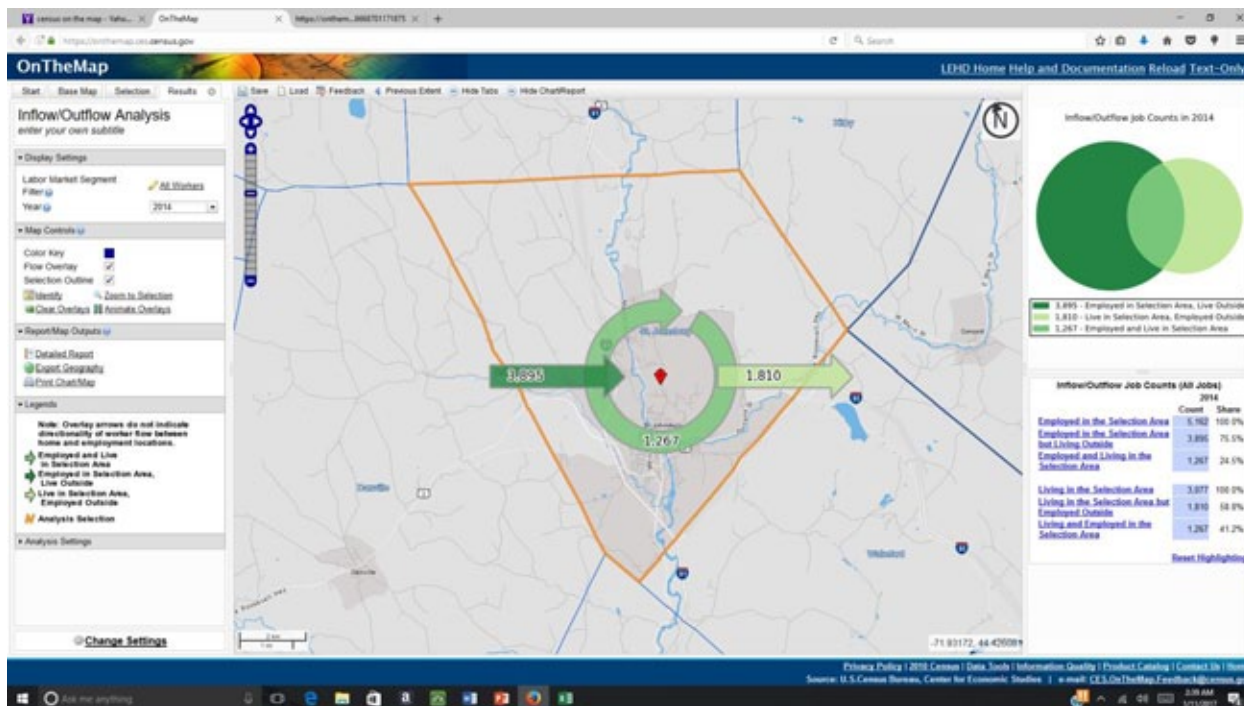
**Vermont Travel and Tourism Trends**

		2003		2005		2007		1% of 2007
Person trips to Vermont for leisure, business, personal		12.8 million		13.4 million		14.3 million		143,000
Direct spending for goods/services (\$ in billions)		\$1.46		\$1.57		\$1.615		\$1,615,000
<b>Visitors by type (# of visitors in millions)</b>								
Out-of-state overnight	49.2%	6.3	53%	7	52.2%	7.5		75,000
In-state day	25.0%	3.2	22%	2.9	24.9%	3.6		36,000
Out-of-state day	20.3%	2.6	18%	2.4	16.2%	2.3		23,000
In-state Overnight	5.5%	0.7	7%	1.0	6.7%	1.0		10,000
<b>Visitor \$ by Season (\$ in millions)</b>								
Winter (dec-mar)	31.4%	\$568.7	28.3%	\$570.2	34.9%	\$562.9		\$5,629,000
Summer (jun-aug)	40.2%	\$443.1	37%	\$508.7	33.4%	\$539.2		\$5,392,000
Fall (sep-nov)	21.5%	\$337.7	25.6%	\$363.8	23.2%	\$374.6		\$3,746,000
Spring (apr-May)	6.9%	\$112.5	9.0%	\$131.7	8.6%	\$138.3		\$1,383,000
<b>Visitor \$ by activity (\$ in millions)</b>								
Shopping	26.4%	\$386	21.4%	\$337.2	11.7%	\$188.2		\$1,882,000
Lodging	23.7%	\$346	23.7%	\$372.9	19.9%	\$321.2		\$3,212,000
Food & Beverage	23.6%	\$344	21.4%	\$354.2	25.5%	\$411.6		\$4,116,000
Amusement/Recreation	11.0%	\$161	10.1%	\$158.8	8.7%	\$140.6		\$1,406,000
Gasoline	7.0%	\$102	14.3%	\$225.0	19.1%	\$308.7		\$3,087,000
Groceries	6.7%	\$99	6.4%	\$100.7	13.3%	\$214.7		\$2,147,000
Auto Repair & Services (2007 other transportation)	1.6%	\$24	1.6%	\$25.6	1.9%	\$30.0		\$300,000
<b>Tax &amp; Fee Revenue (\$ in millions)</b>								
General Fund		\$91.7		\$99.3		\$107.7		\$1,077,000
Education Fund		\$74.2		\$82.0		\$82.9		\$829,000
Transportation Fund		\$15.8		\$15.18		\$16.3		\$16,300
<b>Jobs supported by Visitor Spending</b>	1 in 10	36,470	12%	36,250		37,490		374.9

Sourced from Vermont State Archives database: Travel & Tourism Industry

## A.6: Transportation

People need to travel. Whether they travel to shopping, to entertainment, to recreation, or to work they decide which type of transportation they will use to reach their destination: walk, bicycle, automobile, bus, train, airplane, or a combination. Different types of transportation enable individuals and the Town to meet other Town goals and policy such as those that reduce energy use or make more jobs available. An automobile is the least efficient and most costly mode of transportation that an individual can choose to use. Currently the only Mass-Transit available to St. Johnsbury residents is Rural Community Transportation (RCT), a non-profit, grant-funded regional bus service with limited options and resources to implement timely, predictable, and frequent schedules and alternative or extended bus routes that meet the needs of commuters and travelers. Growth in the number of people who prefer to opt out of their vehicles when they can is increasing the need to provide bus services to and from multiple neighborhood locations, and inter-city connections outside the immediate area. Census on the map data also factors in the cost of transportation as a factor in area affordability.



From Census on the Map Data

Analysis of jobs by sector tells us the types of industry for which we have skilled workers who are St. Johnsbury residents. Some may be willing to support jobs in St. Johnsbury depends on why they are motivated to take a job over 10 miles away and in some cases over 50 or 200 miles away. At the same time, the professionals traveling to cities such as Nashua, Boston, New York and Hartford may be workers that we want to bring back into St. Johnsbury as they bring diversity to the St. Johnsbury community.

## MASS TRANSIT

While walking and bicycle travel cost less and contribute the most to meeting energy conservation goals, they are not the most effective use of time for commuting to shopping and jobs that are distant from a person's residence. Effective Mass Transit, whether bus or train, which allows cost of energy and maintenance to be spread across individuals is the most efficient mode of transportation.

Working to influence the State policy makers over the next 8 years to understand the role mass transit plays in the economic recovery and health and welfare of residents in the Northeast Kingdom is an important role for St. Johnsbury over the next 8 years. In the Northeast Kingdom, there is very limited intercity or town-wide mass transit available for commuters to reach outside job markets and services or to reduce the strain on parking that projected workers and visitors create. Ten year trends captured by neighboring states as well as the Champlain

Valley region of Vermont have shown that where mass transit is available for people to get to job markets and recreation areas and facilities, both commuters and travelers will use it instead of using an automobile.

The State's current and projected void for Mass Transit in the Northeast Kingdom will have a direct negative impact not only on our ability to meet 2025, 2035, and 2050 State Energy Plan Goals, but also on the ability of NEK residents to recover financially from the 2008 - 2016 recession and the resulting gas and oil prices. In addition, lack of Mass-Transit will negatively affect the regions ability to meet new business, median income, and travel and tourism goals set out in the Regional and Town Comprehensive Plans. The following from the Vermont Agency of Transportation plan maps along with the Inter-city bus map reflect the lack of mass transit planned for travel to and through the Northeast Kingdom.

Vermont's Goals for rail clearly leverage existing rail capacity for Freight, Commuter, and Visitor Passenger rail expansion. However, St. Johnsbury and the other Northeast Kingdom towns are void of Mass Transit capability. There is a need for Towns along the active rail lines and highways to work together to bring this void to the attention of the State Economic Development and Transportation Agencies and work together to address it. There is also a need to quantify the economic opportunity that is enabled by access to available job markets, increased energy efficiency, and additional tourism spending which results from Inter-city Passenger rail and multi-modal transportation to/from our well established Railway Depots. This has been done over the years for the Southern and Champlain Valley areas of the State so a similar model can be used by St. Johnsbury, Regional, and State Planners working together to revitalize the Town and the Northeast Kingdom economy.

### **INTER-CITY BUS TRANSPORTATION**

Inter-city bus service is a critical path short and long-term strategy to increase the Financial Well-being of St. Johnsbury residents. Cost effective, predictable, weather resistant transportation that brings workers and travelers to St. Johnsbury while also bringing St. Johnsbury residents to job markets and leisure travel destinations helps to meet many other Town, Regional, and State goals (such as energy). In doing so, it also provides the opportunity for residents and businesses to become financially viable and to have more discretionary and disposable income.

Short term, Inter-city bus service that supports commuter schedules and weekend travelers enables St. Johnsbury to begin the long road to financial recovery. It makes diverse job markets available to St. Johnsbury current and future residents while enabling them to leave their automobile at home. They can read a book, take a nap, connect to the Internet and reach their destination on time every time. It also means that people who would like to live in St. Johnsbury can commute easily to work elsewhere. Cities and towns along a bus route that begins, ends, and passes through St. Johnsbury become potential job markets. These connections with Boston, Manchester, Concord, Montpelier, Burlington, White River Junction,

Hartford, etc. are critical to achieve several economic growth goals and policies. Long term, the Inter-city bus connections become part of the multi-modal transportation network (at the St. Johnsbury Train Depot) that is described as a goal in the Vermont Agency of Transportation Plan.

Information available on the Vermont Agency of Transportation Website illustrates the absence of Public Inter-city bus service to/from St. Johnsbury and any other town in the Northeast Kingdom. Although there is inter-city bus service to Littleton, New Hampshire, the bus route does not pass through St. Johnsbury. Investigating how best to include a short diversion to St. Johnsbury could begin to open the NEK to travelers wanting to take advantage of mass-transit.

A VT Transportation bicycle/pedestrian grant is being used to increase safety at the intersection of Route 5 and South Main Street. Local Motion is also assisting St. Johnsbury in increased safe bike routes throughout town, particularly on Main St. A task force has formed to study suggested plans for re-marking travel lanes, adding bike lanes, and to consider safe pedestrian crossings.

### St. Johnsbury Town Forest Hiking Trails Map



## Appendix A.7: Energy

Energy use includes gasoline use, heating oil, renewable energy, electric used for housing, municipal and industry lighting. The comprehensive energy plan to be defined in 2017 will identify the baseline elements that will be addressed to conserve energy and move toward net zero in all buildings and locations in town.

In addition, use of energy for transportation and ways to conserve it will be evaluated to determine to what degree conservation goals can be established.

Source: St. Johnsbury Estimates for heating are derived from data provided by the State and analyzed NVDA for each of the communities in the region.

There is currently not an identified scarcity of electric and heat source needs. Electricity is currently being supplied by Green Mountain Power who operates the hydro facilities in St. Johnsbury.

<b>St. Johnsbury Electrical Usage (Key Accounts)</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Variance % YOY</b>
Total Electric Billing	\$333,360.49	\$282,028.89	(\$51,331.59)	-15%
Street Lights	\$108,066.45	\$78,082.99	(\$29,983.46)	-28%
Other:				
Water Treatment Facility	\$86,102.02	\$80,527.45	(\$5,574.57)	-6%
Pump Plant Center	\$5,578.03	\$4,191.28	(\$1,386.75)	-25%
Water Filtration Plant	\$32,447.86	\$30,055.33	(\$2,392.53)	-7%
Pleasant Street Pump	\$36,706.16	\$31,182.44	(\$5,523.72)	-15%
Town Garage	\$4,614.38	\$3,652.49	(\$961.89)	-21%

The prevalence of housing stock which dates before 1940 is driving energy usage in the town. NVDA's website captures usage estimates including the total estimated usage for residential heating at 416,000 mega BTUs with less than 20% coming from renewable sources.

## Appendix B: Background Information

### The Community Visit 2015

-Mike Welch, Chair

St. Johnsbury was fortunate to have Paul Costello and Jenna Whitson from the VT Council on Rural Development (VCRD), and a number of skilled professionals conduct a community visit in April 2015. Over 280 people participated in the Community Visit Day. The results of that community visit process have been inspiring. The five (5) top priorities emerging from the process were:

- Developing a Warming Shelter
- Improving Access to the Riverfront
- Improving Communications and Promote a Positive Town Image
- Redevelop and Revitalize Downtown Buildings
- Improve Housing in Downtown St. Johnsbury

Task Forces were formed around each of these topics – utilizing existing committees where possible, reinvigorating committee membership with volunteers who emerged from the Community Visit.

In less than one year, every one of these task forces achieved positive results.

*Warming Shelter* – Kelly Greaves of the Economic Services Division of the Department of Children and Families served as point to coordinate the efforts of different groups on the effort to implement a warming shelter. The team gained approval and implemented a shelter for use during the 2015-16 winter months. The Northeastern VT Regional Hospital and Northeast Kingdom Human Services played significant roles in supporting space for the warming shelter. The shelter continues to be managed by volunteers and staff, and task force members have reported very few problems in the operation of the shelter which has recently gained approval to continue operation indefinitely.

*Riverfront* – Adam and Andrea Kane have chaired the Riverfront Task Force. Thanks to assistance from NVDA a Municipal Planning Grant was received that will allow the team to hire a consultant to investigate riverfront access options. Adam was able to secure funding to have a real estate appraisal performed on two waterfront parcels that have not been in productive use. The Select Board has recently supported an application to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) to secure a portion of the funding needed to purchase this parcel. The goal is to develop a riverfront park that runs from Portland St. Bridge to the Town treatment plant, and enable people to enjoy our vast riverfront in the Bay Street Area. A river clean-up was held in the fall of 2015. Local-Motion Organization, a Non-profit organization promoting cycling, blading, and walking will be working with the Town to improve access for

pedestrians and bicyclists along the riverfront to provide alternative connection to the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail as well as at other locations throughout the town.

*Housing* – Select board member Jamie Murphy has chaired this task force, with Joe Kasprzak, Assistant Town Manager. The Select board approved the hiring of a civil ordinance building code compliance officer. The Committee has initiated an information exchange with owners of apartment units to examine what support is needed for landlords to be more successful while working to continually improve our housing stock to allow for a diverse tenant population that is targeted in our plan to live in our downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. The group has met with representatives from Project Vision (Rutland) who shared methods used in Rutland to address housing and public safety issues. A corresponding movement in St. Johnsbury is the Drug Abuse Resistance Team (DART) which meets monthly to support neighborhood safety.

A priority initiative identified by the housing committee is the need for a comprehensive assessment of the Town’s current housing stock, and a strategic plan to improve the quality and choice of housing. St. Johnsbury had 3,158 occupied housing units at the time of the 2010 census, over 40% of which were renter-occupied. The housing assessment is scheduled for completion in July, 2017.

This assessment and resulting set of strategies will include identification of prospective rehabilitation and remodeling options as well as identifying structures not recommended for reuse. Improved walkability, off-street parking needs, and identifying incentives for renovation will also be part of this work.



Figure 13 from VCRD Community Visit Report

*Communications & Positive Image* – Anna Rubin and Jody Fried have developed promotions campaigns published in media throughout Vermont. News articles have recently been published in New York and in Boston as a result of the initiatives of this task force. A new historic downtown brochure has been designed and printed, with US Department of Agriculture (USDA) funding assistance. The group community visit team has combined with



the Chamber of Commerce Promotions Committee and continues to develop plans that promote a positive image for STJ.

A two-page spread in the Boston Herald (September, 2015) (to reach foliage travelers) included coop ads pulled together by the St. J Chamber and an article that highlights some of St. Johnsbury's attractions: [http://www.bostonherald.com/entertainment/travel/2015/09/st\\_johnsbury\\_charms\\_with\\_its\\_natural\\_beauty\\_vibrant\\_culture](http://www.bostonherald.com/entertainment/travel/2015/09/st_johnsbury_charms_with_its_natural_beauty_vibrant_culture)

Another piece in Artscope magazine (a glossy publication for gallery-goers throughout New England) links the art scenes in Stowe and St. Johnsbury. Here's a link to the opening – the full article is attached: <http://zine.artscopemagazine.com/2015/09/stowe-st-johnsbury-vermont/>

*Downtown Buildings* – Seleem Choudhury, Task Force Chair, has worked with a team of volunteers to solicit new businesses. Several meetings have been held with bakers, restaurateurs, and an NEK Ice Cream producer (using a University of Vermont study) about utilizing vacant downtown space. The team is working through details on plans to offer technical and funding assistance, and promotional support. An inventory of available properties is now in place and managed by the Town offices. Building owners have been approached about offering flexible lease terms as an incentive for targeted new tenants. Team members toured the former Ide building and the Cormier building in downtown – both of which are vacant or underused. The St. Johnsbury Development Fund has expressed interest in working with the task force to identify and complete a downtown building redevelopment project. St. Johnsbury was selected to participate in the 2016 Fresh Tracks Road Pitch. Members of the task force continue to entertain proposals for start-up businesses that can be used as leads for new business ventures.

The bottom line for St. Johnsbury Community Visit: each of the priority initiatives identified through the Community Visit process has resulted in forward movement to achieving the goals of the Town. The focused committees have worked to create innovative business proposals, renew interest in vacant properties, funding alternatives to improve resident access to the river, improve housing assessments and compliance, create a warming shelter and there is an active group of individuals working to promote a positive community image.

The over 200 people who participated in the 2015 Community Visit identified and chronicled other initiatives that were discussed extensively by community members on April 8, 2015. These initiatives, such as a community center and access to mass transit, are not lost, but have been incorporated into the 2016 Town Plan. Of particular note are the desired transportation access by rail and more commuter mass transit. These are included in the transportation policies. Building strong neighborhoods was a discussion with much interest, and these ideas have been incorporated into the housing and neighborhood sections. Youth, creative economy, and

community gathering spaces received the next level of interest. These, also, have been included in this plan.

Neighborhoods are the cornerstone of St. Johnsbury. Neighborhood schools provided spaces for community gatherings and celebrations until the consolidation into a single Town School in 2001. Identified neighborhoods or existing settlements, once known as the districts, are identified as: East Village (East St. Johnsbury), St. Johnsbury Center, Arlington, Summerville, Four Seasons Arnold Park (formerly Fairbanks Village), Cole's Corner, Stark, , Spaulding, Goss Hollow, Maple Side Retreat, Mount Pleasant, and Maple Place. In an 1875 map, 17 districts were identified, each with their own school. The Town's planning and zoning land use regulations focuses on keeping community identity while allowing for growth. Districts once stripped for commercial use are now mixed use or residential and allow the development of community-centered businesses, provide opportunities for connection between neighborhoods and the designated historic downtown center. The Town plan has neighborhood goals that encompass additional State designations that allow tax incentives for developing a commercial infrastructure that also supports the community and neighborhood communities.

## **HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION**

Communities where residents feel connected to neighbors, have a sense of belonging, have safe options for walking and being active, and have easy access to healthy foods are communities where people enjoy greater health and well-being. Research shows that strong schools and strong school-community relationships are an indicator of community well-being and a major factor in attracting new families and businesses to a community.

Healthy communities also have a direct correlation to the economy of the region. Health care costs consumed 18% of our gross domestic product nationally in 2012 and are estimated to grow to 30% of Gross Domestic Product by 2040. These costs threaten the economic vitality of our communities by consuming resources that otherwise could be invested in schools, businesses, Town safety, and infrastructure. Chronic health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, cancers, and asthma as well as unhealthy behaviors such as poor diet, sedentary lifestyles, and misuse of tobacco, alcohol, and drugs, can negatively affect school and workforce productivity. The VT Department of Health has issued a study (3-4-50) which identifies three behaviors (lack of physical activity, poor diet, and tobacco use) that lead to four chronic diseases (cancer, heart disease & stroke, type 2 diabetes, and lung disease) that result in 50% of all deaths. Local work by the Caledonia Essex Accountably Health Community, Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital (NVRH), a Regional Prevention Partnership grant collaboration with NVRH and the VT Dept. of Health, the local Drug Abuse Resistance

Team (DART), the Community Health Team with NVRH's Community Connections, the Fit and Healthy Coalition also help to spearhead recreation initiatives like safe bicycle and pedestrian routes – are all geared to increasing community health.

**Legislative Summary of Planning Actions:**

- Act 64 (H 35) – An act relating to improving the quality of State waters.
- Act 154 (H 595) An act relating to potable water supplies from surface waters.
- Act 174 (S 260) An act relating to improving the siting of energy projects.



Figure 14 Welcome Center

## Appendix C: St. Johnsbury Chamber Goals (Discover St. J.)

March – May 2017

Support for priority objectives identified through the **Working Lands Needs**

**Assessment** – The St. Johnsbury Chamber of Commerce will work with area farms and value-added producers to invest in community-based solutions to barriers that have impeded growth. These might include seeking investments for a commercial kitchen, community storage facility, access to distributors or targeted, cooperative marketing.

June – August 2017

**Sector Series/Resource Summit** – The St. Johnsbury Chamber of Commerce will review and assess data collected through ongoing economic sector gatherings. This data will contribute to our understanding of the areas where there is potential for growth. We will seek creative solutions, such as business incubators and community-supported business investments to encourage entrepreneurship.

**Community Marketing** – St. Johnsbury and nearby communities will create sustained and collaborative communications that reinforce each other and generate interest in the assets that are established in this region. For example, Kingdom Trails (Burke) and the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (trailhead in St. Johnsbury) could partner on a series of bicycle features that showcase these resources to residents of Vermont and out of state.

### Committee Priorities

#### Image/Marketing

This committee is a combination of the Chamber's Marketing committee and the St. Johnsbury Image Task Force that was formed through the 2015 Vermont Council on Rural Development Community Discussion. The goals and priorities of this committee are defined by the VCRD Community Discussion report. The committee's mandate is to create a positive image that will rekindle community pride and improve consumer and investor confidence in our commercial district.

2017 – 2019 priorities

- Annual Report to the Community – What has been accomplished? Consolidate available data – (point of sale info, web analytics, employment info, construction, new businesses, number of visitors, financial benefits returned to Town and businesses as a result of Downtown tax credits & grants) measurements.
- Positive Articles to be written and provided to Caledonian-Record.
- Coordinate Walking Tour with AARP
- Evaluation of Events – Staff/volunteer time involved, cost, return, benefit

- Downtown Map & E-Map– Design, printing, cost
- Remain active in Regional Marketing program w/o Northeast Kingdom Travel & Tourism – Northern Forest Center Grant (USDA 2016)

### Economic Restructuring

The goal is to build a commercial district that responds to the needs of today's consumers by retaining and expanding successful businesses to provide a balanced commercial mix; sharpening the competitiveness and merchandising skills of business owners; attracting new businesses that the market can support; and converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property

2017 – 2019 priorities

- Working Lands (opportunities for small farmers and locally produced ag)
- Small & Micro-Enterprise Development/Technical Assistance (training, creativity)
- Business Recruitment/Marketing.

### Design

Getting Main Street into top physical shape and creating a safe, inviting environment for shoppers, workers, and visitors by directing attention to all of its physical elements: public and private buildings, storefronts, signs, public spaces, parking areas, street furniture, public art, landscaping, merchandising, window displays, and promotional materials.

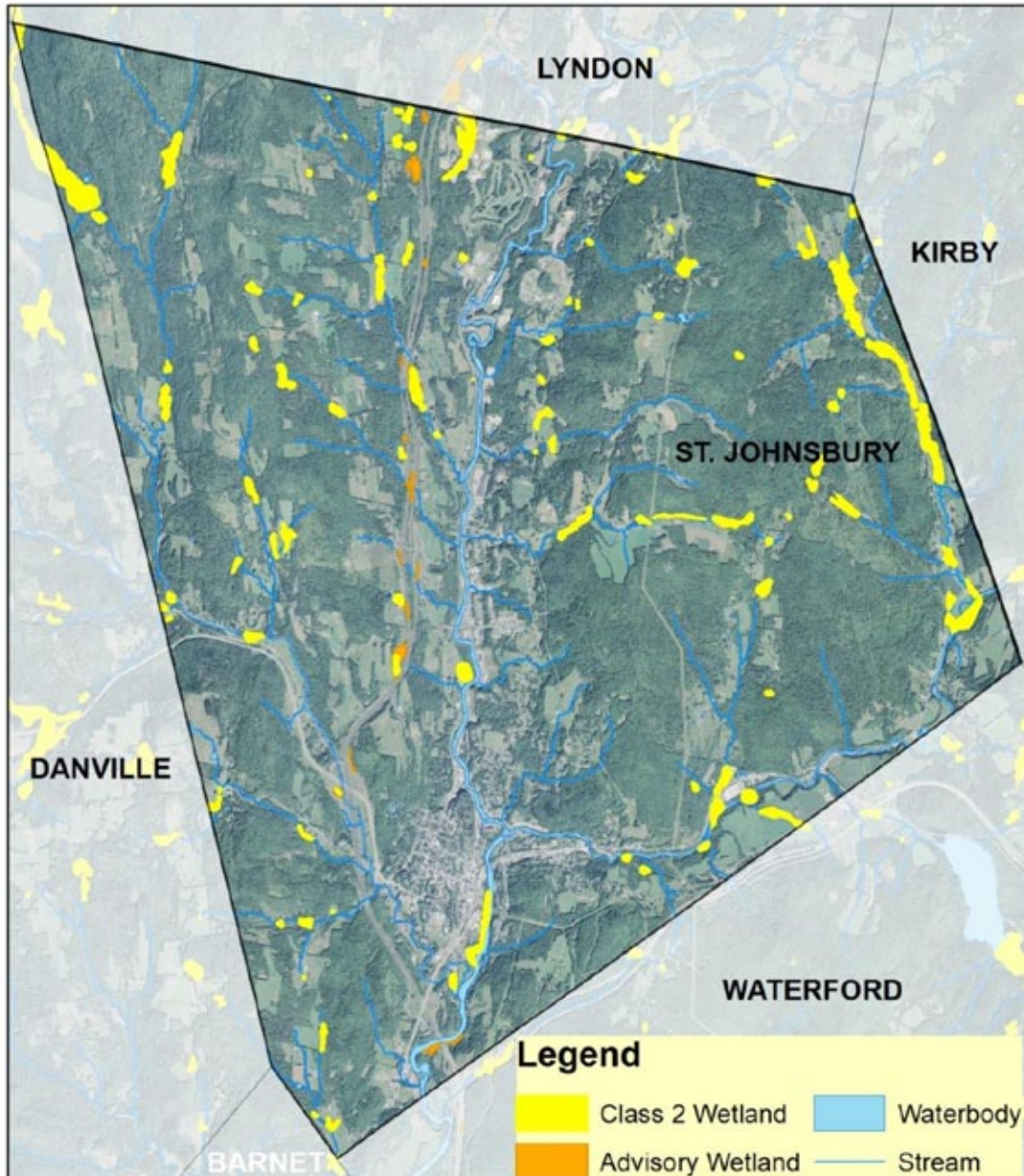
2017 – 2019 priorities

- Determine Interest in pocket park development
- Banners on Railroad Street, Main Street, Portland Street
- Public Arts projects
- Façade improvement on downtown buildings

## Appendix D: Maps

Interactive maps using the map tool on the Town's website ([www.stjvt.com](http://www.stjvt.com)) will give the most current maps regarding districts and parcels. The overlay of Town Designations, Special Service Districts, and Flood Plains can also be located on the Town's map tool.

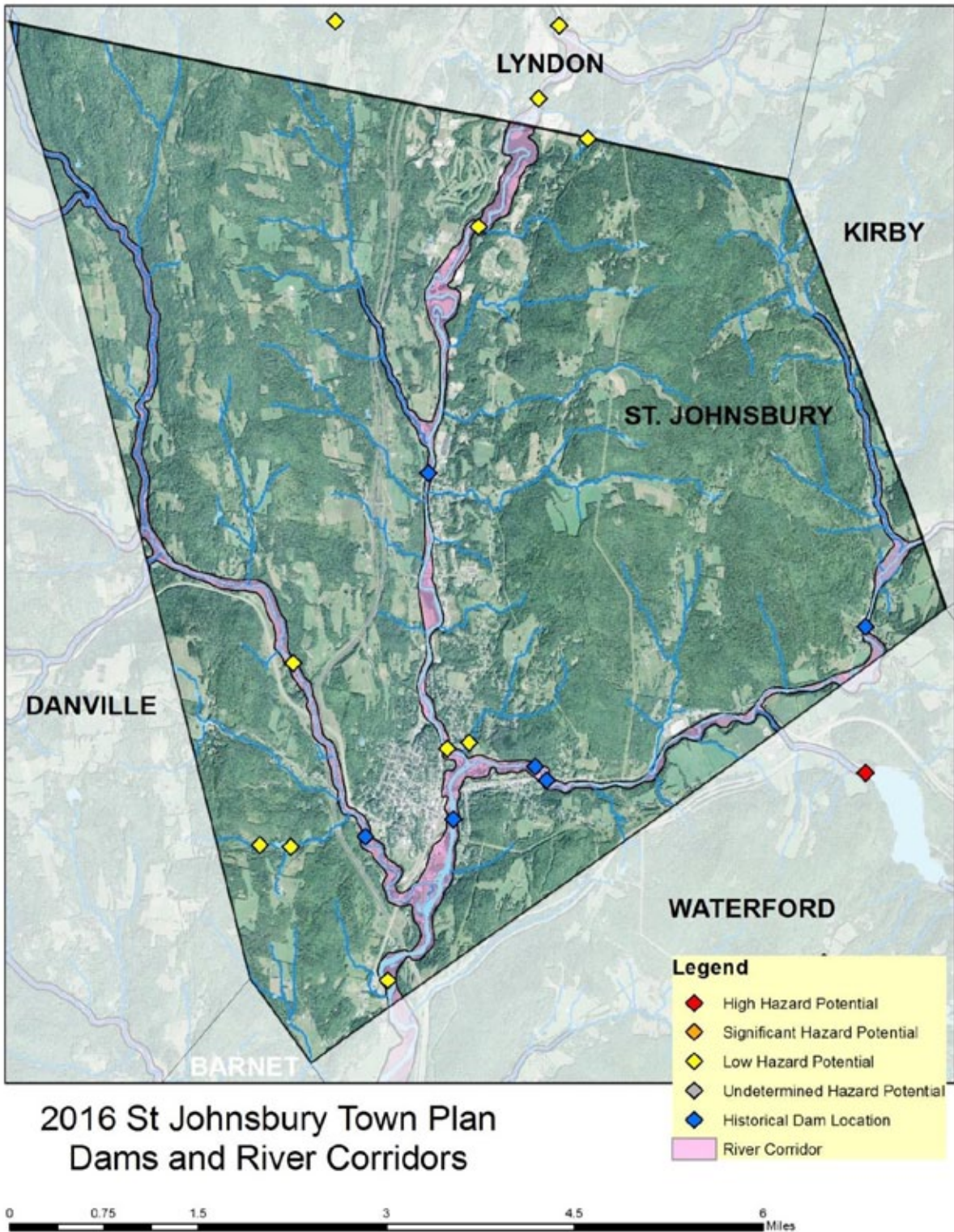
### St. Johnsbury Wetlands Map



2016 St Johnsbury Town Plan  
Mapped Class 2 and Advisory wetlands

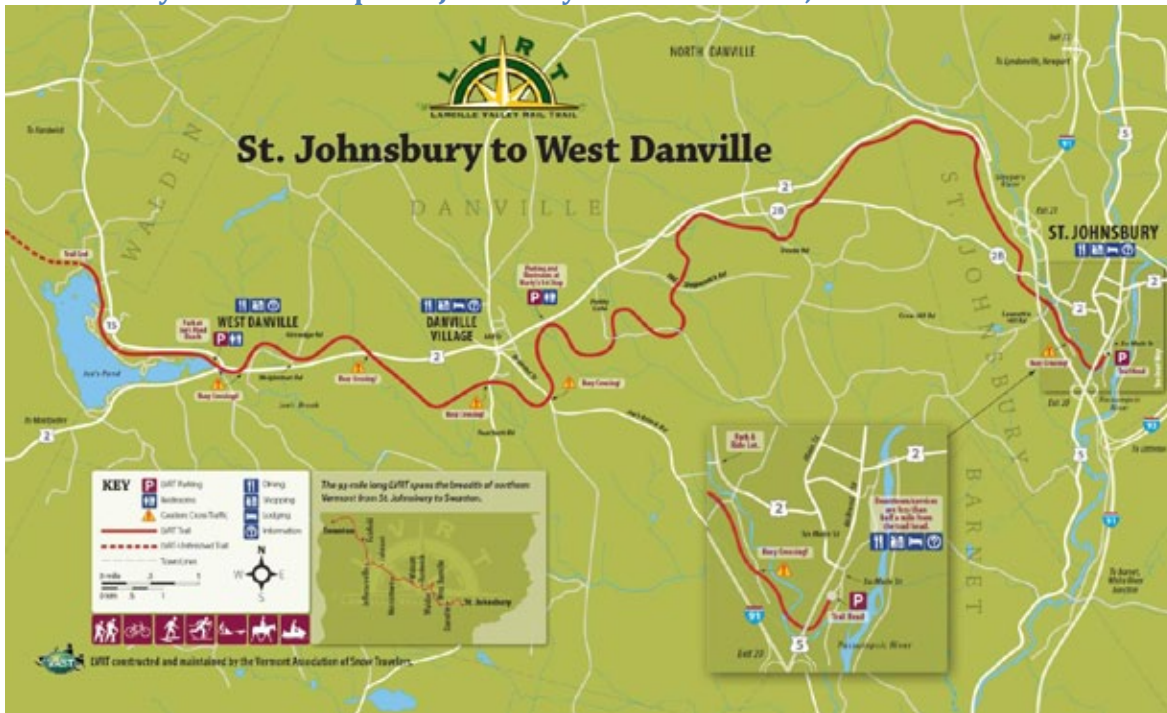


Dams and River Corridors Map



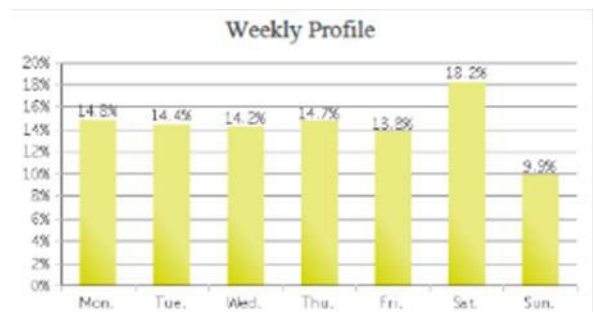
2016 St Johnsbury Town Plan  
Dams and River Corridors

## Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Map – St. Johnsbury to West Danville, VT



The LVRT is complete from Morristown to Cambridge as of 2016. Please see: <http://lvrt.org/interactive-trail-map/> for more updated information.

The visitation data below was collected at the High St. intersection and represents data collected over a 13 month period (Aug. 1 2015- Sept. 4<sup>th</sup> 2016). The data is collected going both ways with virtually the same going outward as inward. From this data we can calculate 25,827 visits to the St. Johnsbury leg of the LVRT (Three Rivers Path). It is also worth noting that the average distribution of visits by day-of-week is very similar indicating a large proportion of usage coming from the local community.

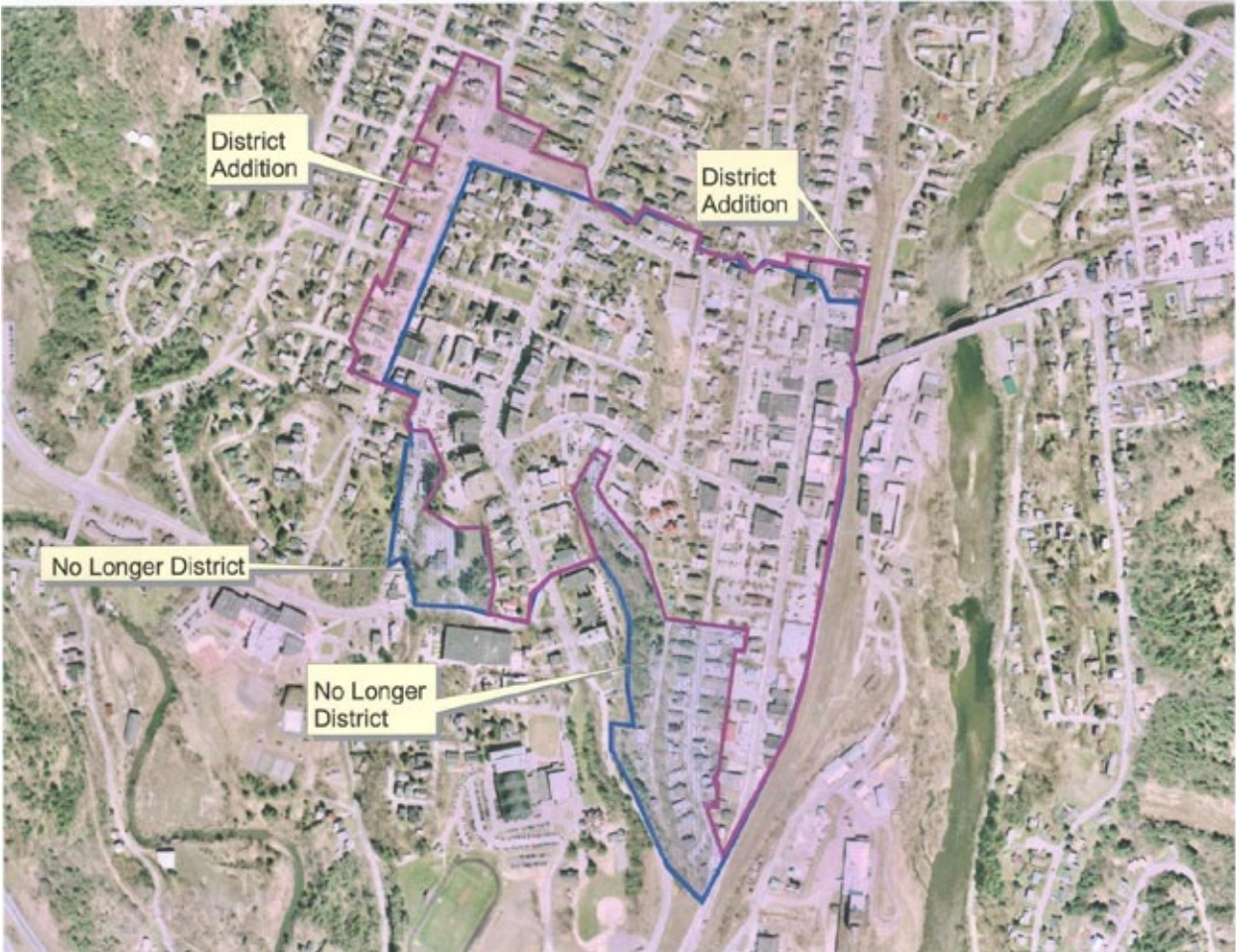




# Scenic Byways Map

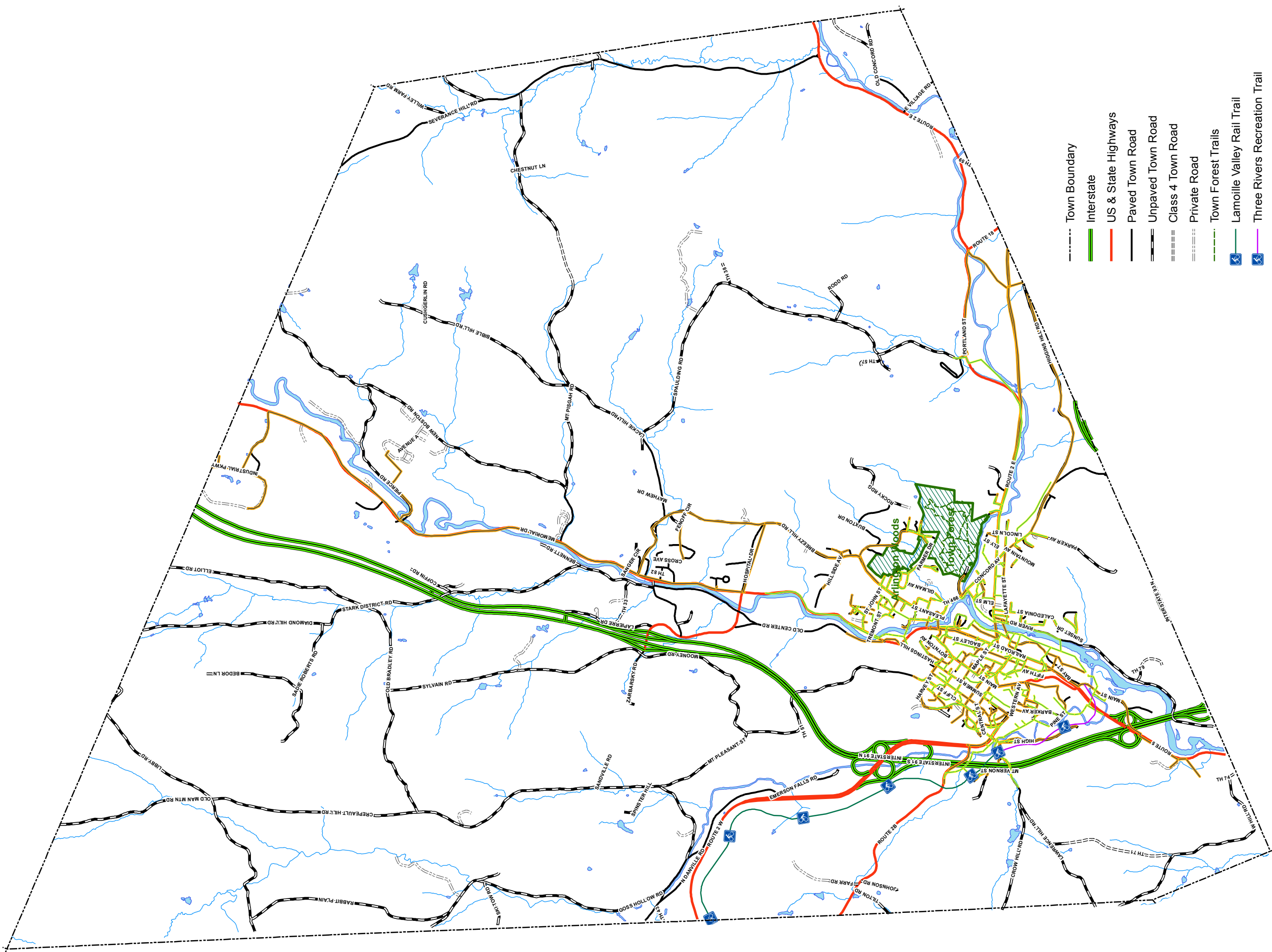


St. Johnsbury's Designated Downtown



# St Johnsbury, VT Transportation & Utilities Map

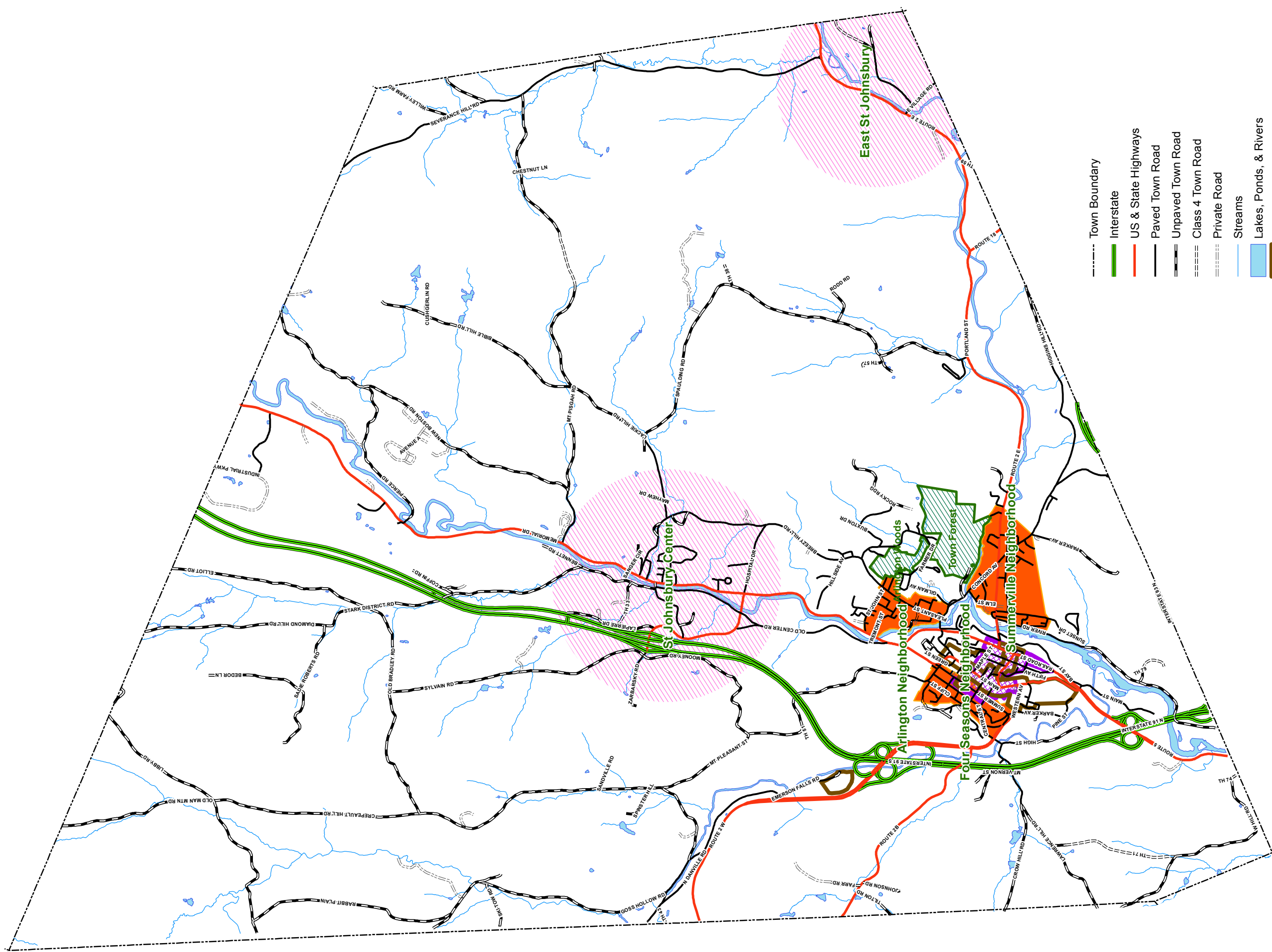
05/03/2017



- Town Boundary
- Interstate
- US & State Highways
- Paved Town Road
- Unpaved Town Road
- Class 4 Town Road
- Private Road
- Town Forest Trails
- Lamoille Valley Rail Trail
- Three Rivers Recreation Trail
- Municipal Water Lines
- Municipal Sewer Lines
- Streams
- Lakes, Ponds, & Rivers
- Town Owned Forests



**St Johnsbury, VT**  
**Base Map**  
 05/03/2017

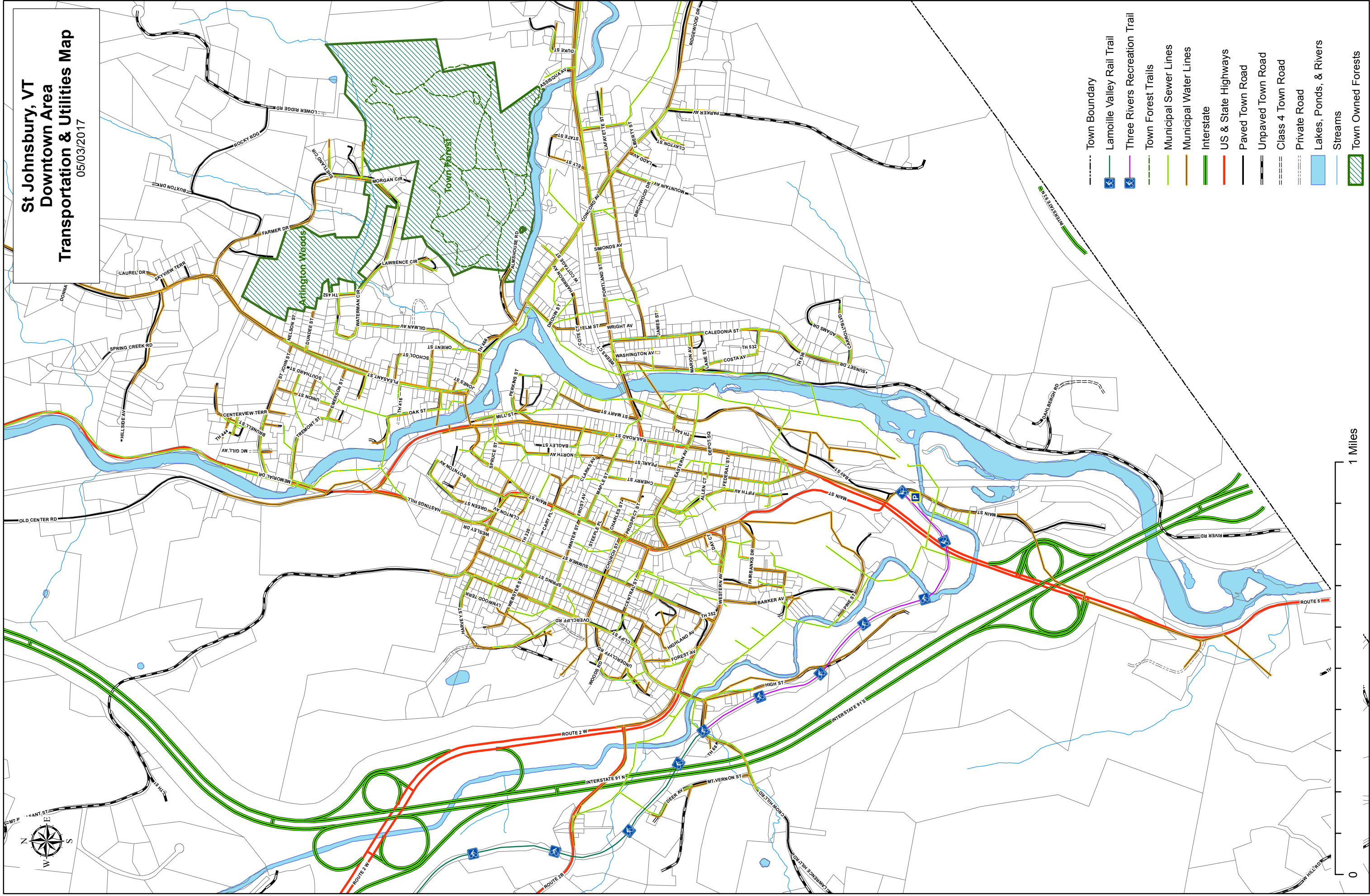


- Town Boundary
- Interstate
- US & State Highways
- Paved Town Road
- Unpaved Town Road
- Class 4 Town Road
- Private Road
- Streams
- Lakes, Ponds, & Rivers
- Historic Districts
- Designated Downtown
- Town Owned Forests
- Defined Neighborhoods
- Village Center Study Areas



**St Johnsbury, VT  
Downtown Area  
Transportation & Utilities Map**

05/03/2017



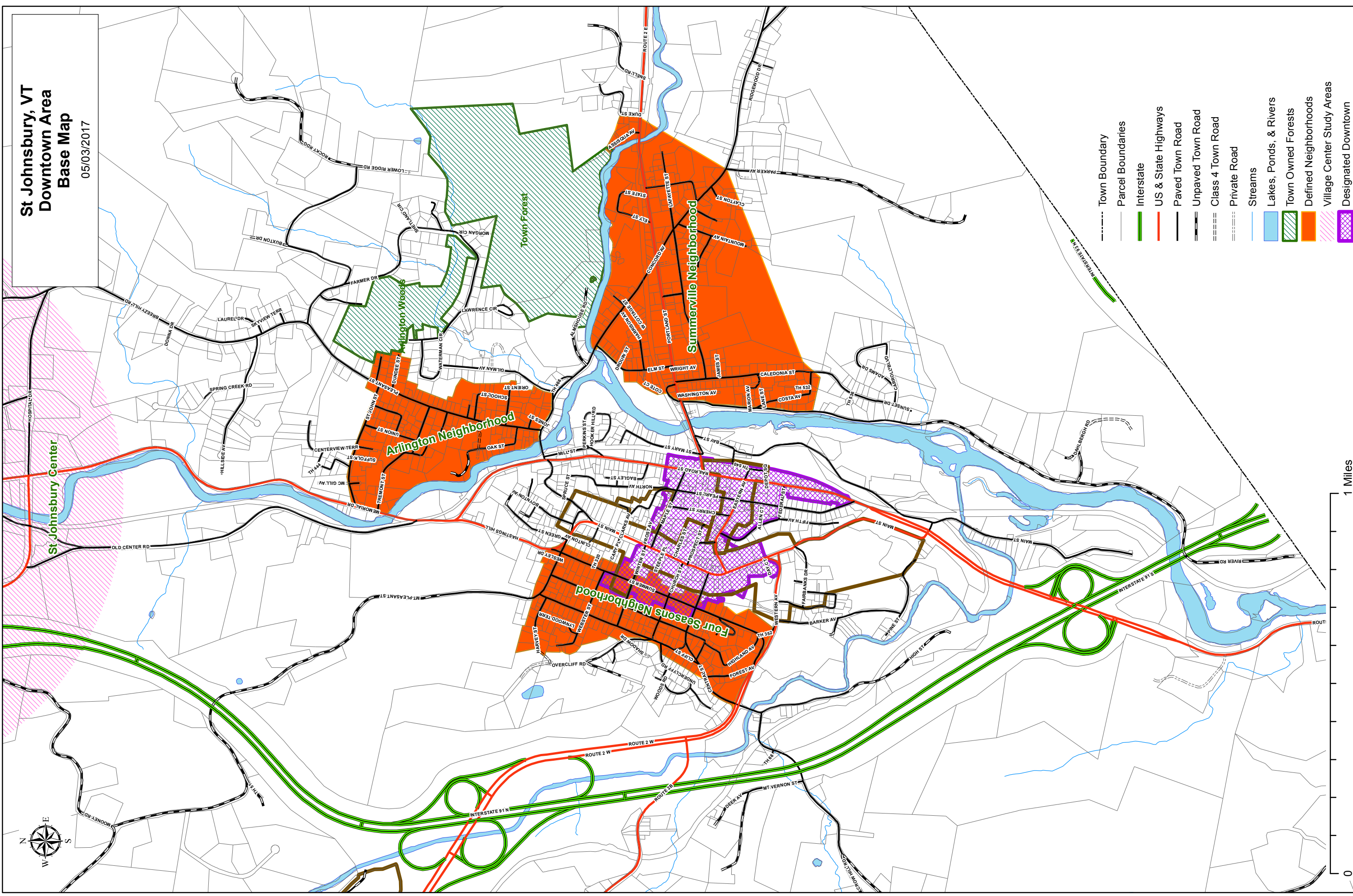
- Town Boundary
- Lamoille Valley Rail Trail
- Three Rivers Recreation Trail
- Town Forest Trails
- Municipal Sewer Lines
- Municipal Water Lines
- Interstate
- US & State Highways
- Paved Town Road
- Unpaved Town Road
- Class 4 Town Road
- Private Road
- Lakes, Ponds, & Rivers
- Streams
- Town Owned Forests

1 Miles

0

# St Johnsbury, VT Downtown Area Base Map

05/03/2017



- Town Boundary
- Parcel Boundaries
- Interstate
- US & State Highways
- Paved Town Road
- Unpaved Town Road
- Class 4 Town Road
- Private Road
- Streams
- Lakes, Ponds, & Rivers
- Town Owned Forests
- Defined Neighborhoods
- Village Center Study Areas
- Designated Downtown

1 Miles

0