

Albany Town Plan

June 20, 2017

Town of Albany Planning Committee

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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF PLAN

Planning empowers communities to respond to change in ways that reflect their own goals, needs, priorities and values. Planning can allow communities to designate key growth and rural areas to attract new business or to preserve rural character. Perhaps the greatest advantage of planning is the long-range vision gained by the community through a democratic and inclusive process.

- Participation in creating a vision of the future.
- Increased eligibility for grants (A plan is mandatory with some grant programs).
- Articulates the municipality's opinion about issues for Act 250 and Section 248 proceedings.

Plans are often written or updated to implement zoning bylaws and flood hazard regulations. However, they are also required for non-regulatory initiatives, such as Downtown or Village Center designation or capital budgets and programs.

Vermont statute enables municipalities to submit their plans to the Northeastern Vermont Development Association, (NVDA), to request regional approval. While regional approval is not required by law, it does make communities eligible for certain benefits, such as access to Municipal Planning Grant funds, or Downtown or Village Center designation.

Historic overview

The Town of Albany originated as the Township of Lutterloh in June of 1781. After eighteen years of efforts the town began to prosper. By 1860 the town had a school and many different shops along with saw mills, farms & a starch factory. The majority of the people still farmed for barter.

Farming, forestry/logging, and maple sugaring were very important to the early history of Albany and they are still important to some families within the town today. The future protection for these aspects add to the rural "essence" of our community spirit and landscape.

However, the town has changed much since the 18th century, a majority of our resident's no longer farm, (other than for their own families.). Many people now drive 30 miles or more for employment. As of 2010 there were 511 housing units, 83 of which were within the Village boundaries.

Sources and more detail on the History of Albany can be found in the appendix.

Vision

Albany, is a town of four distinct historic communities; settled by Revolutionary War Veterans and their families; of Irish, Scot and French descent, who all brought their own heritage, religious beliefs, language, methods and ways of living and working to our river valley and forested hills after the Revolution and still continue to relocate here to this present day—2017. Today, the beauty and uniqueness of the Four Albany's: West Albany, Albany Center, East Albany and South Albany, are all being enhanced and infused with: new energy, creative imaginative vigor, new varieties of life and wage earning, and new challenging opportunities for the vigorous young of the 21st Century.

Goals and Recommended Actions

Goal:

The purpose of the Town Plan is to emphasize the continued desire for local control while exploring the area of special needs that will shape the development of the town over the next several years.

Actions

1. To maintain and protect Albany town character, our environment, and physical character by encouraging and directing growth using local non-regulatory and incentive-based tools rather than zoning.
2. Articulate the municipality's opinion about issues for Act 250 and Section 248 proceedings.
3. Increase our communities eligibility for grants (A plan is mandatory with some grant programs).
4. Consider village center designation and the benefits of such designation.

I. LAND USE PLAN /OVERVIEW

Existing Land Use

1.) Forestry

Forests have provided a utilitarian base for the local economy in Albany since times of early settlement. Additionally, Albany forests offer an aesthetic backdrop for the town's pastoral setting and for the distant vistas.

Forests are slow growers and change is subtle, but definite. It can be assumed that most of the town has either been cleared for agricultural purposes or logged, more than once, during the past 200 years. Yet, forests have re-seeded and grown back; it is not uncommon to find evidence of old fields where a 75+ year old forest now stands.

There have been four periods in the town history when open lands were abandoned and allowed to naturally re-seed to trees: after the Civil War, after the Great Depression, after World War II and more recently, as modernization of the dairy industry has reshaped and consolidated family farms.

The forests can be categorized into seven forest types:

1. Northern Hardwoods (sugar maple, yellow birch, beech)
2. Spruce and balsam
3. White pine
4. White cedar
5. Pioneer hardwoods (grey birch, aspen and red maple)
6. Hemlock
7. Swamp and bog softwoods

Albany still has a working landscape with a significant amount of managed forest land. According to the 2015 Grand List for Albany, there are 24,325 acres of land in the town. Of this, there are 100 parcels enrolled in Vermont's Current Use Program. Information provided from the Town Listers indicates that 3,719 are agricultural acres, 8,623 are forest land acres, 407 are non-productive forest land acres and 81 acres are more than a mile from a class 3 road and are forest land acres.

The Vermont Land Trust has conserved a total of 1,076 acres in Albany, approximately half of which is forestland, (542 acres). In addition, the Town Forest comprises 22.5 acres of land on Hartwell Pond Road.

2.) Recreation

Albany's recreational opportunities are primarily outdoor focused. In the Village is a baseball field, School soccer field, and cross country and ski trails for winter use. During State regulated seasons, hunting game and fishing the areas streams and ponds are very popular activities. Growing more popular is mountain biking using the area roads and trails. There has also been an increase in popularity of all-terrain vehicle use, exploring recently opened trail systems and local roadways that are approved for their use. There are approximately 16 miles of VAST trails in Albany maintained by the Hazen's Notch Snowmobile Club. There is a maintained nature trail at the Albany School. Another component of local recreation is fall foliage viewing which is enjoyed both by local residents and visitors/tourists to our area.

The Craftsbury Outdoor Center is a four-season recreational resource in the Albany area, providing programs in rowing, Nordic skiing, and running. There are several miles of trails in Albany in the vicinity of Great Hosmer Pond that are part of the Craftsbury Outdoor Center Nordic trail system. The Craftsbury Outdoor Center Trails are open to Albany residents without charge. Trails at the schools interconnect into this trail system

3.) Agriculture

Agriculture has historically helped to characterize the Town of Albany and continues to today. In 2012, Albany had 10,599 acres enrolled in Vermont's Current Use Program, both agricultural and forestry properties, constituting roughly 43% of the Town's total land area. In Albany, there are 15 properties that are listed as "farms" on the Town's Grand List, which range from 0.83 acres to 436 acres in size, with the average size being 178 acres. There are 44 properties identified as "woodland", many of which provide for maple sugaring operations and contain sugar houses, ranging in size from 10 acres to 378 acres, (the average size being 84 acres). Combined, they cover approximately 26% of the Town's total land area.

The Vermont Land Trust has conserved a total of 1,076 acres in Albany, approximately half of which is agricultural land at 534 acres. 555 acres of this land received financial assistance from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund (VHCB). In addition, 43 acres of property now part of the Albany Community School, was purchased with the help of a grant from assistance from VHCB, and combined with an appropriation from the Town of Albany.

4.) Residential

The greatest concentration of dwelling units in Albany is within the center of the incorporated Village, along Main Street, Water Street, Old Street, and New Street. The 2010 census counted a total of 511 housing units in the Town, 83 of which were located within the incorporated village. There is also a small cluster of dwellings in the area of South Albany. The rest of the Town's housing units are dispersed along Route 14, and on the paved and unpaved town roads.

Table 1 highlights population and housing data in Albany, Orleans County and the State from 2000 to 2010, based upon the most recent available data from the U.S. Census.

The numbers show that Albany has grown in year-round population and family households over the last decade.

Albany's population grew by 101 persons, the number of families increased by 30, and the town's housing stock increased by 58 units from 2000 to 2010. Year-round households also increased by 58, mirroring the growth in housing units, while seasonal units actually decreased by 1.

The rate of growth in occupied (year-round) housing units and family households in Albany was significantly higher than in the county and state. Family households in Albany increased by 12.6% from 2000-2010, while Orleans County had growth of only 2% and the State, only 1.7%. Occupied housing units increased by 17.2% in Albany, while the increase was only 8.4% and 6.6%, respectively, in the county and state.

The vast majority of new housing units built occurred outside of the incorporated village, with only 4 of the 58 new units occurring inside the village boundaries. However, percentage-wise, the growth in population and family households was greater within the village than in the town as a whole, with population in the village increasing by 17% compared to growth of 12% town-wide.

Within the village, the number of units that are "renter-occupied" increased by 7 while owner-occupied units decreased by 4. Percentage-wise, the number of renter-occupied units increased at a greater rate than owner-occupied units town-wide. While this increase (22.8%) was significantly higher than the percent increase in rental units county-wide and state-wide, owner-occupied units still account for the majority (about 82%) of the households in Albany. County-wide, owner-occupied units account for 75.6 % of all households, and state-wide, 70.7% of units.

Goals and Recommended Actions

- 1.) Support and preserve the agricultural, forest, and recreational use of lands in the Town. Encourage the use of local land trusts when applicable.
 - Encourage local farmers to talk to Farm Bureau and explore options for keeping their land in agriculture.
 - Consider possibility of developing a community Land Trust to educate and encourage conservation of forest and agricultural land.
 - Encourage the diversification of agriculture in the region so as to increase the viability of farming for the future.

- Encourage taxpayers to consider tax incentives such as the Current Use Program.
- Encourage the development of commercial enterprises in town that that make use of locally grown or harvested products.

2.) Based on previously stated issues with potable water supply to the Village, retain the existing scale and density of housing in the Village.

- Encourage restoration and/or rebuilding of existing dwellings.
- Encourage the formation of a study group to look at alternatives to the current Village well and water supply situation.
- Encourage new residential development that occurs outside the Village to make use of existing roads and infrastructure, and to avoid impacting existing and potential agricultural and recreational uses of the land.

3.) Promote the development of commercial uses in the Village.

- Consider incentives, such as a low interest loan program, that will promote business development in the Village, including a general store.
- Recommend a study group be formed to investigate community or co-operative style ownership of general store if individual(s) can't be attracted to open same.

4.) Enhance the recreational potential of public lands.

- Consider options of creating hiking trails and sites for tent camping on the Buchanan Lots; consider the potential impacts of trail development and camping on surrounding area and wildlife.
- Encourage coordination of efforts with the Northwoods Stewardship Center's Kingdom Corps and Craftsbury Outdoor Center to enhance recreational opportunities.

II. Albany Watershed & Wetlands

The Town of Albany lies within the Black River watershed, with a small portion of its eastern edge located within the Barton River watershed. Albany is within the larger Memphremagog Watershed. Which ultimately flows into the Saint Lawrence River in Canada and then into the Atlantic Ocean.

The main stem of the Black River originates in Albany, very close to the headwaters of its major tributary, Lord's Creek. Both streams originate from a wetland complex along Creek Road; the Black River initially flowing south and Lord's Creek north. After beginning on a southerly course, paralleling the Creek Road into Craftsbury, the Black River then turns 180-degrees to flow north through Craftsbury, Albany, Irasburg, and Coventry before emptying into Lake Memphremagog's South Bay. The river parallels Routes 14 and 5 for most of its course through a wide, level valley that is bounded by the Lowell Mountains to the west and the hills of Albany and Craftsbury to the east. The river is fed by many smaller tributary watersheds.

Each of the watersheds that our waters drain into has been affected by nonpoint source pollution, which occurs when runoff such as rainwater or snowmelt moves over the land surface and washes with it a number of manmade or natural pollutants into lakes, rivers, wetlands, and even groundwater. The main nonpoint sources of contaminants are sediment, bacteria, nutrients, toxic chemicals, and metals. Land uses such as agriculture, forestry, construction, residential areas, and septic systems are all potential nonpoint pollution sources. The Vermont Division of Water Quality is working through the Basin Planning Program to assess streams and rivers for such pollutants.

There are a number of ponds within Albany (either entirely or partially), including Great Hosmer, Page Pond, Hartwell Pond, and Griggs Pond.

The Hosmer Ponds Watershed Initiative is an informal group of Craftsbury and Albany Residents which wants to increase its appreciation and understanding of the community's natural resources through outings, workshops, and gatherings. This group strives to engage community members to think about long-term conservation goals for the region and the tools available to reach such conservation goals. This effort began in 2007, supported by the Vermont Land Trust through a small grant from the Vermont Community Foundation. The Hosmer Ponds Watershed Initiative recently joined forces with the Craftsbury Outdoor Center.

Portions of some streams, especially the Black River, suffer from severe stream bank erosion. Stream bank instability is a complex issue not usually resolved by short term solutions of narrow focus. Careful analysis of such erosion will reveal a number of contributing factors, among them soil type, volume of flow, gradient, stream bank vegetation, livestock damage, beaver population, and previous stream channel alteration. Solutions therefore must, if possible, address each factor related to soil loss. Such soil loss is alone and unfortunate; however the effects are compounded once it enters the stream. Soil deposition tends to reduce or change food supplies and spawning areas for native fish.

Riparian buffers and corridors, including stream banks and lakeshores, serve vital functions that have significant environmental, economic, and social value. Conserving riparian ecosystems allows them to carry out their many functions, which include: protecting water quality and aquatic habitats for terrestrial wildlife, including travel and dispersal corridors; supporting significant natural communities and adjacent wetlands and protecting channel-forming processes and channel stability. Riparian vegetated buffer strips can contribute to addressing residents' concerns about water quality and supply, pollution of water sources, disappearance of natural areas, and wildlife habitat.

a.) Existing Plans

The River Corridor Plan for the Black River, prepared in March 2011 by the North Woods Stewardship center, evaluates river stability and the condition of the adjacent landscape. The plan offers specific recommendations for prioritizing restoration efforts and for long term management of the river and its corridor for the improvement of water quality and fish and wildlife habitats, and for mitigating flood hazards.

The Plan identifies 6 locations in Albany where revegetation of the stream buffers are recommended (Reaches T4.03, segment B; T4.04, segment A; T4.04, segment B; T5.02; T6.02, segment B; T8.01). In some cases, fencing is also recommended to keep grazing cattle from accessing the stream channel and destabilizing the banks. The report also recommends repair or

removal of a deteriorated snowmobile bridge on Rogers Branch where it is collapsing into the stream (Reach T8.01). Two locations are identified where culverts restrict the water flows, resulting in large scour pools, sediment deposits, and bank erosion: where Route 14 crosses the Rogers Branch (Reach T8.02), and where Shuteville Road crosses Lamphear Brook (Reach T5.02).

b.) Wetland Protection

The wetlands of the State of Vermont are valuable natural resources. It is estimated that Vermont's existing wetlands comprise less than 5 percent of the state's surface area. In addition to being Vermont's most reproductive ecosystems, wetlands serve a wide variety of functions beneficial to the health, safety, and welfare of the general public, including:

- Retaining storm water runoff, reducing flood peaks, delaying flood crests, and thereby reducing flooding;
- Protecting the quality and quantity of groundwater;
- Improving surface water quality by storing organic materials. Chemically breaking down or removing pollutants, and by filtering eroded sediments and organic matter from the surface runoff;
- Stabilizing soil and dissipating wave and current energy;
- Providing spawning, feeding and general habit for fish;
- Providing a wide diversity of habitat for wildlife, including waterfowl, birds, mammals, furbearers, amphibians, and reptiles;
- Providing habitat critical for survival of rare, threatened, or endangered species of plants and animals;
- Providing both representative and rare examples of plant communities which make up the state's natural wetland heritage;
- Providing valuable resources for education and research in natural sciences;
- Providing a diversity of recreational and economic benefits;
- Contributing to the open space character and overall beauty of the landscape.

A substantial portion of Vermont's wetlands have already been lost or severely impaired by draining, dredging, filling, excavation, pollution, and other activities. It is estimated that Vermont has already lost 50 percent of its wetland resources and is continuing to lose additional wetland resources annually.

b.) Other Conservation Purposes

The State of Vermont owns 78 acres of "Streambank" property along the Black River in Albany, which is managed by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department to provide angler access to the Black River.

The Natural Resources Constraint map (included in appendix) prepared for the Town of Albany by NVDA in 2014, depicts the locations of wetlands in Albany based on the Vermont State Wetland Inventory. It estimates that about 1,600 acres in town contain wetlands.

At the local level, Albany has a Local Emergency Operations Plan that is required to be updated every May. This plan identifies emergency responders and local contacts. The Town adopted an All Hazards Mitigation Plan in 2005, but that plan has since expired.

Watershed related Infrastructure

All the major bridges in Town have been rebuilt or updated within the last 15 years, including a new bridge on Water Street over the Black River completed in 2002. A new bridge over Lord's Creek on Chamberlain Hill Road (completed 2013) and, upgrades to the bridge on Town Farm Road.

The Town received FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), money for the Chamberlain Hill bridge replacement, and for other road repairs associated with flooding in the spring of 2011, in May of 2012, and as a result of Hurricane "Irene."

Existing Structures in the Mapped Flood Hazard Areas

Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) were prepared by FEMA in 1986 for Albany. Based on a review of the FIRM and a review of E-911 points in Town, there are seven (7) points within the FEMA Flood Hazard Area.

Roadways within the FEMA Flood Hazard Areas include a portion of Urie Road, sections of State Route 14, Water Street, Town Farm Road, Vance Road, and Wylie Hill Road where they cross the Black River; and portions of Creek Road and Wells Road in the northern part of Town.

River Corridor Maps have been developed for the Black River and its tributaries within Albany. These maps identify both the river channel and the fluvial erosion hazard area associated with the river. There are (18) E-911 points within the mapped river corridors.

A.) Planning Considerations

FEMA and NFIP

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), has mapped the "Zone A" flood inundation areas in Town, but has not identified base flood elevations.

In order to be eligible for participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the Town will have to adopt local flood hazard regulations that meet the minimum federal requirements. (*See Reference Flood Plan Attached*)

The River Management Program within the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has prepared model flood hazard regulations for towns in Vermont, that comply with the requirements of NFIP. In addition to setting standards for development within the flood inundation areas mapped by FEMA, the model ordinance also provides standards for development within mapped River Corridors identified by the State.

It is recommended that the Town should investigate the FEMA Community Rating System (CRS) to see if the community could qualify for discounted flood insurance, once flood hazard regulations have been adopted.

River Corridors

Infrastructure placed in close proximity to streams and rivers is particularly exposed to damage from flash flooding, bank failure, and stream channel dynamics. It is recommended that new development stay outside of the mapped River Corridor.

For smaller streams that have not been included in the river corridor maps, the recommended standard setback is 50 feet.

Transportation Infrastructure

A culvert and bridge inventory, noting the location, size and condition of all culverts and bridges, is currently being updated with data being entered for 2017 inclusion into the Vermont Online Bridge and Culvert Inventory Tool (VOBIT). This database was developed by the Vermont agency of Transportation and is a good resource for local officials, planners, and state agencies.

In addition, information on the adequacy of culverts to handle flood waters has been evaluated as part of the River Corridor Plan for the Black River.

Potential Future Infrastructure Needs

While predicting future infrastructure needs and requirements is often difficult; culvert repair, replacement, and new installation should always be considered and included in Town budgets. Specific examples include Shutesville Road where it crosses Lamphear Brook. This area will continue to be a problem for a number of years due to poor logging practices that have caused erosion of adjacent upland areas and the depositing of logging debris in the stream channel.

The Wells Road in North Albany has a significant beaver dam about a mile above the road that occasionally causes a washout of the road. The addition of a culvert may be necessary.

Other new culverts that are scheduled to be, or have been recently replaced, are a new box culvert on Creek Road near Merrill Corner, and one on Page Pond Road, (where it crosses Lord's Creek).

Hazard Mitigation Planning

The purpose of mitigation planning is to identify policies and actions that can be implemented over the long term to reduce risk and future losses. Mitigation Plans form the foundation for a long-term strategy to reduce disaster losses and break the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage.

Albany's All-Hazards Mitigation Plan expired in 2005. In order to qualify for certain federal grant assistance, the Town needs to have an adopted Plan that has been approved by FEMA. A new FEMA-approved hazard Mitigation Plan was adopted by the Town on March 21, 2017

Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF)

ERAF provides public assistance grants through FEMA to help municipalities repair damaged infrastructure after a presidentially-declared disaster. A 25% non-federal match is required for approved projects, with half of this (12.5% of the total project cost) typically covered by the State. A State rule adopted in 2012 requires that by October 23, 2014, a Town must have four mitigation measures in place in order to be eligible to receive the same level of State funding. The four mitigation measures required are 1) adoption of the Agency of Transportation's Road and Bridge Standards, 2) adoption of flood regulations meeting NFIP standards, 3) adoption of a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and 4) adoption of a Local Emergency Operations Plan.

Under the new ERAF rule, effective in October 2014, municipalities can qualify for an increased state match of 70 percent for the non -federal share (or 17.5 percent of the total project cost) by

either: 1) maintaining an active rate classification under FEMA's NFIP Community Rating System (CRS) that includes activities that prohibit new structures in mapped flood hazard zones; or 2) adopting a river corridor protection bylaw that meets or exceeds state model regulations and guidelines.

Goals and Recommended Actions

- 1.) A new FEMA-approved hazard Mitigation Plan was adopted by the Town on March 21, 2017.
- 2.) Adopt flood hazard area regulations to mitigate against future flooding and fluvial erosion events, and to qualify the Town to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.
- 3.) Provide flood hazard area education materials to support flood damage mitigation and better insure community residents and property for future flood damage.
- 4.) Consider the participation in the FEMA Community Rating System (CRS) and a discount on flood insurance
- 5.) Update the Emergency Operations Plan and Hazard Mitigation Plan.

III. Transportation

Existing Conditions

The major transportation route in Albany is VT Route 14 which had an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volume of 1,400 in 2012. This route runs northeast to southeast through town and connects Albany with Irasburg, Orleans, Newport City and Derby to the northeast, Hardwick and Montpelier to the south, and Burlington to the southwest. This route is categorized as a “Major Collector” by the Vermont Agency of Transportation. Major routes connect the Town to employment, healthcare, education, shopping, and many other services. The improvements to the Northeast Kingdom International Airport in Coventry have the potential for growth in travel for Albany. The airport is approximately 20 miles from Albany, compared to Stowe Airfield or Burlington International Airport. ‘Minor Collectors’ in Albany and other traffic data is available on the Albany page of NVDA’s website: <http://www.nvda.net/towns.php?town=37>

- According to Vermont General Highway Map, there are approximately 46.6 miles of town roads in Albany, and 6.7 miles of state highways.
- According to the American Community Survey’s 5 year estimates for 2008-2012, the average Albany resident’s travel time to work was 30 minutes. 76.9% of all workers drove to work, 9.7% carpooled, 1% walked, and 3.9% traveled by other means (not public transportation). 8.5% of the workforce worked at home.
- Other transportation routes in Town included approximately 16 miles of snowmobile trails maintained by the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers (VAST), which are also used by Nordic skiers.

A.) Planning Considerations

Albany provides bus transportation for all students to Village and Lake Region schools, with crews keeping roads open for them ten months of the year. Bus expense is about 1.7% of our education budget and keeps rising. At town meeting the possibility of discontinuing school bus transport has been suggested. At the same time, elderly people and others without access to private vehicles are in need of daily public transportation. In some cities in the United States and worldwide, students ride public buses to school. By operating the school buses as public transportation, free to students while other riders pay fare, the Town could help finance transportation for our students and serve our growing population of older people who find it difficult or impossible to drive especially during the winter.

B.) Existing Conditions

The Town maintains its roads in accordance with current and anticipated travel needs and safety. A road maintenance budget for repairs and upkeep of existing roads and structures is set every year at Town Meeting and is funded through property tax and from State funds.

Albany’s current road policy allows the Select Board to accept and maintain new and upgraded Class 4 roads into the Town Highway system pursuant to Vermont Statutes.

Participation by the Town in the Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) allows Albany to have a voice in the regional transportation infrastructure prioritization. NVDA also conducts Road Foreman meeting through the Agency of Transportation District Offices and at NVDA. This is an excellent peer learning opportunity and builds relationships between communities.

C.) Resources

Can be found in the Appendix

Goals and Recommended Actions

- 1.) Maintain our roads in such a way that it does not negatively impact our natural resources or appearance.
 - a. Utilize the latest state standards to determine and apply the amount of road salt that is needed for road safety while protecting our environment.
 - b. Identify erosion hazards caused by transportation infrastructure and incorporate the repairs into a capital facilities improvement plan and budget accordingly.
 - c. Apply for transportation infrastructure grants to help fund road repairs and maintenance.
 - d. Identify and repair existing transportation hazards and areas of disrepair.
- 2.) Encourage and accommodate multiple modes of transportation, including walking and biking, for all ages and abilities.
- 3.) Encourage meeting the transportation needs of our senior population.
 - a. Support Rural Community Transportation (RTC), and cooperate with local and regional entities to expand local transportation services
- 4.) Maintain a transportation network that accommodates the citizens of Albany in a manner that is affordable and sustainable over the long term.

The 2015 Vermont legislative session created a new regulatory framework for all work on Town Highways, The Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP), as part of Act 64, (the Vermont Clean Water Act.) This general permit is intended to achieve significant reductions in storm water-related erosion from municipal roads, both paved and unpaved. Research and water quality monitoring has indicated that roads are responsible for 6-10% of phosphorus loads to Lake Champlain and other waterways, and roads contribute over 10% of sediment loads. Excessive sediment and phosphorus can cause algae blooms, increase water turbidity (cloudiness), and degrade fish and invertebrate habitat.

Municipalities will need to develop and implement a customized, multi-year plan to stabilize their road drainage system. The plan will include bringing road drainage systems up to basic maintenance standards, and additional corrective measures to reduce erosion. The permit is required by H.35/Act 64, the Vermont Clean Water Act, and the Lake Champlain Phase I TMDL and applies to all Vermont municipalities.

Updated information can also be found on the program's website at:

http://www.watershedmanagement.vt.gov/stormwater/htm/sw_municipalroads.htm

- 5.) Municipalities will need to inventory their road network and identify priority road segments that are connected to surface waters through ditches, culverts or other drainage structures. Towns will then report to DEC which of these priority road segments meet and do not meet MRGP standards. Towns will prioritize road segments and develop remediation plans and implementation schedules (capital budgets).

Towns can apply for funding through the Better Back Roads Program for both the inventory and remediation process. There is technical assistance through the County Conservation District, VTrans Maintenance District, Vermont Local Roads and NVDA.

DEC will be developing a draft MRGP and standards by December 2016 and a final version one year later. Towns will begin applying for MRGP coverage between 2018-2021. Exact dates are to be determined. Towns can be apprised of the coming requirements through participation in the Regional Road Foreman's Group facilitated by NVDA and their VTrans District, or by going to the DEC MRGP website above. Before the MRGP and standards are finalized, towns can begin identifying road erosion sites that could potentially impact waterways and begin implementing road best management practices. Towns identifying sites and implementing BMPs will be credited for this work as part of the MRGP."

IV. Utilities and Facilities

1.) Water Supply/Sewage Disposal

There are two public community water supply systems in Albany: a system which serves the Albany School and a system which serves properties in the incorporated village.

The Albany Town School has its own community water and sewage system.

The Village water system currently has 97 connections. Water service is not metered to individual customers. The water system is managed by Simon Operation Services based in Waterbury, Vermont. The Village Trustees own approximately 20 acres in the Source Protection Area (SPA) for the Village Water system. The location of the Source Protection area and public wells are available on the Vermont Natural Resources Atlas at: <http://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/anra/> The appendix includes a map generated from that website depicting public water sources and the Source Protection Areas.

Sewage disposal is the responsibility of the home-owner or business, as is water supply for properties outside the service areas of the Village water system.

Solid Waste Disposal

Several private companies provide solid waste disposal services for residents by subscription. There is also a “pay by the bag” solid waste service at the Town Recycling Center, open the same hours as the Recycling Center. Albany is a member of the Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District. The Albany/Irasburg Recycling Center is located just south of the Albany Village center. Information on materials accepted and hours of operation at the recycling center can be found at <http://nekwmd.org/services/Albany.pdf>

2.) Law Enforcement/Fire Protection/Emergency Services

The Orleans County Sheriff's Department provides patrol services of the Town of Albany. They and the Vermont State Police are responsible for law enforcement. Albany also has a constable who also acts as a dog catcher. The Town relies on a volunteer fire department. Albany has several certified EMT's who are able to respond to emergency situations. Albany has an emergency services policy in place in conjunction with the American Red Cross.

3.) Health Care Facilities

There are no health care facilities within the Town of Albany, but travel times to the nearest health care facilities range from 30 minutes to 2 hours. This includes facilities in Newport, Orleans, Barton, Hardwick, Morrisville, and St. Johnsbury.

4.) Public Buildings/Properties

- Public buildings owned by the town include the Town Hall/Library, Town Clerk's Office, and the Fire Station, all on Rt. 14.
- The Town Library provides free wireless internet service to patrons, as well as two computers for use.
- Other Town-owned properties include the Town Garage and gravel pit located on Delano Road, the Town garage and sand/salt shed located on Center Hill Road, and Town vehicles of various types.
- The Albany Historical Society focuses on collection development and the presentation of the Town's history to its residents. It is open twice a year, on Memorial Day and Labor Day, and by appointment. The Historical Society also maintains the memorials and plantings on the grounds of the building.
- The Albany branch of the U.S. Post Office is located on Main Street in Albany Village.
- There are seven cemeteries in Albany, including one located on VT Rt. 14/ Main Street, just North of Albany Village; one located on the Creek Road; and one on Chamberlin Hill Road. The Village cemetery is owned and maintained by its own corporate entity. The Catholic cemetery is owned and maintained by the Catholic Church and the remaining 5 cemeteries are owned and maintained by the Town of Albany.

5.) Public Utilities: Electric and Telecommunications

- Albany is served by the Vermont Electric Co-operative. More information about this in the Energy section.
- FairPoint provides land line phone services in Albany. In late 2013 FairPoint expanded its fiber-based broadband Internet service to Albany, serving most customers along the VT Rt. 14 corridor.

Internet service is also provided by satellite companies, Wildblue, HughesNet and DISH.

Goals and Recommended Actions

1. Cooperate with and encourage continued maintenance of the Village Water system and Source Protection Area plan
2. Encourage at how to educate for more effective recycling practices.
3. Promote use of existing recreational facilities.

V. PRESERVATION PLAN

Albany still possesses a viable working rural landscape with a significant amount of managed forest land. According to the 2015 Grand List for Albany, there are 24,325 acres of land in the town. Of this, there are 100 parcels enrolled in Vermont's Current Use Program. Information provided from the Listers updates that 3,719 are agricultural acres, 8,623 are forest land acres, 407 are Nonproductive forest land acres and 81 acres are more than a mile from a class 3 road and are forest land acres.

The Vermont Land Trust has conserved a total of 1,076 acres in Albany, approximately half of which is forestland at 542 acres. In addition, the Town Forest comprises 22.5 acres of land on Hartwell Pond Road.

Agriculture has historically helped to characterize the Town of Albany and continues to today. In 2012, land in Albany enrolled in Vermont's Current Use Program, both agricultural and forestry properties, constituted roughly 43% of the Town's total land area. In Albany, there are 15 properties that are listed as "farms" on the Town's Grand List, which range from 0.83 acres to 436 acres in size, with the average size being 178 acres. There are 44 properties identified as "woodland", many of which contain sugar houses, ranging in size from 10 acres to 378 acres, the average size being 84 acres. Albany's farms cover a total of 2,667 acres, and woodland parcels cover a total of 3,704 acres. Combined, they cover approximately 26% of the Town's total land area.

The Vermont Land Trust has conserved a total of 1,076 acres in Albany, approximately half of which is agricultural land at 534 acres. 555 acres of this land received financial assistance from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund (VHCB). In addition, 43 acres of property now part of the Albany Community School, was purchased with the help of a grant from assistance from VHCB, and combined with an appropriation from the Town of Albany.

In addition, The Northern Rivers Land Trust (NRLT) is active in Albany. The NRLT was founded in 2006 by residents of Hardwick and six neighboring towns who were interested in preserving the area's rural character by protecting farms, forestland and wildlife habitat. NRLT is a private nonprofit 501©3 land conservation organization supported by its membership and governed by a volunteer board of trustees. We are not connected with local or state government. A particular recent project undertaken by NRLT is Lamphear Brook. Lamphear Brook and its watershed, located in northwest Albany Township, are a spectacular feature of the Northeast Kingdom's landscape. The brook, which drains part of the Lowell Mountain range, cascades over a hundred feet through deep gullies, including a 20-foot waterfall (below) before crossing Route 14 and emptying into the Black River.

Landowners and other townspeople have formed a group called "Friends of Lamphear Brook", which is working with the Vermont River Conservancy and the Northern Rivers Land Trust to introduce conservation easements and other measures to protect the watershed. This includes efforts underway to restore a 160-acre parcel on the Irasburg border, formerly owned by Middlebury College that was clear-cut in 2011-12.

In December 2015, two owners of land in the watershed, Henry Coe and Allison Van Akkeren, conserved their properties with the NRLT. Coe's property, in Albany, comprises two adjacent parcels totaling 125 acres, more or less, in the middle of the watershed, while Van Akkeren's comprises close to 100 acres in Lowell, on the Albany border.

Information related to Albany's existing natural areas, scenic features, important wildlife habitat and historic resources can be found on the attached Natural Resources Constraints map.

Goals and Recommended Actions

- 1.) Encourage protection and management of Albany's Natural Heritage and biodiversity for the benefit of current and future generations.
 - Encourage conservation of natural resources through local conservation planning and land stewardship.
 - Encourage opportunities to raise community awareness about Albany's natural heritage through education.
 - Cooperate with State and Federal agencies to preserve irreplaceable natural areas, scenic areas, historic buildings, and fragile natural resources.
- 2.) Cooperate with the outreach efforts of the Hosmer Ponds Watershed Initiative
- 3.) Encourage development of town policies on how to use and preserve natural resources for the benefit of current and future residents of Albany and creation of "Town" vision for natural heritage protection.
- 4.) Identify and understand the natural resources within Albany and their regional significance to the surrounding landscape.
- 5.) Protect and limit the degradation of natural resources for all road development, road maintenance, and construction activities performed by the Town, in accordance with the adopted road and bridge standards.

- 6.) Encourage conservation and the preservation of natural resources through local conservation planning and land stewardship.
- 7.) Manage all town and all school-owned lands as models for good land stewardship and the conservation of natural resources.
- 8.) Encourage education of residents about existing rules and regulations pertaining to the use and protection of natural resources.
- 9.) Encourage education of residents on the recently enacted state lakeshore protection legislation and required state permits.
- 10.) Encourage the development for a policy on the use and development of wind and solar power.
- 11.) Cooperate with measures to preserve Albany's historic and scenic resources
- 12.) Encourage the development of a road review committee to identify roads, ditches and stream crossings in the basin that are having an impact on water resources, focusing initially on town roads which have not yet participated in the Better Backroads Program including Irasburg, Coventry, Albany and Craftsbury.
- 13.) Cooperate with other towns in the basin to apply for Better Backroads Grants. .

IMPLEMENTATION

(It should be noted that the Town of Albany successfully completed a tree planting project in 2011 on the banks of McCleary Brook on the Albany Community School property to improve water quality.)

VI. Education

A. Existing Conditions:

The Albany Community School was completed in 1996. It is located on the western side of town, directly on Vermont State Route 14 between Craftsbury and Irasburg. It serves children in preschool through the 8th grade.

The actual building consists of 20,000 square feet, holding nine full-size classrooms, a library, offices, workrooms, a gymnasium, and a kitchen. The classrooms are large with cubbies, supply closets, and equipped with appropriate and modern technology. The gymnasium has built-in bleachers, a renovated floor and plenty of storage space. A detached school shed, sits at the foot of the paved parking lot. The school building sits on 49 acres. The grounds are a mix of mostly fields with some forest and wetlands. These natural areas are connected by a trail system set to be improved and expanded in the summer of 2014. Ball fields, a playground, and a community garden round out the outdoor facilities.

The building is in excellent shape. The Town is determined to keep the maintenance current. Enrollment is down from historic levels. The staff has plenty of space to meet the educational needs of their students. Not only does it meet the needs of the students during the regular school day, it meets the needs of students and the community after school hours. Next year the Albany Community School will host, five days a week, an afterschool program for all students. The building and grounds allow programs of all types, ranging from drama to dance to wilderness survival skills. The community hosts a range of meetings, receptions, birthday parties, trainings, dinners, and sporting events in and on the school property.

B. Planning Considerations

The current school building is adequate for the current population. The school would like to consider some energy efficiency measures, to address some safety concerns, and to add some storage space to our shed in the future. The school has just been through a top to bottom energy audit. Compared to most Vermont Schools, the Albany Community School is in excellent shape in terms of energy usage per square foot. However, ACS could achieve additional savings by discontinuing the use of heating oil as its main source of fuel, by further insulating the attic, and by producing some or most of its energy through solar panels. In terms of safety, according to the Vermont State Troopers, the Albany Community School is the safest in the Orleans County Supervisory Union. However, the installation of detection cameras and school-wide window film would help make the safest school even safer.

The taxpayers, to date, have kept the building in excellent shape replacing and restoring as needed with high quality materials. If the taxpayers continue this method of building maintenance, the school structure will last many years into the future. Actions and forethought like this will continue to make the Albany Community School a wonderful place to send children.

With the passage of Act 46 in 2015, Albany has joined a study committee with the other schools in the Orleans Central Supervisory Union to study merging into one district.

Goals and Recommended Actions

The Albany Community School is a student-centered school, and the common thread throughout our school is respect for all people and property. Our school will enable individuals to achieve a high, measurable level of academic and social competence through a variety of learning experiences. Students will learn in an inclusive, accepting, safe environment that prepares them to live full, independent and participatory lives.

1. Maintain the facilities.
2. Reflect the State requirements.
3. Continue to support the vision of the school system.
4. Broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure full realization of the abilities of all residents.

VII. ENERGY

Nearly every modern convenience we have in our homes and businesses today consumes energy, powering everything from our lighting, heating, transportation, to our mechanical machines and industrial tools. We often take it for granted that the current sources for traditional power are infinite and will last forever. But recent global events and economic impacts tend to disagree. A growing trend is to seek alternative sources to the traditional petroleum and fossil fuels. Over the past few years, Albany has witnessed our neighboring communities caught up in the commercialization of their ridge lines with commercial wind and huge solar projects with little local say on the development and placement of these projects. The social and visual impact of these projects has led to community and regional disagreement over their value at this time and until the economic feasibility justifies this, Albany prefers and recommends small scale residential wind and solar as means to defray global warming. If opportunity exists for future commercial scale energy projects within our Town, the planning commission recommends that our residents have local “siting choice 1st approval” in order to direct the will of the citizens at a local level.

Energy Efficiency

In 2009, an energy audit was conducted on the Town Hall/Library building as part of a series of municipal energy audits conducted in Northeast Kingdom communities under a grant administered by NVDA. The results of the audit are contained in a report and addendum prepared by Montpelier Construction, a certified Energy Star contractor.

Recommendations to improve energy efficiency included new thermostats, air sealing, and the addition of insulation. Work was prioritized based on the financial payback period: “Level One” priorities were those improvements that would pay for themselves in less than two years; “Level Two” had a payback period of two to six years; and “Level Three” had a payback period of over 6 years.

In 2013 Albany voted to participate in the Vermont Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program, although the process of establishing the PACE district in Albany has not yet been finalized.

Energy Use

Based on the 2010 census, the two most commonly used types of home heating fuel in Albany was wood (47.5%) and fuel oil (46.9%). The Table below shows a comparison of home heating fuel use in Albany Town, Orleans County and Vermont.

Electrical Service is provided to Albany residents by the Vermont Electrical Cooperative (VEC). Based on the Vermont Energy Atlas, the total annual electric consumption in Albany in 2010 was 3,380 MWh.

According to VEC, there are no specific needs, scarcities, or problems that need to be addressed currently with the electrical supply to Albany. Albany Village, including the fire station, school and post office along with a great portion of Albany town is fed from a radial line that originates in Irasburg, (just south of Bob’s Gas Station on Route 16). (Some areas of East Albany are fed from a

separate line connected to the Burton Hill transmission line). A long term failure of the radial line on Route 16, during a storm or other emergency, could result in a total Albany Town outage.

VEC encourages Albany to maintain its back-up generator at the elementary school for emergency shelter purposes in the event the area is affected by a natural disaster. The distribution and supply of electricity into Albany is meeting current needs with VEC's planning horizon for supplying the entire system (Albany and other Towns) is 20 years based on load forecasting. They see no future capacity deficiencies.

In response to recent changes in system maintenance and VEC's initiatives to improve service to all members, VEC has recently increased efforts and investment to have powerline "right of ways" cleared and trimmed to help reduce tree damage from storms that result in outages. It is an ongoing program.

VEC continues to offer programs for communities including community education and promotion of programs such as "Beat the Peak", Co-op Community Solar, and upcoming "Energy Transformation" opportunities. More information can be found on their web site.

Net Metering

Net metering allows property owners who have a renewable energy system on their property, such as a roof-top solar system or windmill, to feed excess energy back into the power grid. In Vermont, utilities are required to accept net metering projects until their combined capacity reaches 15 percent of the utility's peak load. These rules are under review and subject to change in the near future.

Alternative Energy

The Vermont Energy Atlas provides mapping of potential wind development areas throughout Vermont (<http://www.vtenergyatlas.com>). Potential sites for wind power depend on the height of the turbine and well as the geographic location.

There are currently numerous residential wind and solar installations in Albany that are both net-metered and non-net-metered (off grid). This is a growing trend and it is believed that it will continue into the future.

The potential for solar energy is mapped by the Vermont Energy Atlas, which shows the potential of different areas for both roof and ground solar systems.

Structures can be situated to passively make use of solar energy. Active solar thermal systems use the same basic principle but use a collector to absorb and collect solar radiation. Fans or pumps are then used to circulate the heated air or heat absorbing fluid. Systems can also capture solar energy through the use of photovoltaic panels.

Planning Considerations

1.) Energy Audits

An energy audit is a good first step that helps homeowners decide if they would benefit from energy efficiency upgrades in their home. If there is a significant loss of heat due to inadequate insulation or air leaks, the annual savings in energy costs resulting from upgrades can far exceed the cost of the energy-efficiency improvements. If the results of the energy assessment show that upgrades would be beneficial, homeowners may decide to either finance the costs of the energy efficiency upgrades on their own or through traditional loan options, or to finance it through participation in the Town's PACE program (Property Accessed Clean Energy) (see below). More information on the types of energy audits available and their degree of usefulness can be found by contacting Efficiency Vermont or visiting their website: www.encyvermont.com

2.) Town Street Lights

Street lights in the Albany Village used to use a lot of electricity. The Village investigated a grant program through Efficiency Vermont to help convert the existing street lights to more energy efficient ones. The resulting conversion has resulted in a great savings.

3.) PACE Program

Town participation in the PACE program helps eligible residents finance weatherization and efficiency improvements or install renewable energy systems on their residential properties. The value of those improvements is added to the assessed value of the property with the cost of the improvements paid back as an assessment over a period not to exceed twenty-years. Since the payments are tied to the property rather than the owner, PACE financing payments can be transferred to a new homeowner at any time.

4.) Energy Standards for New Construction

Recently enacted State legislation supports the application of energy efficiency in new construction, additions and renovations. An amendment to 24 V.S.A. § 4449 requires that when a municipal land use permit is sought, the administrative officer shall provide the applicant with a copy of the applicable building energy standards under 21 V.S.A. §§ 266 (residential building energy standards) and 268 (commercial building energy standards). The administrative officer may provide a copy of the Vermont Residential Building Energy Code Book, published by the Department of Public Service, in lieu of the full text of the residential building energy standards. While these energy standards have been mandated since 1998 (for residential construction), and 2007 (for commercial construction), the new state legislation should result in better public awareness and compliance by building contractors with these standards.

5.) Land Development Patterns

Besides improving energy efficiency through building standards and weatherization upgrades, patterns of land use development that make efficient use of existing infrastructure and results in residential development occurring in close proximity to basic goods and services can help conserve energy use by reducing vehicle miles traveled.

Goals and Recommended Actions

- 1.) Encourage increased public awareness of the PACE program and its benefits.
- 2.) Cooperate with Efficiency Vermont in holding public information sessions for residents on the benefits of undertaking eligible PACE projects, and how to participate in the program.

VIII. Housing

A) Existing Conditions

The greatest concentration of dwelling units in Albany is within the center of the incorporated Village, at the intersection of Main Street with Water Street, Old Street, and New Street. The 2010 census counted a total of 511 housing units in the Town, 83 of which were located within the incorporated village. There is also a small cluster of dwellings in the area of South Albany. The rest of the Town's housing units are dispersed along Route 14, and on the paved and unpaved town roads.

See Table 1 (page 27) which highlights population and housing data in Albany, Orleans County and the State from 2000 to 2010, based upon the most recent available data from the U.S. Census.

The numbers show that Albany has grown in year-round population and family households over the last decade.

Albany's population grew by 101 persons, the number of families increased by 30, and the town's housing stock increased by 58 units from 2000 to 2010. Year-round households also increased by 58, mirroring the growth in housing units, while seasonal units actually decreased by 1.

The rate of growth in occupied (year-round) housing units and family households in Albany was significantly higher than in the county and state. Family households in Albany increased by 12.6% from 2000-2010, while Orleans County had growth of only 2% and the State, only 1.7%. Occupied housing units increased by 17.2% in Albany, while the increase was only 8.4% and 6.6%, respectively, in the county and state.

The vast majority of new housing units built occurred outside of the incorporated village, with only 4 of the 58 new units occurring inside the village boundaries. However, percentage-wise, the growth in population and family households was greater within the village than in the town as a whole, with population in the village increasing by 17% compared to growth of 12% town-wide.

Within the village, the number of units that were renter-occupied increased by 7 while owner-occupied units decreased by 4. Percentage-wise, the number of renter-occupied units increased at a greater rate than owner-occupied units town-wide. While this increase (22.8%) was significantly higher than the percent increase in rental units county-wide and state-wide, owner-occupied units still account for the majority (about 82%) of the households in Albany. County-wide, owner-occupied units account for 75.6 % of all households, and state-wide, 70.7% of units.

Table 1. Population and Housing Stock 2000-2010

	Albany Village				Albany Town				Orleans County				Vermont		
	2000	2010	change		2000	2010	change		2000	2010	% change		2000	2010	% change
			#	%			#	%			#	%			
Population	165	193	28	17.0%	840	941	101	12.0%	26,277	27,231	954	3.6%	608,827	625,741	2.8%
Family households	48	55	7	14.6%	238	268	30	12.6%	7,153	7,298	145	2.0%	157,763	160,360	1.7%
Total Housing Units	79	83	4	5.1%	453	511	58	12.8%	14,673	16,162	1,489	10.2%	294,382	322,539	9.6%
Occupied Housing Units (Households)	70	73	3	4.3%	337	395	58	17.2%	10,446	11,320	874	8.4%	240,634	256,442	6.6%
Owner-occupied	59	55	-4	6.8%	280	325	45	16.1%	7,738	8,553	815	10.5%	169,784	181,407	6.9%
Renter-occupied	11	18	7	63.6%	57	70	13	22.8%	2,708	2,767	59	2.2%	70,850	75,035	5.9%
Total Vacant Housing Units	9	10	1	11.1%	116	116	0	0%	4,227	4,842	615	14.6%	53,748	66,097	23.0%
Vacant units used seasonally	3	4	1	33.3%	93	92	-1	1.1%	3,397	3,951	554	16.3%	43,060	50,198	16.6%

Source: Census 2010, American Community Survey 2007-2011 Estimates, Housing Data.org

Housing Affordability

Table 2 highlights incomes and the value and affordability of housing in the region. Average monthly owner costs for housing are provided, as well as data on the income that the department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has determined is needed in order to afford a market-rate rental in the county and state.

In general, a household for which rents or housing costs exceed 30 percent of household income is considered financially stressed.

While both household and family incomes were lower in Albany than the county and state figures, the sale price of primary residences and the median monthly owner costs were also lower. Calculated housing costs include all expenses associated with housing, including rents, sum of payments on

mortgages, fuel costs, utilities, insurance, and real estate taxes. Town-wide, both median owner costs and rental housing costs as a percentage of household income were below 30%, indicating that housing in town is generally affordable. However, the census also shows there were a considerable number of both owner-occupied and renter-occupied units where monthly costs were at or exceeded 30% of household income. In addition, the relationship of per capita income of town residents with what is estimated to be the income needed to afford an apartment county-wide, indicates a potential affordability problem which could become an issue if the need for rental housing were to increase without a parallel increase in income.

Table 2
Income and Cost of Housing

	Albany	Orleans County	Vermont
Median Household Income	\$33,274	\$40,929	\$53,422
Median Family Income	\$48,375	\$49,966	\$66,340
Median family adjusted gross income, 2011*	\$35,893	\$41,818	\$59,315
Median Price of primary residences sold, 2012	\$112,500	\$129,000	\$196,000
Median Price of vacation residence sold, 2012	\$315,000	\$186,973	\$281,117
Median monthly owner costs	\$778	\$875	\$1195
Median monthly owner costs as % of household income	28.7%	23.2%	23.2%
Median gross rent	\$668	\$671	843
Median gross rent as a % of household income	22%	33.2%	30.9%
Per capita income	\$19,038	\$21,000	\$28,376
Income needed to afford an apartment at HUD's Fair Market Rent for 2013:			
0 bedroom unit	\$24,480	\$24,480	\$30,290
1 bedroom unit	\$25,360	\$25,360	\$33,119
2 bedroom unit	\$30,320	\$30,320	\$42,156
Source: American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2007-2011); Vermont Housing Data (www.housingdata.org)			
Notes: * from the Vermont State tax forms of families.			

Condition of housing stock

According to data compiled by the American Community Survey 5-year estimates (2007-2011) there were eight occupied housing units in town lacking complete plumbing facilities, and six occupied units lacking complete kitchen facilities. The median date of construction for all occupied housing units was 1967.

B. Planning Considerations

Factors such as the capacity of the Village water system, the location of fluvial erosion hazard areas, and the presence of soils unsuitable for septic systems will influence the ability of the Village to absorb more residential density. Future residential development should occur in such a way that it will not stress existing resources, including community facilities and services. Increased residential density in the Village is not desirable at this time, although improvement in the condition of existing housing resources in the village through restoration, rehabilitation or rebuilding is desirable.

New residential development occurring outside the Village should make use of existing roads and infrastructure, and avoid impacting existing and potential agricultural and recreational use of the land.

Energy efficiency can be realized by avoiding residential development that requires the creation of new roads, that is located far from services and employment centers, and that in general increases the number of vehicle miles traveled.

Although the Town will consider adopting flood hazard regulations town-wide in order to qualify for membership in the National Flood Insurance Program, there are currently no local regulations that might hinder the development of affordable types of housing, including manufactured home parks or multiple unit dwellings. However, all new residential development needs review and approval of an on-site septic system from the State.

Goals and Recommended Actions

- 1.) Encourage restoration and/or rebuilding of existing dwellings.
- 2.) Encourage preservation of the agricultural and recreational use of lands in Town.
- 3.) Encourage new residential development occurring outside the Village to make use of existing roads and infrastructure, and avoid impacting existing and potential agricultural and recreational use of the land.

IX. Economic Development

A.) Existing Conditions:

According to the most recent Census data, the top 5 industries providing employment to Albany residents were “educational, healthcare and social assistance” (18.2 %), “manufacturing” (14.1%), “construction” (12%), “retail trade” (12%), and “agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining” (9.6%). Another significant segment of the working population (9.4%) found employment in the “arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services” industry.

Albany Residents' Employment by Occupation

OCCUPATION	Estimate	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	417	100%
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	140	33.6%
Service occupations	62	14.9%
Sales and office occupations	67	16.1%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	64	15.3%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	84	20.1%

Albany Residents' Employment by Industry

INDUSTRY	Estimate	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	417	100%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	40	9.6%
Construction	50	12.0%
Manufacturing	59	14.1%
Wholesale trade	13	3.1%
Retail trade	50	12.0%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	10	2.4%
Information	2	0.5%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	6	1.4%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	24	5.8%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	76	18.2%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	39	9.4%
Other services, except public administration	26	6.2%
Public administration	22	5.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. ACS 5-Year Estimates 2008-2012, Table DP03

A few family run dairy farms still operate in Albany, while a wide variety of forest products continue to be produced from Albany's forested lands. Both of these provide economic opportunities for the respective landowners. Meanwhile, a number of diversified agricultural operations have become established in Albany recently, ensuring the continuation of Albany's historic agricultural past. All of which enables Albany to continue to possess a vibrant working rural landscape that aids in maintaining Albany's desired character. In addition, Albany provides the opportunity for a wide variety of entrepreneurs to make a living in such a wonderful setting. Craftspeople, teachers, artists, writers, salespeople, woodworkers, masons, carpenters, other tradespeople are examples of some of the individuals who have been successful in making Albany their home, while still being able to earn a living from their home.

B.) Planning Considerations:

Agriculture

Farming and Forestry are productive uses of the land that the Town wants to support.

Tourism

The Nordic ski trails associated with the Craftsbury Outdoor Center are an important resource both for recreation and economic development in Town. In addition to providing recreational resources to the residents of Albany, it brings tourism business to the area. Bike touring companies also use roads in the area.

Business Needs

In the past, there were multiple small general stores within the town, and even within recent years, two General Stores operated within the Village. Residents of town currently believe there exists a need for at least one enterprise of this nature to return, both as an important local source of grocery necessities and merchandise as well as an important spoke in the communities' social well-being.

Village Center Designation

The Vermont Village Center designation program, administered by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, recognizes and supports local revitalization efforts. State statute defines "Village Center" as "a traditional center of the community, typically comprised of a cohesive core of residential, civic, religious, and commercial buildings, arranged along a main street and intersecting streets. Industrial uses may be found within or immediately adjacent to these centers."

In a designated village center, building owners, lessees and the municipality may be eligible for the following benefits:

- 10% historic tax credits are 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% façade improvement tax credits are available for eligible facade work up to \$25,000.
- 50% code improvement tax credits are 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.

- Priority consideration for Municipal Planning 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.
- 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 downtown.

A step-by-step guide to the application process for village designation can be found at the following link:

http://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accd/files/Documents/strongcommunities/cd/designations/130531_Village_Center_Application_Guidelines_Final_web.pdf

Goals and Recommended Actions

- 1.) Promote the development of commercial uses in the Village.
 - Consider incentives, such as a low interest loan program, that will promote business development in the Village, including a general store.
 - Consider the benefits of Village Center designation.
- 2.) Encourage the development of commercial enterprises in town that that make use of locally grown or harvested products.
- 3.) Encourage the recreational potential of land as a draw for eco-tourism.
- 4.) Consider options of creating hiking trails and sites for tent camping on the Buchanan Lots; consider the potential impacts of trail development and camping on surrounding area and wildlife.
- 5.) Encourage coordination of efforts with the Northwoods Stewardship Center’s Kingdom Corps and Craftsbury Outdoor Center to enhance recreational opportunities.

X. FLOOD RESILIENCE

Flooding is one of the most common hazards in the United States, causing more damage than any other severe weather-related event. It can occur from tropical storms, hurricanes, swollen rivers, heavy rains, tidal surges, spring snowmelt, levee or dam failure, local drainage issues and water distribution main breaks. Impacts to drinking water and wastewater utilities can include loss of power, damage to assets and dangerous conditions for personnel. As storms become more frequent and intense and as sea levels rise, flooding will be an ongoing challenge for drinking water and wastewater utilities.

The Federal Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, and other scholarly articles explain that “flood resilience” refers to the ability of Towns, utilities, and landowners to withstand flooding events, minimize damage and rapidly recover from disruptions caused by such events. It is with that in mind, that Albany developed The Town of Albany Local Emergency Operations Plan, (LEOP). Our Town LEOP is updated yearly by the Emergency Management Coordinator.

The recommendations that directed the town to help build such a plan all include the following measures:

- 1.) Identify flood hazard and fluvial hazard areas
 - (use river corridor maps)
- 2.) Designate areas to be protected to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure and improved property, including:
 - a.) floodplains
 - b.) river corridors
 - c.) land adjacent to streams
 - d.) wetlands
 - e.) upland forests
- 3.) Identify Goals and Policies
- 4.) Implementation – strategies to protect the areas identified and designated above and to mitigate risks to the following:
 - 1) public safety
 - 2) critical infrastructure
 - 3) historic structures
 - 4) municipal investments
- 5.) Adopt flood hazard area regulations to mitigate against future flooding and fluvial erosion events, and to qualify the Town to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.
- 6.) Provide flood hazard area education materials to support flood damage mitigation and better insure community residents and property for future flood damage.
- 7.) Consider the participation in the FEMA Community Rating System (CRS) and a discount on flood insurance
- 8.) Update the Emergency Operations Plan and Hazard Mitigation Plan.

XI. Regional Compatibility

A.) Relationship with Adjacent Communities

Albany is bordered by Lowell and Eden on the west, Irasburg on the north, Barton on the northeast, Glover on the east, and Craftsbury on the southwest. All of these towns are located in Orleans County, with the exception of Eden which is in Lamoille County. The Albany Town Plan does not propose any developments or changes in the use of land that would negatively impact adjacent communities.

Lowell has a Town Plan that was originally adopted on April 14, 2009 and re-adopted in August 2014, and a zoning bylaw adopted 2003. One of the goals identified in Lowell's Town Plan is to maintain for recreational use that part of the Bayley-Hazen Military Road between Lowell and Albany that is no longer maintained for vehicular use. The Lowell Mountains are located in the eastern part of Lowell that borders Albany, and are the site of the 21 wind turbines of Kingdom Community Wind.

Eden has a Town Plan that was adopted in April of 2013, but has not adopted zoning regulations. Albany shares a very small border with Eden, and Albany Road in Eden connects to the Town of Albany after first crossing through the southeastern corner of Lowell.

Irasburg does not have an adopted Town Plan or land use regulations, . But is working on one. Route 14 and Creek Road connect Albany with Irasburg. The Black River and its tributaries, sections of which flow north from Albany to Irasburg, are also an important link between the two towns. The proposed regulation of River Corridors in Albany will benefit water quality and flood resilience downstream in Irasburg.

Barton has a Town Plan that was adopted November 4, 2008, and zoning regulations adopted in 2006. Barton shares a small border with Albany, and East Albany Road in Barton connects to Barton Road in Albany. The land in Albany that borders Barton is within the Barton River watershed. The land in the southwest corner of Barton that is immediately adjacent to Albany is zoned "Low Density," and is intended for non-intensive uses of land for agriculture, forestry and residential development.

Glover's Town Plan dates to 2006, and was re-adopted in 2011. Glover does not have zoning regulations, although it does have flood regulations. County Road in Glover crosses into Albany and meanders along the town boundary until it intersects with Hartwell Pond Road in the south east part of Albany.

Craftsbury's Town Plan was first adopted in May 2011, then revised and adopted in June 2016. Although Craftsbury does not have zoning regulations, it has adopted flood hazard regulations. Craftsbury is connected to Albany through roads, cross country ski and bike trails, and through Great Hosmer Pond which straddles the two towns. Close coordination with Craftsbury is necessary to successfully maintain and improve water quality in Great Hosmer Pond and the Black River and its tributaries, and to maintain the recreational resources associated with the Craftsbury Outdoor Center.

The goals articulated in Albany's Town Plan are compatible with the Town Plans of adjacent towns.

B.) Compatibility with State Planning Goals and Regional Plan.

We have strived to articulate that the goals expressed in each section of the Albany Town Plan, are compatible with the regional plan and State planning goals.