

## INTRODUCTION

### Goals & Objectives prioritized 1-3

1. Strive for public participation in the planning process at all levels.
2. Understand what the Town's residents want for the future "look and feel" of the Town balanced against the potential impact on taxes.
3. Build upon and continue to improve our relationships with neighboring towns.

### Strategies prioritized 1-4

1. Encourage citizen participation at all levels of the planning process.
2. Continue working with Town residents to find ways to turn their vision for the future of South Hero into reality.
3. Collaborate with other municipalities and regional organizations to address important regional issues, such as improving water quality in Lake Champlain.
4. Consider the impact of land use decisions on adjacent municipalities.

### Vision Statement (added "agricultural")

South Hero, Vermont is a friendly, vibrant, and beautiful small Lake Champlain Island town where folks live, work, play and visit. Abundant recreational, **agricultural**, and cultural amenities support healthy lifestyles, a sense of community, and a thriving local island economy.

### Themes

Prioritize list with icons:

Vibrant Villages  
Housing & Transportation  
Recreation and Recreation Economy  
Equity & Inclusion  
Climate Change and Resilience

### Page 2 Equity Icon: make it consistent with the family icon on page 1

Last paragraph: The Town recognizes that the work of creating an equitable and inclusive community is an ongoing process and is committed to continuing to reevaluate how to ensure its planning best supports its goals for equity and inclusion.

### Page 3

Town Plan Survey:

The Town Plan Survey included 23 questions covering demographics and the following themes: housing & transportation, climate change & resilience, equity & inclusion, recreation & recreation economy, and vibrant villages. The survey was distributed online & in paper form at the Town Office and Worthen Library.

The Town of Milton last updated its (or, you could use “their”) development regulations on June 7, 2021.

### **NATURAL RESOURCES & LAND USE**

**Page 2** Earth Resources. Earth resources, including sand, gravel and stone, are important resources particularly for use in construction and road maintenance. Mapped soil data from the NRCS shows limited potential for sand and gravel extraction in the Town. There is one mapped quarry in the area where there is sand and limited gravel potential. The Town of South Hero acquires sand from Highgate, gravel from North Hero, and salt is sourced from Barrett’s, Inc.. Given the limited potential in town, the likelihood of finding suitable property for a municipal sand/gravel quarry is not favorable unless the Town looks outside its borders. Despite this limited potential, it is important to ensure that any quarry, public or private, is properly designed, engineered and managed. Zoning standards shall include performance standards for extraction, noise, dust, hauling, reclamation and bonding to minimize impacts to neighbors. Proper end of life reclamation shall also be required.

### **Water Resources**

Streams and Drainage. South Hero falls into the “Northern Lake Champlain Direct” watershed. Water from a series of unnamed streams and wetlands generally flow directly into Lake Champlain and shall be monitored for excess phosphorus and other lake pollutants. Factors such as, larger rivers flowing into Lake Champlain, including the Lamoille (Colchester) and the Winooski River (Winooski), and overflows from the Burlington area can negatively affect the quality of water on the south end of South Hero Island. Flow from St. Albans Bay can negatively affect the Inland Sea area of South Hero from the Sandbar Causeway north around Kibbe Point into Keeler Bay and north to the Grand Isle Town border. Many homes get their drinking water directly from the Lake along the entire South Hero shoreline.

ADD: Protecting ground water. Mention sulfur wells issue and limited aquifer sources that need to be protected.

**Page 3** The two most significant wetlands in South Hero are the South Hero Marsh Wildlife Area and the Round Pond Natural Area. The Roy Marsh Wildlife Area (the Crick) outlets on the north side of U.S. Route 2, just west of South Hero Village, and extends southerly nearly to West Shore Road. The “Crick”, roughly 100 acres in size, is mostly wooded with deciduous trees. Round Pond is situated near the shoreline, northeasterly of the intersection of Landon Road and East Shore Road. The pond is mostly open water; the wetland is more extensive and includes some marshes northerly along the shoreline. This area is noted as an important protected nesting area for Loons.

Unfortunately, too much pollution is reaching Lake Champlain.....  
Wastewater treatment plants off island, in particular Burlington, Winooski, and St. Albans are an additional source of water pollution to Lake Champlain’s waters. South Hero recognizes the importance of clean water, a clean Lake Champlain and the negative impact a polluted Lake

Champlain has on the State's economy. South Hero supports efforts to decrease and stop all polluting of Lake Champlain.

Page 3-4 Phosphorus is one of the nutrient pollutants found in stormwater and arguably the greatest threat to clean water in Lake Champlain. Too much phosphorus pollution stimulates excessive growth of algae and nuisance aquatic plant growth. Of particular concern is the toxic cyanobacteria, also called blue-green algae, that can turn the water green, release a horrid odor and make people and pets sick.

**Page 4 Stormwater Management.** (Bottom of page) Another way that South Hero can work on limiting the amount of stormwater .....Examples including storm-water retention basins, gravel wetlands, bio-retention swales, limiting impervious surface and various green infrastructure techniques, including is something missing here?

#### **Page 5 Scenic Areas**

Add: Goal to re-evaluate and prioritize list.  
Emailed SHLT to get map of Conserved Land

Bottom page 5: Designated Scenic Views. 3rd sentence: Many years ago a Special Island Environment Committee created a scenic views listing of 17 locations and ranked them from 1 to 4, with 1 being the best.

#### **Page 8 Considerations for Future Land Use**

Vermont has established a framework of "designations" to offer incentives that encourage communities to maintain vibrant concentrated settlements separated by rural countryside. These programs provide a variety of incentives for development in the designated areas. Each program has a set of unique goals for making vibrant places. South Hero Village and Keeler Bay Village both have Village Center Designation (VCD). The VCD boundary is similar but distinct from the village core planning area boundaries. The VCD program has helped the Town of South Hero receive several State Grants including a Municipal Planning Grant to help create this Town Plan.

Reply to Comment: The tax Credit program is competitive. One business applied twice but was not chosen.

#### **Page 9 Commercial and Industrial Development.** Definition of light—industry should be in the Dev regs.

Commercial and industrial development in South Hero shall be of a scale and impact appropriate for the Town's rural character. There are no areas in town designated exclusively for commercial or industrial uses. As a result, heavy industry is not appropriate in the town. Most commercial and light industrial uses are encouraged in or adjacent to the villages, however the particular use will determine the appropriate location. All commercial and light-industrial uses will have appropriate review standards that protect the scenic beauty of the Town, protect the quality of life for nearby residences and businesses through robust performance and site design standards, and ensure compatibility with the resources that the Town is trying to protect. Light industries in particular will adhere to standards that ensure any manufacturing, fabrication, processing, assembly, storage or warehousing does not interfere with the character of the area.

Home occupations will be encouraged throughout the Town provided they fit in with the surrounding neighborhood. All uses must demonstrate that they have adequate road access

### **Page 13**

#### Village Core Land Use Planning Area Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Village Core Land Use Planning Area is to provide ~~for the~~ a mixed use, concentrated core of South Hero's traditional village centers. The planning area encompasses the historic village settlement area in addition to adjacent undeveloped land allowing for growth. Historic buildings are an important significant contributor to village character and should be preserved when possible. New development shall be consistent in siting and scale with the surrounding historic structures in the villages. A mix of residential, commercial and public uses are intended to be located in the village core and should be designed and sited to further traditional village center characteristics such as; walkable, pedestrian-friendly streets, sidewalks and walkways; human-scale buildings with architectural details, landscaping and lighting; an integrated street network; shops and services intermixed with homes; a variety of commercial establishments from retail shops to home businesses, professional offices, and tourist services; places for the community to gather for social and cultural events; and government services. Some small, low-impact industries may be appropriate.

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

#### Village Neighborhood Land Use Planning Area Purpose Statement

The purpose of a Village Neighborhood Land Use Planning area is to accommodate a walkable residential-neighborhood adjacent to the village core areas. Village neighborhood planning areas are primarily residential in nature at a higher density than the rural residential area, but with less density than the village core. Home occupations and some limited commercial establishments may be integrated but with less intensity than in the village core. The planning area consists of historic residences along main roads in addition to land available for new development. New roads shall be constructed to create an interconnected, walkable network and residences will be oriented to the street. It is intended that if a municipal wastewater system is developed it would be made available to the village neighborhood in addition to the village core.

#### Rural Residential Land Use Planning Area Purpose Statement

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

Development shall be carefully sited and designed to limit impact on important natural resources including; primary agricultural soils, habitat blocks, wildlife corridors, wetlands and other natural

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

### Shoreland Land Use Planning Area Purpose Statement

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

### **Goals & Objectives **renumber****

1. Allow South Hero to grow in a responsible way with respect for its unique characteristics, natural beauty and rural environment in a manner which encourages and nurtures South Hero's sense of community and civic pride.
2. Support equity and inclusion efforts as defined on page 2.
2. Support agriculture that follows best environmental management practices.
3. Ensure the compatible coexistence of development with major ecologically sensitive areas, such as wetlands, natural areas, Lake Champlain, scenic views and historic sites.
4. Enable mixed use of residential, agricultural, **light industrial** and/or commercial developments to flourish in the Town.
5. Encourage commercial and small, light industrial development within or adjacent to the designated Village Centers and along Route 2 and Route 314 in a way that maintains the beauty of the entrances to the Town from the east and west and prevents strip development.
6. Take advantage of existing or historical hamlets where appropriate.
7. Increase public awareness of the unique characteristics of South Hero in an effort to help preserve those characteristics for future generations.
8. Maintain adequate public access to the lake in an environmentally responsible manner.
- ~~9. Encourage compatible coexistence of development with major ecologically sensitive areas, such as wetlands, natural areas, scenic views, open and agricultural land, historic sites and Lake Champlain itself.~~ **redundant to #3**

9. Strongly support reduction **and cleanup** of lake, groundwater and air pollution.

10. Re-evaluate the “scenic views’ list. Consider adding development regulation(s) to specifically define preserving some or all of these views.

~~10. Be strong supporters of Lake Champlain cleanup efforts.~~

## **Strategies**

1. Restructure the Town’s Development Regulations to define and include Proposed Land Use Areas; Village Core, Village Neighborhood.

~~2. Recognize in plans and regulations that there are certain parts of Town that are more appropriate for development than others due to the capability of the soils for septic systems,~~

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~~presence of wetlands, natural areas, scenic areas, and primary agricultural soils, and existence of State and federal regulations. DRB review takes all of this under consideration.~~

3. **Evaluate** making provision for a Town Center with adequate capacity to host the Town Offices, ~~Fire Department, Rescue Squad~~, recreation fields and other functions and facilities as the need develops. Commercial enterprises, in a public/private partnership or just private, should **also** be included **in the evaluation**.

4. Support purchase and/or donation of development rights to maintain agriculture and important natural areas outside of the village areas.

5. **Encourage agricultural easements in subdivisions and promote Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) where soils are suitable.**

6. Require that “building envelopes” be defined for house sites in subdivisions to ensure coexistence with wetlands, natural areas, and farmland.

7. **Define “village core” area and “village neighborhood” area in the zoning regulations, encourage development in those areas and take steps to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, and enforce appropriate speed limits.**

8. ~~Commercial and small, light industrial enterprises should be encouraged by designating locations where these uses will be less restricted than in other parts of the Town.~~

9. **Support, encourage and inform the public about innovative solutions for safe sewage disposal.**

10. Support the development of retail, hospitality and service-based businesses best suited to serve the needs of residents, seasonal residents and the tourist population.

11. ~~Evaluate adding limited form-based zoning to the Development Regulations to maintain the character of the Town.~~

12. Reconsider the lot size limitations in zoning regulations.

13. Support and participate in Federal, State and local efforts to improve water quality in Lake Champlain. Ensure Town Development Regulations support that effort.

14. The Town Planning Commission should stay up to date on State and federal regulations concerning wildlife, wetlands, natural areas, and water quality and determine the best course for the Town to take regarding regulations for these areas. The Planning Commission should monitor the effectiveness and enforcement of town regulations.

15. The Town ~~should~~ shall support, seek out and apply for State, federal and private grants for the protection of natural areas, wetlands, scenic areas, recreation areas, and wildlife habitat.

16. The Town ~~should~~ shall support donations, leases, and other private, voluntary ways to protect natural areas, wetlands, scenic areas, recreation areas, and wildlife habitat.

17. Town zoning and subdivision regulations ~~should~~ shall be strictly and consistently enforced. All Town officials should be well-informed about these ~~ordinances~~ regulations.

18. In the Town Development Regulations, provisions ~~should~~ shall ensure that development compatibly coexists with the following special environmental areas:

a. Natural areas, especially significant fossil sites

b. Critical habitat on the outer islands

c. Public access areas on the lake shore

d. Lake Champlain shoreline e. Wetlands, including the "Crick" and the area of Round Pond

e. Scenic views

f. Flood plain areas

19. Ensure that the conversion of seasonal homes to year-round use meets local zoning standards and results in safe and adequate sewage disposal, water supply, and road access.

20. To protect the Lake Champlain shoreline and recognize its diverse and unique character, the Town Planning Commission and Conservation Commission shall keep apprised of lakeshore land use and identify shoreland areas that may be treated differently in the Town regulations.

21. Support State of Vermont efforts to minimize pollution to the Lake and groundwater.

22. Support programs which:

a. ~~Educate the public, including children and landowners, on the importance of agriculture, natural areas, wetlands, and historic sites.~~ Note: SHLT does this

b. ~~Organize volunteers who are interested in creating and maintaining town trails and coordinating with regional trail projects~~ Note: SHLT does this

#? Work cooperatively with the newly created Conservation Commission where appropriate.