

## REPORT ON TOWN OF SOUTH HERO TOWN PLAN UPDATE

The South Hero Planning Commission has been working to complete an update of the South Hero Town Plan. This effort is part of a continuing planning process that guides the Town's decisions for future growth. The planning process conforms to the State's four planning goals of Chapter 117, Section 4302, which strive for a comprehensive planning process that includes *citizen participation*, *the consideration for the consequences of growth*, and *compatibility with surrounding municipalities and encouragement of municipalities to work creatively together to develop and implement plans*.

The current South Hero Town Plan will expire on August 10, 2023. The plan update is a comprehensive re-write of the plan with a focus on developing a new community vision, updating the housing, transportation and land use sections and adding a new implementation table.

The plan update does make alterations to the designation of land area in South Hero. The plan proposed to add two new planning areas: village core and village neighborhood. These planning areas replace the previous village planning area and have a smaller overall footprint than the previous village planning area. The purposes of the new land use planning areas are:

**Village Core Planning Area:** to provide for a mixed use, concentrated core of South Hero's traditional village centers.

**Village Neighborhood Land Use Planning Area:** to accommodate walkable neighborhood adjacent to the village core areas. Village neighborhood planning areas are primarily residential in nature at a higher density than that of the rural residential area, but with less density of than the village core.

The purpose of this proposed change in land use designation is to better align standards in these areas with desired patterns for development. Reducing the size of the village core planning area will ensure commercial development occurs in the historic village core, while the addition of the village neighborhood planning area will provide for residential density at a scale appropriate for South Hero.

The change in land designation will reduce the size of the previous village planning area, and significantly reduce the size of the area where commercial development is encouraged, therefore, it is not expected to generate additional traffic or burden on public facilities. These changes will effect a long term benefit on the municipality by limiting development in areas where such development could result in high costs for the maintenance of infrastructure. This proposal provides for some vacant space areas where appropriate development could occur.

After considering alternative locations, uses, and impacts on other areas similarly designated, it has been determined that the areas under consideration are suitable for the proposed land use

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designation. The size and boundaries of the proposed change are appropriate for the proposed use, land capability, and existing development in the area.

The South Hero Town Plan consists of 8 chapters and 3 appendices: Introduction, Natural Resources & Land Use, Transportation & Complete Streets, Municipal & Community Facilities and Services, Housing, Local Economy, Flood & Climate Resilience, Implementation Program, Appendix 1: Scenic Resources, Appendix II: Enhanced Energy Plan, and Appendix III: South Hero Town Plan 2022 Survey. These chapters are consistent with the 14 goals established in Chapter 117, Section 4302. These goals aim to: maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village centers separated by rural countryside; provide a strong and diverse economy with rewarding job opportunities; broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities for people of all ages; provide for safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient transportation systems; to identify, protect, and preserve important natural and historic resources; to maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, and land resources; to encourage the efficient use of energy and development of renewable energy resources; to maintain and enhance recreational opportunities; to encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries; to provide for the wise and efficient use of natural resources; to ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing; to plan for, finance, and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services; and to ensure the availability of safe and affordable childcare. The chapters also contain all 12 required elements for a municipal plan established in Title 24, Chapter 11, Section 4382.

South Hero's Development Regulations are based on the information compiled and the goals expressed within the Town Plan. South Hero Planning Commission members have spent many hours discussing and compiling this document and would sincerely like to receive your feedback.