

SOUTH HERO TOWN PLAN

2015

PREPARED BY:

The South Hero Planning Commission and
Residents of the Town of South Hero

with the assistance of
The Northwest Regional Planning Commission
St. Albans, Vermont

Adopted by the South Hero Selectboard: Month xx, 2015

VISION FOR THE FUTURE of SOUTH HERO

South Hero is a beautiful, peaceful, thriving rural island town on Lake Champlain. This community prides itself on cooperation, participation, and sharing.

Land Use and Special Environment

South Hero is a town with a balance of broad open spaces, woodlands, and buildings offering magnificent views of the land, lake and mountains. Diverse farm operations, including dairies, orchards, fish farms, vegetable farms, and nurseries, contribute to these open spaces while at the same time providing jobs and offering locally grown products to residents and visitors. Houses are clustered in village areas, along the shoreline, or integrated carefully into the landscape that maintains the rural environment. While there is a strong seasonal resident community, some conversions of seasonal homes to year round use occur, but only when safe means of year round access, water supply and sewage disposal are provided. Revitalized historic village areas provide compact centers for shops, services, and homes, as well as places for the community to gather for social and cultural events. In addition to the shops and services, home businesses, professional offices, tourist services, and small, low impact industry contribute to a healthy economy. In 2001, the community achieved a redesign of the State highway through town to slow traffic flow and to enhance environmental, scenic and historic features. However, it has not yet been possible to implement that plan. Rural roads have retained their scenic quality; they remain narrow and tree-lined, yet are safe for automobiles, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

South Hero is known throughout the region for its Town recreation facilities -- its beaches and parks, its bike paths and trails, and its public access to the lake. Innovative agreements between the Town and landowners have enabled public trail access. The Town takes a responsible role towards protecting Lake Champlain water quality. Air, surface water and groundwater are clean in South Hero as a result of community efforts at providing alternatives to individual auto use, finding creative solutions to sewage disposal problems and runoff into the lake, and preservation of wetlands.

MAP 7: Current Zoning on page 77 reflects the current zoning districts. The South Hero Planning Commission is considering the addition of village zoning districts encompassing the South Hero and Keeler Bay village areas. The extents of these potential districts are shown on MAP 8: Proposed Land Use on page 78.

Village Building Guidelines

The Planning Commission intends to develop Form-based code guidelines for the Village District(s) in the South Hero Development Regulations. The intent of this code would be to develop a language for the physical character of the Village District along the primary travel corridors of U.S. Route 2, South Street and Vermont Route 314. The Form-based code guidelines would encourage residential, lodging, office and retail uses for these primary thoroughfares as well as the surrounding community. These guidelines, which if followed, would greatly reduce the need for Conditional Use and Site Plan reviews for businesses in the village areas. Such guidelines would create specific requirements for one and two-story buildings to have the appropriate parameters for height, frontage type and build-to lines for the development of properties along primary travel corridors, with the goal of providing pedestrian friendly entrances, walkable downtowns, off-street access to buildings along with parking, landscaping and

MAP 8: Proposed Land Use

