
BAY STREET AREA MARKET ASSESSMENT AND REUSE PLAN

195 BAY STREET, ST. JOHNSBURY, VERMONT



MARCH 2023

**U.S. EPA OFFICE OF BROWNFIELDS AND LAND REVITALIZATION (OBLR)
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

REGIONALLY DIRECTED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

This project was performed through regionally directed technical assistance provided by ICF, Vita Nuova LLC, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 1 through the EPA Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization (OBLR) Program.

The project was supported by the Town of St. Johnsbury, Vermont, and the Northeastern Vermont Development Association. Successful brownfields reuse and redevelopment often depends on early consideration of the range of potential future uses for each brownfield site. Local community priorities, market conditions, infrastructure availability, environmental contamination, public health issues, and local ordinances shape brownfield site reuse opportunities. Having this conceptual reuse plan and market assessment grounded in these local conditions will directly influence how that site is characterized, assessed, and cleaned up.



TA Recipient: Town of St. Johnsbury, VERMONT

Site Address: Bay Street Area including properties around 195 Bay Street, Saint Johnsbury, Vermont

Draft February 2023

Previous Grants:

CLEANUP GRANT(S)

Town of St. Johnsbury - BF00A01034, 1249 Main Street St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

ASSESSMENT GRANT(S)

Town of St. Johnsbury - BF96133401, 195 Bay Street St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

Northeastern Vermont Development Association – BF00A01042

Northeastern Vermont Development Association – BF00A00480

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PROJECT BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

The technical assistance (TA) team (ICF/Vita Nuova), in coordination with the Town of St. Johnsbury and the Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA), developed conceptual design options and a market assessment for the Bay Street Project Area that will assist St. Johnsbury and NVDA in the next phase of redevelopment. The goal is to redevelop the corridor from its current vacant/dilapidated state into productive use that fits into the neighborhood context and move forward with brownfield revitalization activities and redevelopment of the Bay Street area.

The TA contractors reviewed its work during four webinars held with the Town of Saint Johnsbury and U.S. EPA Region 1 as described below.

- **Webinar Project Status Review (August 24, 2022):** This webinar focused on the Stakeholder Interview Overview, the Site Visit Summary, and a review of Opportunities and Constraints.
- **Webinar 1 (September 22, 2022):** The TA contractors presented a Summary of the Market, an update on Opportunity and Constraints, Developable and Buildable Area Constraints, and an analysis of FEMA Mapping
- **Webinar 2 (October 20, 2022):** The TA contractors presented the Constraints and Regulatory Requirements, Environmental Issues, Development Opportunities, Brownfield Conceptual Reuse Plan, and Future Considerations.
- **Webinar 3 (November 29, 2022):** Discussion and Response to Submitted Comments from the Conceptual Reuse Plan previously presented on October 20.

Electronic copies of each webinar presentation were previously provided to the Town and U.S. EPA. The final summary, analysis, and conceptual reuse plan are included in this report. Maps in AutoCAD format will be provided to the Town under separate cover.

The attachments provided with this report include the following:

- Attachment 1: Webinar #1 PowerPoint- Initial Findings: September 22, 2022
- Attachment 2: Webinar #2 PowerPoint- Market Assessment Overview and Initial Conceptual Plan: October 28, 2022
- Attachment 3: Webinar #3 PowerPoint- Response to Questions and Comments from the Initial Conceptual Plan: November 29, 2022
- Attachment 4: High Resolution .jpg of Site Plan, formatted 24"x 36"
- Attachment 5: LVRT Impact Analysis – SE Group, December 13, 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Saint Johnsbury, Vermont requested technical assistance (TA) from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization (OBLR) and EPA Region 1 to identify conceptual reuse options for the Bay Street Project Area adjacent to 195 Bay Street, Saint Johnsbury. The Bay Street Project Area site includes approximately 100.97 acres and 24 parcels of property. The Project Area is in an existing flood plain that is vulnerable to potentially more frequent and intense storm events that are forecasted for the Northeast.

The Project Area is characterized primarily by light industrial uses and a rail yard. It is located adjacent to the historic downtown with limited pedestrian and vehicle access. The Passumpsic River straddles the area on the east, and the Lamoille Valley River Trail (LVRT), a new 94-mile multi-use linear recreational trail connects to the site area. The Town and the Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) have been active in recent years to create a new trail called the Three Rivers Trail that connects the LVRT trail to the Downtown. These efforts are intended to capitalize on the thousands of new trail users expected to visit Downtown and create development opportunities on properties within the Project Area.

TA is intended to assist in developing a community consensus on how the area could be redeveloped given its history of industrial, riverfront, and rail use and its location in a flood plain and river corridor. Historical uses in the area have created known and suspected environmental conditions on many of the properties. While several of the properties have had environmental assessments completed and others have undergone remediation, many have no public record of any environmental assessment or cleanup activities.

The market research and stakeholder interviews conducted as part of the TA reinforced the importance of tourism and recreational activities to the Town and region. While winter sports including skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, ice skating, and hockey continue to be an economic driver in the region, the use of trails for hiking and biking have increased significantly during non-winter months. The “Northeast Kingdom,” a term used to describe northeastern Vermont, has become a key destination for trail and mountain biking, drawing locals, Vermont residents, and out of state visitors. The State of Vermont, the Town of St. Johnsbury, the NVDA, and other regional economic development organizations have identified the economic benefits resulting from these recreational activities. The Town understands the value of marketing the historic downtown to these recreational users and building infrastructure and amenities that create a user-friendly environment.

The TA team conducted a Site Reuse Analysis using the market information to identify potential uses, opportunities, and constraints associated with potential reuse scenarios. Based on the Site Reuse Analysis the TA team developed a Conceptual Brownfield Site Reuse Plan focusing on additional recreational trails, related infrastructure and amenities, and likely development opportunities in the Project Area. The Site Reuse Plan identified several regulatory requirements that may impact future development scenarios.

The Site Reuse Plan recognizes a need to create partnerships between the public and private sector including existing property owners, potential businesses, developers and utilities, the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTTrans) Rail Program and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

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Project Background

The Technical Assistance Scope of Work charged the TA Team to initially review existing information/documentation on the site area, to conduct interviews with key stakeholders, conduct a site visit, and use market information to identify potential uses and opportunities and constraints associated with potential reuse scenarios. These tasks and findings are summarized below resulting in a Brownfield Conceptual Site Reuse Plan.

Open communication and shared materials enabled the Technical Assistance Team to learn about the community and listen to stakeholders. The Town of Saint Johnsbury and the NVDA provided multiple reports and background information including, but not limited to:

1. Connecting Downtowns & Trails, University of VT Extension March 2019
2. LVRT Traffic Counter from 8/1/2015 to 9/4/2016
3. Area-Wide Assessment Bay Street Area, Stone Environmental, December 2011
4. Saint Johnsbury Riverfront Conceptual Access Study, GPI 2017
5. Limited Phase II Environmental Site Assessment Report, 483 Bay Street, January 2020
6. Saint Johnsbury Sportsplex Feasibility Study, Cognitive Edge, July 2018
7. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2021-2025
8. Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Management Plan, VT Agency of Transportation, August 2022
9. Vermont Department of Tourism & Marketing Benchmark Study, 2017
10. LVRT Trail User Projections and Economic Impact Analysis, SE Group, Dec. 2022
11. LVRT Assessment – Infographic Final Package, SE Group, Dec. 2022
12. NVDA access to Base Mapping

Saint Johnsbury Location and Access

Saint Johnsbury is located in Caledonia County in the “Northeast Kingdom” of Vermont. It is the largest town by population in the Northeast Kingdom and has long served as a commercial center for the region. It’s 2020 population was 7,364 and encompasses approximately 36.8 sq. miles. The Town is situated at the confluence of the Passumpsic, Moose and Sleeper’s Rivers at the heart of the Passumpsic River Basin, one of the largest of the upper Connecticut River Watershed.

The Town is located along Interstate I-91 and the northern terminus of Interstate I-93. In addition, U.S. Route 2, Route 2B and U.S. Route 5 serve the Town. Saint Johnsbury is located 40 miles south of the Canadian border, 172 miles to Boston and 12 miles to the New Hampshire state border.

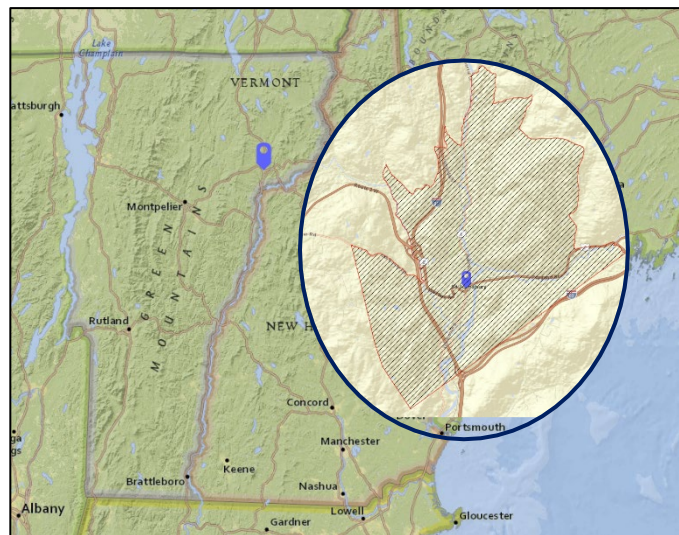


Figure 1: Saint Johnsbury, VT

Parcel Identification

The Bay Street Area comprises 24 properties. Several are active light industrial or commercial businesses, others are vacant, some are town or state-owned, and one is an electrical substation. Together, the properties total 100.97 acres. The largest is 515 Bay Street at 11.9 acres. The list below numbers each parcel by address, ownership, acreage, and current use. Please note #16 in the table below has no numerical address, but the tax parcel number is 026-002-057-000.

Address	Owner	Acreage	Current Use
Northern Parcels			
1. 25 Depot Street	D&D Holdings	.25 Acres	Vacant (Restaurant)
2. 292 Bay St.	VT Rail	52.0 Acres	VT Rail Yard
3. 256 Bay St.	FHS Holdings LLC	.16 Acres	Commercial warehouse
4. 259 Bay St.	FHS Holdings LLC	1.32 Acres	Warehouse/retail
5. 299 Bay St.	Green Mountain Power	9.6 Acres	Electrical Substation
6. 145 Bay St.	FHS Holdings LLC	.27 Acres	Commercial warehouse
7. 202 Bay St.	Zion Corp.	.98 Acres	Vacant Commercial Bldgs. (Proposed Hemp Processing)
8. 195 Bay St.	Saint Johnsbury	.21 Acres	Trail Pavilion
9. 136 Bay St.	Wild Blue Yonder LLC	.52 Acres	Commercial Warehouse
10. 119 Bay St.	Waste Management	.32 Acres	Vacant Industrial Land
11. Bay St.	Waste Management	.34 Acres	Vacant Industrial Land
12. 258 Bay St.	FHS Holdings LLC	.07 Acres	Commercial Bldg.
Southern Parcels			
13. Main St (LVRT Trail)	State of VT	3.3 Acres	Portion LVRT Trail
14. Bay St.	Vermont Rail	2.7 Acres	Portion Vermont Rail Yard
15. 799 Bay St. Ext.	Saint Johnsbury	5.3 Acres	Wastewater Treatment Plant
16. Bay St.	Vermont Rail	2.5 Acres	Vermont Rail - Vacant
17. 493 Main St	Saint Johnsbury	.32 Acres	Vacant -adjacent to LVRT Trail Head
18. Bay St. Ext.	Saint Johnsbury	.47 Acres	Vacant
19. 659 Bay St.	Bay St. LLC	4.0 Acres	Vacant
20. 515 Bay St.	L&R Inc.	11.9 Acres	Portion Vacant Bldg. & Offices
21. 521 Bay St.	Lumpsie LLC	1.4 Acres	Vacant Land
22. 507 Bay St.	507 Bay St. LLC	1.91 Acres	Containers/Office/Shop
23. 492 Bay St.	Bay St. Property LLC	.66 Acres	Storage/Warehouse
24. 483 Bay St.	CN Brown Co.	.47 Acres	Vacant

Brownfield mapping

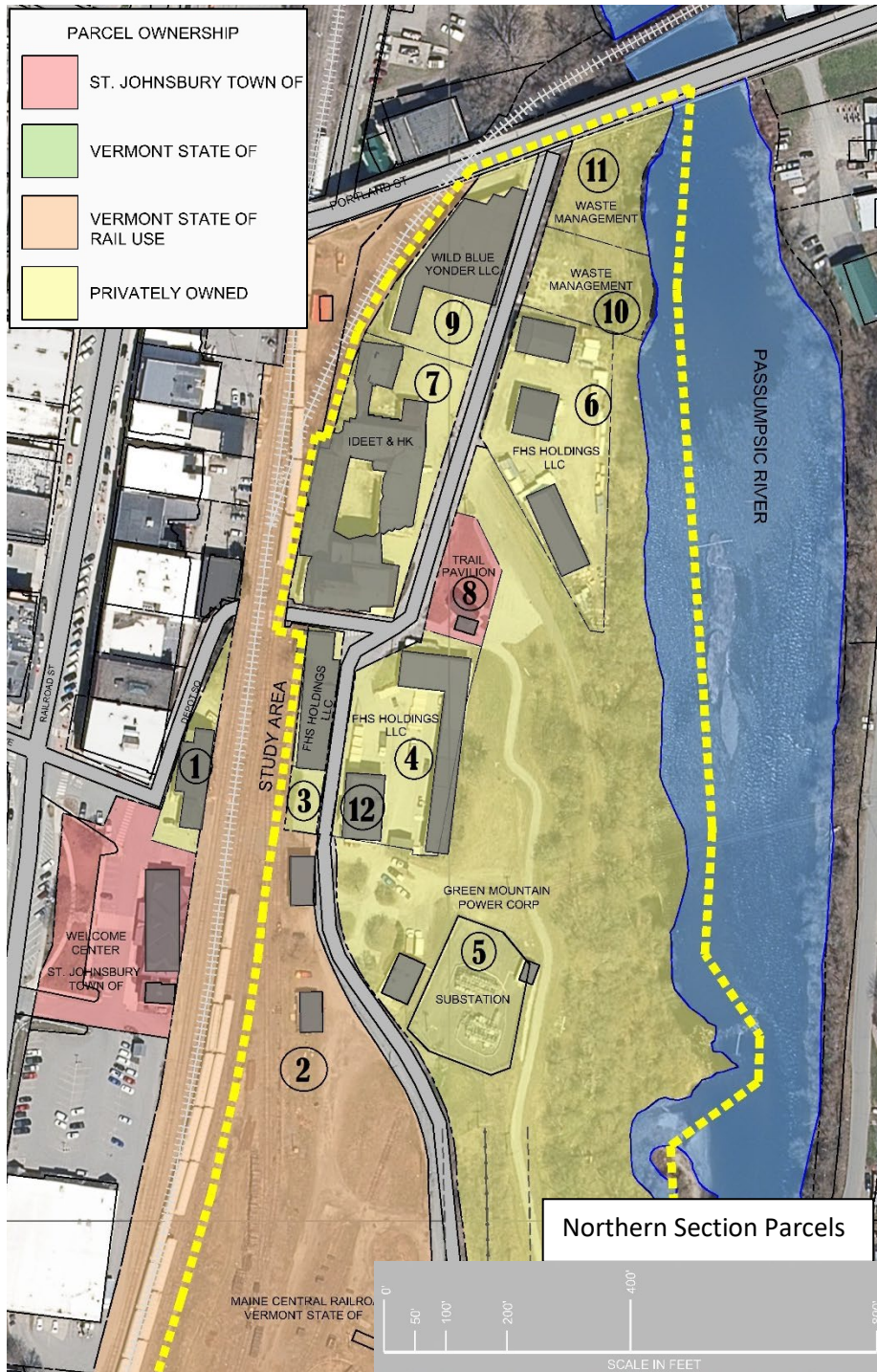
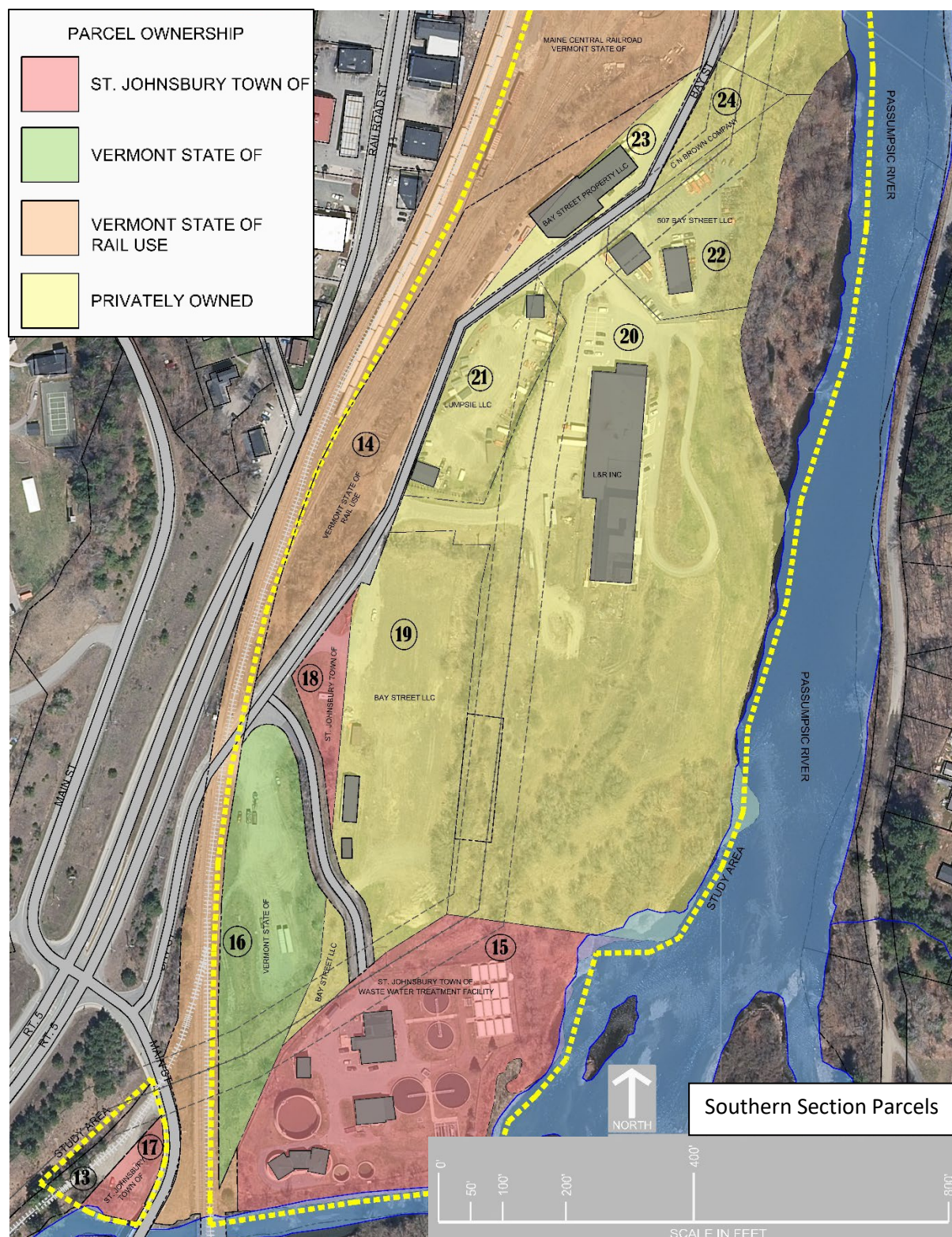


Figure 2: Brownfield mapping and ownership of northern parcels

Base mapping of the site was prepared using existing site information and publicly available geographic information system (GIS) data. Base maps of the parcels (northern section and southern section) are shown below.



Stakeholder/Community Engagement

The TA contractors spent significant time throughout the project to engage stakeholders from several sectors to identify and confirm the project boundaries, discuss area strengths and weaknesses, identify and discuss potential development constraints, and identify potential areas for site improvements. Community engagement was conducted through in person and online meetings, at a site tour that was held in July 2022 (see Attachment 2, site visit summary), and at an online meeting held in September 2022. Community input was used by the TA contractors to inform its site reuse planning. Stakeholders that participated in the community engagement process are listed below.

Organization	Stakeholder Market	Name
Developer	Developer	Josh Oakley
Real Estate	Developer	Tim Scott
Myer's - 507 Bay Street LLC	Economic Development	Nick Rivers
Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital	Economic Development	Shawn Tester
St. Johnsbury Development Fund	Economic Development	Daniel Kimbell
Kingdom Taproom	Economic Development	James Murphy
Lumpsie LLC - 521 Bay Street	Economic Development	Bruce Ralston
Passumpsic Savings Bank	Economic Development	Jim Kitsch
State of Vermont	Local Official	Scott Beck
Vermont	Local Official	Tim Tierney
White and Burke, town consultant	Local Official	Stephanie Clarke
Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA)	Local Official	Doug Morton
VT Transportation	Local Official	Kevin Clairmont
VT Transportation	Local Official	Mark Fitzgerald
St. Johnsbury, VT	Local Official	Tracy Zschau
Planning Commission Chair	Local Official	Jim Brown
Catamounts arts	Quality of Life	Jody Fried
St. Johnsbury Chamber of Commerce -	Quality of Life	Gillian Sewake

Figure 4: Community Stakeholders



The highlights of the stakeholder engagement feedback is summarized in the table below.

<u>Economic Development</u> Strengths: • Proximity to Downtown Business District • LVRT and River front access • Potential synergy with the redevelopment of Ralston Mills • Potential Tax Increment Financing district • Political will and influence of key partners in the neighborhood Constraints: • Need better connection between downtown and Bay Street • Public improvements to sidewalks, lighting, etc. • Current industrial orientation is not appropriate for residential use • Shortage of labor for building • Difficult to attract professionals to area • No public transportation	<u>Local Government/Local Officials</u> Strengths: • Potential synergy with the riverfront redevelopment • Housing prices have increased • Grand list growing modestly • Grants and funding incentives available Constraints: • Struggle to get companies to locate in Bay Street • Prime properties have issues to redevelopment • Differences between state and local visions for redevelopment
<u>Developer/Real Estate</u> Strengths: • Potential synergy with the redevelopment LVRT and other investments in neighborhood • Investments planned or underway • Opportunity for multifamily, adaptive reuse • Opportunity to improve pedestrian environment and connection to downtown Constraints: • Limited number of developers • Lack of housing options - single-family, apartments, multi-family, and condos. • Vehicles dominant form of transportation	<u>Quality of Life</u> Strengths: • Art and culture have a large reach to other towns and are intertwined with community • Health and Wellness • Opportunity for more murals and performing arts • Public art • Recreation Constraints: • Conflict between cars and pedestrians • Flooding • Conflict between uses • Lack of wayfinding

Market Assessment

A Market Assessment was completed to gain insight into market conditions, the market area, and the opportunities for brownfield site reuse. The information was shared with the local stakeholders on a webinar held on September 22, 2022. The following is a summary of the market research and analysis that was presented at the meeting.

The Market Assessment includes a high-level assessment of the real estate market within the Bay Street Area in Saint Johnsbury, VT. Key data includes demographic characteristics, commutation patterns, and employment trends relative to the 10, 20 and 30-minute drive times from the center of the Town of Saint Johnsbury. The market assessment also considers the preferred site boundaries that were discussed during the stakeholder engagement process. The preferred site boundaries include the Bay Street Area, generally defined as the known brownfield, vacant, and/or otherwise underutilized properties in and around Bay Street (located to the south and east of Downtown Saint Johnsbury). Finally, the Market Assessment considers the potential for increased tourism resulting from investments made by the State of Vermont, by the Town, and by the NVDA to the recreational trail system. Local stakeholders have the expectation that the improvements to the LVRT recreational trail, the completion of the LVRT and other ongoing trail improvements, may result in an increase of visitors to the area once the State-wide trail is completed.

Population

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, a ten-minute drive radius encompasses most of the Town of Saint Johnsbury. The population in 2020 was 7,364. The area has a median household income of \$43,256 and a median net worth of \$79,367. The population within a twenty-minute drive radius of the subject property was 18,414 in 2020. The twenty-minute drive radius has an 18% higher median household income of \$51,097 and significantly larger median net worth of \$140,043.

The population within a thirty-minute drive radius of the subject property was 36,280 in 2020, representing approximately 483% increase over the ten-minute drive radius. The thirty-minute drive radius has a similar median household and median net worth as the twenty-minute drive time radius.

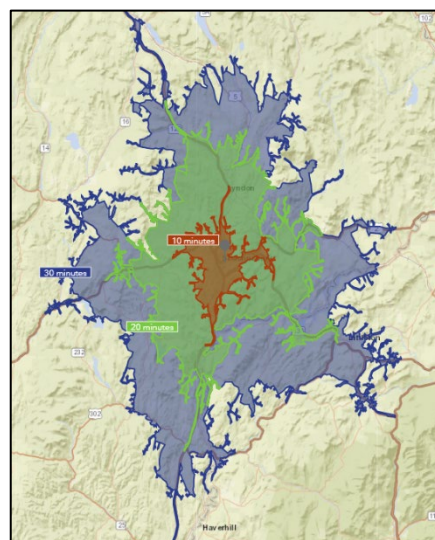
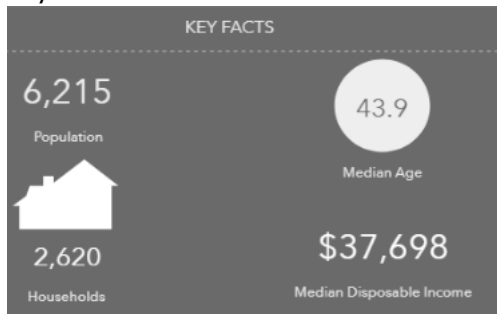


Figure 5: 10-15-20 drive radius

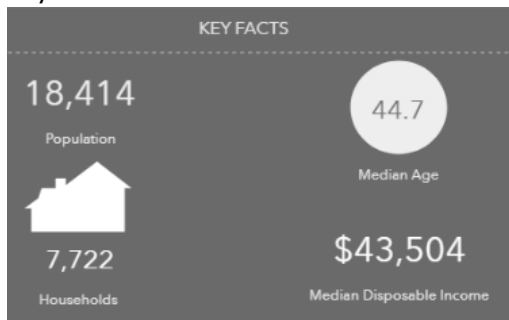
Key Facts within 10 Minute Drive



Income Facts within 10 Minute Drive



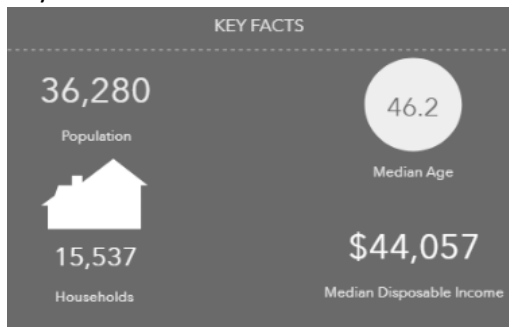
Key Facts within 20 Minute Drive



Income Facts within 20 Minute Drive



Key Facts within 30 Minute Drive

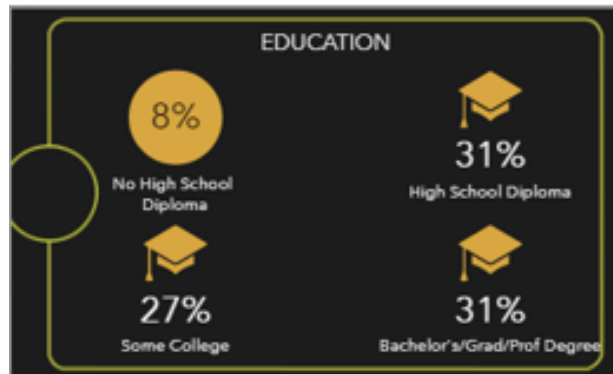


Income Facts within 30 Minute Drive

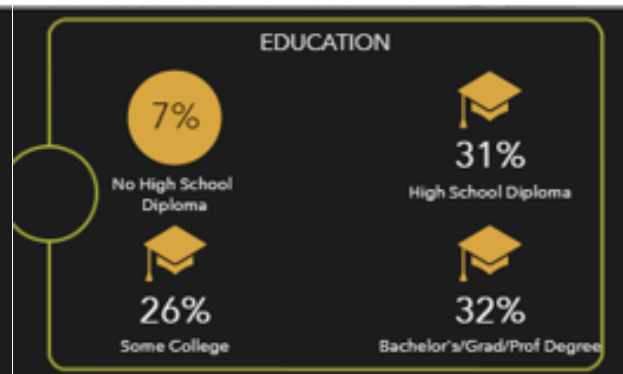


Educational Attainment

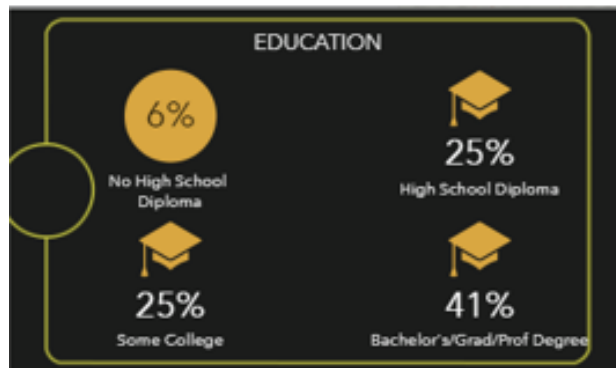
St. Johnsbury CDP



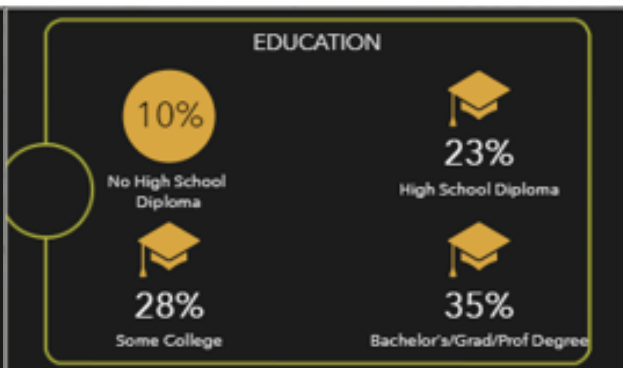
Caledonia County, VT



Vermont



USA



Educational attainment is important to understanding workforce opportunities. A majority of the population age 25 and over in the Saint Johnsbury Census Designated Place (CDP) have a high school diploma or GED. An estimated 31% of the population within Saint Johnsbury CDP has some college education or has achieved an associate degree or higher. Within Caledonia County, the percentage of the population age 25 and over that has some college education or higher is 32%. The percentage of college participation increases to 41% in the State of Vermont and 35% in the U.S.A. There is an extremely low unemployment rate in Saint Johnsbury, which may indicate a lack of available employees.

Workforce and Employment

According to the Vermont Department of Labor¹, the total employment for the Saint Johnsbury Labor Market Area (LMA) as of 2021 was 9,565, with the following breakdown:

- There are 7,878 jobs in the public sector, which accounts for 82% of jobs. The public sector is made up of the following industries:
 - Goods producing industries, including manufacturing and construction accounted for 2,133 jobs or 27% of public sector jobs.
 - Service industries are the largest private employment sector at 5,745 jobs or 60% of total jobs
 - The largest subset of service industry jobs is in Educational and Health Services with 2,155 jobs or 37% of service industry jobs.
- Government employment sector has 1,687 jobs or 17.7% of total jobs.

According to the recent LVRT Economic Impact Study (SE GROUP 2022-commissioned by NVDA) assuming “Significant Growth”, the future economic impact potential for Caledonia County include:

- Approximately 163,499 annual visitors with 75% in the summer and 25% in the winter.
- Average Daily Spending is highest for overnight visitors spending approximately \$160.23/day, followed by a non-local day visitor spending \$70.52/day.
- The key sales by sector from trail users are retail, recreation, and entertainment and the most impacted are restaurants and bars.

Development Opportunities

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) and Three Rivers Trail

The LVRT, when completed in early 2023 will be a 93-mile recreational trail with a trailhead beginning on Saint Johnsbury’s Main Street that runs across northern Vermont to Swanton, VT. Portions of the LVRT are currently in use and final work is almost complete including connections to other existing trails. The trail is owned and in large part managed by the State of Vermont Agency of Transportation. It is primarily a gravel pathway intended for hikers, bicyclists and snowmobile enthusiasts who will have the

¹ <http://www.vtلمي.info/regionلما.cfm?لماcode=000019#crc>

opportunity to use trail heads along the pathway to begin and end at different sections. The NVDA commissioned an economic impact study to determine the benefits anticipated from local, state residents and out of state users. The study, prepared by the SE Group, identifies significant numbers of trail users who are expected to utilize the Saint Johnsbury trailhead and the beneficial impact as users expend funds for a variety of services in the Town and specifically within their historic downtown which is immediately adjacent to the Bay Street Project Area. The study emphasizes that to achieve the full economic potential of the trail it must be widely promoted, there must be substantial investments in community connectivity and amenities and significant efforts around tourism/camping and lodging development. Figure 6 indicates various growth of visitors in the Caledonia County section of the trail in part depending upon “Trail Investment”.

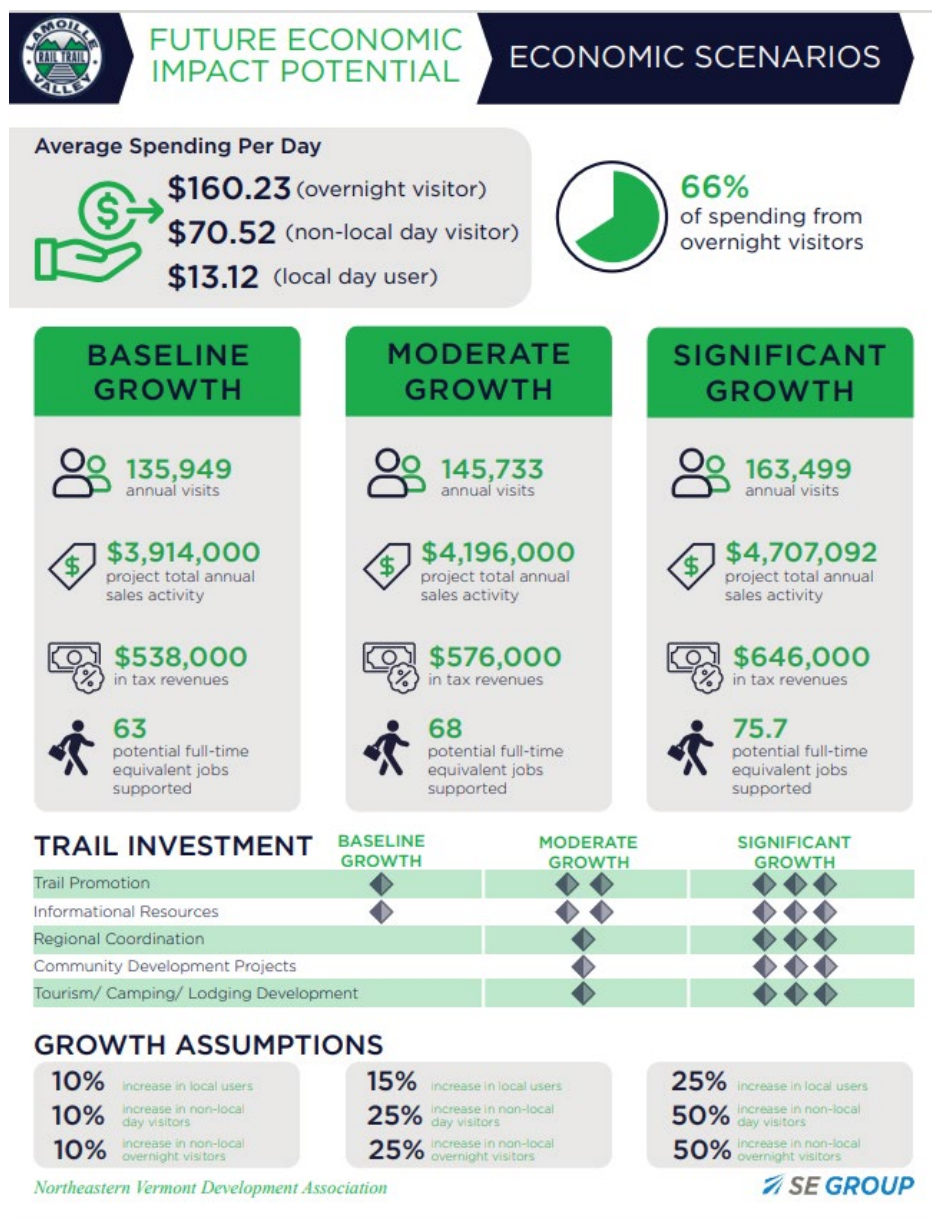


Figure 6: LVRT Future Economic Impact Potential

The Town has already taken numerous steps to facilitate the ability of expected trail users to end or begin their use of the LVRT Trail at the trailhead and come into the downtown. These include the beginning of a connecting trail near the entryway on Bay Street to the downtown partially along the Passumpsic River. A trail pavilion was built at 195 Bay Street, a former brownfield, as an amenity for trail users where a vacant building once stood. Thousands of expected LVRT trail users could create demand for additional amenities and the development of vacant and brownfield properties in the Project Area.

Historic Downtown/Designated Downtown

Saint Johnsbury's downtown is a vibrant historic commercial area within a short walking distance to the Bay Street Area. A significant portion of the downtown and a small section of the Bay Street area is classified as a "Designated Downtown" by the State of Vermont. This designation provides significant economic incentives to the Town and property owners to further commercial development and rental housing.



Figure 7: Historic Downtown, July 2022

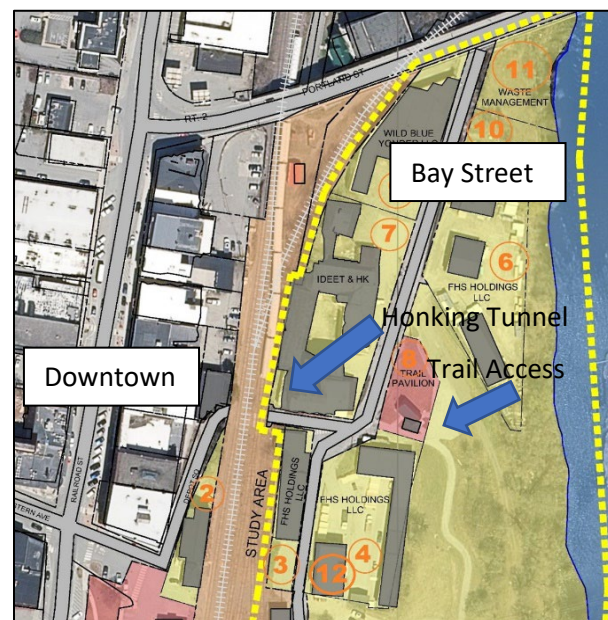
While the retail and commercial activity in the historic downtown is significant, many of the upper levels of historic buildings are vacant. The Town is aware of the potential for residential development on the upper floors and is actively seeking developers and partners who could add to the downtown housing stock.

Vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists access the Bay Street area from downtown by using a small, single-lane roadway that travels under railroad tracks. The roadway is known locally as the "Honking Tunnel" given a curve one must negotiate without being able to see oncoming traffic. The Honking Tunnel is an



Figure 8: Honking Tunnel, July 2022

important asset given the lack of other easy access alternatives to the downtown from Bay Street. Improvements to the tunnel, or the development of transportation alternatives for motorized and non-motorized transportation



modes, would likely benefit the Bay Street area by opening opportunities for new commercial development and retail uses along Bay Street.

Development Constraints

Brownfields & Unknown Environmental Conditions

The Bay Street area is, and historically has been, primarily an industrial area with a wide variety of uses that are suspected to have contaminated properties. In 2011 the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation retained Stone Environmental, Inc. to perform an Area-Wide Assessment (AWA) of an area that included a portion of the Bay Street area. The AWA study included 41 properties while the current Bay Street Project Area includes 24 properties. Funding was provided by a Technical Assistance Grant from the U.S. EPA. A section of the report summarized the historical uses of the study area:

“Historical uses within Project Area include saw mills, woodworking facilities – including wood treatment and preservation, grain milling and storage, a coal gasification plant, electrical power generation, granite and marble manufacturing, automotive maintenance, print shops, bulk petroleum fuel storage, and an extensive rail yard with associated ancillary support (such as machine shops, painting sheds, and blacksmiths), a turn table, warehousing, coal and petroleum fuel storage.....Based on the historical uses within and adjacent to the Project Area, contaminants of concern (COC) are numerous.” - 2011 Area Wide Assessment, Bay Street Area, Stone Environmental

The AWA was intended to be used as the basis for follow up work on properties in the project area including Phase I ESAs for redevelopers and Phase II ESAs across the project area. The report further stated that “...Prior investigations of environmental sites within the Project Area, including, the former Northern Petroleum properties, former Lewis Oil, Lewis-Sangravco, the former Ralston Purina Mill, Central Vermont Public Service (CVPS), and the Saint Johnsbury Rail Yard have demonstrated widespread petroleum contamination in soil and ground water within the middle third of the Project Area...Further investigation is necessary to assess the REC’s and data gaps identified within the Project Area”

Based on known reporting from USEPA ACRES and CIMC online search and properties that the NVDA have included in its Brownfield programming, the following properties in the Bay Street Project Area are known to have undertaken environmental investigations; cleanup activities have also been conducted on several sites. The status of Brownfield sites in the Bay Street area is summarized below.

Address	Brownfield Status
1. 25 Depot St -D & D Holdings, Inc	Unknown
2. 292 Bay St. – VT Rail	Unknown
3. 256 Bay St. – FHS Holdings, LLC	Unknown
4. 259 Bay St. – FHS Holdings, LLC	Unknown
5. 299 Bay Street – Green Mountain Power	Unknown
6. 145 Bay St. – FHS Holdings, LLC	Unknown
7. 202 Bay St. – Zion Corp.	Phase II 2021, Partial Corrective Action Plan, Remedial Design Investigation, 2022, Cleanup – request for bids early 2023
8. 195 Bay St. - Town	Phase I 2012, Phase II 2013, Cleanup complete 2019
9. 136 Bay St. Wild Blue Yonder LLC	Unknown
10. 119 Bay St. – Waste Management	Unknown – see Property #11
11. Bay St. – Waste Management	Phase I Completed
12. 258 Bay St. – FHS Holdings, LLC	Unknown
13. Main St. (LVRT Trail)	Unknown
14. Bay St. – VT Rail	Unknown
15. 799 Bay St. Ext. - Town	Unknown
16. Bay St. – VT Rail	Unknown
17. 493 Main St. - Town	Unknown
18. Bay Street Ext. - Town	Phase I Completed 2009 for ROW and Roadway
19. 659 Bay Street – Bay St. LLC	Phase I Completed 2009
20. 515 Bay St. L & R Inc.	Phase I Completed 2009
21. 521 Bay St. – Lumpsie, LLC	Phase I Completed 2009
22. 507 Bay St. – 507 Bay Street LLC	Unknown
23. 492 Bay St. – Bay Street Property LLC	Phase I Completed 2009
24. 483 Bay St. – CN Brown Co.	Phase I & Limited Phase II, March 2020, VT DEC Notification

Floodplain/Wetlands

The Bay Street area includes FEMA-designated floodplains and Class II wetlands. The presence of these natural features is likely to constrain development or add costs to new development or building renovation.

Flood Hazard Areas identified on the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) are identified as a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). SFHA are defined as the area that will be inundated by the flood event having a 1-percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year (100 -year flood). SFHA's located within the Project Area are labeled as Zone A7. Moderate flood hazard areas labeled Zone B are also shown on the FIRM and are the areas between the limits of the base flood and the 0.2-percent-annual-chance (or 500-year) flood. The areas of minimal flood hazard, which are the areas outside the SFHA and higher than the elevation of the 0.2-percent-annual-chance flood, are labeled Zone C. In addition to the floodplains, a Class II wetlands area runs along the riverfront from the wastewater treatment plant north to just east of the electric substation. The TA contractors completed a map of the Bay Street area highlighting the existing building footprints, the flood impact areas (pink and green areas), and Class II wetlands (green area). Areas with minimal flood impacts are shown in gray.

Sacha Pealer, a State of Vermont Floodplain Manager for the region, provided the TA Contractors information about the FEMA Flood Zone areas and wetlands around Bay Street. She also noted that FEMA FIRM maps have not been updated since 1986, and FEMA is in the process of updating the maps. Typically, before issuing a formal map change, FEMA issues preliminary Flood Hazard Data. The State expects FEMA to release this information in early 2023. Once this data is available, property owners and communities will have an opportunity to review the data, consider its impacts to property, and comment on proposed changes to the FEMA flood maps.

Both the Flood Hazard Area and the Class II Wetlands are regulated by the State and by Town zoning regulations. In addition, depending on the size and nature of development or improvement, the State of Vermont ACT250 regulations may also apply. Any

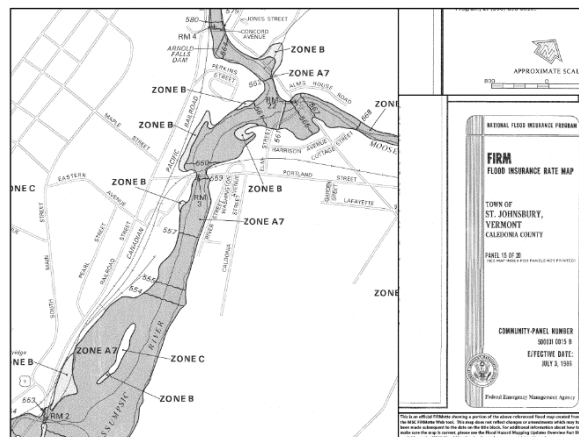


Figure 9: FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM)

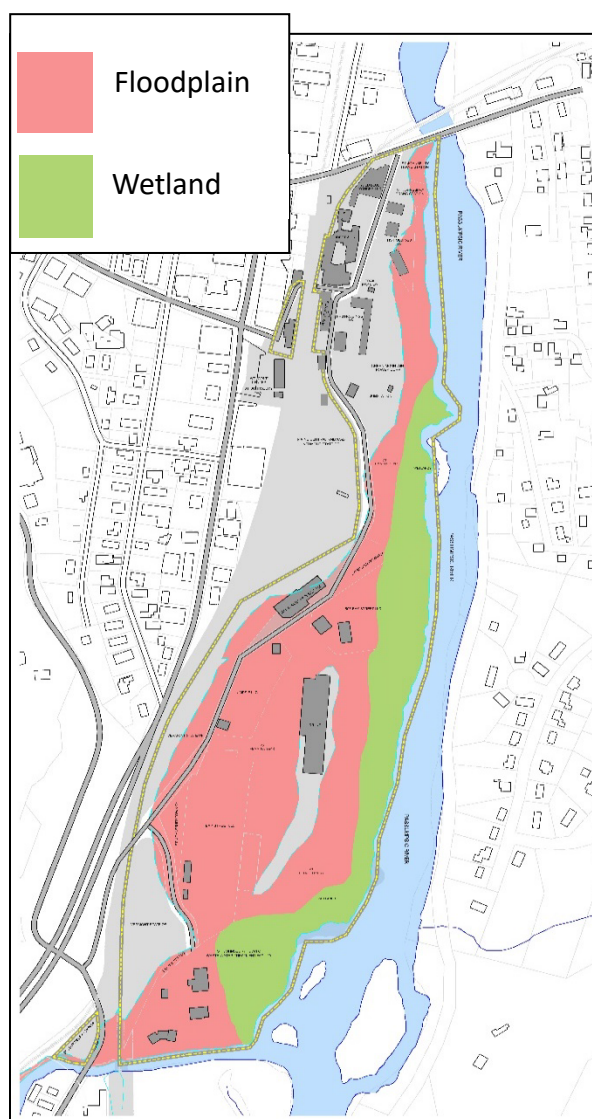


Figure 10: Bay Street Area floodplains and wetlands

proposed developments or significant improvements will require review and analysis by appropriate engineering and land use professionals to determine what permits may be required.

Rail Property/Railyard

The Bay Street area includes three rail properties totaling 57.2 acres. The largest, at 52 acres, and an adjacent parcel at 2.7 acres, include the main rail tracks heading south and north through the Town and what is called the rail yard. The rail yard includes additional spurs and a turntable/wheelhouse. A third parcel south of the rail yard on the eastern side of Bay Street (tax parcel number 026-002-057-000) is adjacent to an active rail track but has no tracks or buildings itself and is 2.5 acres.

The State of Vermont (VTrans) owns the tracks and railyard and leases the property to the Washington County Railroad Company, a private operator of a short line freight railroad. The rail line and rail yard reportedly has experienced a reduction in the number of active trains in recent years. The State is unlikely to sell or develop any portions of the rail yard property other than to support increased rail operations. This is consistent with an overall goal to maintain a freight rail system that supports a variety of businesses that depend on rail and actively market the lines to those that could transport materials via rail instead of relying entirely on truck-hauling to move supplies and products. The railyard in this area is not currently equipped with an active transloading operation and only a small building on Bay Street is present for rail staff and operations. A vacant 2.5-acre parcel south of the railyard is another potential development parcel, one of the few that is located outside of the floodplain, and adjacent to two other likely development parcels along Bay Street. VTrans has indicated they have not considered selling the parcel but would consider leasing the property for development.

Rail Crossing Equipment at Bay Street

The at-grade rail crossing located at Bay Street is a Passive Grade Crossing consisting of warning signs and flashing lights as a train approaches. This has been sufficient in the past given the limited vehicular traffic, consisting largely of truck traffic and employees at businesses along Bay Street. With the new LVRT trailhead at Main Street, the number of hikers and bicycles heading north is expected to increase significantly raising the question of the need for Active Grade Crossing equipment including gates that lower and raise as a train passes. In addition to increased users from the trail, new development along Bay Street will likely increase vehicular traffic.



Figure 11: Rail Crossing at Bay Street

The Vermont Rail operation has an established process to petition and evaluate a request for an upgrade to an at-grade rail crossing. The availability of funding to upgrade crossings is based on the results of the evaluation process and would be allocated as funds are available.

Overhead Electrical Transmission Wires

The Green Mountain Power Company (GMP) operates an electrical substation at 299 Bay Street with overhead transmission lines running north and south through portions of the Project Area. On several of the potential development properties, GMP maintains a 100-foot building restriction – with 50 feet on either side of the poles. In their current location, this would reduce any new construction or structures on a property within 50 feet of the powerlines. It may be possible to negotiate with the utility a limited use such as parking or other passive use under or within 50 feet of the powerlines. Relocation of power lines may also be considered in future development scenarios with the potential developer assuming the cost.



Figure 12: Electrical substation and overhead power lines

Properties with Development Potential

Based on outreach to owners and stakeholders it is understood that several of the properties are available for sale, or the owners are seeking additional development on them, or they are currently vacant. These properties are listed and further described below.

Address	Owner	Acreage	Current Use
Northern Parcels			
(#7) 202 Bay St.	Zion Corp.	.98 Acres	Vacant Commercial Bldgs. (Proposed hemp processing)
(#10 & #11) 119 Bay St.	Waste Management	.66 Acres	Vacant Industrial Land
Southern Parcels			
(#16) Bay St.	VT Rail	2.5 Acres	VT Rail - Vacant
(#18) Bay St. Ext.	Saint Johnsbury	.47 Acres	Vacant
(#19) 659 Bay St.	Bay St. LLC	4.0 Acres	Vacant
(#20) 515 Bay St.	L&R Inc.	11.9 Acres	Portion Vacant Bldg. & Offices
(#21) 521 Bay St.	Lumpsie LLC	1.4 Acres	Vacant Land
TOTAL		21.91 Acres	

(#7) 202 Bay Street is owned by Zion Corp. The Property consist of several existing commercial buildings on .98 acres. The site was developed in the early 1900's as a retailer of grain and coal. Since the closure of the grain mill the site buildings have been leased for various personal and commercial purposes. Zion Corp recently purchased the property with the intent to renovate it as a hemp processing plant. The property is not within a wetlands nor floodplain zone according to current FEMA mapping. In May of 2022, Stone Environmental prepared a Partial Corrective Action Plan for Zion Growers and NVDA. Zion Growers enrolled in Vermont's Brownfields Reuse and Environmental Liability Limitation Act (BRELLA) program on March 16, 2021, as a *bona fide* prospective purchaser and is completing corrective actions to allow site redevelopment as an industrial hemp processing facility. The CAP was approved by VERMONT DEC and Stone is currently working with Zion Growers design team to prepare a request for bids and select a remedial contractor.

(#10 & 11) 119 Bay Street and an adjacent property are owned by Waste Management. The Town Assessor records show ownership as Saint Johnsbury Trans Station. The two parcels total .66 acres and are vacant with portions of concrete pads remaining on the 119 Bay Street parcel. Both are vacant and located on the riverfront. Prior discussions have taken place regarding the potential acquisition of the parcels for recreational/park use by the town. The parcels were identified as possible acquisitions in the 2017 Riverfront Access Report. EPA awarded a grant to conduct a Phase I of the properties in 2021 – not underway yet. FRS Link # 110071194930)

(#16) Bay Street Extension/Bay Street (Tax ID: 026-002-057-000) is owned by State of Vermont Rail. The property is not actively used but is alongside an active rail on another rail parcel. It is unknown if any environmental assessments have been conducted on the property.

(#18) Bay Street Extension is owned by Town of Saint Johnsbury and not actively used. A Phase I Environmental Assessment was completed in 2009.

(#19) 659 Bay Street is owned by Bay Street LLC (Brinks). The property is a vacant parcel with a previous building demolished and removed. The property consists of four acres with access from Bay Street and the Bay Street Extension. Currently, the Bay Street Extension primarily provides access to the Town wastewater treatment plant. The Bay Street Extension runs through a small portion of the property at the southern end. The owner has indicated the property is available for sale. The majority of the property is in the floodplain classified by FEMA as Zone A7 which would place restrictions on development. Phase I Environmental Assessment completed in 2009.

(#20) 515 Bay Street is owned by L&R Inc. (aka Ralston Mill). The property is one of the larger parcels in the Bay Street Project Area at 11.9 acres. The primary building on the property is listed at 80,904 sq. ft consisting of mixed-use commercial offices, warehousing, and a vacant portion previously used as a grain mill building of approximately six stories. The most recently renovated section of the building consists mostly of a two-story office space, leased to a variety of tenants including holistic health practitioners. The owner of the building has investigated possible options to renovate the vacant portions and has been approached by various tenants and developers proposing a variety of uses. The majority of the property is located in a Zone A7 floodplain with the exception of the existing building located on a higher elevation as Zone C and a smaller area in Zone B. The property also has a long narrow stretch of wetlands along the river. This property has electrical power lines from a nearby substation running along its west side. The Green Mountain Power Company maintains a 100-foot building restriction – with 50 feet on either side of the poles. In their current location, this would reduce any new construction or structures on the property within 50 feet of the power lines. It may be possible to negotiate with the utility a limited use such as parking under or within 50 feet of the powerlines. Depending on a proposed future use it may be possible to negotiate to move the power lines and poles closer to Bay Street with a developer assuming the cost. A Phase I Environmental Assessment was conducted in 2009.

(#21) 521 Bay Street is owned by Lumpsie, LLC. The property is 1.4 acres in size with a double bay garage-type building of approximately 1,200 sq. ft. The property was most recently used for the sale of storage sheds. According to the most recent FEMA mapping most of the property is located in a Flood Zone A7. A Phase I Environmental Assessment was completed in 2009.

Brownfield Conceptual Site Reuse Plan

An initial Conceptual Site Reuse Plan was presented to local stakeholders on a Webinar (#2) held on October 20, 2022. Refinements were made to the Plan which were discussed on a Webinar (#3) held on November 29, 2022. Electronic copies of the presentations were made available to the Town, the NVDA and U.S. EPA. Maps in AutoCad format are provided to the Town and NVDA under a separate cover.

Trail Location and Proposed Connection to Existing Trail System

The Brownfield Conceptual Plan presents two trail scenarios, trail option A (TOA) and trail option B (TOB). Both trail systems begin at the LVRT trailhead and ultimately connect with the existing Three Rivers Trail (TRT) on the Green Mountain Power parcel. TOA's location is consistent with ongoing planning efforts siting the trail along or in close proximity to the Passumpsic River. TOB is proposed to run adjacent to Bay Street before connecting with the existing TRT. Although both trail options begin and end at the same locations, there are distinct differences and opportunities each trail offers.

The southern end of TOA connects with the LVRT system and runs northeastward over the railroad tracks (trail-rail crossing), through the State of Vermont and Bay Street LLC properties, crosses the water treatment facility's access road, continues north of the wastewater treatment facility, adjacent to the river and connects with existing TRT on the Green Mountain Power Company land. This route is approximately 2,800 LF from the trail-rail crossing to the point of connection with the existing TRT (see Brownfield Conceptual Plan). The route guides trail-goers close to proposed economic development areas, minimizes wetland disturbance, and limits potential specialized trail construction such as raised boardwalks, footbridges, etc.

Trail Option A1 (TOA1) is a variation on TOA. The trail runs eastward from the trail-rail crossing, south of the water treatment facility, adjacent to the river and connects with existing TRT on the Green Mountain Power Company land. This route is also approximately 2,800 LF from the trail-rail crossing to the point of connection with the existing TRT. This route guides trail-goers away from economic development areas and through wetlands close to the river. The extent of wetland disturbance cannot be determined at this point due to the accuracy of current mapping. It may be specialized construction will be required to minimize disturbance to ecologically sensitive areas along the trail route.

TOA / TOA1 maximize the scenic attraction by being close to the river. The trail system is ideal for passive and active recreation such as walking, biking, cross country skiing and access to a potential river boat launch area. Consideration may be given to installing lighting and benches along the river trail sections. Inherently, the trail's close proximity to the river results in a less direct route from the LVRT trailhead to the center of town, and guides trail-goers away from future economic development along Bay Street. It is less likely visitors would elect this route over walking/biking down Bay Street if their destination is downtown ST Johnsbury. The town will need to consider the extent of regulatory requirements for constructing the trail within the FEMA flood zone and wetland areas.

TOB generally runs parallel with the water treatment facility's access drive, along the east side of Bay Street and connects with the existing TRT at the CN Brown Co parcel. The total length of the trail is approximately 2,300 LF from the rail-trail crossing to its connection with the TRT. This route directs trail-goers directly through future economic development areas. Visitors would have an opportunity to patronize future businesses along roadway frontages as they travel between the LVRT trail head and downtown. The trail can be either a dedicated walking path or a multi-use system. A multi-use trail

could help reduce the conflict between truck / vehicular traffic and pedestrian / bicycling circulation. The existing Bay Street ROW is a key design element affecting the amount of private land area required to construct the trail. It is likely that portions of private property would require easements in favor of the town to accommodate the trail. The trail may include interpretive and directional signage as well as proper lighting for nighttime use. Although TOB is within the floodplain it does not impact wetland areas therefore requiring less regulatory action.

TOA (A1) and TOB both provide unique character and benefits to redevelopment goals, and consideration may be given to combining portions of both systems. TOA along the river is ideal for passive / active recreation, great views and boating access, but its remote location does not lend itself as the most ideal route from LVRT trailhead to the town center, especially at night or during adverse weather. TOB's location provides a more direct and safer route for pedestrian / bicycles to access the town center and guides visitors through future economic development areas along roadway frontages. If variations of TOA & TOB are both constructed, consider converting the existing section of the TRT into a multi-use system up to the Three Rivers Pavilion. This will establish a well-defined corridor from the LVRT trailhead to the town center.

Cost details for the trails are not presented as part of this reports scope but it is assumed that Trail Option B running along Bay Street will be more expensive. New street work, curbing and new driveway locations, lighting, landscaping and signage are needed. It is suggested that Trail Option B be built as a second trail phase when developments are proposed for several of the vacant properties along Bay Street. Coordinating the design and work with new ongoing developments could lessen the Town's cost and be shared in part with the new developments as well as other sources of state or federal roadway/infrastructure grants.

See the conceptual design plans for both the northern and southern sections, below.



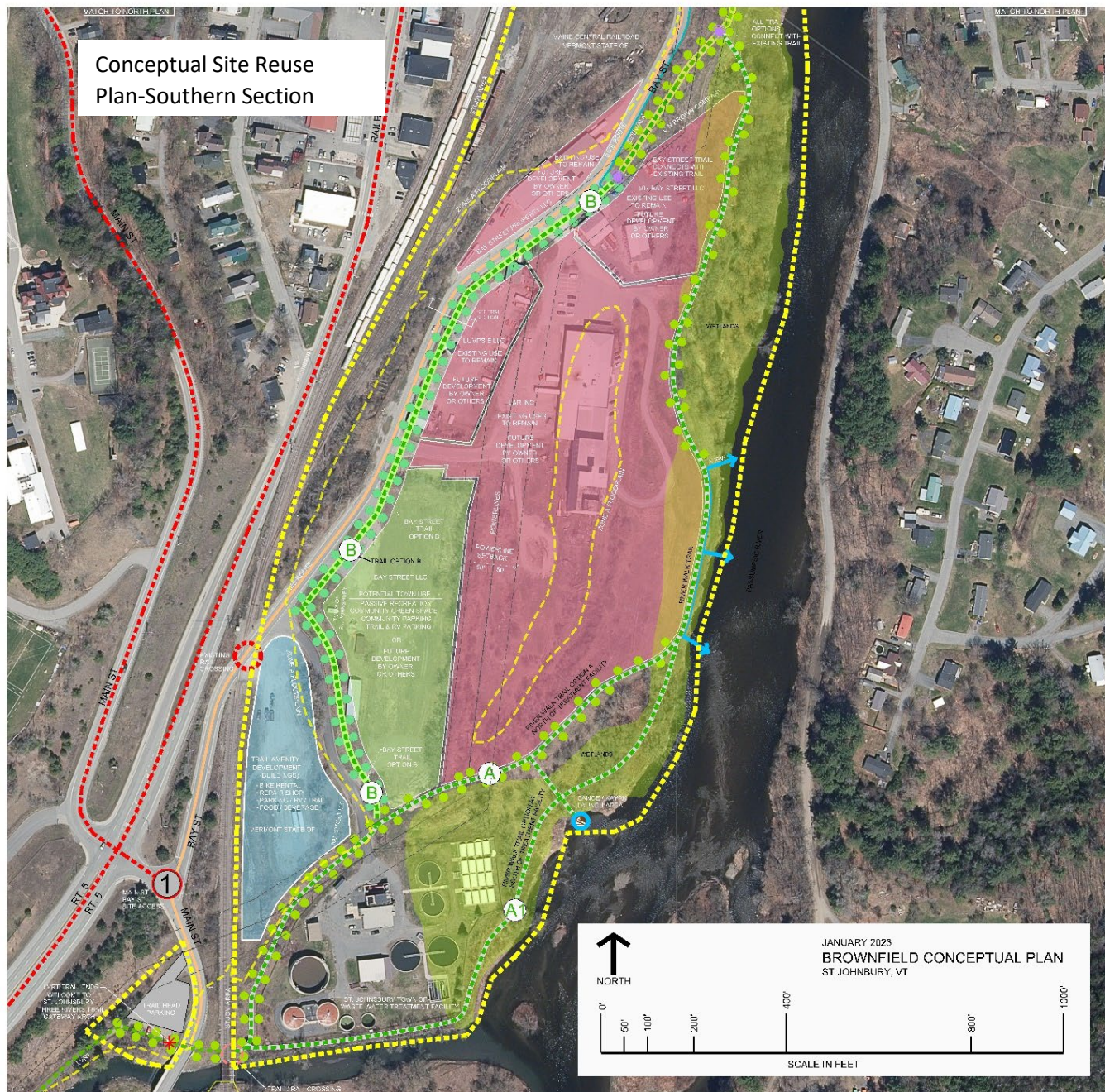


Figure 14: Conceptual Site Reuse Plan-Southern Section

Design Considerations

For a trail to be fully functional and safe, the following design considerations are offered:

- Provide appropriate amenities including signage, benches, and/or informational kiosks in the LVRT trailhead.
- Providing electric charging stations could serve as an amenity and marketing tool.
- Ensure adequate car and RV parking for LVRT and Three River trail users both at the trailhead and in the downtown. The completion of the Three River Trail allows trail users to begin their trip to the LVRT from the downtown heading south to the Trailhead.
- The Plan suggests that an opportunity exists for two trails to be built from the LVRT trail head to downtown in phases:
 1. Phase One, The River Walk Trail, starting at the trail head – that will link to the existing Three Rivers Trail on the Green Mountain Power property. This could run along the southern edge of the Town’s wastewater treatment plant and run north along the river just east of the wetlands. If not possible to be built along the southern boundary of the treatment plant, it could run along the northern boundary of the property. This trail could be constructed in a manner that would respect the natural setting of the riverfront and accommodate occasional flooding as it could run along property in the floodplain.
 2. Phase Two is to run from the LVRT trailhead to the north of the wastewater treatment plant and head north on the Bay Street Extension turning north at Bay Street and connect with the existing Three Rivers Trail that continues north to the pavilion on Bay Street. The trail on Bay Street Extension and on Bay Street could be constructed with curbing and a separate sidewalk/bike path along the existing street. This section could include select lighting along the trail as well as trees. The level of improvements along Bay Street can vary depending upon the budget. At a minimum, improvements could include a sidewalk/bicycle pathway on at least one side of the street and appropriate pavement markings and signage and traffic calming efforts, as seen in the cross-section below:

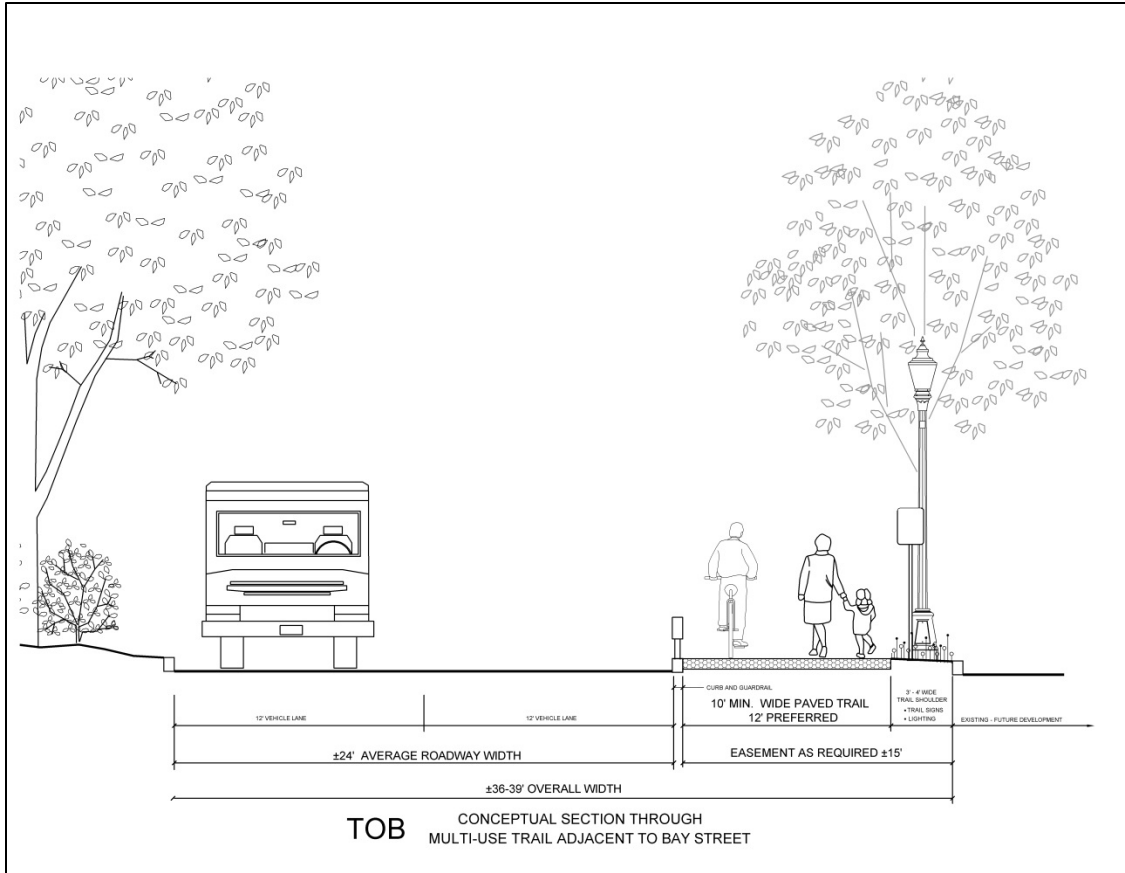


Figure 15: Conceptual Section through Multi-Use Trail

Other considerations for site improvement

By enhancing the Bay Street area to include an expanded trail system, parking, and enhanced safety, vacant and underutilized parcels may become more sought after as development sites. A summary of the potential opportunities is described below:

- The proposed Bay Street trail runs along several key development properties. Improvements in this area have the opportunity to open new building types and uses on these parcels. Upgrades to private property in this area could include façade improvements (painting, windows, siding), landscaping, signage, artwork, and/or major building renovation or replacement. New businesses could include bicycle shops, recreational tour operator and outfitters, and repairs near the beginning of the trail. These properties, located in the southern section, include:

(#18) Bay St. Ext.	Saint Johnsbury	.47 Acres	Vacant
(#19) 659 Bay St.	Bay St. LLC	4.0 Acres	Vacant
(#20) 515 Bay St.	L&R Inc.	11.9 Acres	Portion Vacant Bldg. & Offices
(#21) 521 Bay St.	Lumpsie LLC	1.4 Acres	Vacant Land

- The northern section of the Three Rivers Trail currently continues to the Trail Pavilion located at 195 Bay Street. Directly across the street from the pavilion is the “Honking Tunnel” which runs under the rail tracks and turns onto Depot Square. While the existing tunnel is not adequate for any increase in vehicular traffic (except perhaps emergency or maintenance vehicles), it may be an opportunity to create an enhanced gateway directly into the downtown for trail users and likewise for people in the downtown to access Bay Street. Upgrades to the tunnel could include appropriate lighting, signage, artwork/sculpture.
- Traffic/pedestrian/bicycle usage analysis and traffic calming design is needed for this section of the project area around the tunnel and pavilion. The area is currently an isolated commercial/industrial area with significant numbers of trucks and vehicles that may create conflicts with increasing numbers of trail users both walking and biking.
- The two vacant properties at the northern end of Bay Street owned by Waste Management (property #10 & #11 at 119 Bay Street) front along the river. This site could undergo further environmental testing, be acquired by the town and be considered for use as passive park property. A possible further extension of the Three Rivers Trail north along the river could be considered running from the pavilion behind 145 Bay Street (FHS Holdings) and through the Waste Management properties to the roadway under the Route 2 /Portland Street Bridge. The trail could continue to recreational fields north of the bridge.

(#6) 145 Bay Street	FHS Holdings, LLC	.27 Acres	Lumber yard
(#10) 119 Bay St.	Waste Management	.32 Acres	Vacant Industrial Land
(#11) Bay St.	Waste Management	.34 Acres	Phase I Completed

Potential Partners and Site Redevelopment

The successful transition and redevelopment of an area like the Bay Street Project Area involves many organizations and individuals from the community. The list below identifies many that have played a role to date in these efforts and will be necessary to work together going forward.

The Town of Saint Johnsbury has taken a leading role in coordinating efforts to promote the ongoing development efforts in the Bay Street Project Area. This includes working with potential developers, businesses, and community organizations as well as coordinating municipal departments to use their resources and personnel to assist with redevelopment of the area. As important are the numerous commissions and committees who oversee zoning, planning, transportation, and public works – they all play an integral role in the ongoing development of Bay Street.

The Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) has a broad responsibility for hundreds of planning efforts in the multi-county region it represents including Saint Johnsbury. These include transportation planning, economic development, land-use planning, brownfield development, and emergency management. NVDA understands grant writing and accessing state agencies to assist in efforts like Bay Street development including coordinating Brownfield funding for the region.

The Northern Forest Center is a significant organization that works in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and parts of New York to build strong rural communities including Saint Johnsbury. The Forest Center has recently acquired 560 Railroad Street in Saint Johnsbury with plans to redevelop the building as a mix of small commercial rentals and middle-market housing. With a broad knowledge of the multi-state area, they bring a wealth of resources, ideas, and development opportunities that could benefit the Bay Street area.

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) operates several departments that oversee natural resources and participate in larger scale development projects. In Saint Johnsbury certain zoning request involving development in flood plain areas must be forwarded to ANR allowing them an opportunity to review any proposal before the town can act on the request. The Agency also includes the Department of Environmental Conservation which oversees the Vermont Brownfield Programs. The Planning division has the ability to work with the Town regarding the overall Bay Street redevelopment.

Agency of Commerce and Community Development oversees several divisions that impact development in Saint Johnsbury including Economic Development, Tourism and Marketing, and Municipal Planning Grants. The Agency also oversees the “Designated Downtown” program in the downtown including a portion of northern Bay Street. In an informal discussion with the Agency in 2022, the TA Team inquired if the Downtown Designation or a “Growth Area” could be used in the future redevelopment of Bay Street. The initial response was that neither was likely an appropriate program but that the Agency would welcome a further discussion on the redevelopment of Bay Street.

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) – Rail and Aviation Bureau coordinates a number of rail related operations in the state including the state-owned rail yard, tracks and property in Saint Johnsbury. While the freight operations are leased to the Washington County Railroad Company, the Bureau and VTrans oversee capital improvements to the rail line and evaluate request for improvements at grade crossings and leasing of property. VTrans in 2021 completed a comprehensive State Rail Plan including technical memos, reports, and available resources. A discussion between the Bureau and

VTrans would be helpful regarding the Bay Street At-Grade Crossing equipment, improvements to the “Honking Tunnel”, and the possible acquisition/long-term lease of the property at 689 Bay Street.

Considerations & Next Steps

The technical assistance provided several opportunities for stakeholders, community members, and government leaders to discuss areas of concern, as well as recognize opportunities and assets that support redevelopment of the Bay Street Area. Based on these discussions, the following strategic next steps are offered for consideration.

Timeline	Tasks	Project Lead
2 – 6 months	1. Brownfields - Prioritize development properties needing environmental assessment or additional assessment and clean-up.	Town, NVDA
4 months - ongoing	2. Identify current state and federal funding for trail improvements/amenities. 3. Review the new FEMA FIRM mapping for the Bay Street Area to ensure any proposed changes are appropriate. 4. Establish a community-based Bay Street Project Committee to advise and advocate for Bay Street redevelopment. Involve members of the business community, recreation, environmental and developer interest.	Town, State, NVDA
4 months - ongoing	5. Establish a working group at the State level to coordinate with Vermont ANR-Office of Planning on the extension of the Three Rivers Trail and on the overall development of the Bay St Area. Include DEC-Brownfields, Flood Plain and River Corridor divisions, and VTrans/Rail Bureau and Housing and Community Development.	State ANR, Town, NVDA
4-5 months	6. Meet with Green Mountain Power to identify power line restrictions and options to allow additional development opportunities and discuss possible further improvements to the Three River Trail.	Town, NVDA
6-8 months	7. Begin legal process to restrict use of Honking Tunnel for pedestrians/bicycles and identify funding for design upgrades as connection to downtown.	Town, VTrans

6 – 8 months	8. Develop a management plan for the Three Rivers Trail and the LVRT trail head including responsibilities for maintenance, safety and promote volunteer efforts.	Town
8 months - ongoing	9. Upon completion of three rivers trail, phase-in tourism promotion of the new Three Rivers Trail, the LVRT and Bay Street improvements with downtown, regional, and state tourism efforts.	Town, NVDA