



NORTHWEST REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

REGIONAL ENERGY PLAN

Adopted June 28, 2017

Utility Service Areas

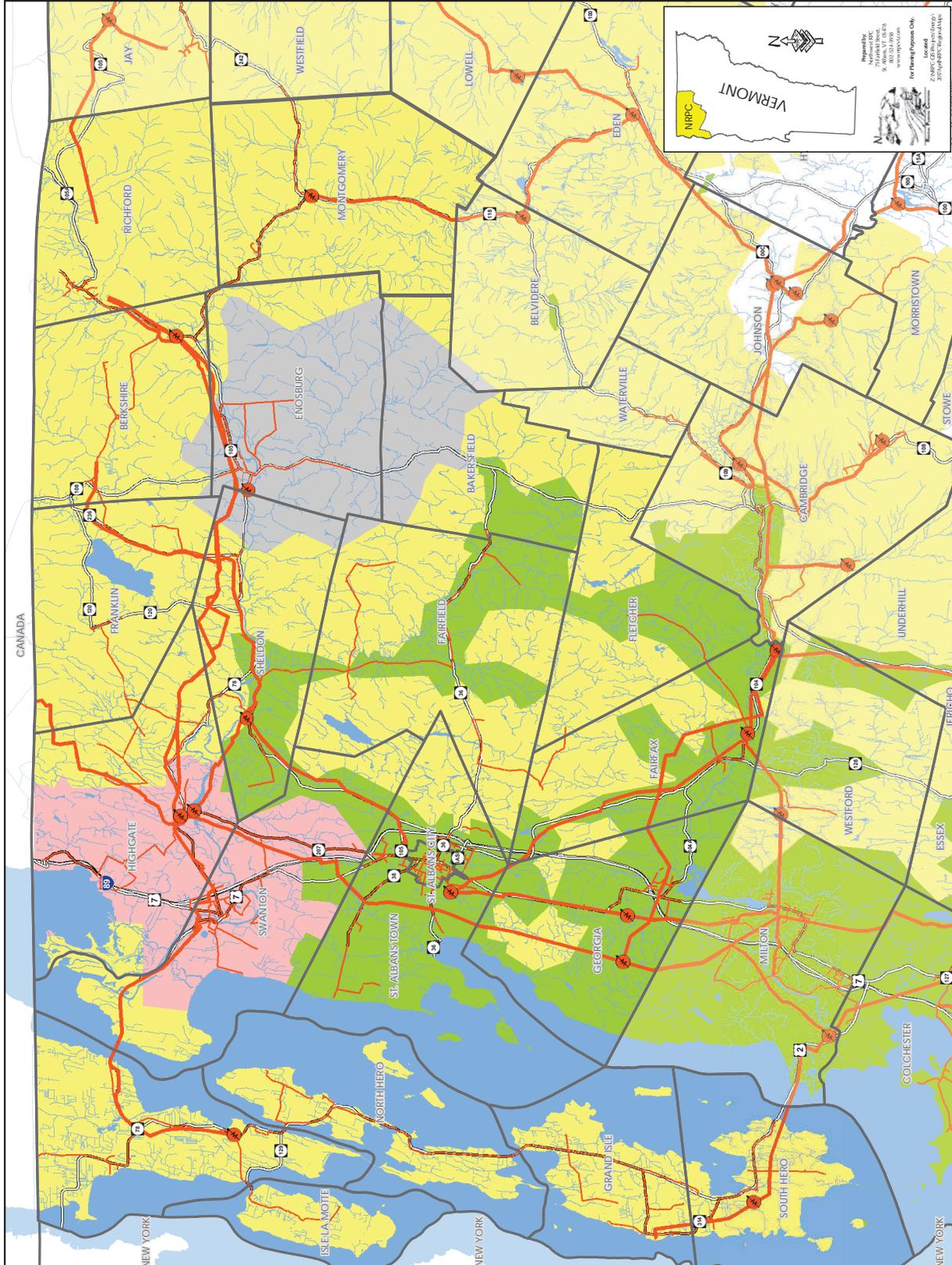
Northwest Region, VT
Act 174
Energy Development Improvement Act of 2016

This map and the corresponding data is intended to be used to inform energy planning and is not intended to be used for final site identification by those interested in energy development. The map is a general indication of the location of utility service areas. The maps do NOT take the place of site-specific investigation for a proposed facility and cannot be used for siting maps.

Legend

-  Substation
 -  3 Phase Power Line
 -  Transmission Line
- Utility Service Area Features
-  Green Mountain Power
 -  Swanton Village Electric
 -  Vermont Electric Co-op
 -  Enosburg Falls Electric

Sources: VCCJ
Disclaimer: The accuracy of information presented in this map is not guaranteed. Errors and omissions may exist. The Northwest RPC is not responsible for these. Questions on the map should be directed to the appropriate utility, inspections, and/or surveys by a registered professional engineer. The map is a general indication of features on the ground. It does not identify the presence of features, and may not be used as a replacement for surveyed information or engineering studies.



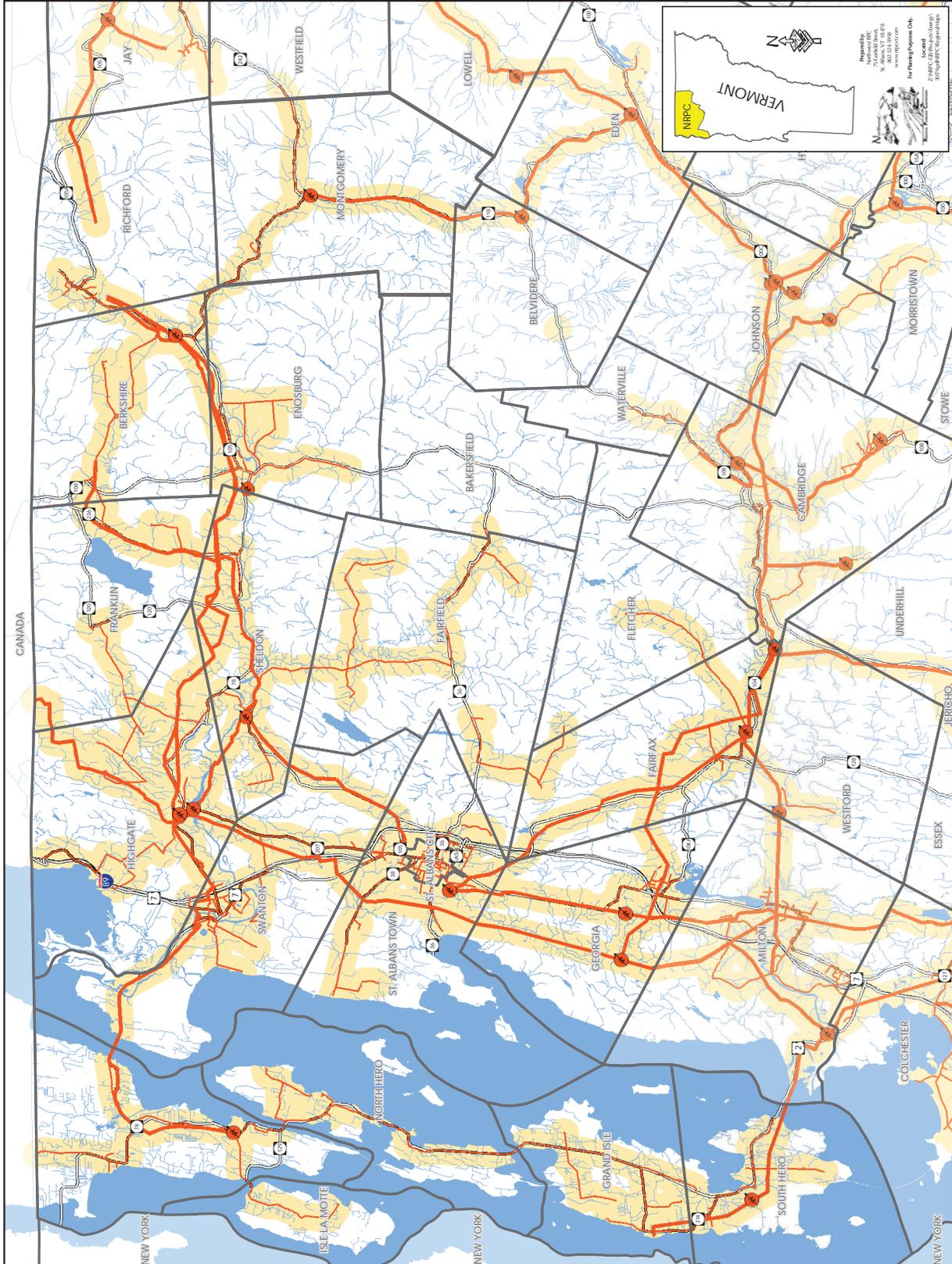
Transmission and 3 Phase Power Infrastructure

Northwest Region, VT
Act 174
Energy Development Improvement Act of 2016

This map and the corresponding data is presented for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be used for engineering or construction purposes. The map is also to be used for conceptual planning or initial site-specific information. The map is not intended to be used for engineering or construction purposes. The map is not intended to be used for engineering or construction purposes. The map is not intended to be used for engineering or construction purposes.

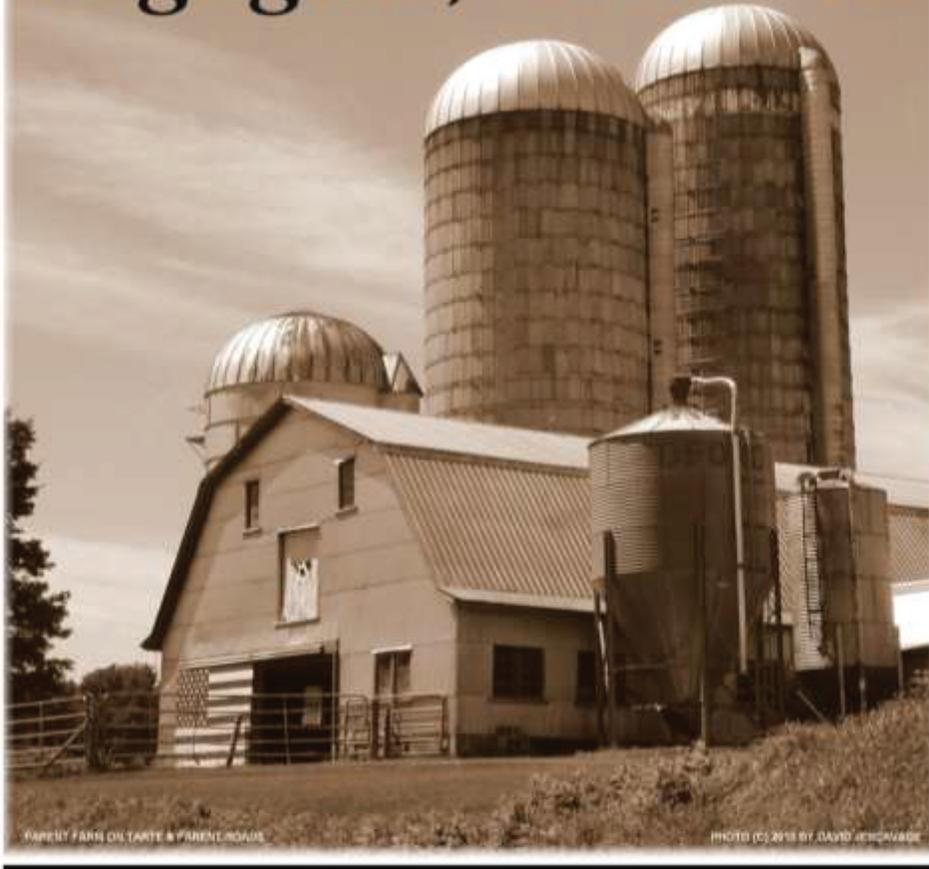
- Legend**
- Substation
 - 3 Phase Power Line
 - Transmission Line
 - 1/2 Mile Buffer (3 Phase Power Line & Transmission Line)

Sources: VCC. The accuracy of information presented is determined by its sources. Errors and omissions may exist. The Northwest RPE is presented for informational purposes only. The ground location can be reviewed by site survey. The map is not intended for engineering or construction purposes. The map is not intended for engineering or construction purposes. The map is not intended for engineering or construction purposes. The map is not intended for engineering or construction purposes.



HIGHGATE TOWN PLAN 2015-2020

Highgate, Vermont



The Dairy Farming Capital Of Vermont

CHAPTER 9

Land Use

EXISTING LAND USE

Land in Highgate is used primarily for agriculture or is considered forestland. The Town covers 59.8 square miles (38,279 acres), 11.5 square miles (7,291 acres or 19 percent) of which are covered by water. Of the 38,279 total acres, the number of acres in agricultural use is 16,057 acres, or 42 percent of the total. The number of acres of forested land is approximately 9,559 acres, or 18 percent of the total. Wetlands, shorelines and other non-buildable locations account for 14 percent of the land area in Highgate. The remaining 7 percent of the acreage in the Town is used for residential purposes, as either available for residential development, or for transportation purposes.

Land Use	Acres	Percent
Residential	1,633.87	4.27%
Transportation/Utilities	965.97	2.52%
Commercial	22.99	0.06%
Industrial	8.21	0.02%
Other Urban	2.15	0.01%
Row Crop	10,790.41	28.19%
Hay/Pasture	4,947.52	12.92%
Other Agricultural	319.56	0.83%
Deciduous Forest	2,665.51	6.96%
Coniferous Forest	1,526.65	3.99%
Mixed Forest	2,706.71	7.07%
Forested Wetland	2,660.60	6.95%
Non-Forested Wetland	2,718.06	7.10%
Barren Lands	20.26	0.05%
Water	7,291.01	19.05%
Total	38,279.47	100%

The Town of Highgate has three areas of State owned land covering a total of 340 acres. These areas include Highgate State Park (which is within the Highgate Cliffs Natural Area) covering 37 acres, the Rock River Access Area covering 7 acres, and the Rock River Wildlife Management Area covering 296 acres. The boundaries and locations for all of these can be found through the Survey Section of the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation and are identified on the Facilities and Utilities Map.

Settlement in the Town is typically spread out either along the existing

roadways or along the shoreline. The overwhelming majority of development since 1980 has followed this pattern. Commercial and industrial development is primarily located along VT 78 and within the village areas. A small number of individual enterprises are scattered throughout the Town, and many home occupations are operating as well, although the exact number is unknown. Commercial "strip" forms of development have been occurring along State Road 78 west of Highgate Center, particularly near the Franklin County State Airport. The Missisquoi Valley Union High School is also in the area, and combined with adjacent commercial development, has created serious traffic conflicts along this stretch of roadway.

Residential development is by far the greatest growth industry in Highgate, making it somewhat of a "bedroom" community in many respects. The great majority of residential

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The number of small-scale businesses in the community that provide employment, goods, and services to local residents is limited. This encourages residents to work and shop in neighboring towns and discourages new businesses from opening. While the number of commuters may be a concern for the Town, it represents an opportunity for attracting business and industry which will lead to retaining resident's spending within in the community. Businesses that serve and employ Town residents will add to the sense of community by limiting the need to travel to neighboring towns for basic necessities.

It is possible to encourage industrial and commercial growth without harming Highgate's quality of life by targeting environmentally sound industry. The Franklin County Airport and access to Interstate 89 are important resources for attracting industrial and commercial development. Currently, existing businesses are located along VT 78. While increased economic activity and well-paying jobs are an important goal, development must be in accord with the character of the community, landscape, and environment.

Tourism is a constantly growing industry in the County. Recent efforts in the tourism industry have included the concept of "Countryside Tourism". Countryside Tourism promotes the unique resources of a community as the main attractions. It is characterized by locally owned businesses, traditional patterns of development, utilization of existing vacant or under-utilized structures, diversity, and uniqueness. Highgate has several farms and sugaring operations that provide tours. Expanding this agritourism and recreational tourism can attract many visitors to Highgate. The Town should examine how tourism can be promoted as part of a diverse local economy.

Businesses in Highgate should be a mix of small-scale businesses that promote locally produced goods and services to maintain the community's rural character and larger businesses that bring employment opportunities to Highgate. Additionally zoning for home businesses and small-scale business within residential areas should be encouraged. Infrastructure that attracts and supports these opportunities such as internet and other communication services should also be encouraged. Planned unit developments that combine the traditional mix of residential and commercial uses should be encouraged.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL GOALS

1. Encourage clean and environmentally sound light industrial and/or commercial development in appropriate districts.
2. Continue economic planning for new locally owned and operated businesses, and promote businesses that offer year-round employment and which utilize the local labor and materials.
3. Promote the importance of the Village as the Town's social, cultural, and economic center.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL OBJECTIVES

1. Promote further planned unit development (PUD) within village areas.

2. Promote the clustering of commercial activities near village center and high density residential districts to make development more energy efficient and to maintain rural character of the Town.
3. Ensure zoning discourages suburban sprawl and strip development by allowing for PUDs and Mixed Use development as well as adjusting parcel size and frontage requirements.
4. Continue discussions with Swanton to expand water and sewer system in Highgate.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Town of Highgate lies in a fertile and agriculturally important part of the Champlain Valley. Dairy farming, maple sugaring, commercial orchards, and truck farming are the primary agricultural activities still being practiced in the Town. Prime agricultural soils are an important Town resource. In Highgate, the number of acres in active agricultural use is, approximately 42 percent of the total (based on 2003 Land Use and Land Cover data).

According to the 2013 Grand List, there are approximately 55 parcels with farm buildings in Highgate. This number has decreased by 10 since 1987 when the State Property Valuation and Review reported that there were 65 farms in Highgate. According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, there are 770 farms in Franklin County, seven percent of which are in Highgate. This number decreased slightly in the 2012 Census of Agriculture to 736 farms in the county. While in some areas the number of farms has decreased, the total acreage in production may not have due to the consolidation of agricultural land into fewer owners who work larger parcels of land. However it is likely that in Highgate the number of farms as well as the acreage have both decreased over the past decade.

The loss of productive agricultural land may be due to the development of existing farmland for residential use which is currently more profitable for the individual landowners. This creates strong pressure for development, presenting landowners in Highgate with difficult decisions to make. It is important to remember that agricultural and forestry landowners provide a public benefit by not developing their property, and cost the Town little in terms of municipal services. Keeping land in production provides pastoral scenic vistas, important wildlife habitat and other services, which contribute positively to the Town and region. These aspects of farmland that help maintain the rural character and high quality of life in the community cannot be overlooked.

The State of Vermont offers programs that tax agricultural and forestry property according to its use value. The purpose of these programs is to keep agricultural and forested land in production, and to slow development on these lands. In each program, the property must remain in agricultural or forestry use in order to receive benefits. A large proportion of property tax revenue lost to the Town is reimbursed by the State. The programs, administered by the Property Valuation and Review Division of the Vermont Department of Taxes, are Agricultural Land Program, Forest Land Program, Farmland Program, and Working Farm Tax Abatement Program. The State Legislature constantly threatens to eliminate or reduce funding for these

Map 9.3 Proposed Land Use Districts

