

A Master Plan for the **State of Vermont Otter Creek Campus*** and Lands in Vergennes and Ferrisburgh

Prepared For:

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A Master Plan for the
**State of Vermont Otter
Creek Campus* and Lands**
in Vergennes and Ferrisburgh

* Project title refers to the former Weeks School Campus which this plan recommends re-naming.
See “A Note on Property Reference” in the Introduction and Overview.

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1. Introduction and Overview

“This Master Plan has been developed in response to the Request set forth by the State of Vermont.”

This Master Plan for the former Weeks School and adjacent state lands/properties in Vergennes has been developed in response to the Request set forth by the State of Vermont. These lands totaling 476.3 acres in Ferrisburgh (152 acres) and Vergennes (324.3 acres) are made up of a number of separate parcels and leases that include the following:

1. 66 acres in Vergennes leased to the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) for the Northlands Job Corps Center;
2. 53.3 acres of lands owned by Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife of which a substantial portion is being leased to Deer Valley Partnership/Ray Brands Farm;
3. 202.9 acres being leased for agricultural purposes;
4. 6.87 acres leased to AllSun Solar;
5. 147.23 acres in wooded or fallow, undeveloped lands; and
6. 36 acres are subject to a land owner agreement between the state of Vermont and the City of Vergennes for the application of biosolids (included in the leased agricultural lands listed above).

A Note on the Property Reference

A slow but planned transition to a new reference for the property is recommended as part of the overall master planning initiatives. If the State wants to continue to further utilize and develop some portions of the property and plan for the future, it is necessary to look to that future and not stay tethered to the past. Without abandoning the history (and this needs to be memorialized and identified on site somehow in an appropriate manner) it is recommended that the State “rebrand” these properties. Negative references associated with the property and its history need to be put behind in order to facilitate long term value, utility and enhancement for these lands. Thus we have retitled the Master Plan accordingly to relinquish the specific Weeks School reference and to provide a basis for discussing the property as a whole and therefore we have titled this document “A Master Plan for the State of Vermont Otter Creek Campus and Lands in Vergennes and Ferrisburgh”.

“..it is recommended that the State ‘rebrand’ these properties.”



Historic photos of the Weeks School era.

Project Charge

In developing this master plan and in our meetings with the Steering Committee for the project the Team of LandWorks and Dubois&King identified the “charge” put to us as outlined in the original Request for Proposals. It is intended that The Weeks School (and associated State Lands) Master Plan should create a blueprint outlining the property’s future uses (including the highest and best uses). In this plan these uses

“It is intended that the ...Master Plan should create a blueprint outlining the property’s future uses.”

are addressed in the context of the physical development, redevelopment and public investment of the property on a parcel by parcel basis consistent with the existing conditions of the parcels and what those conditions afforded for current and future uses. The proposals for future use and development also were to reference as appropriate the town and municipal development plan; the regional plan and the regional economic development conditions and be consistent with the mandates and requirements of the Division of Historic Preservation (and any other applicable state agency, including the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife).

The charge directed that the Master Plan should include and incorporate the following possibilities:

1. The continued use of the campus by the U.S. Department of Labor for its Job Corp program for the duration of the agreement between USDOL and the State of Vermont;
2. The discontinuation of use by the USDOL at any time in the future per provisions of the agreement; and
3. An evaluation of whether the property may be subdivided and sold, and for what purposes it may be used.

In response to this overall charge the Project Team has:

- Undertaken an existing conditions analysis and conducted several site visits;
 - Reviewed leases and relevant documents;
 - Met with state, regional and local officials, as well as Northlands Job Corps officials;
 - Conducted research and held interviews with key stakeholders and other individuals with relevant expertise or experience;
 - Attended two outreach meetings within the local communities;
 - Met with the steering committee charged with an advisory role in the project;
 - Developed mapping resources and site studies; and
 - Prepared Master Plan alternatives and scenarios, along with potential future development lands.
- It is important to note that this Master Plan as a whole reflects the input and involvement of the Steering Committee, whose members are listed in section 4. Planning Process and Outreach. The consultant team is indebted to the time and effort that these individuals provided to make this the best possible plan for the future of the state landholdings.

Location Map



★ Project Location



Introduction and Overview

A Master Plan for the State of Vermont Otter Creek Campus and Lands in Vergennes and Ferrisburgh

Project Background, Current Uses, and Two Options for the Future

The description of the current uses and specific leases associated with this property include:

Current Uses/Leases:

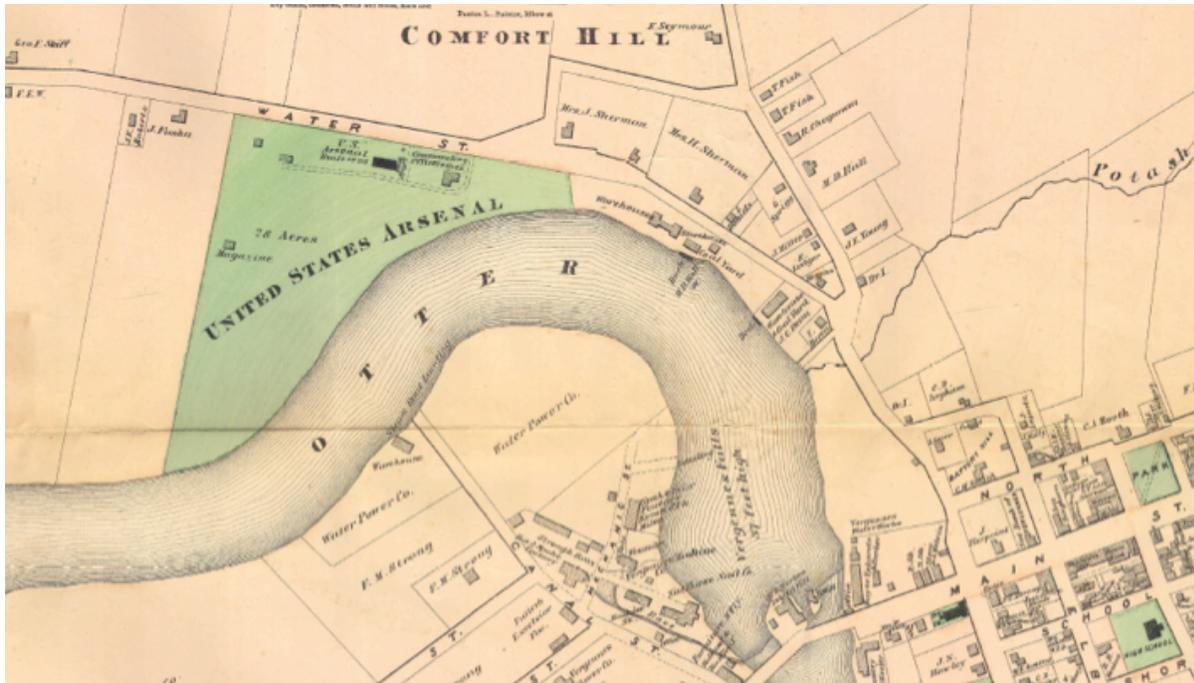
1. Job Corps Center, US Department of Labor. 65.834 acres. Term: Original lease - July 1978, Modified to October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2033 as a one-year term with the option for nineteen (19) consecutive one-year renewals. 28 buildings at approximately 120,000 sq. ft.
2. Vermont AllSun Solar VI, LLC – Tenant leasing land for +/- 500kW solar photovoltaic electric generating facility. Term: September 2014 – September 2034 (term may be extended).
3. Deer Valley Farms Partnership, Sand Road, Ferrisburgh, VT - +/- 200 acres of farm property at Weeks School (no buildings or other structures, except such fencing as may exist on the date of lease). Use as crop land. Term: July 2010 - June 30, 2015. (Tenant may renew for one additional term).
4. Ray Brands - “development and implementation of a sewage biosolids management plan which includes land application on agricultural land...located directly north of the Northlands Job Corps in the City of Vergennes, Vermont and containing approximately thirty-six (36) acres. “The Landowner authorizes the City or its authorized representatives, to apply treated sewage biosolids, and to perform such monitoring of soil, groundwater, surface water, and vegetation, as may be required to comply with the City’s certification and any other federal, state, or local regulations. Term: May 1, 2012 – May 1, 2017.

Historic Designation and Cultural Resources/Site History

“The State of Vermont Reform School for Troubled Youth, a part of city life since it was relocated from Waterbury to Vergennes in 1875, underwent a significant expansion... By 1900 the school was housed in three buildings, including the former U.S. Arsenal, with residents working a farm acquired in 1892. In 1907 the school began a major building program that added about a dozen new structures over the next fourteen years, including residential “cottages”, a gymnasium, creamery, and a chapel. Frank Lyman Austin, a Burlington-based architect, designed the expansion and its Colonial Revival style buildings. Austin united the many free-standing brick structures through the use of similar design features such as broad slate-covered hipped roofs, Palladian windows, and entries with pedimented porches. Corresponding with this change in



Photos of the core campus past and present.



Map of Area, Beers Atlas, 1871 showing a portion of lands within current state ownership.

its size and layout, the school changed its emphasis and became the Vermont Industrial School, training its charges in vocational trades.” *An excerpt from The Historic Architecture of Addison County, Vermont State Register of Historic Places, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation*

There are 28 structures listed on the Vermont State Register of Historic Properties for the Weeks School property.

In addition to the history and designation associated with the former Weeks School site, there are portions of this property which have archaeological and cultural resource sensitivity,¹ as evidenced in state permit reviews. The property includes the location of the former “United States Arsenal” on and adjacent to the property (see the accompanying Beers Atlas Map from 1871), and based on site review and discussion with State Archaeologist Scott Dillon, there is the potential existence of a Native American petroglyph at an undetermined location on the property.²

Going Forward: Two Primary Options for the Future of the Property

The planning process yielded a total of 8 potential Master Plan Scenarios for future consideration with regard to management, development or sale. This primary planning and development scenario, referred to as Scenario 1 is focused on the 66-acre campus currently being leased to USDOL. Any effort to alter the current state of these lands and their use must consider the maintenance of the status quo along with a range of other options.

Based on our comprehensive review, explorations “on the ground”, interviews and assessments, it is clear that there are two overarching options available for the State of Vermont relative to the

¹ Letter to Bixby Memorial Library from Thomas Keefe, Chair of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, dated 1-31-1997

² Site visit by LandWorks with Scott Dillon, Vermont Division of Historic Preservation, 7-28-2015

campus and lands contained within the overall state lands boundary. Any proposal for change or development must also consider whether the existing conditions are acceptable and provide an accepted value and return desired for the resource; that is the basis for the first of the two options. For the second option, the State and its associated stakeholders for this property, must determine whether the proposed changes and potential development options present compelling benefits relative to the costs associated with the implementation of some or all of the proposed actions and strategies.

1. Maintain the status quo and continue to allow the property management and oversight to evolve on as-needed basis, without any overall change in direction other than to maintain and support the current uses and activities which are primarily connected to the Job Corps' lease and operation. This decision implies that the property is "working" and does not need any further expenditure of time and effort for future management, other than a few elements related to maintaining the lease agreements and the infrastructure of the Job Corps campus.

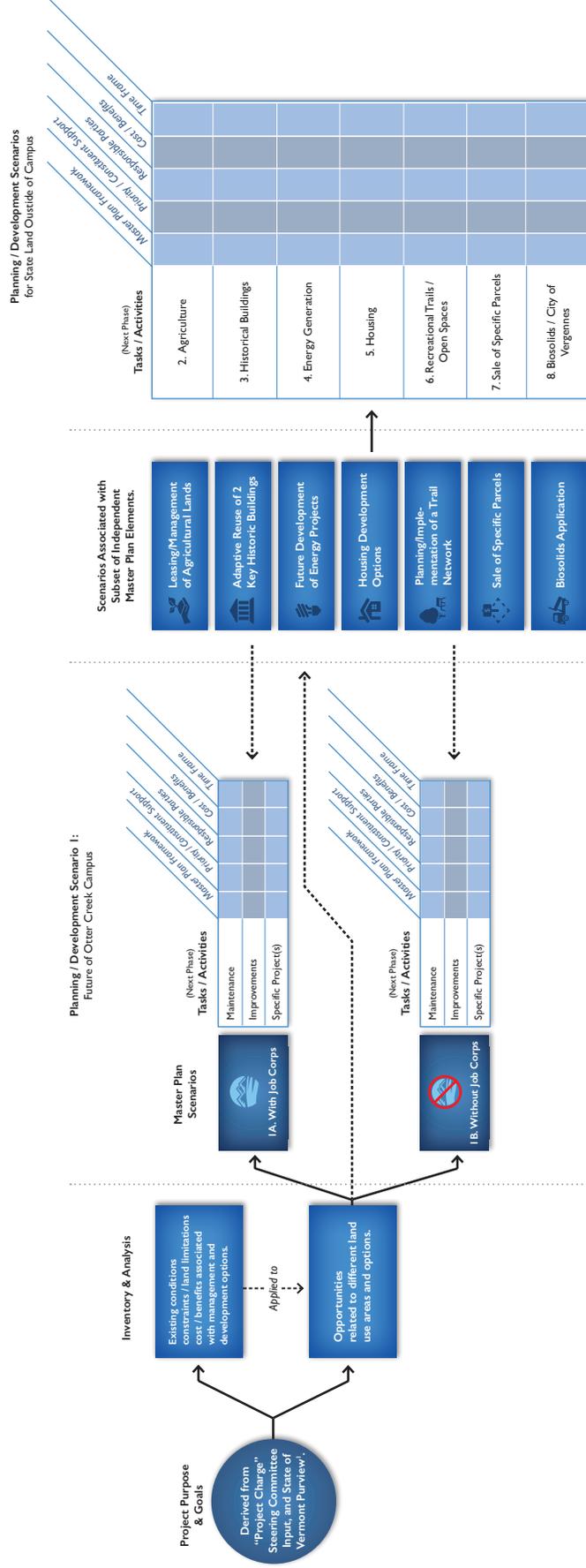
---- OR ----

2. Review the recommendations and scenarios as outlined in this master plan document and determine, perhaps with the continued assistance and involvement of the Project Steering Committee, what priorities and next steps are appropriate to:
 - a. Continue to lease and/or develop this property for the highest and best uses;
 - b. "Market" or actively seek investment and further development in specified parcels or portions of the land;
 - c. Advance public and community use and value through the planning and implementation of amenities such as recreational trails or historic sites and resources;
 - d. Consider sale of one or more parcels within the overall property holdings; and
 - e. Promote the continued improvement and enhancement of the original campus with Northlands Jobs Corps participation and collaboration.

A process diagram for the overall master plan approach is illustrated on the next page.

Note that the some of the 8 Master Plan Scenarios as presented in this Plan overlap with other existing and proposed uses on site today. The "Potential Development Areas" Section, as well as related mapping do have some current uses in place or adjacent to them - for example the lands being used by the City of Vergennes have other potential alternative uses - but the master planning process and recommendations acknowledges that the use and potential purchase of the parcel currently being used for the biosolid dispersal could be one of areas for potential future sale to the City under Scenario 8. Likewise the remaining potential development areas could be developed for housing, energy generation, recreational trails and other uses, either in a singular fashion or in a mixed-use approach.

Otter Creek Campus and Lands Master Planning Diagram



¹ Several state agencies have been engaged as part of the initial master planning process including the Department of Buildings and General Services, the Division of Historic Preservation, and the Agency of Natural Resources Fish and Wildlife Department.

Introduction and Overview

A Master Plan for the State of Vermont Otter Creek Campus and Lands in Vergennes and Ferrisburgh

2. Existing Conditions

Initial Observations and Findings on the Campus and Landscape from Weeks School Site Visit

1. The campus has been readily and perfunctorily adapted for the Northlands Job Corps use and operations; it lends itself to this use due to A) existing buildings which were initially created for a residential “school”-type use; B) the campus-like setting with associated physical plant; C) available land for the types of activities ongoing at the Job Corps Center; and D) the location adjacent to the city but still apart from it.
2. The location apart from the city, and with only two immediate residential neighbors, is both a plus and a minus. It is a plus in the sense that the separation serves a campus like Job Corps well for their activities and population; it is a minus in that the site and land uses are not interconnected with the city’s resources and amenities.
3. A sidewalk exists almost all the way from Main Street/Route 22; the sidewalk ends before it connects with the campus site. The sidewalk condition varies; and lighting along the sidewalk is intermittent.
4. Two of the oldest, most historic buildings at the southwestern end of the campus are vacant and showing signs of deterioration. The stone building is of particular interest for its architectural and historical values.
5. The buildings are of similar size and scale – not overly large with many having a 2,500 sq. ft. footprint, several of the larger footprints are newer, one-story buildings (the classroom building and the Automotive Technology building). The buildings are all individually accessed from either sidewalks or road along Macdonough Drive, each with a driveway and several with small parking areas associated with them.
6. While there is a similar setback for buildings along Macdonough Drive, and there is a distinct orientation to the public street rather than an internal campus layout, the campus and the buildings extend behind the frontage buildings, giving rise to an irregular circulation pattern and layout.
7. There is a cluttered, somewhat haphazard feel to the outdoor environment, with readily visible utilities and infrastructural elements such as propane gas tanks and sheds with vents as add-ons to many of the buildings – no doubt due to space restrictions within the buildings. Utility wires and poles seem to be everywhere. Dumpsters are readily visible as well...undermining the aesthetics of the campus.
8. Landscape conditions include extensive areas of lawn, specimen trees and other landscaping elements, such as shrubs and planter boxes. Lighting is spaced and sited in an irregular manner with many outdated “cobra-head” style fixtures, although one walkway serving an open space and a more remote dormitory area does have more contemporary shielded light fixtures. There are several outdoor amenity areas including smoking benches, two covered shelters as part of a picnic area, and two open recreation fields. There are two tennis courts behind the student union building (that was formerly a church).

9. A continuous sign system developed by Job Corps identifies buildings either by number and/or use. The “welcome” signs are a nice touch.
10. There is very little, if any, connectivity to the Otter Creek, which forms the southern border for a portion of the property. The campus site is above the river, with steep banks and heavily wooded buffers adjacent to the watercourse. There is no view of Otter Creek except in winter when leaves are off.
11. Some of the buildings do not appear to be fully accessible in relation to ADA standards for public buildings, and this needs to be reviewed.
12. There are small, scattered parking lots associated with a number of the buildings – some of these lots are irregular and inefficiently laid out. It is likely that alternative uses for this campus would require additional parking. The site is not served by public transit at this time.
13. There is not a strong sense of arrival to the property or campus, and little sense of connectivity to Vergennes (i.e. no directional signage, awkward road alignment leading up to property boundary at High Street), and a lack of continuous streetscape conditions.

“There is not a strong sense of arrival to the property or campus, and little sense of connectivity to Vergennes...”

Landscape and Circulation



1. Intersection of Comfort Hill and Macdonough Drive



2. Macdonough Drive before intersection with High Street; note sidewalk conditions



3. Northlands Job Corps welcome sign - helps delineate campus



4. View of one of the residential facilities on the campus



5. Pavilions with picnic tables



6. Looking east from dormitory (House 22) to campus grounds - note extensive lawns and mature trees

Landscape and Circulation



1. Storage barn; note utility wires and floodlight



2. View east looking at the campus and extensive paving



3. 100 kW wind turbine on site developed by Green Mountain Power



4. View of new concrete sidewalk to dormitory



5. Mature tree next to maintenance/storage/garage building adds value to site



6. Mature lilac hedge is a visual amenity

Architecture



1. Historic Fairbanks building



2. Historic Arsenal building



3. Typical brick structure with outdoor utilities and no accessibility ramp



4. View of classroom buildings



5. Historic buildings framed by large, mature shrubs



6. Brick Assembly Hall (formerly the Chapel) serves as the student center

Architecture



1. Brick Recreation building / gym



2. CMU Block Automotive Technology Building is a more recent addition



3. Brick and CMU block food service building



4. Food service building with add-ons facing Macdonough Drive



5. Large dormitory with add-ons for fuel storage and heating units.



6. Storage barns and area on eastern edge of the campus

Infrastructure

An initial inventory and analysis of utility and “civil” (as in civil engineering) infrastructure serves as a point of departure for the next phase of work on the campus. If future development becomes a priority initiative based on the findings contained within this master plan certain improvements may be necessary to support the planning or marketing for such a step.

Traffic Access & Circulation

The project lands are located roughly 2 miles from US Route 7, a major traffic corridor, and are easily accessible from surrounding population centers. Burlington is 23 miles north, Rutland is 59 miles south and Middlebury is 13 miles south.

As shown on the Overall Property Map and Leased Lands Map, primary site access is by way of town roads. Comfort Hill (a paved Class III Vergennes town road¹) provides direct access to eastern portions of the project lands. Sand Road (a paved Class III Ferrisburgh town road²) turns into Macdonough Drive (a paved Class II Vergennes town road¹), and together they provide direct access to southern portions of the project lands as well as the Northlands campus. High Street (a paved Class III Vergennes town road¹) also provides access to the campus. Northern and northwestern portions of the project lands have no street frontage and thus no direct access. They could potentially be made accessible through new interior roads connecting to the Northlands campus, adjacent lands or via a private farm road that runs east-west along the northern boundary of the project lands.

The Northlands campus has 11 vehicular access points on Macdonough Drive and one access point on High Street. Campus traffic circulation is effective but not efficient, as the existing interior roads do not tie the entire site together well and most are too narrow for double-lane travel with a range of 14 to 19 feet in width. These roads are generally in moderate to poor condition, consisting of a mix of asphalt and gravel (see Infrastructure photo 1). Improvements to and re-configuration of the interior road network could improve efficiency, safety and usability as well as increase the value of the campus as a whole. Roadway surface improvements are recommended regardless of the direction that the State takes with the property. Improving interior campus circulation is only beneficial if the campus continues to be used by a single tenant. It should also be noted that an increase in heavy truck traffic in this area may present permitting concerns due to the residential area and downtown development to the east of campus.

In regard to pedestrian circulation, there is an existing network of interior sidewalks and paths on the Northlands campus. Some of the sidewalks are in good condition and appear to have been installed fairly recently. These are mainly linked to buildings in use by Job Corps, such as the Chapel and Gymnasium (see Infrastructure photo 2). Others are in very poor condition with spalling concrete, displaced joints and surface ponding (see Infrastructure photo 3). Site lighting is inconsistent and includes area floodlights as well as dispersed pathway lights close

¹ Vermont General Highway Map, City of Vergennes, Addison County, Transportation District #5. Prepared by the Vermont Agency of Transportation, Division of Policy, Planning & Intermodal Development in cooperation with U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. Map prepared June 17, 2015.

² Vermont General Highway Map, Town of Ferrisburgh, Addison County, Transportation District #5. Prepared by the Vermont Agency of Transportation, Division of Policy, Planning & Intermodal Development in cooperation with U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. Map prepared June 17, 2015.

to some buildings and patio areas. There are existing mown paths looping from the western-most building north of Macdonough Drive, through wooded and meadow areas to the west of the northern-most building and back to the swimming pool area. From this path, rolling meadows can be observed to the north of campus. A moderately-travelled footpath spurs off of this and leads to the wooded area northwest of the campus, where a large and interesting ledge outcropping appears to be a popular student gathering spot (see Infrastructure photo 4).³

Parking

The parking layout of the Northlands campus is scattered and in some instances awkward with inefficient access. Parking surfaces are either asphalt, gravel, or a mix of both and are in moderate to poor condition (see Infrastructure photo 5). There is a minimal amount of parking areas currently located on campus, and parking spots are typically poorly defined. Job Corps students are not currently allowed automobiles on campus. If this policy were to change or if the campus area were to be leased to a single institution requiring individual parking then the severe shortage of parking spaces would need to be addressed. It is recommended that the parking surfaces and delineation be improved and expanded gradually as Job Corps continues its lease, in order to improve current conditions to a reasonable standard and provide adequate capacity for a change in use by the existing and any future tenant.

Grading and Topography

Northern portions of the project lands are generally level and suitable for agriculture, which makes up the majority of their current use. The relatively flat nature of these lands makes them suitable for renewable energy applications such as solar or biomass generation, although lack of street frontage for northern and northwestern portions of the project lands means that site improvements would be necessary to render these areas accessible. Some soils are rocky and there are locations to the east and southeast of the campus with exposed bedrock.

The Northlands campus itself exhibits some rolling hills and generally slopes southward towards Otter Creek, but also contains numerous relatively flat areas that could be minimally re-graded for recreational uses or campus expansion. Steep slopes drop off by the southern edge of campus adjacent to Otter Creek. Access to this area needs to be carefully considered and sited appropriately.

Drainage / Stormwater

Stormwater drainage is poor on the Northlands campus in some areas and causes roadside erosion and pooling water (see Infrastructure photos 6, 7 & 8). There is a major drainage route running north-to-south through the center of campus east of the chapel, where a reinforced concrete pipe culvert and two recently installed high density polyethylene culverts and catch basins channel a water course through campus, under Macdonough Drive and downhill of the southern portion of campus. This drainage line was installed to alleviate the flooding of the chapel that was occurring before Hurricane Irene (Aug. 2011). To the northwest of the campus, an old retention pond has been filled in over the years and is no longer in use.⁴

³ Site visit by Ron Lyon & Garrett Organek of DuBois & King, 6-2-15

⁴ Kick-off Meeting With Client Group, Vergennes Fire Station, 5-27-15

As water quality concerns mount in the Lake Champlain Basin and new statewide stormwater rules are enacted by the Agency of Natural Resources, the installation of new stormwater elements and practices will become increasingly important, if not necessary. For a site so proximate to Otter Creek, a range of “Green Infrastructure” technologies will need to be considered, from bioswales, filter strips and bio-retention structures, to rain gardens and porous paving.

Water

The study area is provided with water by the Vergennes Panton Water District, a municipal corporation serving the City of Vergennes as well as the Town of Panton. The Vergennes Panton Water District Treatment Plant is located at Arnold Bay in Panton with additional storage in the southeastern corner of Vergennes. The plant recently underwent \$5.1 million in upgrades, completed in 2012, and included the installation of new filters, new pumping equipment and variable flow devices, new computer software improving control over the plant, new dehumidification system and a new heating system.⁵ The Vergennes Municipal Development Plan states that “the system is expected to have adequate residential, commercial and industrial capacity well into the next decade... According to population projections completed by Otter Creek Engineering the plant will be capable of meeting the future growth needs of the Vergennes-Panton area”. Currently, the plant has about a 1.3-million gallon per day capacity, and the average water consumption for the Vergennes-Panton Water District is approximately 596,000 gallons per day.⁵

As shown on the Water Map on page 74, an 8” cast iron water main runs along Macdonough Drive and connects to a meter pit on the eastern side of campus. From there, the campus is serviced by a looped 10” ductile iron water main running along Macdonough Drive that was installed in 1974.⁶ Many of the buildings have sprinkler systems that have been installed within the last ten years.⁴ The water main experiences periodic breaks and may require improvements or replacement.⁴ Water service connections to the buildings were not upgraded at the time the water main was installed, and most are 6” diameter.⁷ According to the Vergennes Municipal Development Plan, “twenty-five to thirty-five percent of the lines in Vergennes are old and will be upgraded as issues arise or as development drives the need for additional capacity”.

There have been discussions within the community of looping the water services within the area between Ferrisburgh and Vergennes that includes the Northlands campus, and creating a new fire district. This would allow for the back-pumping of water and could benefit fire-prevention services as well as the agricultural lands in the area. However this is only a possibility at this time and nothing has been formalized. This change would require additional upgrades to meter the water service.⁶

Wastewater

The Sewer Map on page 73 displays the various sanitary infrastructure present within the vicinity of the project lands. The entirety of the wastewater flow from the study area is treated

⁵ Vergennes Municipal Development Plan Amended in 2014

⁶ Phone conversation with Jeff Stone, Vergennes Panton Water District Chief Plant Operator, 8-20-15

⁷ Replacement of Sewer Collection System Plans, Northlands Job Corps Academy, State of Vermont Department of Buildings & General Services, July 2011. Consultant: Grenier Engineering, PC

by the Vergennes Municipal Wastewater Treatment Facility, which is located across Otter Creek southeast of the Northlands Campus. This facility is currently able to treat an average design flow of 750,000 gallons per day of wastewater, and operates with an average outflow of about 329,000 gallons per day based on flow records for the year ending in December, 2013.⁵ As described in the Municipal Development Plan, “the system is expected to have adequate residential, commercial and industrial capacity well into the next decade”. This comes with the caveat, however, that “the remaining inflow/infiltration is eliminated” as the wastewater collection system is plagued by these issues due to a number of sources including outdated and leaky pipes. Peak discharges during severe rain and snow melt events are causing overflows into Otter Creek.⁸

A private state-owned sewer collection system services the Northlands Campus as well as the residential property abutting the campus to the west at 110 Macdonough Drive. This private system runs to the Northlands Job Corps Pump Station, owned by the City of Vergennes, where it pumps the sewage across Otter Creek to the Vergennes Municipal Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF). There is approximately 340 feet of public sewer main located within the project boundary to the east of the Northlands campus. This main continues down Macdonough Drive servicing the residential properties neighboring the campus. There is also a public sewer main running along Comfort Hill south of the intersection with High Street. These public sewer mains, along with a private force main servicing the Comfort Hill Kennel property at 90 Comfort Hill⁹, lead to the Macdonough Drive Pump Station which sends wastewater across the Otter Creek to the Wastewater Treatment Facility.¹⁰ There is no public sewer infrastructure to the west of the project lands, as Ferrisburgh has no public sewer mains. However, there are isolated instances of Ferrisburgh properties connecting to public sewer infrastructure in Vergennes.¹¹

The private, state-owned wastewater collection system for the Northlands campus is comprised of a mix of older clay pipes, asbestos cement pipes and recently-installed PVC pipes which range in diameter from 4 inches to 10 inches. There are also numerous antiquated sewer lines that have been abandoned in place on the campus.⁷ The Northlands Job Corps pump station, owned by the City of Vergennes, utilizes a wet well along with dual pumps and operates at a capacity of about 150 gallons per minute. Wastewater is pumped from this station across Otter Creek via a 4” force main to a manhole upstream of the headworks building at the Wastewater Treatment Facility.¹² It may have sufficient capacity to serve additional uses on the project lands depending on the nature of the proposed development, and pending a detailed investigation of its capacity.

The public sewer mains along the eastern end of Macdonough Drive and the southern end of Comfort Hill are both 8” diameter gravity lines that run to the Macdonough Drive Pump Station. This is a pump house with a suction pump system that sends wastewater across Otter Creek through a 10” force main to a manhole upstream of the headworks building at the WWTF.¹⁰ Due to rainwater infiltrating outdated leaky pipes that were installed in the early 1900’s, severe rain and snow melt events currently overwhelm this pump station and cause overflows (see Infrastructure photo 9).⁴ Thus, untreated sewage occasionally discharges

⁸ Joel Banner Baird, “How serious is Vermont’s sewage problem?,” Burlington Free Press, July 13, 2015 (<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/life/green-mountain/2015/07/09/serious-vermonts-sewage-problem/29926047/>)

⁹ Informal meeting with Jim Larrow, Vergennes Public Works Supervisor, 9-9-15

¹⁰ Map of Infiltration/Inflow Investigation Results, April 16, 1997, Prepared by Forcier Aldrich & Associates

¹¹ Phone conversation with Gloria Warden, Ferrisburgh Town Clerk, 9-18-15

¹² Phone conversation with Mel Hawley, Vergennes City Manager, 8-17-15?

Existing Conditions

directly into Otter Creek. These “periodic and recurring overflows” from pump stations within the collection system are the reason that the seven mile stretch downstream from the WWTF has been designated as “impaired” by bacterial contamination by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation for swimming and other contact recreation.¹³ Any proposed development on the project lands that is potentially serviced by the Macdonough Drive Pump station should be coordinated with the City of Vergennes to minimize any further adverse effects on the system’s functionality.

¹³ State of Vermont 2012 303(d) List of Waters, Part A – Impaired Surface Waters in Need of TMDL, June 2012, Prepared by Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

Infrastructure



1. Asphalt and gravel interior road in poor condition



2. Concrete sidewalk in front of the chapel in good condition



3. Asphalt roadside sidewalk in poor condition



4. Wooded ledge outcropping northwest of campus



5. Asphalt and gravel parking area with poorly defined parking spaces



6. Pooling water on interior road network/parking area

Infrastructure



7. Roadside grass “swale” in poor condition



8. Stormwater pooling at basketball court



9. Entrance to Macdonough Drive pump station flooded with effluent (Photo: Joel Banner Baird/Free Press)



10. View of campus looking east



11. Ponding and erosion at a newer dormitory site



12. Parking lot in front of men's dormitory.

Infrastructure



13. A variety of landscaping and trees on campus



14. Croplands adjacent to campus



15. View to leased agriculture lands



16. Fish & Wildlife Property



17. AllSun solar site



18. Possible development site outside of campus lands

3. Planning and Zoning Framework

A review of relevant local and regional plans and regulations provides the foundation for the Weeks School and state lands study area as envisioned or as can be developed. An understanding of the purpose of the land use districts, their goals, standards, and regulations offers some indication for how development can occur here, and importantly, possible changes to allow for the type of growth that is envisioned. The study area contains a mix of existing uses and landscape conditions, which include institutional, agricultural, natural, and energy generation.

Ferrisburgh

In Ferrisburgh, all state lands are found within the Rural Agricultural District (RA-5; 152.27 acres), as delineated on the Town’s 2012 zoning map. The Municipal Development Plan describes the land use area the state properties are located in as Rural Residential, which is characterized as “rural with relatively low to medium densities (for Ferrisburgh) or clustered development, typically close to town roads... Year-round family dwellings are the intended use for this district. A minimum lot size of two acres has traditionally been required for these areas to encourage their utilization and thereby reduce site development costs, increase public health, restrain public service capital and unit costs and preserve the remaining agricultural soils...”¹⁴

There is an inconsistency between the description in the Plan with the purpose statement in the zoning regulations, which describes the RA-5 in the following manner: “Generally, these areas do not have the soil characteristics with good residential or commercial development potential, but are best suited for agricultural use. Other compatible uses would be open space, conservation and forestry. A minimum lot size of five (5) acres is required for these areas.”¹⁵ Permitted uses in this zoning district include but are not limited to residential dwellings, accessory use, home occupation, day care, and group homes. Conditional uses include outdoor recreation, day care facility, state or community owned and operated institutions or facilities, multiple family dwelling, and other similar uses which meet the intent of the purpose statement. The state lands in Ferrisburgh are currently being used exclusively for agriculture; farming is anticipated to be the continued use and is exempt from zoning regulations. Thus, there will be no conflicts with the local regulations, and it should be noted that agricultural uses are exempt from local zoning.

Vergennes

In the City of Vergennes, state lands fall within three zoning districts: Agricultural and Rural Residential (AGR; 244.49 acres), High Density Residential (HDR; 7.61 acres), and Public (PUB; 71.88).¹⁶ Both the Municipal Development Plan and Zoning Regulations concur in the definition and purpose of these districts. The AGR district is intended to “preserve and maintain the rural character of open lands and to protect and promote viable agriculture, important scenic vistas and landscapes, open spaces, passive recreational values and other natural, cultural and environmental resources.” (Zoning, pg. 93) Agriculture and outdoor recreation are the primary intended uses of these lands. However, residential development is permitted as part of a Planned Unit Development (PUD), but must be developed in a way that does not “adversely impact our

¹⁴ Ferrisburgh Town Plan Amended in 2007

¹⁵ Ferrisburgh Zoning Bylaws Adopted 11-02-10, pg. 20

¹⁶ Vergennes Zoning and Subdivision Regulations Adopted 06-12-2012, Zoning Map, pg. 143

city's natural and scenic resources.

Where residential units do occur, clustering of development in combination with the establishment of conservation areas is required as a condition of permit approval in order to preserve open space, agrarian use, and the natural resources present in this district." (Plan, pg. 73) Minimum lot size for every use in this district is four (4) acres, except for one-family dwellings, which require a lower density of one (1) acre. For the state lands in this district that have been identified for future potential development (i.e. residential use), a PUD would be required. The densities could be as high as one unit per acre for duplexes, multi-family dwellings and apartments.

Development of future housing on the project lands would also support goals and policies outlined in the Municipal Development Plan, which include:

Goal: To ensure the availability of safe, livable, affordable housing for all Vergennes residents that satisfies the diverse needs of the community, manages growth, and is compatible with the character of the community. (Plan, pg. 16)

Policies

- 1. Accommodate a range of housing options, including owner occupied, rental, affordable, and manufactured units to meet the needs of all Vergennes residents.*
- 4. Ensure that safe, affordable housing is available for the elderly. A range of living situations including, but not limited to, independent living and assisted living should be considered.*
- 5. Encourage partnerships with non-profit housing agencies to provide assistance with financing affordable housing projects, as feasible.*
- 7. Support the development or redevelopment of new low-cost housing and other low-market housing to meet the needs of all residents.*
- 8. Encourage development that is compatible with historic context, existing architecture, and community character. (Plan, pg. 17)*

For future energy development on lands within the AGR district (i.e. solar farm), precedent has already been established for this type of use with the development of a solar array on Comfort Hill Road. The Municipal Development Plan further supports this type of use in its energy goal, which says "To encourage the efficient use of energy, including the development and use of renewable energy resources in a manner that protects public health and safety, and minimizes adverse environmental and aesthetic impacts." (Plan, pg. 46)

There is one undeveloped state lands parcel along Comfort Hill Street, near the intersection of High Street, which is located in the High Density Residential District (HDR) and has been identified for potential future development. The HDR district contains generally undeveloped lands near the older sections of the downtown that are serviceable by public utilities. The purpose of this district is "to allow the continuation and expansion of residential and related uses while permitting higher clustered densities to accommodate topographical and natural resource

constraints.” (Zoning, pg. 98) However, many of these parcels have building limitations like severe topography or natural resource constraints that require careful siting. The Plan identifies several policies for this district that directly affect future development:

- Retain vegetative buffers and a natural-like setting;
- Ensure new development does not adversely impact scenic resources, hillsides and shorelines;
- Development must occur through a PUD and include specific standards like provisions for recreational open space;
- Single-family and two-family dwellings are the only permitted uses, while multiple-family dwellings and other uses are conditional;
- Parking must eliminate the need for on-street parking (Plan, pg. 78).

Zoning also includes generous density for development in the HDR district, which includes 15,000 square feet for one-family dwellings, 21,000 square feet for two-family dwellings, and 27,000 square feet for multiple-family dwellings (plus 6,000 square feet per additional dwelling unit in excess of 3 units). (Zoning, pg. 99) This is beneficial for the state if it would develop the property in this district, but site limitations like steep slope and bedrock will require careful siting.

The purpose of the Public District is to “provide for the zoning and common classification of most publicly-owned land within Vergennes, such as City and State facilities and offices, parks, schools and school facilities. Uses in this district shall provide direct benefits to the citizens of Vergennes, including education, municipal services, public recreation, community centers and agriculture.” (Zoning, pg. 115) No uses are listed as permitted in this district, because, as the regulations say, “State- and community-owned facilities are not listed because they are exempted.” (Zoning, pg. 116) Conditional uses are limited to community garden, child care facility, community center and outdoor recreation. The required minimum lot size is 20,000 sq. ft. (roughly 2 units per acre). The lands that contain the Northland Job Corps are located within the Public District. Any redevelopment and/or infill of this site would need to be community oriented and of some type of public use. This could be problematic if the state would want to sell the land to a private developer, or wanted to incorporate commercial or residential use e.g. multiple-family dwellings or apartments. The City would need to reevaluate current zoning or change the designation for the campus lands to be more inclusive of the types of uses anticipated for this site if it were to be sold or redeveloped for a non-institutional or non-public use.

“The City would need to reevaluate current zoning or change the designation for the campus lands to be more inclusive of the types of uses anticipated for this site...”

The Regional Plan

The 2011 Addison County Regional Plan was also reviewed to see how the project meets the general goals of this region. Regional plans, as a matter of policy, focus on broader issues that affect the region as a whole and typically do not consider impacts on an individual town or specific

property. Overriding goals, policies, and recommendations, which are characteristically advisory and non-compulsory in nature, are usually made in terms of “encourage,” “support,” “promote,” and “should.” Typically, the Regional Plan has effect where it is not in conflict with provisions of duly adopted municipal plans. With that said, the project supports many of the general goals and statements in the Regional Plan. These include but are not limited to:

Assist in providing access to educational and vocational training opportunities that will foster full realization of the abilities of the population in the region.

Protect important natural and historic features of the region’s landscape.

Encourage conservation and efficient use of energy and the development of renewable energy resources.

Strengthen diversified sustainable agricultural and forest industries.

Encourage the availability of safe and affordable housing. (pg. 1-8)

In section 7.5 Education, the Regional Plan documents the Northland Job Corp, saying:

The Northland Job Corp Center in Vergennes provides vocational education to students aged 16 to 21 who have special needs not met in the public school system. The facility operates on a contract with the U.S. Department of Labor and attracts students from throughout the northeastern U.S. The center enrolls approximately 280 students on its 65-acre state-owned campus. (pg. 7-85)

No further goals, policies or statements are made about this particular site.

With regards to housing, several statements and goals in the Regional Plan would support the future development of residential housing on the project site. The Plan highlights the fact that as population continues to grow, there will be a need to increase the number of housing units, estimating the region will need “nearly 7,500 more housing units by 2025.” (pg. 3-20) The Plan also recognizes the need for affordable housing, and includes policies such as:

Encourage the cooperation and coordination of public and private entities in the planning, financing, development and management of affordable housing. (pg. 3-22)

The Plan further recognizes that “towns in the region own land that could be utilized for perpetually affordable housing. If the land costs were subsidized, private developers could make a reasonable profit building needed affordable houses.” (pg. 3-37) The recommendations in the Master Plan could help promote and advance these goals if Scenario 5, Housing Development is determined to be a desirable and viable next step.

4. Planning Process and Outreach

Public Process

The first task in conducting an extensive and inclusive public process was to identify key stakeholders that could provide local knowledge and history, address relevant state and regional level actions and goals, bring together information from a variety of different areas of interest or concern, and are well-connected to community members in Vergennes and Ferrisburgh. This team was collectively known as the Client Group but is also known as the Steering Committee, and included the following individuals:

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Wordle diagram derived from 1st Steering Committee Meeting.

Members of the Client Group initially met in a Kickoff Meeting held at the Vergennes Fire Station on May 27, 2015. LandWorks lead the meeting which was guided by an agenda that introduced the project including roles and responsibilities, provided an outline of the project purpose, timeline and deliverables, reviewed initial thoughts and takeaways from an early site visit, incorporated a roundtable discussion related to the scope of work and first impressions, provided a forum for a brief discussion of current use by Northlands Job Corp and related issues and opportunities, as well as reviewed connections to ongoing planning projects or studies in Vergennes and Ferrisburgh. The Kick-off Meeting agenda and a photoboard of existing conditions is included in this report as Appendix A. Key takeaways from the meeting included the need to review and address state leases with current tenants, identification of improvements completed on site, comparable projects in Vermont, historic buildings and the role of DHP, existing infrastructure, state lands outside the Northlands Job Corp. lease, renewable energy, job creation, and the desire for innovation in the Master Plan. The Kick-off Meeting notes are included in this report as Appendix B.

Following the Kick-off Meeting LandWorks proposed to facilitate an outreach and collaborative process with the leadership and residents of the host communities and their associated departments and neighboring property owners to ensure their concerns and interests were identified and addressed. We approached this task by conducting interviews with the following groups and individuals:

- 6/25/15 Formal Meeting held at Northlands Job Corp Administrative Offices. Attending were George Sabol, Center Director; Hannah Deming, Administrative Support Director; Denis Dalley, Maintenance Supervisor; Allen Palmer, VT Division of Property Management, Kevin Henderson, Project Manager for BGS Facilities, David Raphael and Sarah Pelkey of LandWorks.
- 6/25/15 Informal interview and follow-up emails with Ryan Brands of Ray Brands Leased Lands and Deer Valley Partnership Leased Lands

- 7/1/15 Informal interview with Robin Scheu, Addison County Economic Development Corporation (ACEDC)
- Informal interview with Adam Lougee, Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC)
- 7/13/15 Phone interview with Jamie Duggan, Historic Preservation Review Coordinator, and Scott Dillon, Survey Archeologist, VT Department of Historic Preservation (DHP).
- 7/15/15 Phone interview with Leslie Black-Plumeau (VHFA) and follow-up email
- 7/20/15 Phone interview with Elise Schenbacher (Addison County Trust)
- 7/22/15 Phone interview with Lynn Jackson (Century 21 Jack Associates) and follow-up email
- 7/28/15 Informal interview onsite with Jamie Duggan, Historic Preservation Review Coordinator, and Scott Dillon, Survey Archeologist, VT Department of Historic Preservation, David Raphael and Lucy Thayer of LandWorks.
- 8/14/15 Phone interview with Dennis Dalley, Maintenance Manager Northlands Job Corps Academy
- 8/17/15 Phone interview with Kim Royar, VT Fish & Wildlife
- 8/17/15 Phone interview with Mel Hawley, Vergennes City Manager
- 8/18/15 Phone interview with Tom Corbin, Middlebury College
- 8/20/15 Phone interview with Jeff Stone, Vergennes Panton Water District Chief Plant Operator
- 9/9/15 Informal interview with Jeff Stone, Vergennes Panton Water District Chief Plant Operator
- 9/9/15 Phone interview with Josh Castonguay, Green Mountain Power
- 9/9/15 Informal meeting with Jim Larrow, Vergennes Public Works Supervisor
- 9/10/15 Phone interview with Jon Deming, Vergennes Panton Water District Superintendent
- 9/14/15 Phone interview with Mel Hawley, Vergennes City Manager
- 9/18/15 Phone conversation with Gloria Warden, Ferrisburgh Town Clerk

“The information garnered from each of these meetings and interviews (and the guidance of the Steering Committee) informed our understanding of the Weeks school site, the potential highest and best uses, and the needs and goals of the surrounding communities and regions.”

The information garnered from each of these meetings and interviews (and the guidance of the Steering Committee) informed our understanding of the former Weeks School site, the potential highest and best uses, and the needs and goals of the surrounding communities and regions. This information is woven throughout our report and contributed substantially to the development of our proposed scenarios and options and the overall Master Plan.

As LandWorks continued to develop preliminary recommendations and to seek input on the Master Plan we maintained contact with each of the host communities and their elected and appointed officials. To this end, David Raphael presented the project and the preliminary analysis to the Vergennes City Council on 7/14/15 and the Ferrisburgh Selectboard on 7/21/15. Members of the Client Group and other interested stakeholders attended these presentations, which were useful in continuing dialogue of the project, and helped to define the direction of the project and to focus the options for potential viable uses. A handout developed for these meetings is included in Appendix C.

The presentations at both the Vergennes City Council Meeting and the Ferrisburgh Selectboard meetings yielded several takeaways and reaffirmed the support for maintaining and supporting the Job Corps program. Several participants discussed the value of and interaction with the Job Corps program and students, and ideas for additional training programs and opportunities were mentioned. There was support for potential housing and additional solar energy development on the site. In Vergennes a resident voiced support and interest related to recreational development – most specifically for off-road trails, and this echoes a local interest that has been highlighted in recent recreation surveys and in the work of the Vergennes Otter Creek Basin Task Force – which has identified the opportunities for boardwalks along the same side of Otter Creek that the campus and loads are located on. In Ferrisburgh, one attendee focused on the two historic buildings on the campus, and expressed interest in seeing those sites developed as a museum or unique historic site.

As a next step, a draft of the Master Plan was reviewed at a meeting with the Steering Committee/Client Group on 8/20/15. The Client Group reviewed the maps and scenarios and discussed the Master Plan options. During the meeting, suggestions and clarifications were given regarding the location and application of biosolids; ownership of lands; and potential for more information on funding and investment opportunities. The team recommendations aimed to ensure that the Master Plan will work as a stepping-stone and catalyst for the next course of action(s) presented in the study.

The final meeting of the Steering Committee/Client Group took place on September 15, 2015 and focused on a review of the conclusions and recommendations as set forth in Section 5 of the Master Plan document. The members present “walked through” each of the 8 Master Planning Scenarios and confirmed, revised and/or added to the final conclusions and recommendations provided. There was general support and acceptance of the Plan, and it was agreed the Plan provided a blueprint for the next steps related to maintaining highest and best uses for the campus and associated lands as well as the need to continue with promoting the options identified and maximizing both the economic returns and community benefits of the overall property and uses.

5. Master Plan Scenarios and Future Management and Development Options and Considerations

The master planning process of garnering input, conducting research and interviews, analyzing conditions on the ground and identifying parameters for future use and development have yielded a number of distinct goals and potential outcomes that are expressed in the following narratives regarding scenarios for property management, land use and development. Eight distinct master planning scenarios have been identified and these include:

- 1. Support and Maintain the 66 Acre Campus** (currently leased to Northlands Job Corps) via Master Plan Scenario 1A or 1B.
- 2. Leasing and Management of Agricultural Lands** (including the continuation of current leases)
- 3. Adaptive Reuse of 2 Key Historic Buildings**, the Arsenal (1828) and Fairbanks (1919).
- 4. Future Development of Energy Generation Projects** (with a focus on renewable energy).
- 5. Housing Development Options.**
- 6. Planning and Implementation of a Recreational Trail Network** and Open Space Areas.
- 7. Sale of Specific Parcels** (within the overall state property holdings).
- 8. Biosolids Application** by the City of Vergennes (including potential purchase of agricultural lands by the city to continue this activity).

This section of the Master Plan outlines the factors and options associated with these overarching goals and opportunities. It is important to note that these scenarios are not listed in any order of priority or feasibility.

Scenario I: Support and Maintain the 66 Acre Campus

Two primary Options within Scenario I

The two primary scenarios governing the future use of the state property and related parcels associated with the former Weeks School involve the past and current lessee for the Weeks School campus and its facilities, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). The USDOL operates the Northlands Job Corps Center on this site through its current contractor, CHP International. The Job Corps Center has been operated at this site in Vermont since 1978; and there are periodic concerns regarding the continued operation of the Center at this location. Thus the (2) key master planning scenarios are considered here: Scenario 1A) the campus continues to host and accommodate the Job Corps program, or Scenario 1B) the potential options for re-use and development of the campus should the Job Corps program leave the site. The other components of the master plan that address adjacent parcels outside of the leased area can be considered with either of the Weeks/Northlands campus scenarios as they are basically independent of the 66-acre campus area.

Scenario 1A: Northlands Jobs Corps Continues on the Weeks School Campus

Highest and Best Use

This Job Corps Center, as a residential job training and technical education facility represents the highest and best use currently for this property, as defined by the 66-acre campus it leases from the State of Vermont (with the associated 28 buildings – as identified in the lease agreement). The Job Corps is a good fit with the scale, organization and design of the various buildings on the campus, given the presence of dormitories, administrative and classroom buildings, shops and other training facilities. It offers the resident students a positive and amenable setting for their career training. The campus and associated facilities fulfill the programmatic needs and provide a focus for the students in a location that is close to but still separate from the more urbanized and developed neighborhoods and districts of Vergennes.

“This Job Corps Center, as a residential job training and technical education facility represents the highest and best use currently for this property...”

The current on-site management and leadership of the program has steadfastly indicated the intention to continue operating this Job Corps Center at this site. Given the longevity of the Northlands program at this campus, the USDOL and its contractors have maintained the buildings and grounds and undertaken modest improvements to the physical plant on an as-needed basis. It is important to note that Job Corps provides a number of benefits to the local community including the employment of 118 and the generation of over 2.8 million dollars (from 12-1-2013 through 5-31-2015) in the local economy by the use of vendors and contractors (in Middlebury, Vergennes and Ferrisburgh the amount spent over that time period was about \$600,000).¹⁷

Options for the Future

It has been suggested that the local Job Corps leadership explore developing relevant programs to reinforce the viability and longevity of the Job Corps program in Vermont. The Steering Committee and others interviewed for this project have suggested that other job training programs be considered for the future that reflect current and future demands for employees and could include the energy and health care sectors. In other words, the training programs could and should work for Vermont and the local economy. This is an important consideration, given that the current student population is 220 students (down from the 285 capacity filled at the height of enrollment) with about 25-30% of students and 70% of the Northlands workforce coming from Vermont.¹⁸

To create better connection to the city of Vergennes and its economic benefits, a cohesive and continuous streetscape condition should be implemented. This could include, among other things, street tree plantings, a sidewalk that connects to and through the Northlands Job Corps campus and a system of lighting that is consistent along the entire route from the city of Vergennes to the Northlands campus. Another way the connection of the Otter Creek Campus and Lands and the City of Vergennes can be bolstered is for the Addison

¹⁷ Information derived from email from George Sabol, dated 6-25-15 and a Powerpoint for the Community Relations Committee Meeting dated 12-11-2014, also prepared and provided by the contractor, CHP International.

¹⁸ Powerpoint which was used for the Community Relations Committee Meeting dated 12-11-2014

County Transit Resources (ACTR) route to be expanded to include a stop at the Northlands campus. This addition could facilitate student engagement in the community, community engagement in the campus and provide a transportation alternative for those employed by Northlands.

Continued Investment

The lease terms with the State of Vermont, as of 2015, require that the USDOL, through its operator, provide required maintenance and facility improvements on an as-needed and yearly basis. An important consideration for the state is to provide a framework and set of priorities for those improvements in concert with the needs of the Job Corps program itself. In the past some improvements have not met certain requirements or protocols set in place by the State. Such a framework also needs to consider the long term use and re-use of the campus by identifying functional (life safety and infrastructure), aesthetic and amenity improvements/enhancements to the campus for both the current and potential future users. For example, it is acknowledged by Job Corps, state and local officials that the water and wastewater service will require upgrades in the near future. A more detailed plan of such improvements and enhancements needs to be developed as part of a second phase of this master planning effort for this property. Certain infrastructure/utility upgrades within the campus or for development projects maybe the responsibility of the land owner/user/lessee, as the City of Vergennes would not implement utilities on lands outside of its ROW or control.

The campus property is indeed a challenge to maintain. It is an important to note that it has been estimated that over a 10-year period the State of Vermont has invested upwards of one million dollars in the campus infrastructure.¹⁹

Historic Resources

One important consideration going forward is the coordination of maintenance and improvement activities with the state's Division of Historic Preservation. This campus contains 28 buildings and sites identified as historic resources²⁰ and the overall campus itself could be considered as an historic site as well. This is also an area considered sensitive for cultural resources given both the Native American presence in the Otter Creek Basin, and subsequent uses by early Americans in the late 18th and early 19th century. Renovations, additions, and new construction requires the purview of the states Division for Historic Preservation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Continue to work with Job Corps Administration to maintain and improve the facilities and infrastructure; address code and accessibility issues as appropriate. Review site infrastructure analysis and recommendations in this report to identify key elements to address in the near term.
2. Consider developing an overall long-term plan for campus landscape, architectural and infrastructure enhancements with an associated cost/benefit study; identify specific initiatives and a capital improvement plan within the parameters of making the site

¹⁹ Estimate provided by Allen Palmer, Division of Property Management, State of Vermont, 9-15-15,

²⁰ Johnson, Curtis, Editor, The Historic Architecture of Addison County, Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, Montpelier, 1992, pages 250-251.

viable with or without the Job Corps program. Identify how to fund both the detailed planning and design work as well as the capital improvements.

3. Explore use or sub-leasing vacant buildings on campus. There do not appear to be restrictions in place to prevent this.
4. Consider with the Job Corps administration how to strengthen and target existing training programs for local and regional needs as well developing new and necessary training programs for para-professionals.
5. The walking and biking connections between the campus and downtown Vergennes are not as safe or sufficient as they could be as of 2015. The route needs to be further studied and upgraded with improved sidewalks, bicycle options, signage, curbing and lighting. As this would primarily be a City program, capital improvement allocations could be considered along with several applicable funding sources such as People for Bikes –Community Grants (<http://peopleforbikes.org/pages/community-grants>), Vermont Bicycle and Pedestrian Grants (http://vtransengineering.vermontgov/sections/ltf/bike_ped/policy_plan), and several additional programs administered through state agency of transportation, VTrans (<http://vtrans.vermont.gov>).

Scenario 1B: Weeks School Campus without the Northlands Job Corps Center

This scenario is presented in the context of what if? – What if, some unforeseen circumstance arises that results in the USDOL terminating its lease and then leaving this campus unoccupied. This is not a desirable scenario but one that this master plan has been charged with anticipating. This site currently consists of the 66-acre campus and associated buildings and has operated as a residential campus since its inception in 1874. Through its subsequent development as the Weeks School in 1937; then as the Northlands Job Corps Center an educational and training facility beginning in 1978, logically it is most suited in the future for a similar residential educational facility.

Institutional/Educational Use

Unfortunately there appears to be little demand for a facility of this scale with its uniquely oriented and sized buildings. It would be a challenging fit for one use or user given the nature of the campus and its historic uses. No new school campuses of this scale are being constructed or planned in Vermont. Most recently a similar campus with classrooms, dormitories, administrative buildings and open space operated by the now-closed Pine Ridge School for a number of decades in Williston has been vacant for several years without any similar potential tenants or purchasers yet. One interested and logical institution that explored adapting and reusing the site for a residential mental health care treatment facility found the costs and permitting requirements for such a re-use to be ultimately prohibitive.

For this site, possible tenants or purchasers could possibly include the Community College of Vermont, Vermont Technical College, UVM Continuing Education or Extension Service, or even Middlebury College, which at one point in time inquired into leasing or purchasing one or more of the buildings but found the rehabilitation costs to be too high. It is possible that a lease arrangement such as that which exists with Northlands now would promote the reuse of all or a portion of the campus, as opposed to outright sale. However, the reality of

current capital investment and development is that many institutions such as the University are not looking to add facilities or create satellite campuses. For example, UVM just firmed up the locations for the next 20 years in each state county for all of their Extension Service offices. UVM is not planning expansion off site or to add any real estate, actually some of its off campus properties are on the market. Currently the focus for the University is on several major projects on its main campus in Burlington.²¹

Redevelop the Site for Alternative Uses

The exit of the Job Corps, as outlined in the previous section, would result in a difficult fit for one user of the entire campus. However there are several models, including the redevelopment of Fort Ethan Allen in Colchester and the sale and redevelopment of the former Brandon Training School site. Fort Ethan Allen has completely redeveloped as mixed-use site with light industry, offices, commercial entities, housing, institutional uses by St. Michaels College and the University of Vermont.

In the Brandon model, the state put the entire property up for sale and a real estate developer purchased it. The new owner leased some discrete buildings and sold several parcels of the site to a design and construction company that has developed a new vision for a portion of the property- calling it “Brandon North/Green Village” – with a focus on housing and offices. Thus a future

“Opportunities for reuse of the campus site and buildings range from incubator spaces, offices, training centers, state agency satellite facilities, day care centers to different types of housing...”

scenario for the Weeks School campus could be envisioned with a site developer or manager using the Brandon model as a basis for the sale or management of the property’s re-use and redevelopment. Individual parcels could then be identified for sale or lease to distinct users; possibly the entire 66-acre campus could be marketed as a whole.

Opportunities for Reuse and Development

Opportunities for reuse of the campus site and buildings range from incubator spaces, offices, training centers, state agency satellite facilities, daycare centers to different types of housing (starter, affordable, senior). A nearby corporate facility run by United Technologies Corporation on Panton Road could yield the need for a nearby storage or use facility, however, the current employment numbers are lower than earlier years. At its height, Simmonds Precision employed about 2,300 employees in five plants, with roughly 600-1,100 at the Panton Road Plant. Goodrich Corporation has space allocated elsewhere in Vergennes. A potential concept for a building or cluster of buildings is as “incubator” spaces for new or growing businesses – this model has been used in Vermont in smaller downtowns and commercial areas to facilitate new and alternative business growth. In Vergennes, for example, the Kennedy Brothers complex has slowly converted to individual spaces and businesses over the last 5 to 10 years. The process requires time and investment either by the owner or the tenant in order to develop suitable spaces and infrastructure to reflect company or business specifics and needs.

Key advantages to this site include the water service and wastewater infrastructure in place,

²¹ Phone conversation with Ms. Julianne Heisler, Real Estate Coordinator, Campus Planning Services, University of Vermont, 8-13-2015.

the presence of the historic architecture and an aesthetically pleasing setting proximate to downtown. The open space and the possibility of future recreational amenities associated with a trail system also creates a positive environment that would be attractive for certain uses and appeal to certain developers and constraints. Constraints include building size and condition, challenges for re-use with buildings such as dormitories, and current inefficiencies associated with layout, circulation and parking for different re-use scenarios. The site's location on a local road some distance from both rail and state highways (and a long walk from current transit stops in Vergennes) also create a disincentive for some types of potential businesses or users who need ease of access and proximity to transportation infrastructure.

A review with the Addison County Economic Development Corporation concluded that current need or demand for office/commercial space and light industrial sites does exist. However, there are other existing sites in Middlebury (Exchange Street District) and Vergennes (Panton Road) that are available for such uses, as well as vacant office space in Vergennes downtown that are already suited for such use. There is also land available to develop, but construction costs limit this option. Thus these types of business would gravitate towards existing spaces already "fit up" for office or commercial use. There is the possibility, as with the former Brandon Training School example, a willing developer and/or a specific business with a variety of functions and needs that may include outdoor space could be a distinct possibility and fit for this site. But that's still an "If" – the Brandon physical plant included larger buildings that are/have been easier to redevelop for other uses.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. In this scenario portions or all of the campus parcel (and buildings) would be considered for alternative leasing or sale. The rezoning of the campus from the current "Public" district designation in the Vergennes Zoning Ordinance would be a necessary first step to enable alternative and mixed uses on this site.
2. The state should review the placement of restrictions on potential properties or buildings that might be considered for lease, sale or subdivision from the current campus. Encumbering potential Purchase and Sales agreements with excessive or numerous restrictions has proven to be disincentive for the successful sale of discrete properties within this landholding.
3. Using this Master Plan as a point of departure, a prospectus or marketing package should be developed as a part of this Scenario. This would allow the state to identify distinct buildings or sections of the campus for leasing and sale to a wide range of possible development opportunities, including incubator space, educational or other institutional uses, health services or other office type uses.
4. As stated in Recommendation 5 in Scenario 1B, the walking and biking connections between the campus and downtown Vergennes are not as safe or sufficient as they could be as of 2015. The route needs to be further studied and upgraded with improved sidewalks, bicycle options, signage, curbing and lighting. See that recommendation for funding sources.

Scenarios 2 - 8

Master Planning on the State Lands Outside of the Former Weeks School Campus Lease Area

As part of the project charge, the planning and design team were asked to explore any and all alternatives for current and future use of the state-owned parcels, including any that might include the sale of discrete parcels within the overall property holdings.

2. Leasing and Management of Agriculture Lands

There is a strong incentive to keep lands in agricultural use and to sustain the lease agreements tied to these lands – and this is the case for several reasons: 1) the soils surrounding the Weeks School campus contain extensive areas of prime or statewide soil designations; 2) over two hundred acres are actively being leased; and 3) the farmed lands may represent the highest and best use for those lands. The family farming here has their farmstead located adjacent to the site on Walker Road, has a long-term investment in this area and the crop lands and has expressed a commitment to the future with the next generation participating in farm operations. Given the nature of the soils and the anticipated long-term use for farming in the Champlain Valley area where tradition, climate conditions, and support for agricultural uses and activities are still quite viable, farming should continue here. Additionally, a portion of the agricultural lease lands serve the City of Vergennes by providing areas for the dispersal of biosolids a relatively short distance from the wastewater treatment plant. These lands are subject to an agreement between the State, the Ray Brands Farm and the city of Vergennes for 36 acres.

The Brands family has expressed interest in development a longer term lease agreement and would like to explore increasing the acreage of the lands they farm in the future. Finally, another potential use for some of the fallow fields and woodlands adjacent to the actively farmed fields could be in biofuel production, including crops such as corn for ethanol production or switchgrass. Silviculture practices could yield modest cord wood production or wood chips for pellet production.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

1. Actively manage the lands outside of the campus to promote additional cost effective agricultural uses that will contribute to the highest and best uses of the property.
2. Work with the Brands family and/or other local farms to determine if more land can/ should be used for agriculture.
3. Evaluate the potential of creating a more long-term lease with lessees that are interested in the continuation of farming.
4. Consider sale with conditions of specific parcels to farmers or the City of Vergennes who are interested in lands continued use for agriculture and the future security of land application of biosolids.
5. Reinvest proceeds of the varied uses, in conjunction with farming operations, to improve the long-term value of properties retained.

3. Adaptive Reuse of 2 Key Historical Buildings – Arsenal & Fairbanks

Two Selected Historic Buildings – the Arsenal which dates to 1828 and the adjacent Fairbanks building which was constructed in 1919 are currently unoccupied and deteriorating. An on-site review with the State Division of Historic Preservation yielded the conclusion that, according to Preservationist Jamie Duggan, the buildings “have very good bones”, look good on the exterior, and are “prime candidates for adaptive re-use”.²² These two buildings are not included in the Job Corps lease and are the first two structures on the property as one approaches from Macdonough Drive from the east. Both buildings would lend themselves to either housing or office space, from outside appearances, and the Fairbanks building’s original use was for office space.

Buildings and General Services and Division of Historic Preservation should work together to determine the ultimate historic value and potential maintenance or re-use of these facilities, and the cost-benefits associate with rehabilitation. These buildings could be marketed in the “as-is” condition, but would be more saleable potentially with an analysis or plan in place for their restoration and rehabilitation – so that costs and steps associated with such a process could be ascertained. The cost for adapting these buildings is substantial; a minimum of \$200-225/sq.ft. was offered by one interested party so tackling these projects would require an altruistic developer, a non-profit entity and the access to grant monies.

Another possibility could be the creation of a historic site destination and/or museum. These spaces are rich in archaeology and history connected to the life and times of local native peoples, the European settlers, and the fledgling nation. Such a facility could be supported by a partnership or consortium of related institutions as identified in this narrative. Partners or other entities could potentially support educational programs focused on history and historic preservation. The buildings certainly could be adapted for office use; another option would be to create a unique meeting place or event space (depending on internal structure or space and preservation parameters) or even a destination restaurant (if zoning was amended). The Arsenal is connected to the history of the Shipyard, the Falls, and the era after the war of 1812. Walking trails could be established that lead to the former shipyard site in a sensitive manner and indoor/outdoor interpretation could be developed. This initiative could be developed in concert with other local historic attractions. Partners could include the Bixby Library, the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, The Preservation Trust and the Lake Champlain Basin Program to identify a few. This approach would reflect the recommendations of local residents who have voiced an interest during the community meetings and it would be consistent with the City’s recent planning project with the Vermont Center for Rural Development that identified amenities and attractions in the Basin area as a high priority.

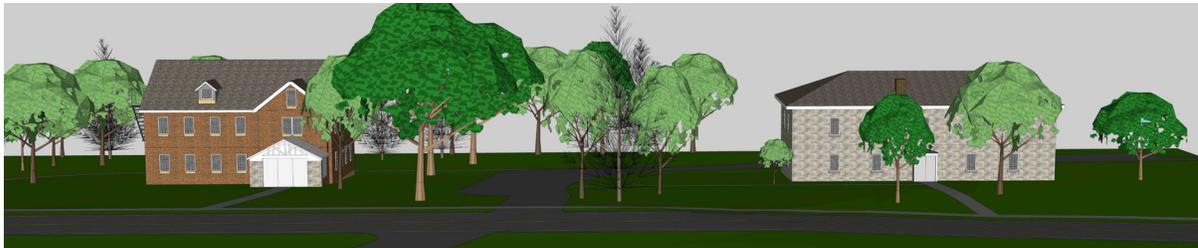
Grant opportunities can come from a wide range of sponsors and foundations. It will be necessary to secure funding from multiple sources given the complexity and breadth of renovations required. For instance, there are many local and state funding sources that could contribute to the rehabilitation and reuse of the historic Arsenal and Fairbanks buildings, however it is important to understand that many available grants target one aspect of the renovation or rehabilitation, so multiple funding sources will need to be identified for full rehabilitation and use.

²² Site Visit with Jamie Duggan and Scott Dillon, VT DHP, 7-28-15.

2 Selected Historic Buildings: The Arsenal and The Fairbanks



Aerial view of the Arsenal (left) and the Fairbanks (right) historic buildings 3D model



View from across the street of the Arsenal (left) and the Fairbanks (right) historic buildings 3D model



3D model view of the Arsenal historic building



3D model view of the Fairbanks historic building

Note: This 3D model of the Fairbanks and Arsenal buildings, currently vacant, is a tool for planning, designs and the consideration of adaptive reuse options for these two buildings and their sites.

Some of the funding opportunities include:

- The Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) works with government agencies, local communities and individuals to coordinate and fund efforts that benefit the Lake Champlain Basin’s water quality, fisheries, wetlands, wildlife, recreation, and cultural resources.
- The Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development - Historic Preservation Grants Established in 1986, the State-funded Historic Preservation Grant Program helps municipalities and non-profit organizations rehabilitate and keep in active use the buildings that make up a vital part of Vermont’s historic downtowns, villages, and rural communities.
- The Walter Cerf Community Fund (WCCF) that makes grants to address charitable needs in the state of Vermont with priority interests that the arts, education, historic preservation, and social services. Within these issue areas, WCCF has a strong desire to support work that addresses the needs of underserved populations with a preference for proposals that encourage cooperation, collaboration, and community building.

“Exploring options for additional wind and solar energy may be one viable use of the undeveloped, fallow lands under the state’s ownership..”

Funding on a federal level is also possible and could include:

- Federal Financial Assistance for Historic Preservation Projects: Cultural and Arts Programs for historic properties, particularly the historic built environment, that can benefit from Federal funding programs that support projects in the arts, humanities, and museum development. These include grants for construction, maintenance and interpretation among others from the National Endowment for the Humanities:
 - Challenge Grants that help institutions and organizations secure long-term support for, and improvements in, their humanities programs and resources. Funds can be used to create endowments for maintenance of facilities. In special circumstances, challenge grants can help with limited direct costs, including construction and renovation of facilities and conservation of collections.
 - We the People: Interpreting America’s Historic Places Grants to interpret America’s Historic Places, projects may interpret a single historic site or house, a series of sites, an entire neighborhood, a town or community, or a larger geographical region.
 - Grants for Arts Projects: Design that focus on architecture, landscape architecture, or designed objects should apply for funding under this program. Two categories of grants are applicable: Access to Artistic Excellence (Stewardship), and Challenge America Fast-Track Review Grants. Under the former, broad ranges of historic preservation activities are eligible for funding. Under the latter, architectural studies, design competitions, charettes, or feasibility plans for the renovation, restoration, or adaptive reuse of facilities or spaces for cultural activities are eligible. Funding is not available for actual renovation or construction costs.
- The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (<http://www.achp.gov/funding-cultural.html>) is another resource that aggregates numerous grant programs including those

listed above.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

1. The historic buildings still have potential for adaptive reuse. Key stakeholders and agencies should meet to collaborate on feasible options for restorations and re-development, including the sale of the properties to other parcels.
2. Investigate and apply for relevant state and federal grants that will facilitate the rehabilitation, reuse, and potential sale of the select historic buildings.
3. Coordinate with the Northlands Jobs Corps to explore the feasibility of and interest in a training program focused on restoration and rehabilitation of historic sites and structures.

4. Future Development of Energy Generation Projects

Existing Conditions:

There are two energy generation facilities on-site, a 120ft tall, 100kW wind turbine and a +/- 500kW solar farm under construction as the “AllSun” facility on 6.87 acres of leased land. The wind turbine provides power to the Northlands campus and was developed by Green Mountain Power as a third community scale wind turbine. The lease is for a duration of 20 years and the state has a buy-out option.

Exploring options for additional wind and solar energy may be one viable use of the undeveloped, fallow lands under the state’s ownership available for development outside of the agricultural leases in both Ferrisburgh and Vergennes. These possibilities include additional smaller scale wind turbines similar to what is present on site, and additional solar arrays. Biomass generation or other energy generation alternatives could be considered as part an approach in Vermont to promoting “Distributed Energy Resources”. This use would be consistent with the silviculture recommendations set forth in Scenario 2 that identified the potential for cultivation of biomass fuel types and woodlot management for cord wood and/or biomass production (pellets).

The presence of two renewable energy generation facilities on the state-owned lands makes it logical to consider the viability of adding to these generation types of energy facilities in the future. Wind energy development is challenging in Vermont given the issues associated with aesthetics, site engineering and not the least, the wind resource. There are now two 100kW Vermont built Northern Power “community scale” wind turbines in this portion of Addison County with the recent installation by Green Mountain Power at the Nea-Tocht Farm in Ferrisburgh. As with Northlands project, the turbine is owned and maintained by the utility. Any additional wind development on this site, as with a solar project, would need to connect with a potential user to make the use of the state lands for such a project more feasible. Potential siting and aesthetic issues often create challenges for permitting and local acceptance, so that is a consideration here and a potential hurdle for future development. However, recent trends and preferences voiced by Vermonters in energy planning indicate that an approach to “Distributed Energy Resources” - residential and community scale systems are preferable than larger scale energy generation options such as new biomass plants and ridge top wind farms.

Solar Energy has proven to be a viable and desirable residential and community scale energy generation option in Vermont, the evidence is visible everywhere in the state. According to Renewable Energy Vermont, by 2013 there was almost 19,000 kW of installed solar system capacity. Net-metering and a range of incentives, credits and customer options made available to solar energy developers along with the improved technology and lower costs have spurred an increase in these types of projects, and the on-site AllSun Project can be considered a testimony to this. Renewable Energy Vermont is a comprehensive resource for the planning and development of solar and wind energy projects, and the Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency (DSIRE) provides a listing of available financing and development incentives applicable to Vermont (www.dsireusa.org).²³

Feasibility for Other Renewable Energy Generation On-Site

One interesting possibility that has emerged from the exploration of energy generation options on the state property is the development of a biogas processing facility or bio-digester. These energy production facilities are in operation currently on a number of farms (16 as of this study) in the state and as a waste-to-energy facility at the Coventry Landfill. The anaerobic digester produces a gas mix consisting primarily of methane that feeds a gas-fired combustion engine that in turn powers an electric generator. Biogas can also be scrubbed and compressed into compressed or liquid renewable natural gas as well. There are several benefits of this type of fuel including the key benefit of a locally produced primary ingredient thus reducing the impact on landfill capacity, and other environmental impacts associated with waste and manure treatment and disposal.²⁴

“There is an ongoing need for certain types of housing in Addison County..”

The Coventry facility has a footprint of approximately 1 to 2 acres, although the landfill itself, from which the gas is derived, is much larger than that. A large facility of that capacity serving the overall electric grid needs to be connected to a transmission line capable of carrying the significant energy being generated; smaller facilities can connect with the grid via three phase utility distribution lines. Three phase utility lines are present on the perimeter roads of the state properties and on Macdonough Drive; thus any future facility would be able to access the grid at these locations as the AllSun project is doing.

The primary source of material for a facility located on the state’s lands would be from farm manure and food waste. While on-site access to these sources is desirable, manure can be trucked to the site from farms within a reasonable radius, although the ideal approach has the manure pumped to the biodigester. A minimum of 2,000 cows plus food wastes would serve as a basis for a biodigester operation that could potentially generate 800 kW of electricity. The components of such a facility would typically encompass 6-7 acres with an ideal site comprising 10 acres. Green Mountain Power is “exploring the next generation of biodigesters” as part of a community program being promoted by the state’s largest

²³ For more information on solar, wind, and the source of information for this section please visit www.vtenergyatlas-info.com

²⁴ <http://www.vtenergyatlas-info.com/biomass>

²⁵ Information derived from a phone conversation with Josh Castenguay, Green Mountain Power, 9/9/15.

utility. GMP will help explore the feasibility for locating and developing such a facility. One suggestion offered by the company representative was the notion of connecting a future facility on this site with a new job training program at the Northlands facility, an appropriate idea that has been suggested for other initiatives being considered as part of this plan.²⁵ Overall, this concept has the initial support of local officials for further exploration and is consistent with one of the over arching development scenarios or opportunities for the state lands which is a focus on energy generation.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

1. There are locations onsite that can be used for energy generation.
2. If this option for development is considered more viable than housing options, or compatible with an adjacent location on state lands suitable for housing, the State should explore with AllSun or another solar energy developer the feasibility of siting additional solar arrays on areas suitable and available for such development.
3. Some further exploration of small-scale biomass production and harvesting on site should be undertaken with the State Forester (for cordwood or wood chips). Consideration should also be given of cultivating switchgrass or some other rapid growing biomaterial suitable for chipping (poplars).
4. Request a preliminary feasibility meeting and site visit with GMP representatives to explore the Community Digester Program. Consider appropriate locations a facility.
5. Meet with Northlands officials to discuss partnering for food waste supply and/or future job training possibilities.
6. Contact potential partners to gauge interest and feasibility of leasing lands that could be used for wind energy generation, as wind is currently present onsite and on adjacent lands.
7. Reinvest the proceeds to improve the long-term value of the property retained.

5. Opportunities for Housing and Development on Selected Parcels

There is an ongoing need for certain types of housing in Addison County. This plan includes a more detailed review of areas of the state-owned lands that could be considered for this use. Areas to consider include portions of the undeveloped areas of the eastern end of property that abuts a residential neighborhood in Vergennes, as well as some wooded areas. The western section of the parcel is primarily open agricultural land.

The need for certain types of housing are identified in multiple sources, including the Regional Plan, Housing sections of the Ferrisburgh Town Plan, Vergennes Municipal Development Plan, Vermont Housing Data Profiles of Vergennes by the Vermont Housing Finance Agency's (VHFA), and the Addison County Vermont Housing Needs Assessment Report. These housing needs could be put into three categories, 1) seniors transitioning to smaller households and properties; 2) affordable housing; and 3) rental housing for young professionals.²⁶

²⁵ Information derived from a phone conversation with Josh Castenguay, Green Mountain Power, 9/9/15.

²⁶ Information derived from email from Lynn Jackson of Century 21 Jack Associates, dated 7-23-15

One issue affecting the local housing market is that Addison County has a very low rental vacancy rate (0.2%)²⁷ that can be compounded with the expected increase in the number of households over the next five years²⁷ (approximately 291). This may put stress on the already low vacancy rate in the county, especially with a general increase in demand for rental units.²⁸ Of the current rental housing costs, much are considered unaffordable, with nearly half the population of renters in Vergennes paying more than 1/3 of their household income towards rent.²⁹ These statistics demonstrate a need for all three housing categories that will service the entire community, not only one subset.

There may be locations on-site that present a possibility for smart development to occur to help alleviate the present lack of affordable, accessible housing in the area. These opportunities are explored in a more detailed fashion in the section that follows: “Analysis of Potential Development.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

1. More affordable and different types of housing is needed in Vergennes, and the surrounding area.
2. Based on the initial analysis presented in this plan a next step should be taken to further determine the potential and viability of specific parcels to be developed for housing.
3. Contact and coordinate with the VHFA, Addison Community Trust, and other housing providers to determine the next steps for developing a housing project on-site.
4. Given the potential for mixed and multiple uses on site, any housing program or proposal should consider, as feasible, the incorporation of A) site/residential scale renewable energy options such as roof mounted solar or even geothermal energy, and B) cluster housing configurations that result in dedicated open space for community small scale agriculture or recreation.
5. If housing is proposed for portions of the state-owned lands in the Rural Agricultural District (RA-5) in Ferrisburgh or the Agricultural and Rural Residential District (AGR) in Vergennes, unit density would need to be reviewed and considered with the town and city planning commissions and perhaps increased to ensure the economic viability of developing a housing project in these locations.
6. The 7-acre parcel on Comfort Hill has been offered for sale previously and as of this

“A multi use pathway system that could be available to mountain bikers, walkers, skiers and snowshoers would garner a lot of local use.”

²⁷ Addison County, Vermont Housing Needs Assessment, <http://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accd/files/Documents/strongcommunities/housing/7%20-%20Addison%2014-363.pdf>

²⁸ Information derived from email from Leslie Black-Plumeau of the Vermont Housing Finance Agency, dated 7-15-15

²⁹ Vermont Housing Data Profiles, General Housing Data: Vergennes, Addison County, Vermont, <http://www.housingdata.org/profile/resultsMain.php?town=001100> (see Note A for additional housing information)

Note A: Housing units with gross rent (total) at or above 30% of household income was 43.1% in 2009-2013. Housing costs that are above 30% (defined as an income of less than 30% of the county median) of household income are considered unaffordable.³ The rate for owner-occupied housing units that with a mortgage that have owner costs at or above 50% of household income was at 11% in 2009-2013.³ For owner-occupied housing units with a mortgage that have owner costs at or above 30% of household income the rate was at 34.2% in 2009-2013, or over 1/3 of all homeowners with a mortgage.²⁸

writing is still technically on the market. Efforts to sell this parcel for housing in particular, given the high density zoning in place, should be resuscitated but with a review of the conditions and restrictions associated with the sale, to remove impediments for purchase.

6. Development of a Recreational Trail Network and Open Space

The possibility of developing a property-wide recreational trail system is an option to consider given the local interest and support for more opportunities and infrastructure in this regard. Multi-use recreational trails represent one of the most popular forms of recreational amenities in Vermont and local residents have voiced a desire for such a network in a number of forums and outreach events. A multi-use pathway system that could be available to mountain bikers, walkers, skiers and snowshoers would garner a lot of local use. One only has to travel to the nearby Buck Mountain trails to see how popular such an amenity can be to the local community (and visitors as well). This use, along with other possible amenities, could be valuable to current and future users of the property, local residents and be advertised to tourists. This could include a perimeter trail network that links the Northlands campus to the downtown Vergennes area and existing recreational resources. There are existing trails on the Northlands campus and beyond into the other state parcels that could be interconnected. There are farm roads that might also serve this purpose on parcels adjacent to the campus. The administration of the Job Corps Center has identified some concerns with unofficial access to the campus and interaction with Job Corps students that highlight security and substance abuse concerns. However, these issues could be addressed via access, location and signage.

Another possibility is a creek-side trail or pathway that uses the remnants of the Old Towpath that is present along the banks of the Otter Creek.³⁰ Access to the riverside has to be carefully sited, as there are some steep riverbank sections on the eastern end of the property. Additionally, some wetland and intermittent stream areas would need to be addressed. Paths along the river could circle back to the road and a trailhead via the VT Fish & Wildlife property at the western end of the site. There are a number of funding options for a project of this type, including the state’s trail and pathway program (www.vtfpr.org/recgrant/trgrant.cfm), and the trail building

“The City of Vergennes would need to reevaluate the designation and zoning of these lands...”

could be a potential Northlands Job Corps or Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC) project.

While there is a possibility of a creek-side trail or pathway that uses the remnants of the Old Towpath along the banks of the Otter Creek, this development is not something that the Vermont State Fish & Wildlife would condone on state land. Reestablishment of the Towpath would potentially fragment the wildlife corridor, connectivity to the river and have negative impacts on nesting waterfowl and wildlife movement. This is one reason they do not crop or mow the lower section of the property that abuts Otter Creek, to maintain critical wildlife habit connectivity and buffer habitat. Vermont F&W does, however, support dispersed wildlife based recreation on their lands.³¹ Currently

³⁰ The Vermont State Fish & Wildlife Department does not support the use of the Towpath on their lands for recreational use, but there has been a discussion overtime about restoring the Towpath for travel use all the way to its terminus at the shore of Lake Champlain.

³¹ Information derived from email from David Sausville and Kim Royer of Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department, dated 8-20-15

the VT F&W does not have a long-range management plan (LRMP) in place for these lands, but expect to create one in the future. This would be a valuable opportunity for the city of Vergennes and Ferrisburgh to work with the VT F&W to ensure that LRMP goals coincide with those of the city to create a comprehensive plan for recreation and management.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

1. A recreational trail network could be a compatible amenity related to current and future uses on state lands. A perimeter trail layout (around or near to the boundaries of the state parcel) and trail sections could be readily developed at a reasonable cost and with volunteer assistance. Additionally, it is possible the Northlands Job Corps Urban Forestry Program could help as part of their training program. Other options include engaging the Youth Conservation Corps or students from the Patricia A. Hannaford Career Center in Middlebury.
2. Open space areas could be designated by the State for passive and informal use by citizens and visitors, particularly along the riverfront, where and if feasible. Recreation fields are a possible use, but the local school system has adequate facilities and is some distance from the site so would not be a potential user. Those responsible and/or interested in local recreation would need to be included in any discussion related to possible recreational fields and potential user groups.
3. The State of Vermont should convene a meeting of state and local officials to explore a collaborative approach to creating a trail system and any related amenities and open space areas to be considered for the property.
4. Revenue generated by other managed leases should be considered as a source of funding for these improvements.

7. Sale of Specific Parcels (Within the Overall State Property Holdings)

One option that both the state and the Steering Committee/Client Group has asked to be “on the table” is the sale of select parcels within the overall land holdings. Sale to a private sector interest would have a positive value insofar as it would return some acreage to the property tax rolls, as well as the implicit potential for development that such a sale might bring, and the related benefits of that development in terms of local economics.

As stated in the Planning and Zoning Framework section of this Plan, the lands that delineate the former Weeks School and current Northland Job Corps are located within the Public District. If the state would like to sell any lands on the Northlands Job Corps campus to a private developer, or to incorporate commercial or residential use (e.g. multiple-family dwellings or apartments), the City of Vergennes would need to reevaluate the designation and zoning districts of these lands to be more inclusive of the types of uses anticipated for this site if it were to be sold or redeveloped for a non-institutional or non-public use.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

1. Select parcels are salable for various uses including agriculture, housing, adaptive reuse, and the application of biosolids (see Scenario 8).
2. The state should review the placement of restrictions on potential properties or

buildings that might be considered for lease, sale or subdivision from the current campus. Encumbering potential Purchase and Sales agreements with excessive or numerous restrictions has proven to be disincentive for the successful sale of discrete properties within this landholding..

3. Denser, more affordable or unique housing options and alternative land uses not envisioned in the current rural agricultural districts in Vergennes and Ferrisburgh may be viable and acceptable options for interested parties considering land purchase. If this opportunity emerges, discussions with regard to zoning district amendments and densities will need to be conducted in the very early stages of land sale process.
4. Reinvest proceeds of sales into the remaining lands to increase return on investments for the state and community.

8. Investigate the Acquisition of Lands and Control of Biosolid Areas by the City of Vergennes

The City of Vergennes has been using 36-acres of the state lands located within city limits and being farmed by the Brands family for the application of biosolids since 2008. Applications occur on a 4-6 year basis approximately but there are exceptions to this schedule. This is a viable and appropriate use for the agricultural lands and the City has expressed an interest in continuing this use and perhaps having the reliability of owning the lands going forward.³²

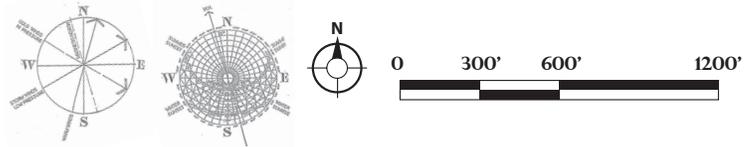
Conclusions and Recommendations:

1. There is potential to expand the current area of biosolid application, and this should be investigated with the City of Vergennes.
2. The City of Vergennes is interested in acquiring land currently used for biosolid application.
3. Coordinate with the City of Vergennes to discuss the possibility selling a specific parcel of land to the City for current and future biosolid application.
4. Explore with Green Mountain Power if and how sewage treatment for the future could provide a source material for biogas generation on this site and if the town of Ferrisburgh could contribute to this system.

³² Information based on phone conversation with Vergennes City Manager Mel Hawley, 9-14-15

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Expanded Analysis of Potential Development Potential Development Site / Area I



1. Exposed ledge in wooded area



2. View of wooded area and unmanaged field

1. Landscape Character

Area 1 is all within Vergennes, as are the other potential development areas, and contains both a wooded area at approximate elevation of 240' and an unmanaged meadow. The topography varies from a hill with approximately +/- 50'-60' of grade change over a short area to a relatively flat meadow with approximately +/- 40' of grade change over approximately +/- .3 miles through the meadow area. The wooded area has a high canopy of established deciduous trees (generally varied in caliper) in the flat areas and becomes dense with shrubby understory trees along the perimeter. The unmanaged field has pioneer species (shrubs and small trees) beginning to establish.

2. Current Land Use

This area is not actively being used or managed for any specific purpose.

3. Soils and Ground Condition

Soils in this area are mainly composed of clay and scattered boulders are present. Exposed bedrock is persistent and visible, especially in the wooded area. The unmanaged meadow is generally wet and contains a Class 2 wetland in northwest corner.

4. Access & Utilities

There is no established vehicular or pedestrian access. Access could be obtained from an existing farm road/trail along the northern border or through the adjacent leased lands. A barbed wire fence and hand hewn posts run along the north portion of the wooded area. The nearest power is present via a distribution line along Comfort Hill.

5. Permitting Factors

Permitting considerations include a Class 2 wetland onsite, stormwater management and archeological resources. The site is considered archeologically sensitive and may require specific analysis before any development occurs. There are portions of this land that have been identified as both prime and state farmland. Note that the sensitivity and permit parameters (or restrictions) associated with prime and statewide agricultural lands designations may not be a substantive constraint within the boundaries of an urban municipality. Potential impacts to such soils as a result of a project seeking a permit under the provisions of Act 250 may need to be addressed, but other privately developed projects that do not trigger this review may be exempt from the agricultural soils mitigation process. This will need to be confirmed with the Act 250 District Coordinator and/or the Vermont Department of Agriculture.

6. Summary / Potential Development Options

The presence of exposed bedrock in the wooded area leaves little potential for development or use. There is some limited potential for the meadow area to be developed for certain uses but is otherwise limited by mitigating factors. Which include access, the presence of exposed bedrock and the generally moist condition of soil.

Agriculture: In the east portion of this zone there are areas considered prime farmland. Existing fields to the east could be expanded to incorporate this land for active agricultural use. In the meadow, pasture or grazing for livestock is a possibility.

Housing: There may be limited opportunities for lower density housing on this site at the edge of the woodlands area between this feature and the broader extent of the meadow. Development costs could limit the viability of the site for development (access and utilities-distance from water or wastewater hook-ups as well as foundation installation).

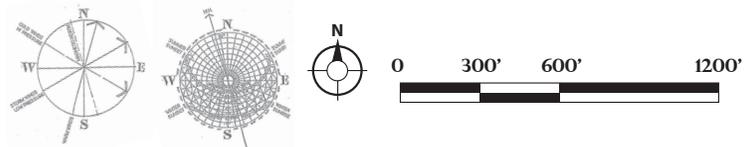
Energy: There could be a potential for some renewable energy types, i.e. wind turbine in this area, however, the limiting factors may not make this a viable option.

Open Space: This site does have some potential for use as an open space area and for establishing a non-motorized trail network. Open space uses would be for passive types of recreation, perhaps hunting in season (if connected to a larger area available for hunting).

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. The best uses of this area include agriculture, silviculture and open space/recreation.
2. Work with agriculture interests to determine potential for leasing best soils.
3. If additional agriculture is a 'best option', coordinate with the City of Vergennes to explore the expansion of biosolid application.
4. Investigate forestry management and recreation potential of remaining property.
5. Consider, if feasible upon further investigation, small scale, lower density cluster housing in those areas where appropriate. Access through the campus area or from Walker Road on Comfort Hill would need to be assessed as a first step.

Potential Development Site / Area 2



1. View towards City of Vergennes from mown field



2. View of agriculture field

1. Landscape Character

Area 2 consists of active agricultural fields and a mown meadow/field that may have been used for agriculture in the past. The topographic change over this portion of the site is relatively flat, approximately +/- 20'-30' over approximately +/- .1 - .2 miles. From the fields, there are limited views of the Green Mountains.

2. Current Land Use

The northern portion of this area is actively being used as agricultural land. The southern portion is managed meadow/field and is being mown to maintain its field composition, thus it is not currently being used for agriculture.

3. Soils and Ground Condition

Soils in this area are mainly composed of clay and scattered boulders are present in the soil, however boulders are likely to be less persistent in areas that have already been developed as agricultural fields. There are areas of exposed bedrock, although there is less than in the land to the west. There is a Class 2 wetland present in the southeast corner of this area.

4. Access & Utilities

There is no established vehicular access to this area, however there are several mown paths that from the Northlands Job Corps campus to the meadow. Vehicular access could be obtained from an existing farm road/trail along the northern border or through the adjacent leased lands. The nearest power is present via a distribution line along Comfort Hill.

5. Permitting Factors

Permitting considerations include a Class 2 wetland onsite, stormwater management and archeological resources. The site is considered archeologically sensitive and may require specific analysis before any development occurs. Most of this area has land identified as both prime and state farmland. Note that the sensitivity and permit parameters (or restrictions) associated with prime and statewide agricultural lands designations may not be a substantive constraint within the boundaries of an urban municipality. Potential impacts to such soils as a result of a project seeking a permit under the provisions of Act 250 may need to be addressed, but other privately developed projects that do not trigger this review may be exempt from the agricultural soils mitigation process. This will need to be confirmed with the Act 250 District Coordinator and/or the Vermont Department of Agriculture.

6. Summary / Potential Development Options

There is some potential for the meadow to be developed for certain uses. This could include agricultural for food or forage crops, similar to the adjacent field. Factors that may influence development in this area include the loss of active agricultural land, access and proximity to utilities.

Agriculture: Land currently being used for agriculture is considered prime farmland and state farmland and would, most likely, be valuable to continue to be used as and maintained for agriculture.

Housing: Housing is a less viable option here because of the overlap of sensitive resources, the challenges and costs of access and infrastructure, as with site #1.

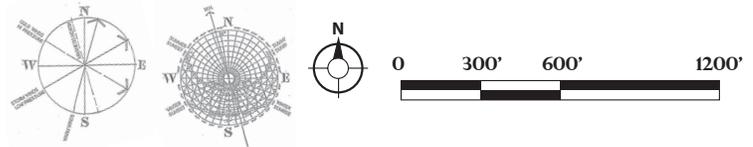
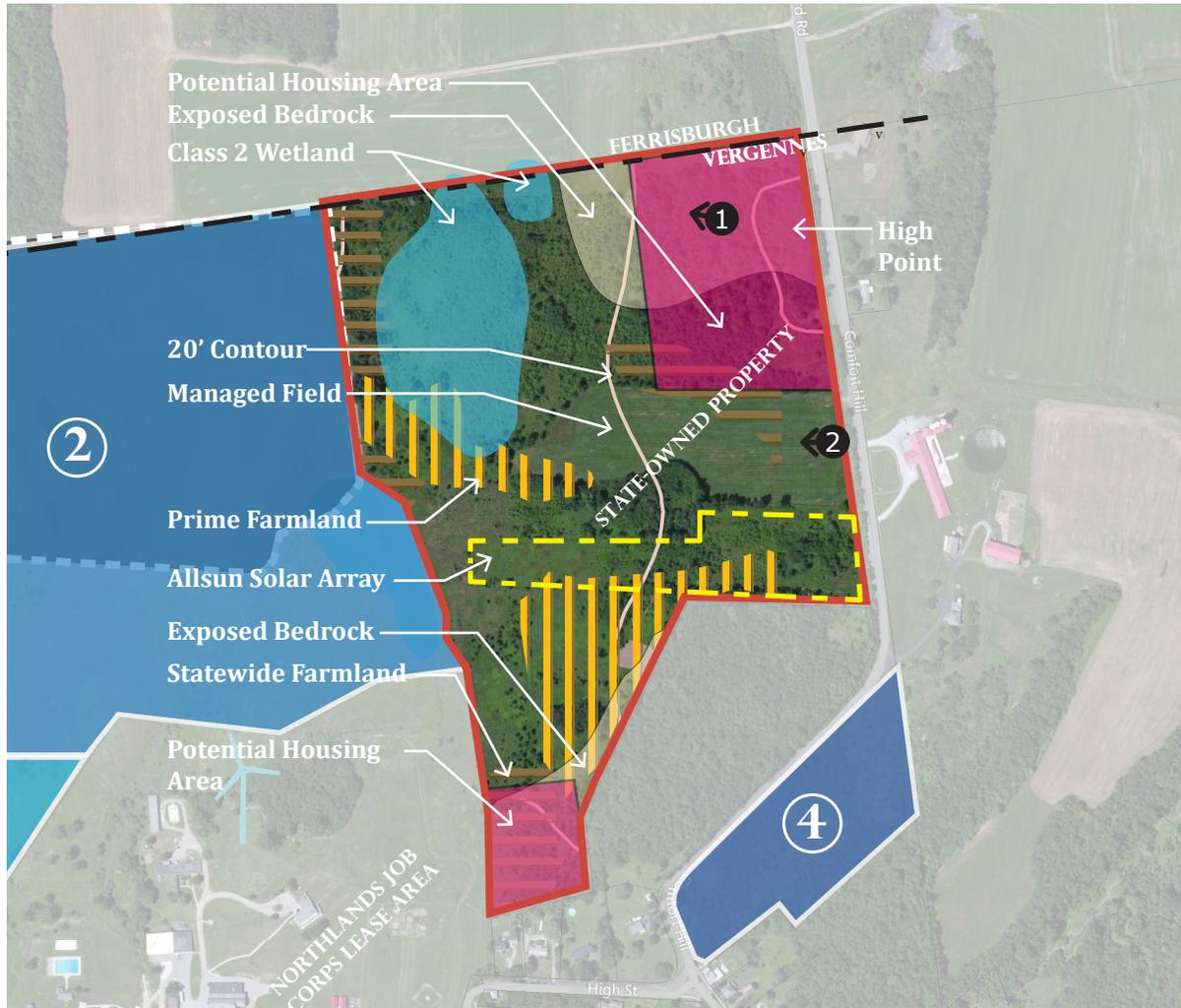
Energy: The surrounding areas, mostly agricultural fields can be considered open, which could be a potential site for renewable energy, like a solar array or wind turbines, or possibly biofuel production (i.e. switchgrass).

Open Space: This site does have some potential for use as an open space area and for establishing a non-motorized trail network. Open space uses would be for passive types of recreation, perhaps hunting in season (if connected to a larger area available for hunting).

Conclusions and Recommendations:

1. The best uses of this area include continued agriculture and biosolids application and open space/recreation.
2. Continue/expand viable farm operations.
3. Work with the City to promote its control of long-term biosolid application.
4. Investigate forestry management and recreation potential of remaining property.

Potential Development Site / Area 3



1. Wooded area along Comfort Hill



2. Managed field on Comfort Hill between solar array construction area and wooded area

1. Landscape Character

Area 3 consists of a wooded area, wetlands and an agricultural field. The greatest topographical change is along the wooded area abutting Comfort Hill at the northeast corner of the site approximately +/- 20'-40' of grade change, sloping from the road towards the wetlands. There is a dense understory tree population with a canopy of deciduous shade trees that vary in size. There is potential here for scenic views of the Adirondacks from the highest point, along Comfort Hill, however, vegetation needs to be cleared and maintained to accomplish this.

2. Current Land Use

This portion of the site contains a parcel leased for a solar array, unmanaged wooded areas, an agricultural field and a wetland.

3. Soils and Ground Condition

Soils in this area are mainly clay and scattered boulders are present. The frequency of boulders will most likely increase in wooded areas that have undergone less development. This area contains Class 2 wetlands located along northwest portion. Soils surrounding the wetland are wetter than those along the road. Several areas in this zone are considered to be both prime and statewide farmland.

4. Access & Utilities

There is established vehicular access along the area abutting Comfort Hill. Access to the rest of the site could be obtained through an existing farm road/trail along the northern border or the adjacent leased lands. There are several pedestrian trails through the wooded portion that lead toward the wetland, some appear to be managed and some are not. The nearest power is present via a distribution line along Comfort Hill.

5. Permitting

Permitting considerations include Class 2 wetlands onsite, stormwater management and archeological resources. The site is considered archeologically sensitive and may require specific analysis before any development occurs. There are portions of this land that have been identified as both prime and state farmland. Note that the sensitivity and permit parameters (or restrictions) associated with prime and statewide agricultural lands designations may not be a substantive constraint within the boundaries of an urban municipality. Potential impacts to such soils as a result of a project seeking a permit under the provisions of Act 250 may need to be addressed, but other privately developed projects that do not trigger this review may be exempt from the agricultural soils mitigation process. This will need to be confirmed with the Act 250 District Coordinator and/or the Vermont Department of Agriculture.

6. Summary / Potential Development Options

This area has the most potential to be developed for various uses because of its location and ready access. The agricultural field presents several possible options for development such as continued use for agricultural, renewable energy or possibly for housing. Development of the wooded lot on Comfort Hill could incorporate housing. However there are several mitigating factors that include underlying bedrock or ledge and topographic change (approximately +/- 20'-30') in the wooded area. Currently, there is housing southwest of this potential development site and access could

be gained through the east at the intersection of High Street and the border of the state-owned property line. Mitigating factors for development in this area includes land identified as state farmland and may have underlying bedrock present.

Agriculture: The field could potentially be used as crops production (nursery, food, or orchard) or livestock grazing and forage. The southern most portion of this site is considered state farmland and could be used as agricultural lands for crops or forage.

Housing: There are several locations in this site that could be considered as potential areas for housing, including the wooded area along Comfort Hill, the agricultural field and the southern most portion of this zone, the latter of which would most likely be arranged in a clustered pattern. There are municipal water, sewer and cable systems in proximity to the site that could be accessed. Underlying bedrock and topographic change could be a limiting factor in this area.

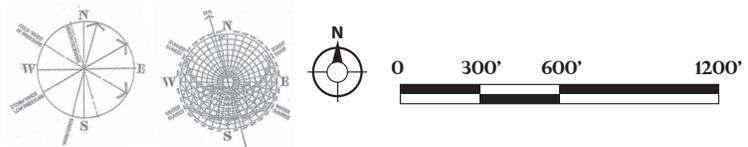
Energy: There is potential for different renewable energy types in the agricultural field that could include a solar array, biofuels, etc. Use for renewable energy would be constant with and a continuation of the solar array under construction on the adjacent field to the south. Another potential location for the renewable energy types mentioned above is the south most portion of the site.

Open Space: This site does have some potential for use as an open space area and for establishing a non-motorized trail network. Open space uses would be for passive types of recreation, perhaps hunting in season (if connected to a larger area available for hunting).

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. The best uses of this area include clustered housing, energy generation and open space/recreation.
2. Consider leasing the land for either energy generation (i.e. solar) or agriculture.
3. Consider the sale of specific parcels for housing with conditions for development.
4. Investigate forestry management and the recreation potential of the remaining property, or for integration with any proposed energy or housing development.

Potential Development Area 4



1. View from high point of slope towards the City of Vergennes



2. Existing structure along Comfort Hill

1. Landscape Character

Area 4 is along the southeast of Comfort Hill and is composed of a steep wooded lot with a peak at the northern most portion. Meadows/openings appear within the wooded areas, but are not easy to access or large in area. The topography changes significantly, approximately +/- 50'-60', from the northeast corner to the southwest corner, limiting any potential development for most of this area, however there is an area without much grade change that has an existing structure that is not in use. At the high point, a relatively flat area without significant topographic change that has some potential for views to the city of Vergennes. Several deer beds were present and it appears that this potential development area is primarily used by wildlife.

2. Current Land Use

This land is currently unmanaged forest. As noted above, there is a structure present adjacent to the existing residential housing, however it is in poor condition.

3. Soils and Ground Condition

Soils mainly composed of clay and scattered boulders are present. Exposed bedrock is clearly visible at northeast peak of the site.

4. Access & Utilities

There is vehicular or pedestrian access present along the perimeter of this zone along Comfort Hill, but no access is present into the area. A wire mesh fence runs the perimeter of the road on the north side of this potential development area. The nearest power is present via a distribution line along Comfort Hill.

5. Summary / Potential Development Options

Most of this area has limited potential for development, mostly due to geologic and topographic conditions. Exposed bedrock is present along the northern most high point that would make development challenging. Development is most feasible where the existing structure is currently sited and a precedent of residential-scaled buildings is present both in this potential development area and the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Agriculture: There is little potential for agriculture in this area because of geologic and topographic conditions.

Housing: The southern most area, adjacent to the existing residential neighborhood at the base of the slope is zoned for high-density housing. This is a potential site for high-density development because of close proximity to and accessibility of existing municipal water, wastewater and cable infrastructures. Open fields/meadows around the existing structure could be managed to become part of an active housing parcel. The topographic change on this portion of the site is relatively small and would facilitate residential use.

Energy: There is little potential for development of renewable energy in this area.

Open Space: This site does have some potential for use of passive types of recreation.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

1. The best uses of this area include clustered housing and open space/recreation.
2. Consider the sale of specific parcels for housing with conditions for development.
3. Investigate forestry management and recreation potential of the remaining property, or for integration with any development proposed.

Other Land Development Possibilities

It is also important to recognize that infill development use of vacant buildings or the development of some open potentially developable lands within the 66-acre USDOL lease area may be a consideration for future development options. Clearly this would require a renegotiation of the lease agreement or the lease boundaries if this were to be a potential option for future study. At this point, with some vacant buildings on the campus and part of the lease, Northlands would not necessarily have a need for new buildings or space, but a compatible use serving an institutional or educational purpose might be a consideration, given the presence of infrastructure, access and other elements associated with the existing campus.

6. Going Forward: Master Planning for the Future

Ten Guiding Principles for Current and Future Use and Development of State Properties in Vergennes and Ferrisburgh including the current Northlands Job Corps campus.

These principles are integral part of the master planning process for the future of the Otter Creek Campus and adjacent State Lands. Master Plans by their very nature are not fixed, but rather are intended to be flexible documents and plans that can adjust to future environmental, economic and political conditions and circumstances. As such a set of guiding principles can provide an ongoing basis for the future evolution of the plan, and provide a basis by which to assess the contextual compatibility and viability of any future proposal or management or development action.

1. A basic premise for the state lands is to seek out and support the highest and best uses for the various distinct buildings and environs, including the current Northlands Job Corps campus and the open agricultural and other undeveloped lands.
2. Current and future uses of the state property are to be consistent with the setting and context present and be compatible with the surrounding land uses and town/city land use goals for the zoning/land use districts within which they are located.
3. Current maintenance and future management of the facilities and infrastructure shall be consistent and compliant with applicable state and local codes and regulations.
4. Lands that include prime and statewide agricultural soils shall be maintained in agricultural use or uses compatible with agriculture (like biosolid and solar) for as long as feasible.
5. Historic and cultural resources on the state lands in Vergennes are to be managed and retained consistent with state requirements and goals for such properties and resources. Reuse and renovation of historic buildings shall follow Vermont DHP guidelines and applicable Federal standards so as to maintain architectural integrity and overall resource values.
6. Investment and development of additional facilities and uses shall be consistent with state interests and with a goal of maximizing potential financial return to the taxpayers.
7. Investment and development, or redevelopment of existing sites and buildings shall consider the value and benefit to the local host communities.
8. All state landholdings and buildings shall be maintained to the best extent possible for current and future uses to ensure safety, accessibility as appropriate, and overall viability for their current and possible future uses.
9. All future development shall be aligned with Smart Growth principles that include, among other principles, compact/higher density building design; a range of housing opportunities and choices; create distinctive communities with a strong sense of place, and strengthen the development of existing communities.
10. Future maintenance, management and development of all portions of the campus and adjacent state lands shall consider and incorporate, as appropriate, “green” infrastructure approaches in concert with the principles of sustainable and low impact development that satisfies and enhances environmental and water quality conditions.

A Vision for the Future

The State of Vermont's Otter Creek Campus and Lands represents an important asset for Vergennes and Ferrisburgh, the region and the state as a whole. The fading (but not forgotten) legacy of its history is eclipsed by the current value and potential of the property and the existing campus. The current leasing and operation of the campus by the USDOL is desirable and appropriate from an economic, community and land use perspective. This use should and can be an integral part of the property going forward, with the caveat that the program's longevity is subject to the decision making and funding priorities of the Federal Government. The continued presence of Job Corps can facilitate necessary and appropriate maintenance of the built infrastructure and enhancements to improve the campus. In the event that the program should cease to operate in this location, there are challenging but varied opportunities for the reuse and redevelopment of portions or all of the campus. The longer view sees a more sustainable campus with less paving, "green" infrastructure, architectural integrity, with more diverse training programs, vacant buildings occupied, and mixed uses on site in addition to or post-Job Corps.

The surrounding lands outside of the 66-acre campus have already proven their inherent value with the ongoing agricultural uses, but further energy development can build on the community-scale solar array being constructed, and can provide opportunities for housing and recreation not currently available in the area. These lands can become an integral part of the community, better connected through improved sidewalks and bike routes, as well as a local trail network which can help weave the land into the life and times of Vergennes, Ferrisburgh and indeed, Addison County. It is envisioned that the future holds new uses and tenants for the historic Arsenal and Fairbanks buildings, as well as the creation of incubator business space and perhaps a range of housing opportunities accessed by public transit and with walkability to the downtown. A brighter future awaits this campus and the surrounding landscape. The returns, financial, environmental and social, will be forthcoming with a commitment of human and economic resources to continue this planning process, by identifying the priorities and taking the first step on the way forward.

Next Steps

1. Continue the Master Planning Process and Impliment Selected Recommendations and Actions.

This Master Plan represents only a first step in what should and could be a more focused, longer term effort to manage, enhance and further develop (and/or conserve) the 476 acres which comprise the state's Otter Creek Campus and Lands. As a means to take this next step, the State should retain the structure of the Steering Committee, invest it with a longer life, and provide some staff time to support the next phase of master planning. An allocation of funds should also accompany this next step in order to begin the feasibility and marketing effort to test viable development, lease or tenancy options, as well as to facilitate more public engagement and involvement to facilitate the collaborative initiatives identified in this plan.

As a subset to this step, the rebranding of the property as the "State of Vermont Otter Creek Campus and Lands" should begin; and perhaps an overall but basic "prospectus" for the property prepared for use in the attraction of investment, tenants, sale of parcels, future development and for overall public information.

Upon completion of this work, or portions of the work necessary to support an action, the Steering Committee, in conjunction with BGS and VT F&W should be empowered to act to implement this Plan's goal of realizing the highest and best uses of all aspects of this project.

2. Continue the Planning Process and Oversight for the Otter Creek Campus and Lands.

Northlands Job Corps represents the highest and best use for the campus area based on the fit of the facility to the program needs, as well as the longevity of the program on the site. The long-term presence of the program on this site is out of state control and subject to ongoing Congressional funding for the federal program(s) which support job training. This plan does forward some suggestions for enhancing the training options at Job Corps, and also recognizes that some of the vacant buildings could be potentially occupied by other tenants and uses.

3. Create a Maintenance and Improvement Plan.

It will be desirable to develop a more detailed assessment of facility needs and upgrades relative to the campus, its buildings and site infrastructure. This assessment should develop a list of upgrades and maintenance items that the lessee and/or state will need to address in order to maintain the long term viability of the site and building infrastructure. The assessment should include estimated costs as well as priorities related to deferred maintenance, code requirements and necessary improvements. Additionally, some lower cost, higher visibility enhancements to the property and campus (as initially identified in the "Future Site and Circulation Concepts" Plan as part of this document) will enhance marketability and curb appeal for the future vitality of the campus and environs. Some portion of the proceeds from sales and/or leases associated with this property must be reinvested to meet this goal.

7. Site Mapping and Plans

The series of maps that accompany this Master Plan support the master planning process and provide a set of references for existing conditions, as well as delineated development areas and concepts for site and circulation enhancements. These maps were based on data and information provided by the State of Vermont, Regional and Local GIS data sets, Northlands Job Corps, and field work. Map 1. Overall Property Map and Leased Lands delineates the existing conditions for the overall parcel, and Map 7.1 Existing Conditions Inventory, provides base information for the 66-acre campus.

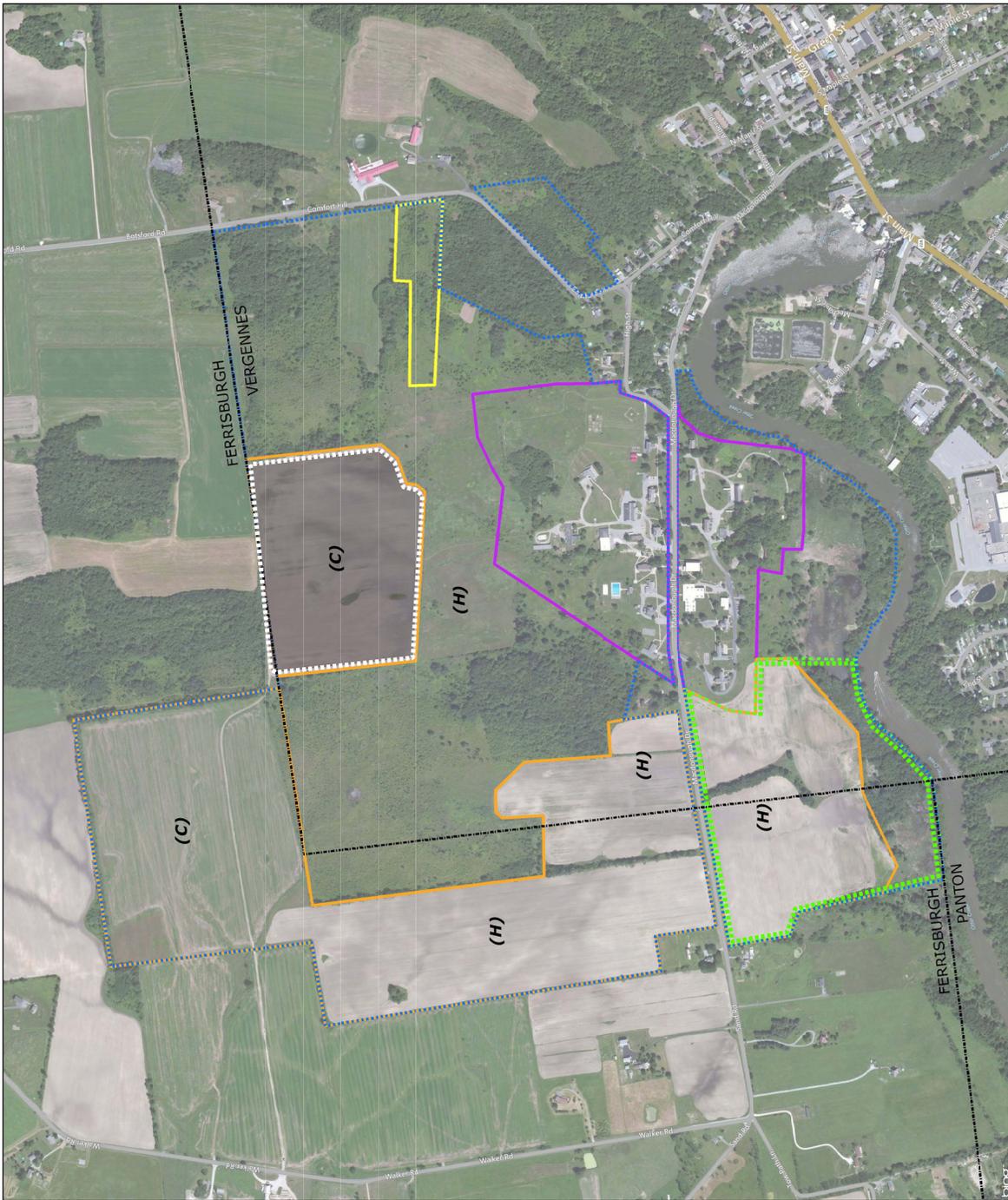
List of Maps and Plans:

1. Overall Property Map and Leased Lands
2. Cultural Resources
3. Natural Resources
4. Surficial Geology and Agricultural Soils
5. Utilities
6. Zoning Districts
7. Development Constraints Composite Map
8. Existing Conditions Inventory
 - 8.1 Circulation and Vegetation Studies
9. Sewer Map
10. Water Map
11. Potential Development Scenarios

OTTER CREEK CAMPUS AND LANDS

STATE OF VERMONT Vergennes/Ferrisburgh

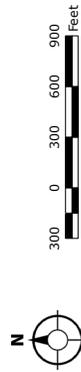
1. OVERALL PROPERTY MAP AND LEASED LANDS



Legend

-  Town Boundary
-  Overall State Boundary
- Total Acreage = 476.3 ac**
 - Area North of Macdonough Dr. = 371.6 ac
 - Area South of Macdonough Dr. = 104.7 ac
 - Area located within Town of Ferrisburgh = 152.0 ac
 - Area located within Town of Vergennes = 324.3 ac
-  Fish & Wildlife Land
- Total Acreage = 53.33 ac**
-  Leased Agricultural Lands
- Total Acreage = 202.9 ac**
 - Area North of Macdonough Dr. = 162.1 ac
 - Area South of Macdonough Dr. = 40.8 ac
-  Leased Land for Solar Array
- Total Acreage = 6.87 ac**
-  Northland Campus Lease Area
- Total Acreage = 72.1 ac**
- Total Acreage in Lease = 66.0 ac**
 - Area North of Macdonough Dr. = 43.8 ac
 - Area South of Macdonough Dr. = 28.3 ac
-  State of Vermont Lease with Brands Farm and City of Vergennes Site for Bio-solid Application
- Total Acreage = 36.0 ac**

- (H)** Land Currently in Hay
- (C)** Land Currently in Corn



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OTTER CREEK CAMPUS AND LANDS

STATE OF VERMONT
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2. CULTURAL RESOURCES MAP



Legend

- Recreation/Public Place
- Trails
- - - - - Town Boundary
- ▨ Potential Archaeologic Sensitivity*
- ▭ Overall State Lands Boundary

*Approximate boundary of lands with potential archaeological and cultural resource sensitivity as identified by state archaeologist



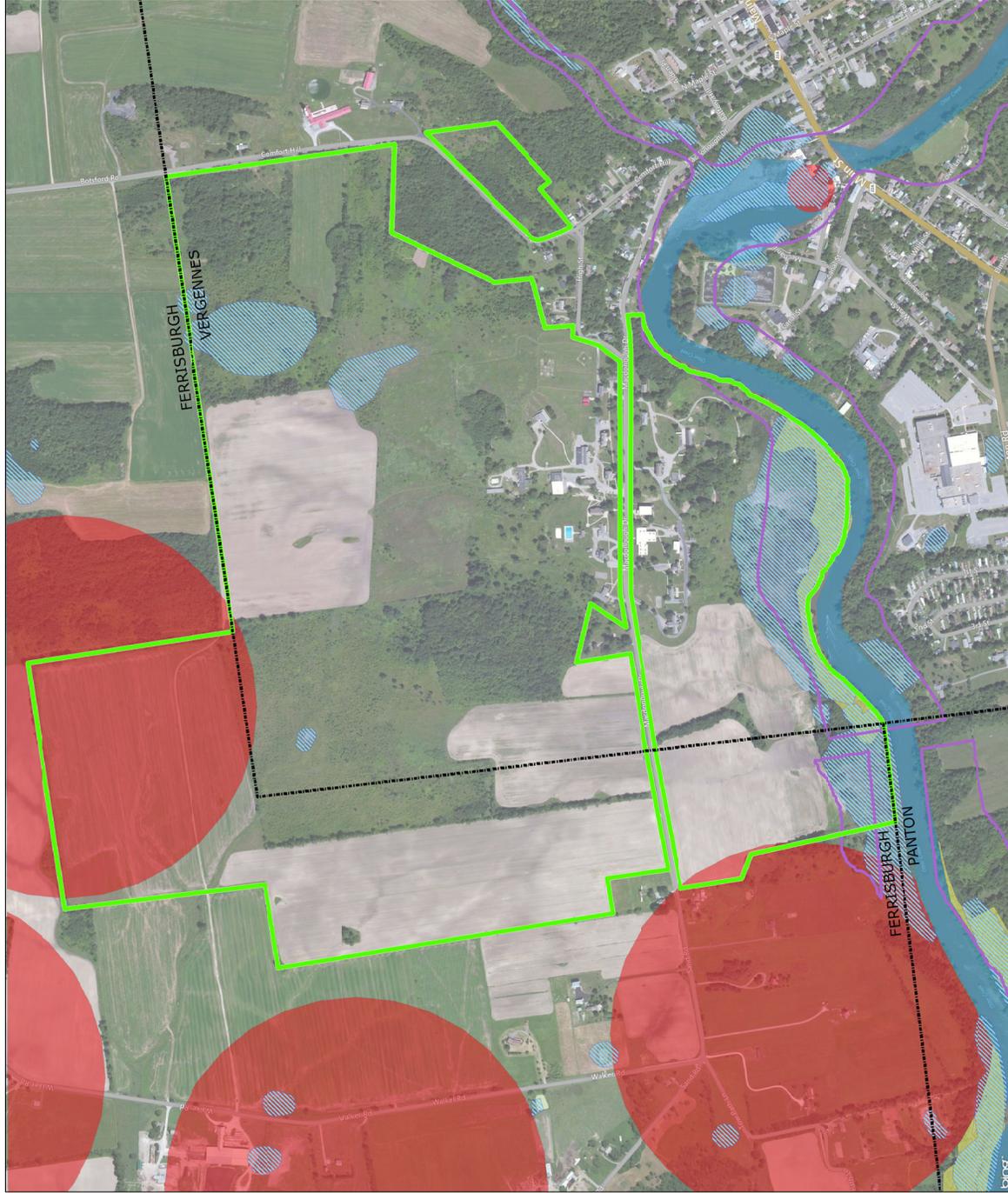
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Site Mapping and Plans

OTTER CREEK CAMPUS AND LANDS

STATE OF VERMONT
Vergennes/Ferrisburgh

3. NATURAL RESOURCES MAP



Legend

- Town Boundary
- Overall State Lands Boundary
- FEMA DFIRM Floodway*
- Class 2 Wetland
- RTE Natural Communities
- Invertebrate Animal
- Palustrine Natural Community
- Vertebrate Animal

*FEMA FIRRM map sheet scans digitized under contract to ACRPC, 2008

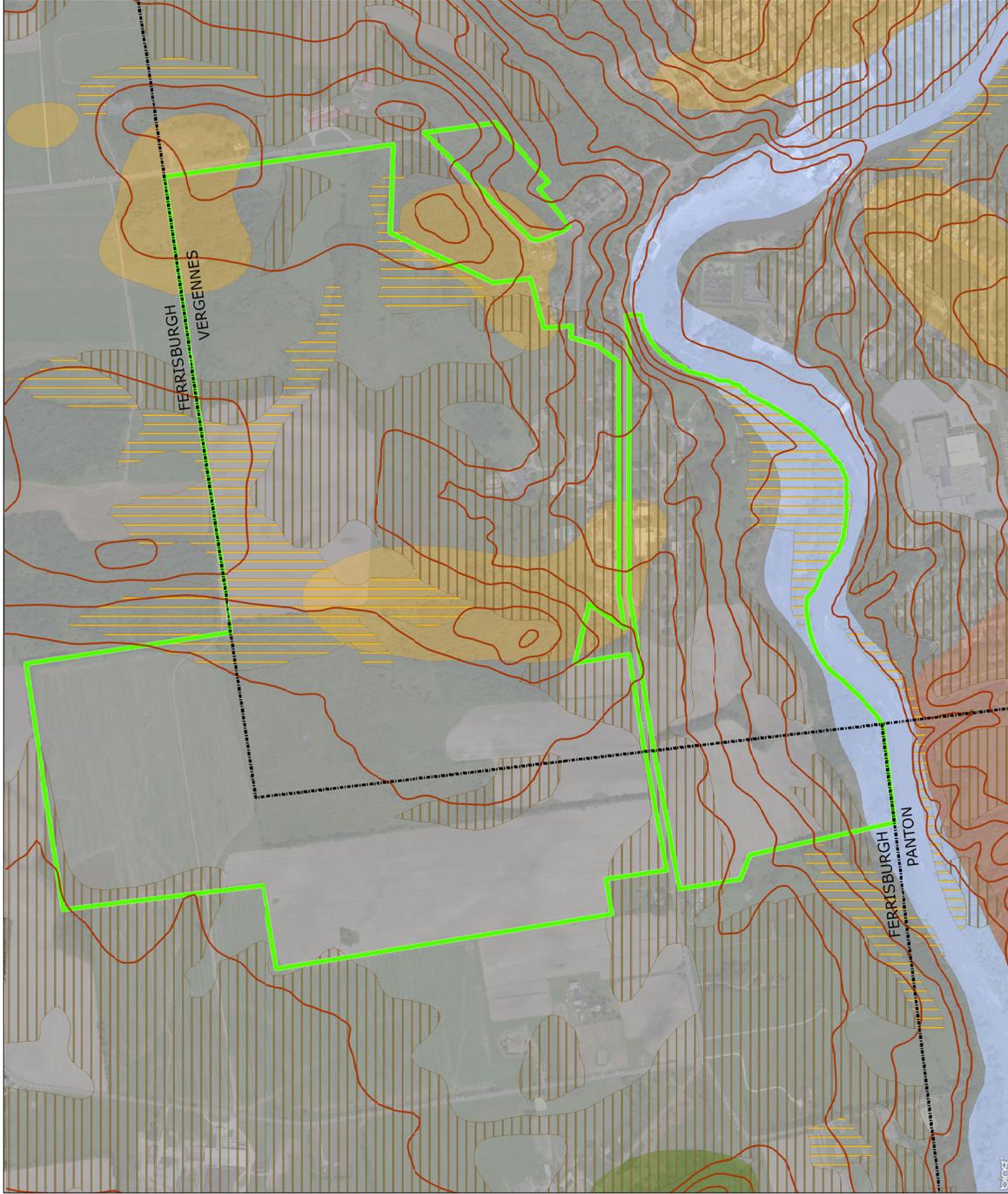


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4. SURFICIAL GEOLOGY AND AGRICULTURAL SOILS MAP

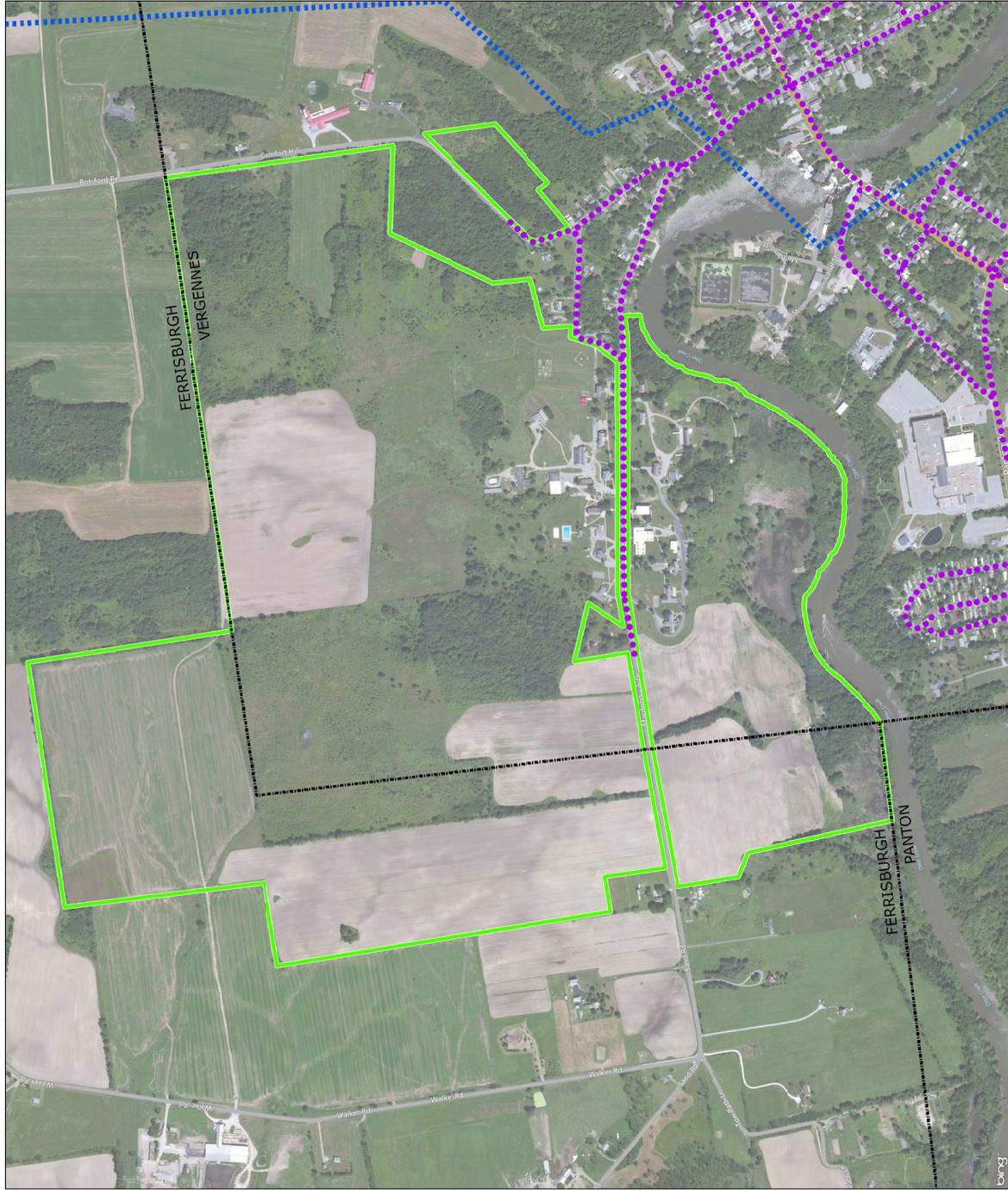


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STATE OF VERMONT
Vergennes/Ferrisburgh

5. UTILITY MAP



Legend

- Cable Line
- Utility Line
- Town Boundary
- Overall State Lands Boundary

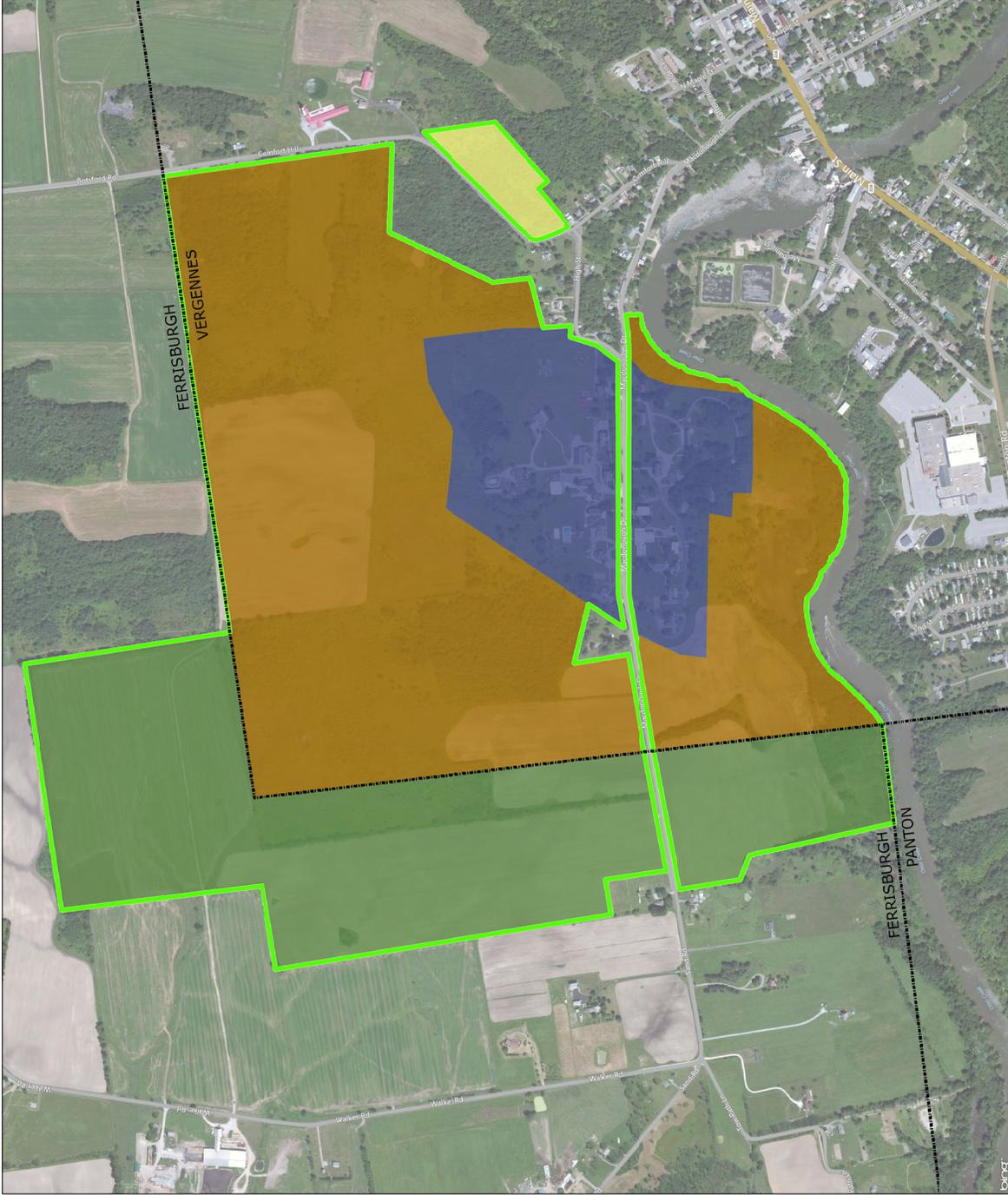


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6. ZONING MAP



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OTTER CREEK CAMPUS AND LANDS

STATE OF VERMONT

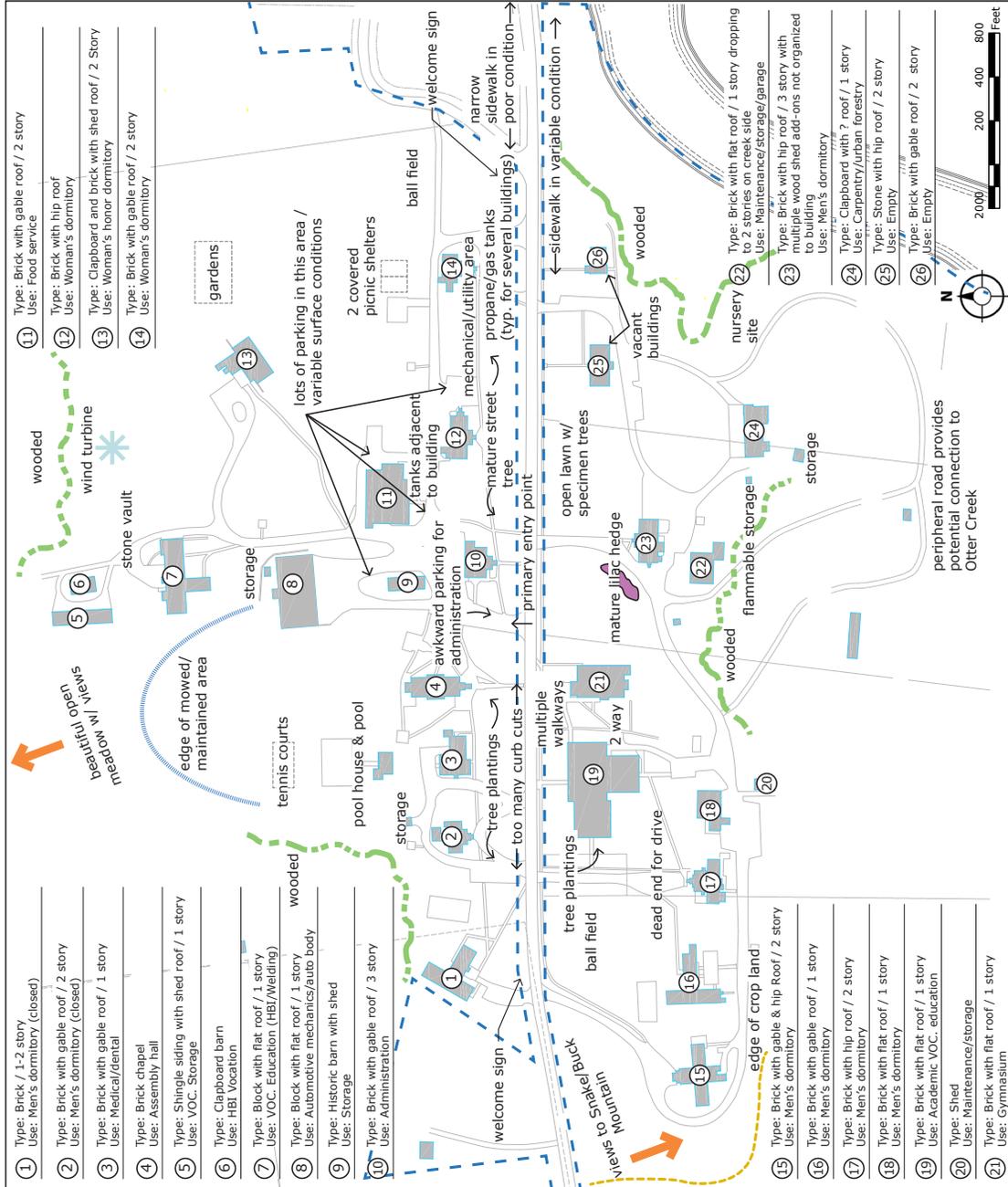
Vergennes/Ferrisburgh

8. Existing Conditions Inventory

- Legend**
- Property Line
 - Road Surface
 - Edge of Crop Land
 - Edge of Woodland
 - Edge of Mowed/Maintained Area
 - Existing Structure
 - Building Index Number

"Big Picture" Notes/Findings

1. Parking and circulation is not as efficient and well organized as it could be both for aesthetics and functionality. There are too many curb cuts along MacDonough Drive.
2. Surface conditions and drainage are an issue for the campus and need to be addressed over the long term with regard to the amount of impervious surfaces and the detention and filtration of stormwater runoff. Many different lighting types are present and need to be addressed for location, coverage and efficiency. External infrastructure (gas tanks heating units, etc.) needs to be better screened and perhaps some of this infrastructure can be centralized in the future. Utility poles and overhead wiring seem to be everywhere and perhaps there can be some undergrounding in the future.
3. Connectivity to the river for the campus and the public needs to be considered; there is no sense of the proximity to and presence of Otter Creek, which is a distinct amenity.
4. There are some high value specimen trees on campus and along the street, but internal landscaping is deficient. No visible "replacement trees" are on site. Internal landscaping seems unorganized, random and inconsistent.
5. Welcome signs and the overall sign system present on the campus is a plus, and the outdoor amenities (ballfields, sitting areas, etc.) clearly serve the student population.
6. Overall impressions from the public and objective viewers vary, but the site has some issues with regard to the campus "look and feel" - derived from both the site analysis and anecdotal public input.

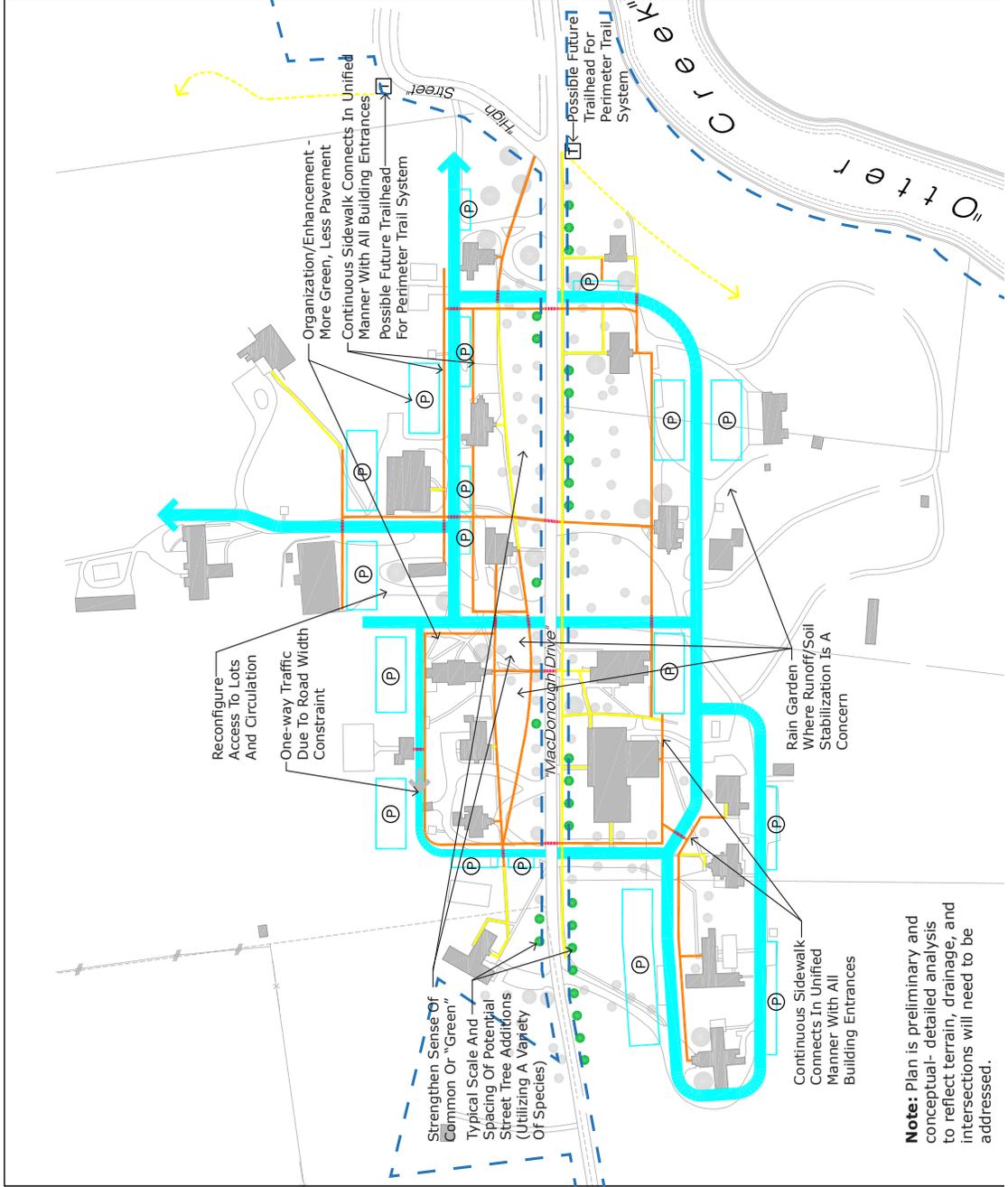


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Site Mapping and Plans

OTTER CREEK CAMPUS LANDS STATE OF VERMONT Vergennes/Ferrisburgh

8.1 SITE PLAN OF WEEKS / NORTHLANDS CAMPUS: FUTURE SITE AND CIRCULATION CONCEPTS



OTTER CREEK CAMPUS AND LANDS

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Vergennes/Ferrisburgh

9. SEWER MAP

NOTES:

1. Locations will need to be confirmed as they are approximate based on available mapping and conversations with local officials.
2. Property boundaries shown are approximate as provided by City of Vergennes Tax Maps. DuBois & King, Inc. did not perform a boundary survey.

Legend

	Town Boundary
	Overall State Lands Boundary
	Vergennes Property Line
	Public Sewer Collection System
	Private State-Owned Sewer Collection System
	Private Sewer Collection System
	Pump Station



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OTTER CREEK CAMPUS AND LANDS

STATE OF VERMONT Vergennes/Ferrisburgh

11. POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT- SCENARIOS

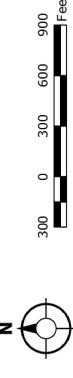
Legend

- Town Boundary
- Fish & Wildlife Land
- Leased Agricultural Lands
- Leased Land for Solar Array
- Northland Campus Lease Area
- Overall State Lands Boundary
- Current Biosolid Application Area

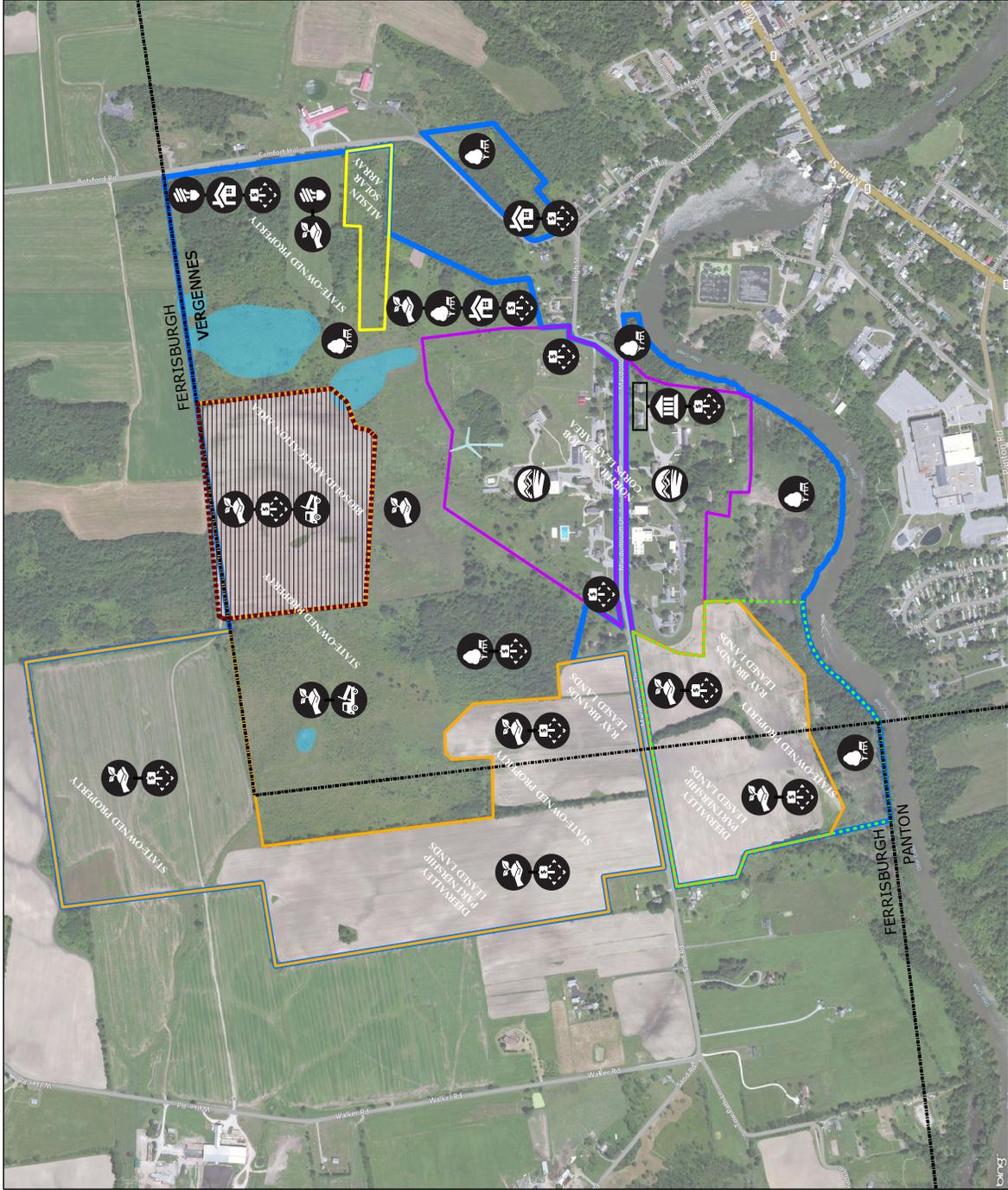
Potential Development Scenario Options:

- Northlands Campus
- Leasing / Management of Agricultural Lands
- Adaptive Reuse of Arsenal & Fairbanks buildings
- Future Development of Energy Projects
- Housing Development Options
- Open Space / Recreational Trails*
- Sale of Specific Parcels
- Biosolids Application

*Note: The recreational trail system can potentially be developed in and around the perimeter of all state lands



September 18, 2015



Weeks School Master Plan - Kick-off Meeting

May 27, 2015

3:00-4:30

Vergennes Fire Station

Agenda

- 1) Introductions - Roles and Responsibilities
- 2) Outline of Project Purpose as set forth in RFP, Timeline and Deliverables
- 3) Some Initial Thoughts/Takeaways from Site Visit
- 4) Roundtable Discussion
 1. Focus and scope of work for the project
 2. Impressions of the site, property and current conditions/uses
 3. With or without Northlands Job Corps?
 4. Issues and opportunities if Job Corps lease is not renewed
 5. Connections to Vergennes and Ferrisburgh - Relevant ongoing planning studies and projects
- 5) Closing/Final Comments

Thank you for participating!



WEEKS SCHOOL MASTER PLAN

PHOTOGRAPHS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

527.2015

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Landscape Architecture

Planning

Graphic Design

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Weeks School Master Plan

Kick-off Meeting With Client Group

May 27, 2015 from 3:00-4:30 at the Vergennes Fire Station

Present:

- Allen Palmer, VT Division of Property Management
- David Raphael, LandWorks
- Ron Lyon, Garrett Organek, DuBois & King
- Mel Hawley, Vergennes City Manager
- Renny Perry, Senior Alderman, Vergennes City Council
- Shannon Haggett, Vergennes Planning Commission Chair
- Steve Gutowski, Ferrisburgh Selectboard Chair
- Bob Beach, Ferrisburgh Planning Commission Chair
- Adam Lougee, Executive Director ACRPC
- Robin Scheu, Executive Director, ACEDC
- Diane Lanpher, State Representative, Addison 3

Meeting Notes:

1. Northlands Job Corps Campus and Lease

- Job Corps has 20 year lease/renewable @1 year intervals
- State owns buildings and any maintenance/improvements to them by others are performed under the lease agreements.
- Which buildings did Job Corps construct?— needs to be identified.
- What improvements have been done? – New buildings constructed and infrastructure improvements.
- It was noted that Job Corps has constructed improvements without permits.
- As a comparable project, it was noted that the state-owned Brandon buildings were not habitable when the redevelopment process began.
- An overarching consideration was the need for looking at the future – beyond the footprint with Job Corps there, what else could we do?
- 336 acres total in Vergennes; total acreage in Ferrisburgh and Vergennes needs to be determined. Suggestions to look at lease information.
- Discussed the two 1825 unoccupied historic buildings:
 - The “Cottage” Building was a dorm
 - The Fairbanks building is also referred to as Arsenal
 - Cost for rehabilitation of the 2 buildings, which were used as state offices up to 1975, was prohibitive when re-use options were considered.
 - Any effort at rehabilitation will have to work with: The Access board and Division of Historic Preservation



- 280 students (vs. 600@ Weeks School originally ?)
- It would be interesting to see how Job Corps enrollment numbers have changed over time
- Could we think of future site development adjacent to Job Corps or somewhere on the property with Job Corps still operating?

2. Infrastructure related to the Job Corps Use and Job Corps Lease Lands

- Important to assess the condition of infrastructure – individual systems (i.e. heating, electrical) condition to identify significant deficiencies
 - Vergennes has wastewater #s that are based on the pump station at Job Corps
 - Vergennes bills Job Corps for sewer flow calculations @ pump station
 - ¾ million in sewer main repair- was invested in by state
 - Infiltration still ongoing in system - clay tile /transite/pipe still extant
 - In 2011 new stormwater system drain was installed with permits in place.
 - Most buildings have sprinklers (in dorms in particular)
 - Note that the water main in McDonough Drive in need of replacement
 - Ferrisburgh Fire District 1 serves Ferrisburgh Central District
 - Need for future loop/water district expansion and loop
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- 750,000 gallons capacity for the treatment plant - Northland Job Corps has sewer line under Otter Creek
 - VELCO/GMP electric line is looped/ and provides high reliability

3. State Lands outside of Job Corps lease

- It was noted that there has been a lack of discussion on lease lands
 - 100 acres @ Comfort Hill – it was stated that a good map of project will be desirable.
 - Use of land for biosolids – Vergennes wants to continue use for application of these biosolids
 - Need to identify natural resource constraints – archeological, sensitive wetlands, presence of agricultural soils
 - Issue of lease timeframes. count on the lease duration. All Sun until 2034.
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- State role in approving solar farm? It is 500 kW now; 1500 kW planned in future
 - renewable
 - Status of GMP wind facility (Robert Dostis at GMP should be contacted)
 - 2016 accelerated appreciation schedule ends for renewable energy facilities

4. General discussion Items

- Need to have a better understanding of the building inventory and building con-



- dition;
- Job Corps has only 20% of their population from Vermont.
- “Has the feeling of a run down place today”
- “There is a long way to go to find other uses”
- Options may include either tearing buildings down or rehab those that are cost effective to do so with.
- Overall question remains as to the state property and how we are using this asset we have – is it the highest and best use? Are there other compatible uses?
- “What could we do with it? Could it be an anchor for some sort of economic development initiative or opportunity for this area?”
- The recent community visit conducted by the Vermont Council on Rural Development was highlighted – and one key focus that emerged was how to better use, access and promote the Otter Creek Basin – a 2nd priority was centered around economic development (and this project could be part of the stimulus for new development or relevant economic activity and the 3rd focus was on transportation, connections and safety, and the relationship of this property to those city initiatives.
- Questions included: “How to generate jobs with this property?”; “What are the means of repurposing the property?”
- At the state office buildings Waterbury – there were 1700 employees in 700,000 sq. ft that are now going to be relocated into to 300,000 sq ft.
- What can’t the site do? What can it be?
- RA5 zone in Ferrisburgh/Ag lands
- Agricultural incubator? Tom Davis was interested in Ferrisburgh.
- Options for the production of biofuels has been considered
- “If we were to peel away the layers” – what it could be?
- One option would be for reclaimed farmland
- state property – people keep track of
- compatible for/with Job corps
- Is the current use the best and highest use - Need info for property.
- The meeting concluded with thinking around Innovation – how to engage Middlebury or Castleton Colleges in having a presence on site.
- There is a distinct need to change the “out there” stigma.

Next Steps:
End June - Early July



- Site Visit with Job Corps, David Raphael (LandWorks), Allen Palmer (State), Ron Lyon (Dubois & King)
- LandWorks to conduct One one One Interviews:
 - Scott Dillon, Jamie Duggan, Devin Coleman (Division of Historic Preservation)
 - Robin Scheu, Addison County Economic Development Corporation
 - Mel Hawley, Vergennes City Manager
 - Bill Benton, Vergennes Mayor
 - Leasees to the Property (including Job Corps)
 - Adam Lougee, Addison County Regional Planning Commission
 - Steve Gutowski, Ferrisburgh Selectboard Chair
- LandWorks to attend Vergennes and Ferrisburgh City Council/Selectboard Meeting
- LandWorks to prepare Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, and Site Analysis Mapping
- Public Workshop
- Roundtable Meeting
- Present Options to Public after First Draft of Master Plan

Draft Master Plan due July 15, 2015

Final Master Plan due August 30, 2015



Overview of Weeks School/State Property Master Plan

prepared for Vergennes City Council Meeting

7/14/15 @ 6:00 • Fire Station

Outreach/Work done to date:

- Kick-off Meeting with Client Group
- Formal Interviews with State of Vermont, Northlands Job Corp., ACEDC, ACRPC, and VT DHP officials and directors
- Information Interview with Ryan Brand, Brand Farms
- Site Inventory & Preliminary Analysis, including infrastructure
- Site Visits & Mapping
- Review of Regional Plan, Town Plans, Leases, and Historic/Archeological Information

Project Charge*

The Weeks School Master Plan should create a blueprint outlining the property's future uses (including the highest and best uses) that addresses the physical development, redevelopment and public investment on a parcel by parcel basis consistent with state and local land use laws; the town plan; regional economic development plan(s) and be consistent with the mandates and requirements of the Division of Historic Preservation.

The Master Plan should include and incorporate the following possibilities:

1. The continued use by the USDOL for its Job Corp. Campus for the duration of the agreement between USDOL and SOV.
2. The discontinuation of use by the USDOL at any time in the future per provisions of the agreement.
3. Shall include an evaluation of whether the property may be subdivided and sold, and for what purposes it may be used.

Where we are heading/preliminary conclusions:

1. **Support & Maintain Northlands Job Corps Campus** - An overall conclusion is that the state and local stakeholders should support Northlands remaining on site for the foreseeable future. Issues and opportunities associated with this include: 1) validating current lease, 2) identifying ways state and tenant can work together to make campus more amenable (including infrastructure and aesthetics), 3) considering ways Northlands Job Corps could develop programs in concert with site characteristics or landscape (such as renewable energy generation, woodland management, recreation or construction) or other para-professional programs that reflect evolving industries, services, or needs in Vermont.

In the long term, and if, for reasons of funding, management (or policy) decisions the Job Corps program should not renew their lease, other uses may be viable. There are some case studies of similar projects, most notably the Brandon Training School Property, which has been redeveloped and converted into a mixed use development. For this campus and its infrastructure an educational use makes the most sense initially, but some buildings, or a portion of the property could be used as satellite facilities or campuses for UVM Continuing Education, Vermont Technical College, Community College of Vermont, or similar types of programs. Otherwise it might host other types of job training and social service facilities. Developing it for office and mixed uses would be more challenging due to the location, building sizes and condition, and the overall market for same in Addison County.

*As set forth in the original Request for Developing the Master Plan (RFP)

Next steps:

- [Ferrisburgh Selectboard Meeting 7/21 @ 6:30](#)
- [Interview with Division of Fish & Wildlife; Site visit with DHP](#)
- [Develop Preliminary Master Plan Scenarios](#)
- [Draft Master Plan](#)
- [Client Group Meeting in August](#)

2. **Continue Use of Agricultural Lands** - There is a strong incentive to keep lands in agricultural use. Some consideration should be given to long-term contracts with current lessees. Look at energy/fuel opportunities in association with agriculture and silvicultural resources.
3. **Address the Future of Select Historic Buildings** - Arsenal & Fairbanks buildings are unoccupied and deteriorating. State and Division of Historic Preservation should work together to determine the ultimate historic value and potential maintenance or re-use of these facilities. Consider creating a historic site destination or museum in concert with historic attractions relevant to these buildings and their role in the Vergennes Basin area and its history.
4. **Consider Energy Generation Options** - There are currently 2 energy generation facilities on site - a 120ft tall, 100kW wind turbine and a +/- 500kW solar farm under construction as the “All Sun” facility. Exploring options for additional wind and solar energy may be one viable use of the undeveloped, no agricultural lands under the state’s ownership in both Ferrisburgh and Vergennes. These options include additional smaller scale wind turbines similar to what is present currently on site, and additional solar arrays. Biomass generation could be considered as part an approach in Vermont to promoting “Distributed Energy Resources”, as well as the cultivation of biomass fuel types and woodlot management for cordwood and/or biomass production (pellets).
5. **Explore Opportunities for Housing** - There is an ongoing need for certain types of housing in Addison County. The plan includes reviewing areas of the state owned lands that could be considered for this use. Areas to consider include portions of the undeveloped areas of the eastern end of property that abuts a residential neighborhood in Vergennes, as well as some wooded areas. The western section of the parcel is primarily open agricultural land. The Regional Plan, as well as the Housing sections of the Ferrisburgh Town Plan and Vergennes Municipal Development Plan all identify future needs for certain types of housing units.
6. **Consider Developing a Recreational Trail System** - There appears to be local interest in off road trail networks (hiking and biking). This use, along with other possible amenities could be valuable to current and future users of the property, as well as local residents and tourists. This could include a perimeter trail network that links the Northlands Campus to the downtown Vergennes area and existing recreational resources.
7. **Consider the Sale of Specific Parcels within the Property** - Consider outright sale of specific parcels, both internal and external to the lands being leased to Job Corps. The state could identify specific parcels that could be potentially sold.

Other Key Items/issues:

1. There is a need to address bike/pedestrian connectivity to the Vergennes Downtown and Basin Area; This project will intersect with the ongoing planning effort being conducted.
2. There is a desire to better integrate this property and area with the city overall. It must be noted that there is distinct value of this Job Corps Center to the region’s economy via vendor services and employment, in particular.

For follow up questions or thoughts please contact:

David Raphael, LandWorks - davidr@landworksvt.com • 802-388-3011

Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles for Current and Future Use and Development of State Properties in Vergennes and Ferrisburgh including the current Northlands Job Corps campus.

1. A basic premise for the state lands is to seek out and support the highest and best uses for the various distinct buildings and environs, including the current Northlands Job Corps campus and the open agricultural and other undeveloped lands.
2. Current and future uses of the state property are to be consistent with the setting and context present and be compatible with the surrounding land uses and town/city land use goals for the zoning/land use districts within which they are located.
3. Current maintenance and future management of the facilities and infrastructure shall be consistent and compliant with applicable state and local codes and regulations.
4. Lands that include prime and statewide agricultural soils shall be maintained in agricultural use for as long as feasible, and economical.
5. Historic and cultural resources on the state lands in Vergennes are to be managed and retained consistent with state requirements and goals for such properties and resources. Reuse and renovation of historic buildings shall follow Vermont DHP guidelines and applicable Federal standards so as to maintain architectural integrity and overall resource values.
6. Investment and development of additional facilities and uses shall be consistent with state interests and with a goal of maximizing potential value and financial return to the taxpayers.
7. Investment and development, or redevelopment of existing sites and buildings shall consider the value and benefit to the local host communities.
8. All state landholdings and buildings shall be maintained to the best extent possible for current and future uses to ensure safety, accessibility as appropriate, and overall viability for their current and possible future uses.
9. Improvement to the former Weeks School now Northlands Job Corps Campus shall be implemented in a manner that enhances the property both functionally and aesthetically with the long term value and re-use of the campus as a key consideration.
10. All proposals and uses relative to the parcels under state ownership shall be encouraged and considered in a manner that maximizes the potential for these properties to benefit local, regional, and statewide constituencies.

