Georgia South Village Core Strategic Plan

Defining and giving context to the south village area, providing guidance for project design and site plan review, and outlining future needs.

A resource for developers and plan reviewers in the Georgia South Village Core.

NOVEMBER 2009

This plan was prepared by the Georgia Planning Commission with assistance from the Northwest Regional Planning Commission.

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Introduction and Purpose

The south village area of Georgia is located near exit 18 of Interstate 89 with the intersection of Vermont Route 7 and Vermont Route 104A at its center. Today, the area consists of commercial and residential development along Route 7 and 104A surrounded by high-density residential neighborhoods to the south and southwest and an industrial area to the east. The south village area has good potential for development with access to the interstate, a shared border with Chittenden County, and few environmental limitations. In response, it has been zoned for commercial, industrial, and high density residential development since the 1970's. As the area became developed over time, a vision for a Georgia south village was born. The Planning Commission envisioned the area to include a mix of residences, businesses, professional services, light commercial, and public facilities among ample green space in a Vermont community type setting.

It was not intended for the south village to replace or detract from the small, historic village of Georgia Center, but rather to complement and preserve it. The Planning Commission intends to maintain the existing historic character of Georgia Center, which consists of low density civic uses including the historical society, the elementary school, and the municipal offices, low density residential uses, and one small market. It is intended for the south village to include a higher concentration and intensity of development, while Georgia Center maintains its character with a small concentration of historic and civic uses.

The Town of Georgia developed the concept of the south village area through many years of planning, beginning with the commissioning of a conceptual plan for the area (Georgia Village Plan: A Vision for the Future) completed in April of 2003. Following the conceptual plan, the Town commissioned a Historic Village and Town Center Water Supply and Wastewater Feasibility Study completed in May of 2005, which looked at decentralized and centralized feasibility for wastewater and water supply in Georgia Center and the South Village area. And finally, the Town commissioned an economic feasibility study and master plan for the area, which was completed in 2006.

This strategic plan was developed by the Georgia Planning Commission during 2008 and 2009 with input and support from landowners within the area, Georgia citizens, and members of other town boards and commissions. The Planning Commission discussed the plan at regular meetings broadcasted on Channel 17 and held a public forum to gather input. The strategic plan intends to define and give context to the south village area, synthesize existing plans and studies, provide guidance for design and site plan review, and outline projects and planning still needed. In addition to being a resource for Planning Commissioners, Zoning Board Members, Selectboard members, and municipal staff, the Planning Commission hopes that the document will assist property owners and developers plan projects that further the goals for the area.

Summary of Existing Plans and Studies

Georgia Village Plan: A Vision for the Future (April 2003)

The Town of Georgia retained Lamouroux & Dickenson to prepare a conceptual Georgia South Village Plan over the course of the year 2002. The project included developing options for a South Village with build-out scenarios, preparing a preferred conceptual South Village plan based on public input, and developing specific zoning regulation amendment language. The final preferred village plan was developed with input from the Georgia community during two public forums and included a new village center consisting of approximately 900 acres that surrounded Exit 18 of Interstate 89 (Map 1). The plan recognized the area for mixed use and commercial development with increased density and lot coverage for a more compact community. Several implementation measures were recommended, including developing an economic

development leadership committee, a master plan, zoning regulation changes, and a capital plan for public improvements.

Historic Village and Town Center Water Supply and Wastewater Feasibility Study (May 2005)

The Town of Georgia hired Stone Environmental to complete a water supply and wastewater feasibility study for the historic village and south village (as delineated in the Georgia South Village Plan) areas. This study involved conducting a needs assessment to determine whether each individual property in the study areas should either maintain or upgrade their onsite system or connect to an offsite system. Just over 50% of the parcels in the south village core were found to have conditions unsuitable for an on-site wastewater disposal system, most commonly due to shallow groundwater. The study also evaluated the advantages and disadvantages of water supply and wastewater disposal options, which ranged from connecting to adjacent municipal systems (St. Albans Town and Milton) to a combination of individual on-site and community systems. Finally, the study proposed next steps for pursuing recommended options, which were to connect with the Town of Milton and/or Champlain Water District and either use uncommitted treatment capacity from the PBM Nutritionals system or a combination of individual onsite and community offsite treatment systems.

Georgia South Village Economic Feasibility Study and Master Plan (2006)

The Town of Georgia hired Crane Associates to conduct an economic feasibility study and master plan, which would analyze the local

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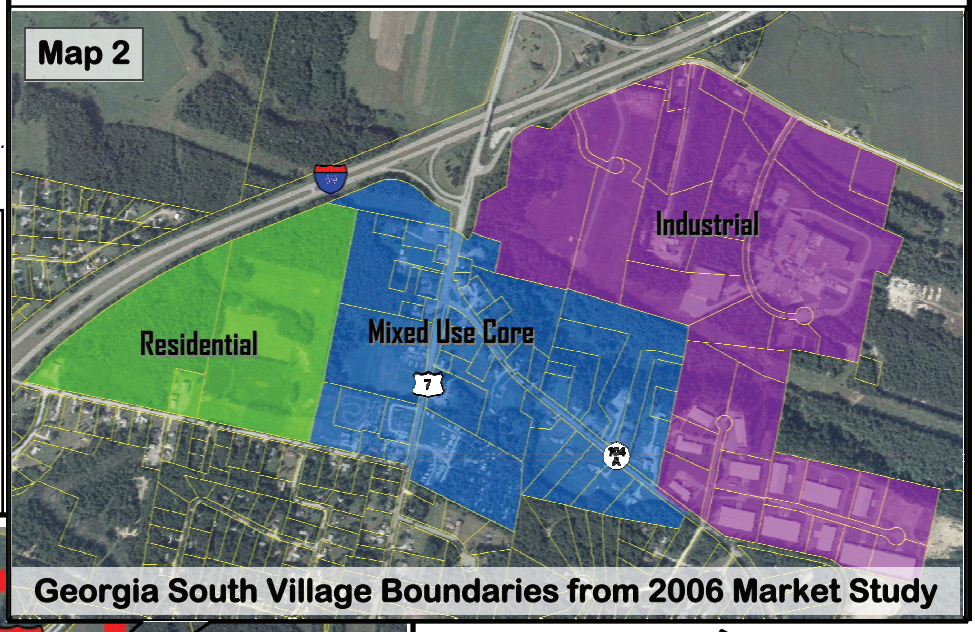
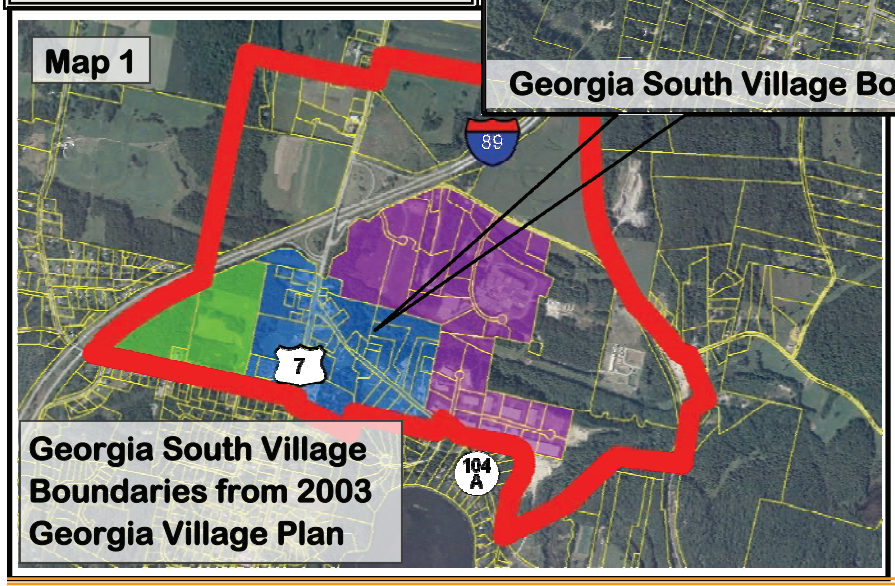
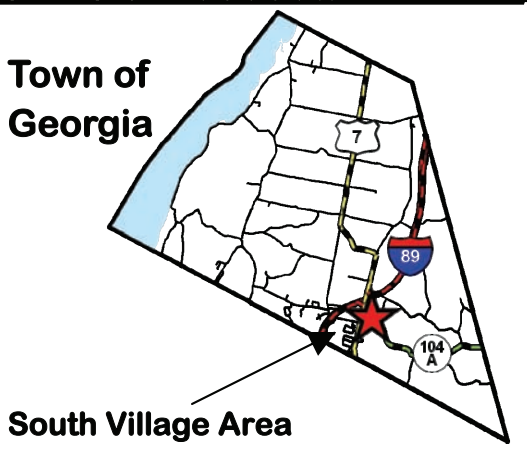
*Shown in **Map 1** are the original boundaries of the Georgia South Village from the 2003 Georgia Village Plan.*
*Shown in **Map 2** are the boundaries reduced in scale recommended by the 2006 Market Study.*



The Market Study proposed three different land use areas for the South Village, including a mixed use commercial/residential area in the center of the village, a single use residential area located to the west of the center, and an industrial area encompassing the existing industrial lands.





real estate market dynamics and determine the supply and demand of commercial and residential property for the preferred South Village (from the 2003 Georgia South Village Plan). The preferred South Village plan from the 2003 study included residential, commercial, and industrial areas with proposed lot sizes no smaller than 1/8 of an acre, buildings no larger than a 20,000 square feet in footprint, and a maximum height of 3 stories. The market analysis used these figures, an assumption that there would be municipal sewer and water service, and evaluation of existing and projected commercial and industrial growth in the greater area to develop its conclusion that the preferred village plan is too large in scale for market conditions in Georgia. Its capacity would be nearly 7 times the amount of commercial space as Taft Corners in Williston. In response to this conclusion, the market study proposed a more reasonable 20 year buildout recommendation (Table 1) and smaller south village boundaries (Map 2, pg. 2).

Table 1: 20 Year Buildout from Feasibility Study and Master Plan (For Mixed Use Core as delineated in Map 2 below)

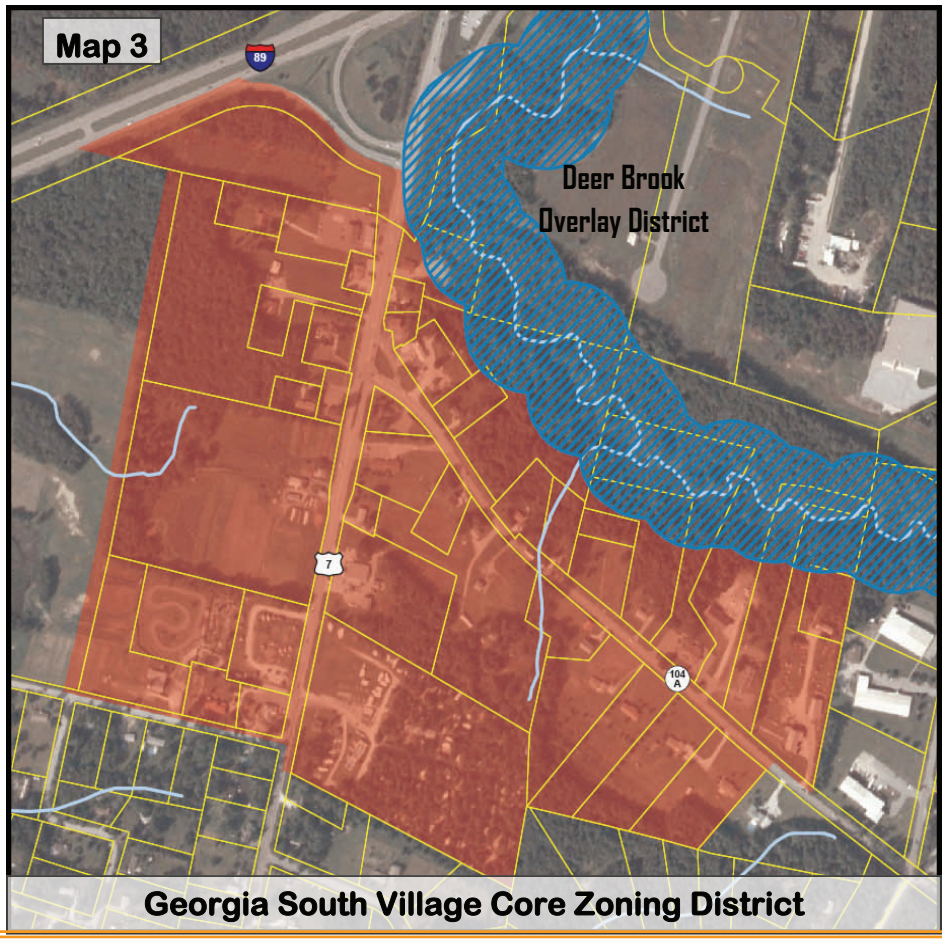
Total Acres	Residential Dwelling Units*	Residential Ownership**	Commercial Square Feet	Industrial Square Feet
70	40-60	200-300	200,000-400,000	100,000-200,000

* 10%-20% 1 bedroom; 20%-50% 2-bedroom; 20%-40% 3 bedroom

** A Mix of single family, duplex, and multi-family for moderate income households

Land Use Regulations for the South Village

In 2008, the Georgia Planning Commission began discussions on developing land use regulations for the South Village area. Initial discussions resulted in a decision to accept the recommendation of the 2006 Market Study and focus on only the area south of Exit 18. The Planning Commission decided to hone their energies on developing regulations for the mixed use core of the South Village Area as a first step. They defined boundaries for a South Village Core Zoning District from the southern end of Exit 18 and the Deer Brook Overlay District to the north, to the Yankee Industrial Park on Route 104A to the east, to Redeeming Grace Church to the west, and to Ballard Road and the southern boundary of the campground to the south (Map 3). Delineation of a core district apart from the surrounding residential and industrial areas is necessary to define the center commercial and social hub of the new south village. It should be developed at a higher intensity with attention to create an interesting sense of place, public spaces, and a streetscape safe and comfortable for pedestrians. In the future, additional zoning districts may be



Georgia South Village Core Zoning District

developed or existing zoning districts modified in the larger south village area—an area that supplies quality employment and residences within a modest walking distance—all important to the success of the core.

South Village Core District Purpose

The purpose of the South Village Core District is to provide a concentrated core settlement of small scale commercial, civic, and residential uses in a traditional Vermont village setting. To achieve this, zoning regulations for the District must facilitate the conversion of existing medium density commercial and residential uses with limited pedestrian accessibility to high density commercial and mixed uses with a pedestrian friendly streetscape and a central focal point, like a village green. A livable streetscape where people can walk, gather, and meet comfortably is vital to creating the desired village character in the South Village Core District. A focal point such as a town green is important to defining the community's identity and sense of place. Mixed uses (both vertical and horizontal) will add livability and character by providing a community where people live, work, and shop.

Regulations for the district shall require sidewalks with street trees and benches, and other public spaces in the form of parks or plazas as appropriate. Buildings must be designed with a human scale oriented towards the street and off-street parking lots must be located to the side or the rear of the building. Standards should require that green space or connections to green space, such as public parks, are incorporated in to site plans as applicable. And importantly, opportunities for developing a village green must be sought.

It is critical that new streets in the South Village Core District create linkages with existing streets (Route 7, Ballard Road, and Route 104A) in accordance with the conceptual future road network (Map 8). A network of streets shortens travel distances and improves circulation, which makes the provision of services more efficient and walking more attractive and feasible.

Water supply and wastewater treatment must be managed on a district basis, through either coordinated and planned community systems or municipal infrastructure to allow for the most efficient buildout of the District.

Smart Growth Vision

The purpose of the South Village Core is in conformance with the smart growth principles as identified in Vermont Statute (Title 24, Chapter 117, §2791). These principles form a vision statement for development in the South Village Core over the next 20 years and are summarized below:

A) Maintains the historic development pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.

B) Develops compact mixed-use centers at a scale appropriate for the community and the region.

C) Enables choice in modes of transportation.

D) Protects the state's important environmental, natural and historic features, including natural areas, water quality, scenic resources, and historic sites and districts.

E) Serves to strengthen agricultural and forest industries and minimizes conflicts of development with these industries.

F) Balances growth with the availability of economic and efficient public utilities and services.

G) Supports a diversity of viable businesses in downtowns and villages.

H) Provides for housing that meets the needs of a diversity of social and income groups in each community.

I) Reflects a settlement pattern that, at full build-out, is not characterized by:
   (i) scattered development located outside of compact urban and village centers that is excessively land consumptive;
   (ii) development that limits transportation options, especially for pedestrians;
   (iii) the fragmentation of farm and forest land;
   (iv) development that is not serviced by municipal infrastructure or that requires the extension of municipal infrastructure across undeveloped lands in a manner that would extend service to lands located outside compact village and urban centers;
   (v) linear development along well-traveled roads and highways that lacks depth, as measured from the highway.

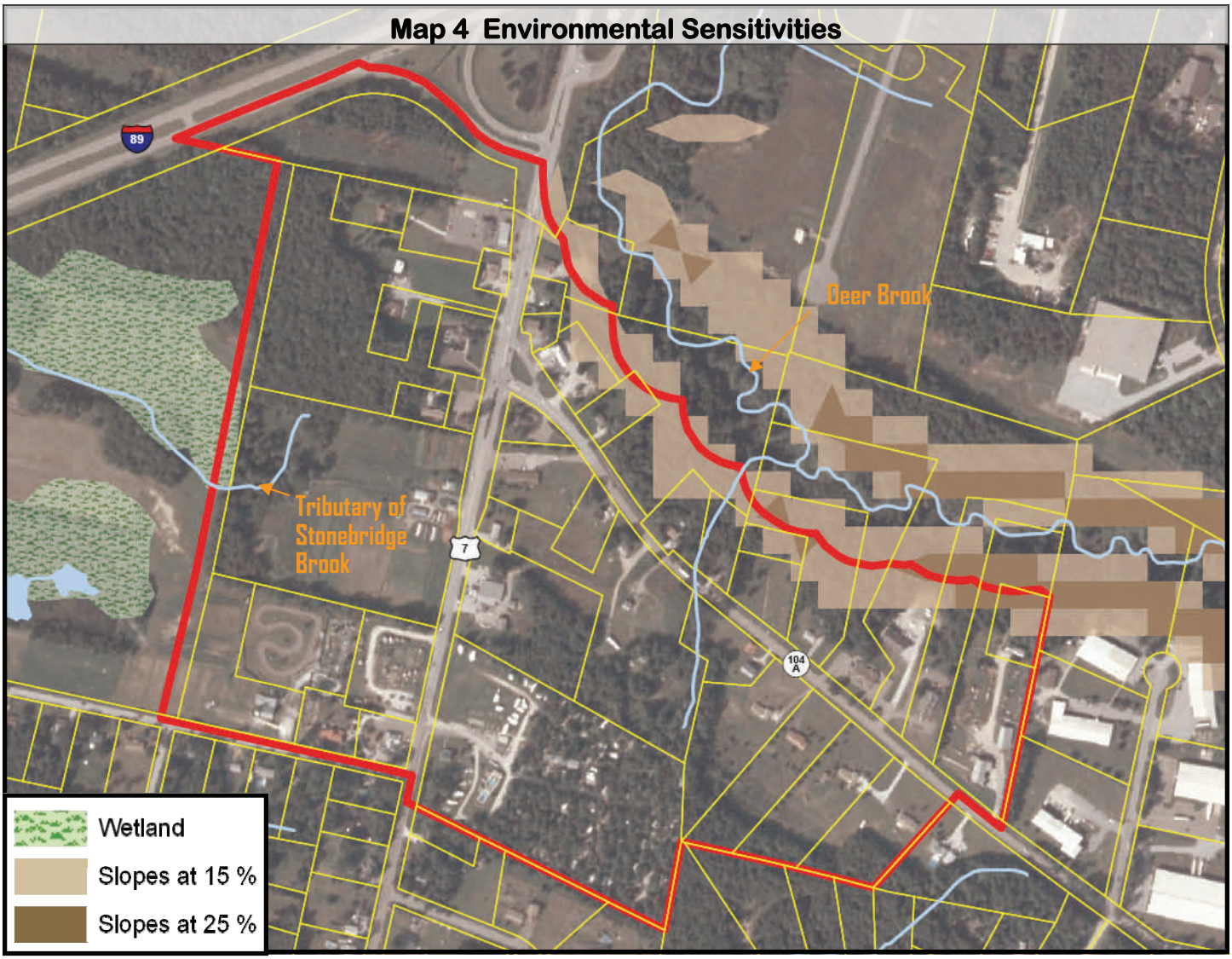
Land Characteristics and Infrastructure

The South Village Core District contains about 120 acres of land in southeastern Georgia. Several major transportation routes, including Route 7, Route 104A, and Interstate 89, give the area excellent access to neighboring communities, St. Albans, Burlington, and further destinations. Land in the Core District is largely built up or open, with only a few small areas of forested land in the northwest and northeast corners. The Core District is almost entirely flat to gently sloping land, with the exception of the far northeast corner where a steep ravine leads to Deer Brook. Environmental sensitivities and issues related to water supply, wastewater treatment, and stormwater management are summarized below.

Environmental Sensitivities

Deer Brook, bordering the South Village Core to the northeast, is listed as stormwater impaired by the State of Vermont. Geomorphic assessment work has been completed by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission and Ross Environmental Associates along much of the stream, including the reach bordering the South Village Core (reach M02). The study notes that this reach is somewhat protected from encroachments by very steep valley walls, but that stormwater impacts (increased flows and an increase of sediment input) from urban development are the predominant stressors, which are causing erosion, including a high concentration of mass failures. Within the District, there is one known mass failure behind the former video store (parcel 16 on Map 7, pg. 9), in addition to several drainage gullies that have caused land erosion. A mass failure is when the valley wall or historic terrace has severe erosion supplying significant amounts of sediment to the river. Overall, the geomorphic assessment has labeled the reaches of Deer Brook bordering the District with a moderate and high sensitivity, while south of the District increased sediment loads have caused aggradation and a severe sensitivity rating. Protecting the stability of Deer Brook by managing stormwater inputs and preventing erosion is important to the Planning Commission as they continue planning and implementing the goals for this District.

In addition to Deer Brook, an unnamed tributary crosses into the Fairbanks parcel (Map 4). This lot also has a marginal depth to seasonal high water table and is adjacent to a large wetland complex. Protecting the quality and function of these wetlands, such as water storage, erosion control, and wildlife habitat, is important to the Planning Commission.



Wastewater Treatment and Water Supply

The South Village Core District is not served by wastewater treatment or water supply infrastructure. All wastewater is treated by individual on-site septic systems, while water is supplied by individual drilled wells or springs. Soil data for on-site septic system suitability shows that the northern part of the Core District, made up of Enosburg Loamy Fine Sand and Wareham Loamy Fine Sand soils, is quite wet (Table 2, Map 5, pg. 7). These soil conditions present limitations for on-site wastewater treatment, which reduces development potential without the presence of wastewater treatment infrastructure. The soils in the southeast of the District are better suited for septic systems.

The Wastewater Feasibility Study completed by Stone Environmental evaluated the potential for on-site disposal in the Core District in detail, finding that theoretically 10 parcels could not support an onsite system due to a groundwater restriction, 3 parcels could not support an onsite system due to a groundwater and an area restriction, 2 parcels could not support an onsite system due to an area restriction, and 1 parcel could not support an onsite system due to a groundwater, bedrock, and area restriction (Map 6, pg. 7). The remaining 27 parcels were found able to support an onsite wastewater disposal system. However, individual on-site systems on 27 parcels within the Core District would surely dictate a lower density of development than desired. For example, the Fairbanks parcel (Parcel #10 on Map 7, pg. 9)

Map 5 South Village Core Septic Suitability

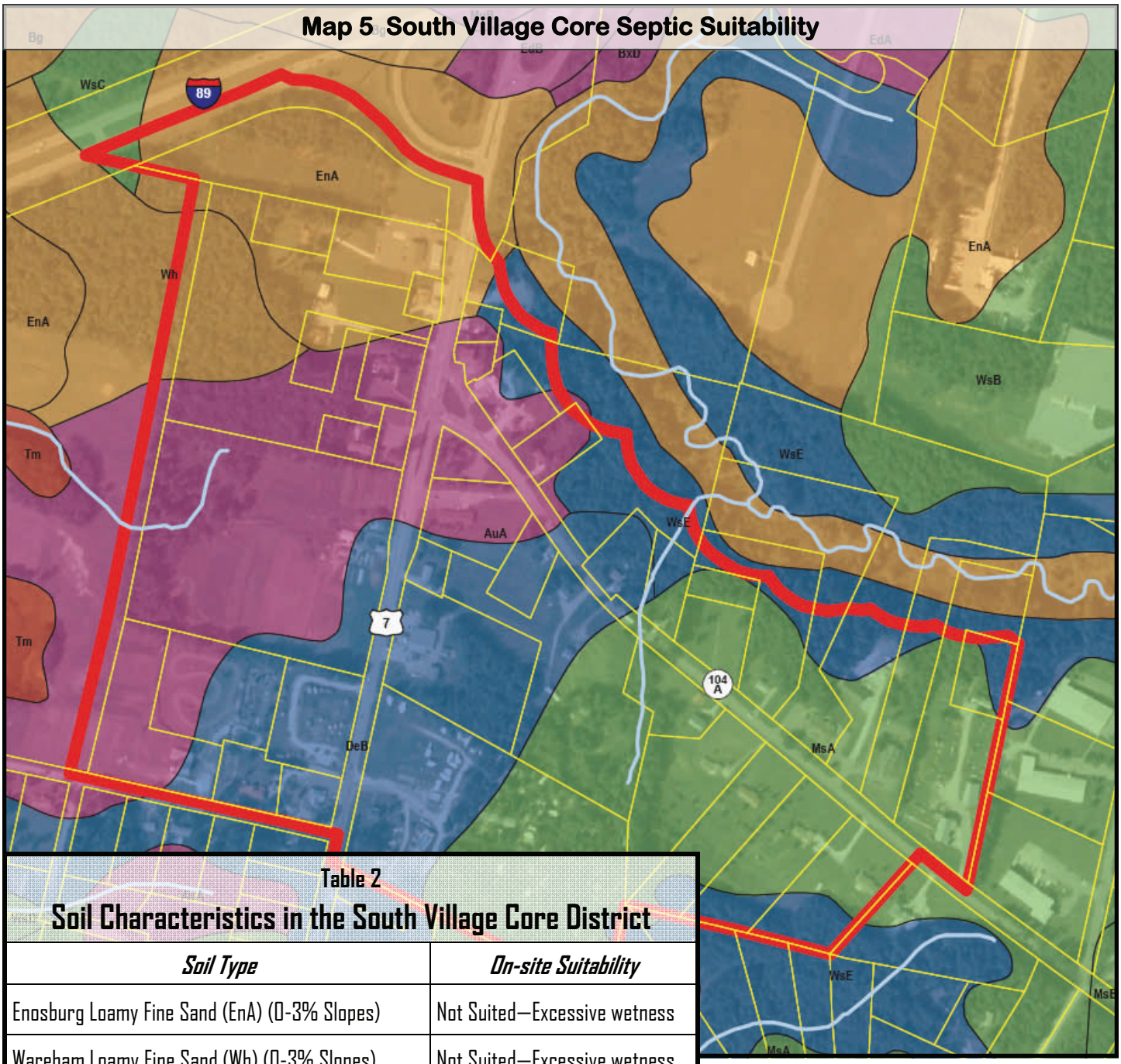
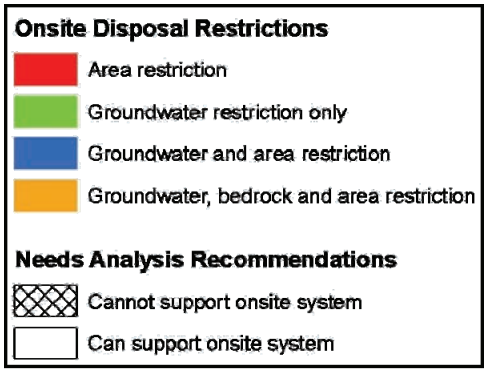


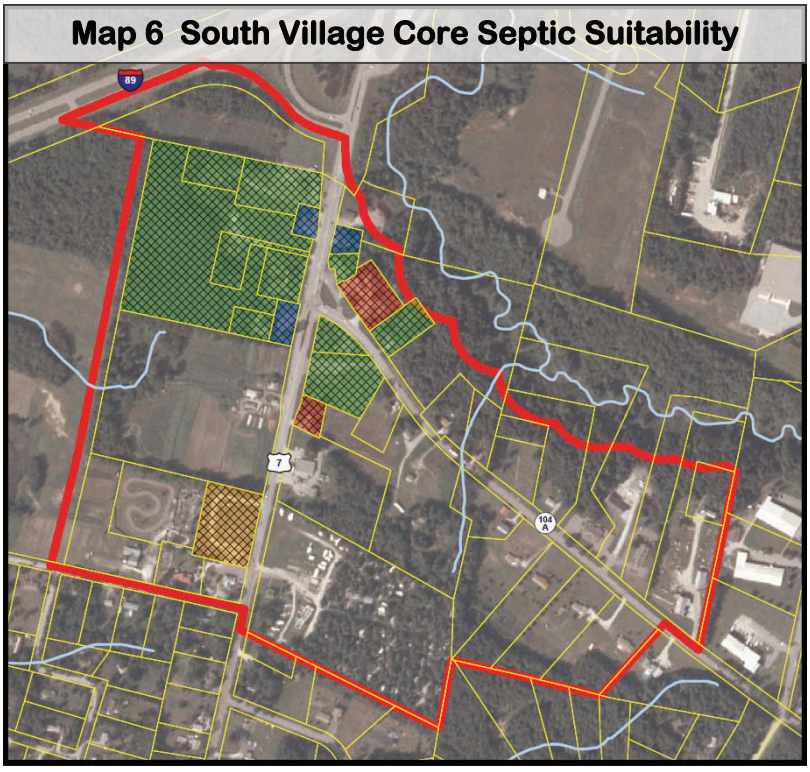
Table 2

Soil Characteristics in the South Village Core District

Soil Type	*On-site Suitability*
Enosburg Loamy Fine Sand (EnA) (0-3% Slopes)	Not Suited—Excessive wetness
Wareham Loamy Fine Sand (Wh) (0-3% Slopes)	Not Suited—Excessive wetness
Au Gres Loamy Fine Sand (AuA) (0-6% Slopes)	Marginally suited—Marginal depth to SHWT and gentle slope
Windsor Loamy Fine Sand (WsE) (25%—60% Slopes)	Moderately suited—rapid permeability and steep slope
Deerfield Loamy Fine Sand (DeB) (0-8% Slopes)	Moderately Suited—Moderate depth to SHWT
Missisquoi Loamy Sand (MsA) (0-3% Slopes)	Well Suited—Rapid Permeability

may only have capacity to support wastewater for one commercial use, while desired buildout is at a much higher density, such as a mixed use building with several commercial uses and some residences upstairs. Also, locations suitable for wastewater treatment systems may conflict with desired locations for buildings close to the street right of way. These soil limitations indicate that it is very important for the Town of Georgia to pursue community wastewater disposal options.



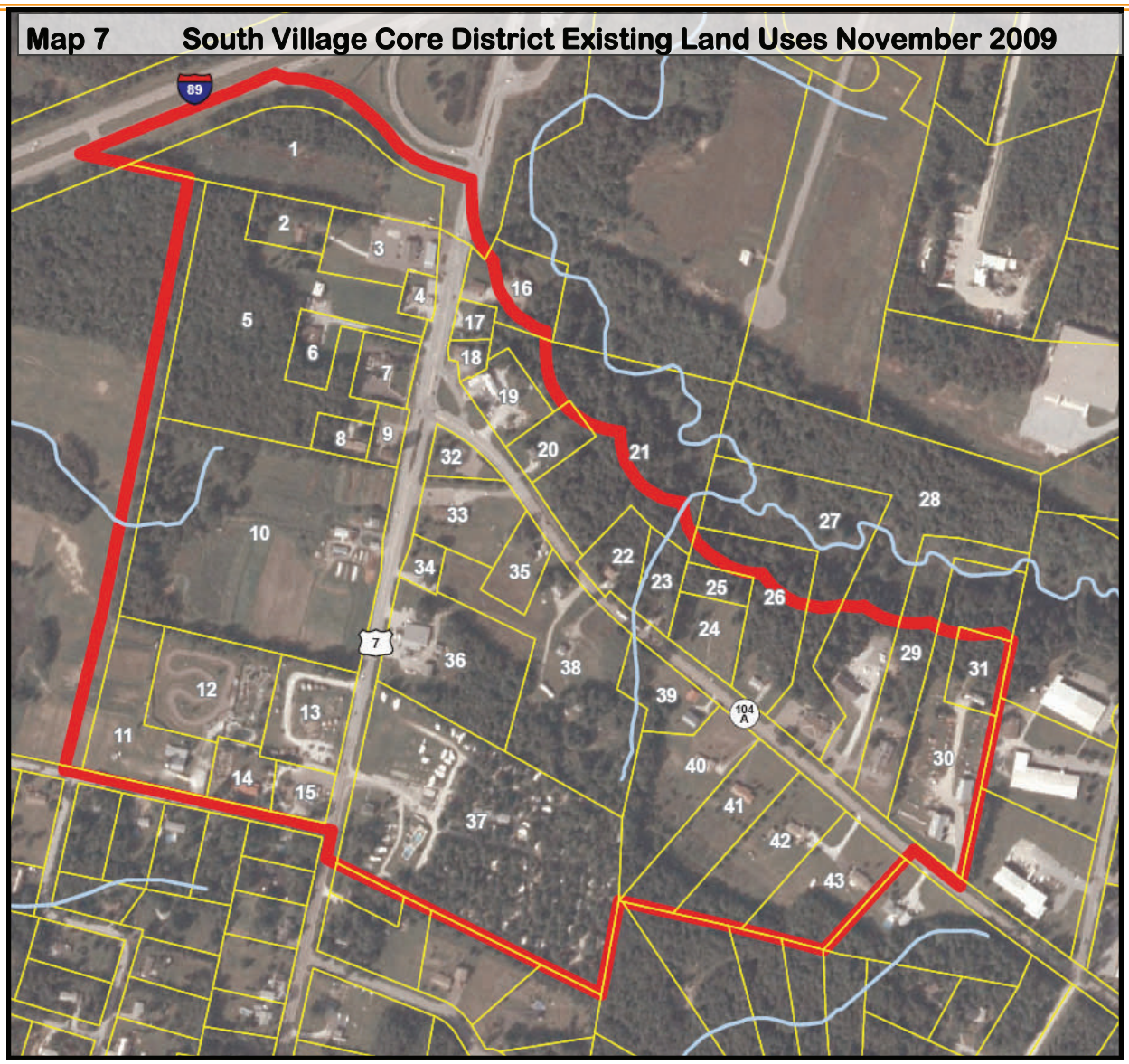


Stormwater

Stormwater is currently managed on a lot by lot basis without any infrastructure or engineered storage or treatment. Generally, stormwater from rooftops, roads, driveways, and parking lots is directed to grassed or vegetated areas where it is absorbed or directed to open channel, grass lined ditches via sheet flow before being discharged into a water body or wetland. No state stormwater permits have been issued within the District, indicating that individual developments have involved less than an acre of impervious surface and have been reviewed only by the Georgia Planning Commission. As the area is developed further, the quantity and rate of runoff into receiving bodies in and around the District will increase, which needs to be carefully managed to protect water quality and stream stability, especially Deer Brook, Arrowhead Lake, and the adjacent wetlands. Future planning for the South Village Core District will include planning for how to best manage stormwater from a District wide perspective. This work will include consideration of the water quality impact and erosion hazards along Deer Brook and impacts to the wetlands.

Existing and Proposed Land Uses in the South Village Core

There are 43 parcels of land located within the South Village Core District with approximately 18 commercial establishments, 15 residences, 5 mixed uses, 4 undeveloped parcels, and a cemetery. Map 7 on the next page identifies each use by parcel within the District. Future development in the South Village Core District will follow at similar mixed use proportions; however, commercial development is the priority and it is expected to make up the largest percentage, It is intended that the South Village Core be redeveloped and in-filled with a wide variety of commercial uses and multi-family housing. Single and two family housing will be incorporated only as part of mixed use developments. Commercial uses that are desired within the District include small scale retail; such as hardware shops, drugstores, and specialty markets; personal and professional services, such as salons and barber shops, doctors offices, and other professional offices; and restaurants and cafes.



1 — Undeveloped(VELCO)
2 — Residential Use (Single Family)
3 — Commercial Use (Maplefields Convenience Store and Gas Station)
4 — Commercial Use (Maplefields Convenience Store and Gas Station)
5 — Undeveloped
6 — Commercial Use (Automotive Repair Use)
7 — Commercial Use (People's Trust Bank)
8 — Residential Use (2 units)
9 — Mixed Use (Hair Stylist, Residential)
10 — Residential Use (Single Family)
11 — Commercial Use (Not Established)
12 — Commercial Use (Go Cart Track)
13 — Commercial Use (Medical Center)
14 — Residential Use (Single Family)
15 — Mixed Use (Farmhouse Restaurant, Creamy Stand, Residential)
16 — Commercial Use (Not Established)
17 — Mixed Use (Residential, Small Business)
18 — Commercial Use (Dance Studio)
19 — Commercial Use (Interstate Auto)
20 — Residential Use (Single Family)
21 — Undeveloped
22 — Residential (Single Family)
23 — Residential (Single Family)
24 — Cemetery
25 — Undeveloped
26 — Residential (Single Family)
27 — Commercial
28 — Commercial
29 — Commercial
30 — Commercial
31 — Commercial
32— Commercial Use (Not Established)
33—Mixed Use (Georgia Auto, Self Storage Facility)
34—Mixed Use (Bike Shop, Kitchen Design Business, Residential)
35—Residential (Single Family)
36—Commercial Use (Georgia Market)
37—Commercial Use (Campground)
38—Residential Use (Single Family)
39—Residential (Single Family)
40— Residential (Single Family)
41— Residential (Single Family)
42— Residential (Single Family)
43— Residential (Single Family)

South Village Core Design

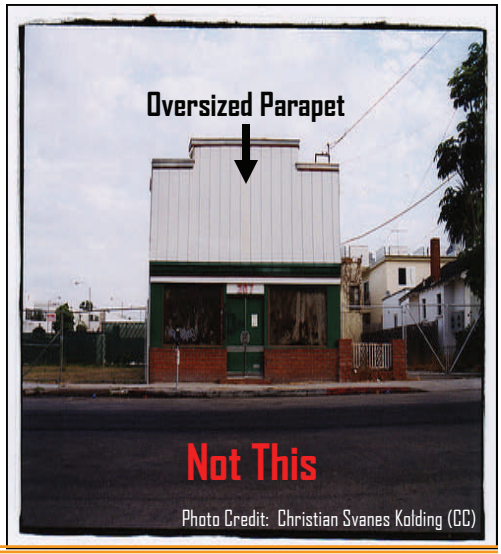
The South Village Core District should incorporate traditional forms and styles of development and a pedestrian friendly streetscape. Design standards that require this type of development can be implemented in different ways, depending on what a particular town finds appropriate, including incorporating design guidelines or standards within zoning regulations and other ordinances, requiring design review by an advisory committee during the development review process, or a combination of both. The guidelines in this plan should be used as a basis for developing design review standards for South Village Core District, and in addition to or as an alternative, as a reference of appropriate design for applicants, the Planning Commission, and the Zoning Board of Adjustment during development review.

Building Form. Buildings in the South Village Core should emulate the form of those historically located in and around Vermont villages—2 and 3 story buildings that create a sense of enclosure in the streetscape, achieve a higher density, encourage mixed uses, and enhance the feeling of a village center, Listed below are guidelines for block style and other building forms in the South Village Core.

1) Two or multi-story "block" style buildings with flat or pitched roofs and architecturally interesting parapets and/or cornicing at the roof/wall juncture are encouraged in the South Village Core. Cornices and parapets should fit with the overall building design and should not seem out of scale. Shown below are appropriate and inappropriate block style buildings for the South Village Core.

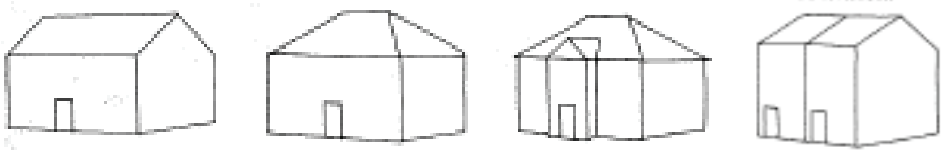
This building is appropriate for the South Village because it is a 2-story block style building with a flat roof and a detailed cornice. Other good features include architecturally integrated and pedestrian scale signs, a building entrance facing and oriented towards the street and sidewalk, large first story windows, and awnings and planter boxes along the sidewalk.

This building is appropriate for the South Village Core because it is a 2 and 3 story block style building oriented towards the street and sidewalk with a detailed parapet, large first story windows, and an accentuated corner entrance providing public space with benches.



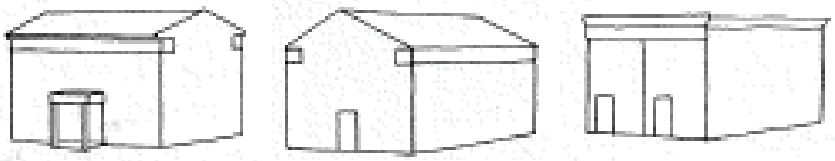
2) Two or multi-story buildings with pitched roofs that model styles typical to Vermont villages, such as Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival are encouraged in the South Village Core. Shown below are examples of building traditions common to Vermont.

Federal Traditions (Windows and detailing are not shown)



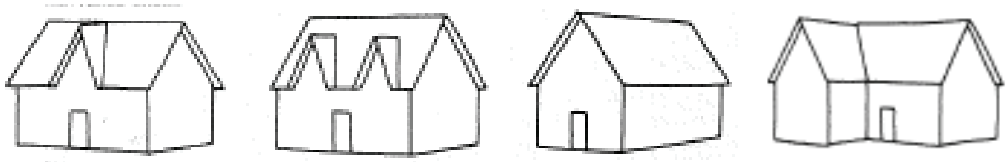
Side-Gabled Roof | Hipped Roof | Centered Gable | Townhouse

Greek Revival Traditions (Windows and detailing are not shown)



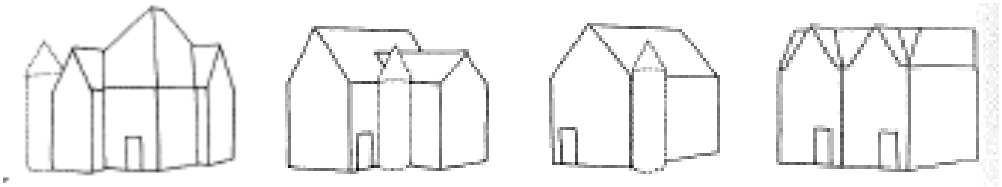
Entry Porch Less Than Full Height or Absent | Front Gabled Roof | Townhouse

Gothic Revival Traditions (Windows and detailing are not shown)



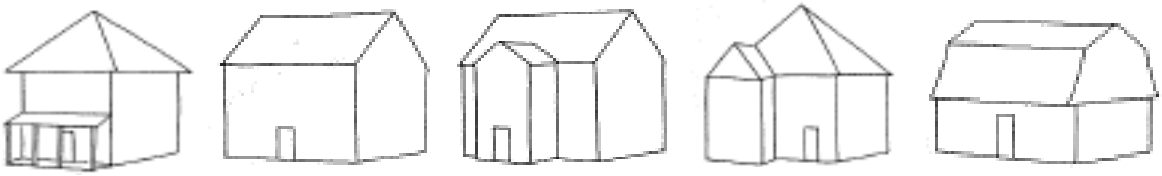
Centered Gable | Paired Gables | Front Gabled Roof | Asymmetrical

Queen Anne Traditions (Windows and detailing are not shown)



Hipped Roof with Lower Cross Gables | Cross Gabled Roof | Front Gabled Roof | Town House

Colonial Revival Traditions (Windows and detailing are not shown)



Hipped Roof with or without Full Width Porch | Side Gabled Roof | Centered Gable | Asymmetrical | Gambrel Roof

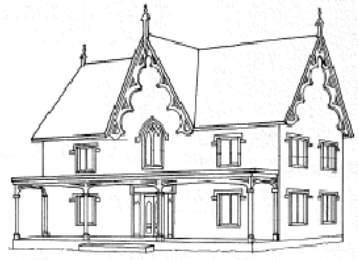
Image Source for illustrations above and on the next page: A Field Guide to American Houses

Building Forms that model traditional Vermont barns are also desirable in the South Village Core.

Examples of Pitched Roof Styles Traditional to Vermont

Federal Style Example

Greek Revival Style Example



Gothic Revival Style Example

Queen Ann Style Example

Colonial Revival Style Example

Roof Pitch in the South Village Core

Pitched roofs are desired in the South Village Core District, except for on two or multi-story block style buildings. Normal and steep slope pitched roofs are encouraged over low slope pitched roofs.

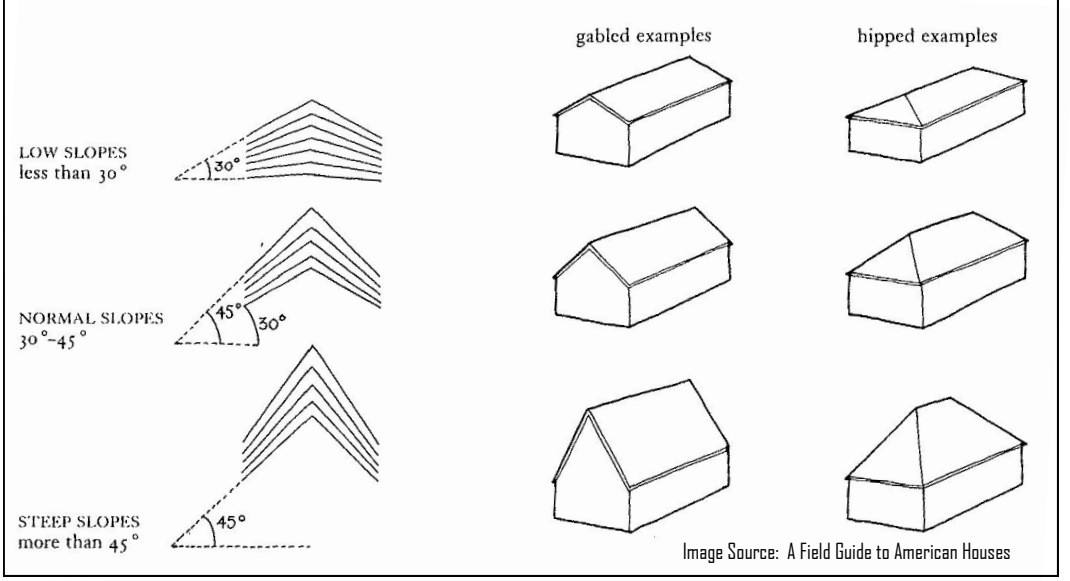


Image Source: A Field Guide to American Houses

Where do modern forms fit into the South Village Core?

While traditional styles are encouraged over modern designs, if modern designs are built to a human scale and conform to all other recommendations in this plan, they can be acceptable.

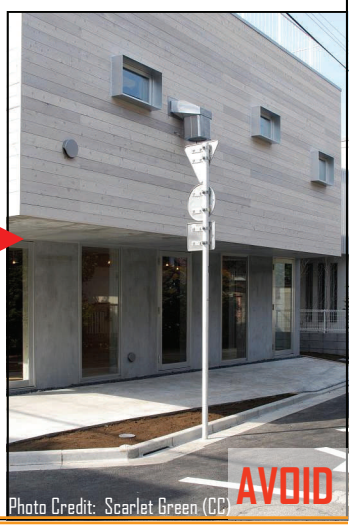
Use windows and openings in the house to relate the design to a human scale.

Include detailing and framing around windows and doors.

Windows on all sides of the house with a reasonable ratio of wall to window allows the building to fit in with traditional styles.

This building is so different from traditional styles, it will never fit in and become outdated quickly.

Don't forget the windows and detailing; think of a house not as an art project, but as a place for people to occupy.



ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS. Whether built new or adapted from a historic structure, traditional architectural details should be highlighted and buildings should be interesting and designed at a human scale in the South Village Core. It is important to strike a balance between a simple design and a complex design—box like buildings should be avoided and architectural details should be carefully placed, while not over doing it. Architectural and decorative detailing can be included around windows, gables, entrances, between stories, on roofs, and on roof cornices or parapets. Blank facades fronting sidewalks or walkways must be avoided. Regularly spaced windows, which on the first floor are at eye level, and entrances and porches that orient to the sidewalk add a human scale to development.

Basic Architectural and Decorative Details Can Be Added in the Following Ways

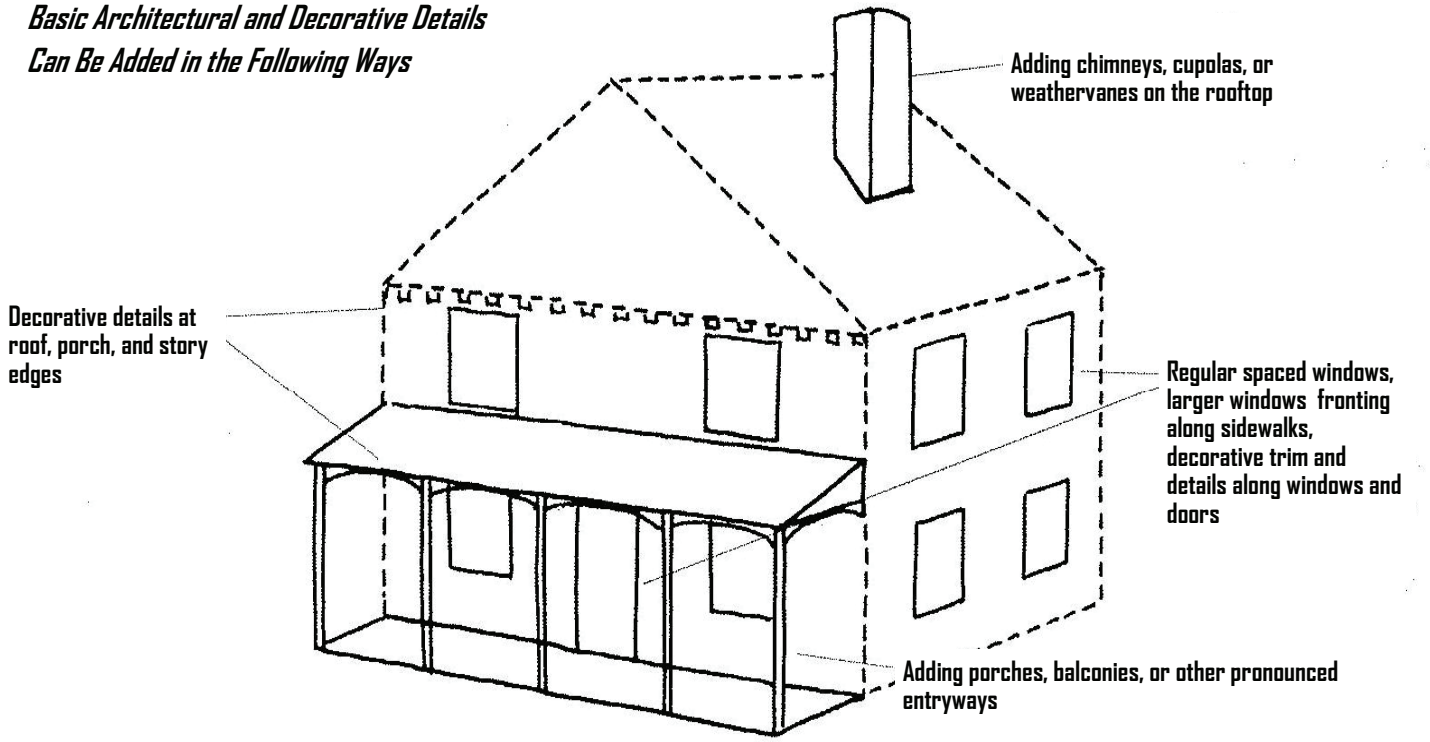
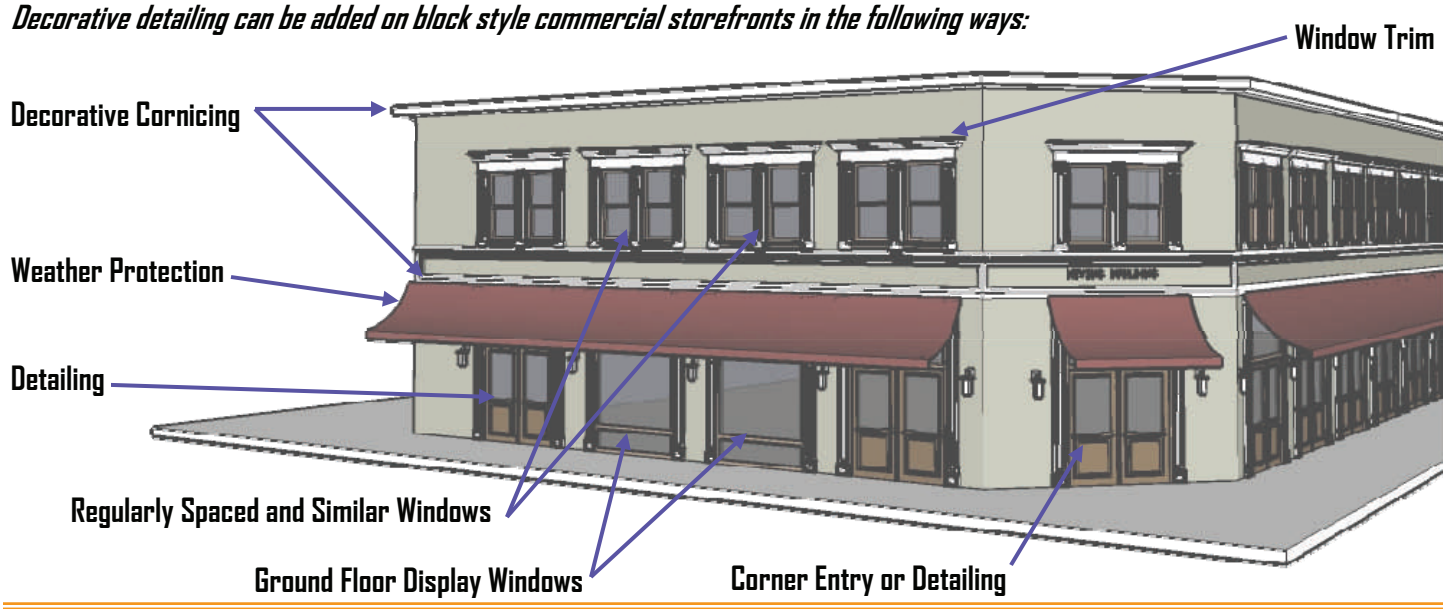


Image Source: A field Guide to American Houses

Decorative detailing can be added on block style commercial storefronts in the following ways:



Cornices and Parapets are Encouraged in the South Village Core

Cornice—the molded and projecting horizontal member that crowns an architectural composition.

Parapet—a low wall or railing to protect the edge of a platform, roof, or bridge.

Cornices and parapets can range in detail, size, and style. There is no right or wrong way of constructing them as long as they fit with the overall building design and are not out of scale. Cornices and/or parapets add detail and screen equipment and utility infrastructure on flat or low sloping rooftops.

Parapets


Photo Credit: Robapalooza (CC)

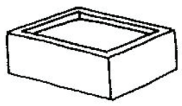
Cornices


Photo Credit: Russ Naldolf (CC)

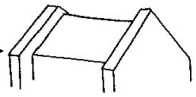

Photo Credit: Racine (CC)

Examples of Parapet and Cornice Styles

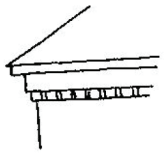
Parapet with flat roof →



Parapet with gabled roof →



Cornicing with slight eave overhang, boxed with modillions, dentils, or other classical molding →



Cornicing with slight eave overhang and brackets →

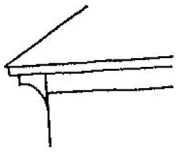


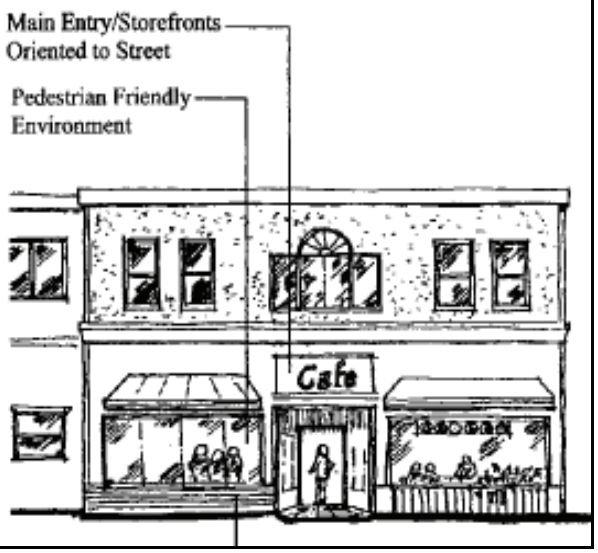
Image Source: A field Guide to American Houses

Rooftop Architectural Details, such as Cupolas, Towers, and Weathervanes are Encouraged

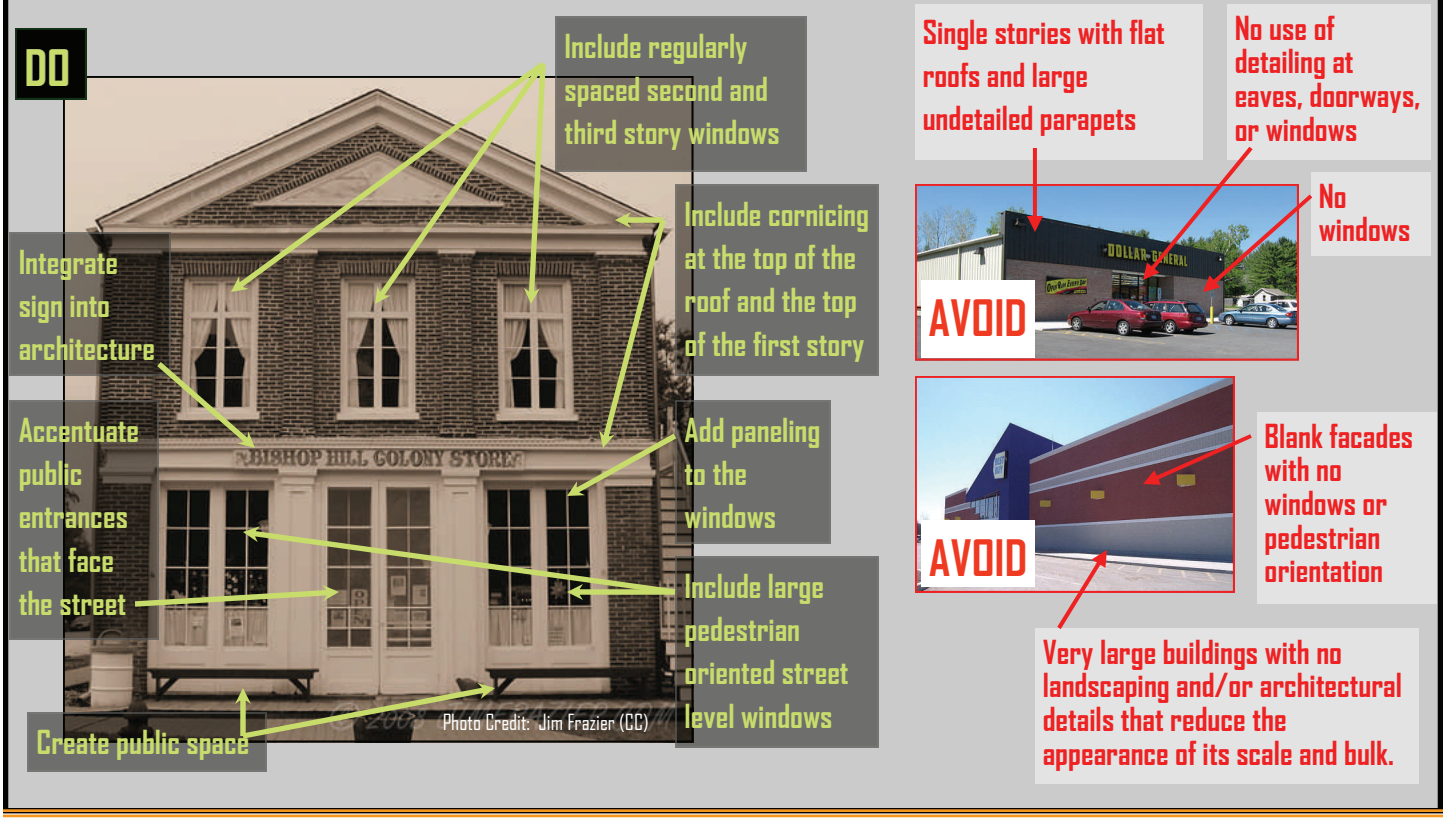
Regularly Spaced, Street Level Windows Oriented to Pedestrians are Encouraged in the South Village Core.

Details encouraged for storefront windows:

- Attractive molding or first story cornices,
- Awnings or other weather protection,
- Panes to break up scale and make look less like hole in wall.



BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER:
Examples of appropriate and inappropriate architectural details for buildings in the South Village Core.



Shown below are examples of appropriate and inappropriate building form and architectural details for the South Village Core.

This building is appropriate for the South Village Core because it is a 2 story building with a side gabled roof of a normal to steep pitch, a center gabled entryway oriented to the street, and regular spaced windows.

This building is appropriate for the South Village Core because it is a two story building with an accentuated corner entrance, which is oriented to pedestrians and facing the street. The building has regularly spaced windows with panes and a simple but elegant cornice at the roofline. In addition, signs and lighting are scaled down appropriately for a pedestrian oriented center.

This building is appropriate for the South Village Core because it is a 2 1/2 story building with decorative cornices and parapets, pedestrian oriented first floor storefront windows, regularly spaced second and third story windows, and signs that integrate well with the architecture. Further, while the building is quite large, it does not feel out of scale because of well designed additions.

While this building is oriented to the street with side parking, the windows are clustered near the entrance rather than regularly spaced throughout the façade and it is only one story. In addition, the paneling extending from the top of the roof to the top of the door sticks out rather than blend in with traditional architecture.

Good Downtown Buildings:

- Face the main street.
- Are located at the front property line.
- Have street-level entrances.
- Provide a sense of enclosure and proportion to the street.
- Include windows and display cases that invite window-shopping (no blank façades).

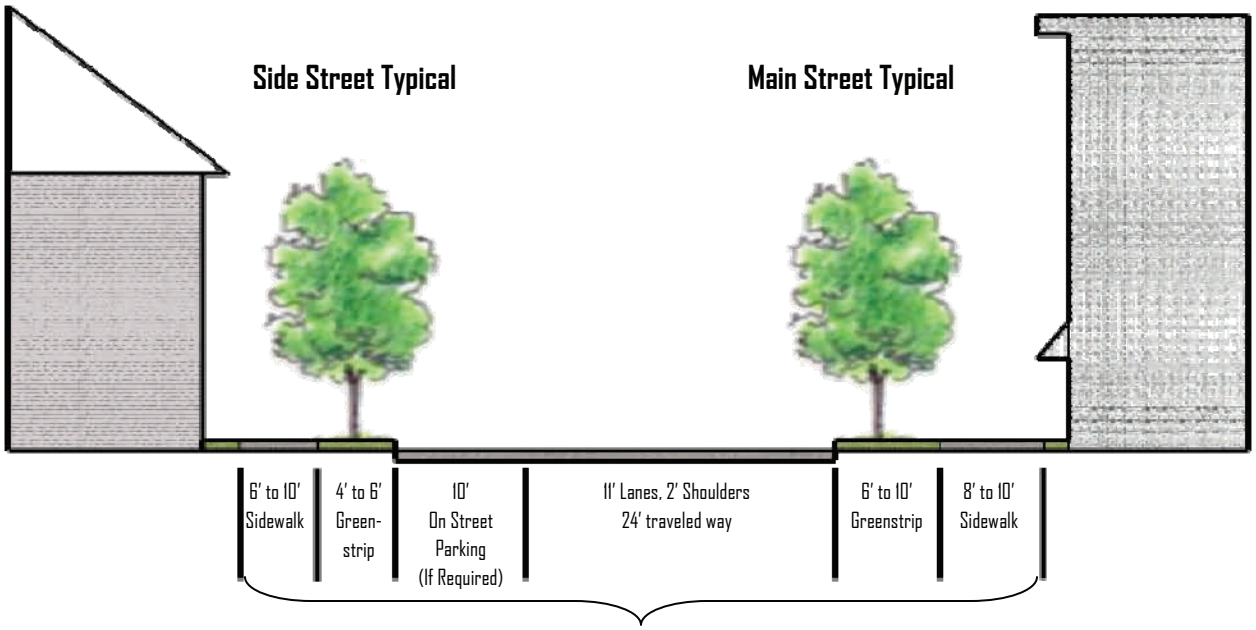
While this building has 2 stories, the windows are too small without any detailing such as framing or panes. In addition, there is no detailing at the eave line and the entrance way is not accentuated.

Streetscape.

The streetscape in the South Village Core should be safe and comfortable for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as accommodating and efficient for automobiles, First and foremost, developments should accommodate safe pedestrian circulation in the form of sidewalks along every street and pedestrian paths that connect sidewalks to building entrances, parking lots, and public spaces. In high traffic areas, cross walks and other traffic calming measures should be integrated into the streetscape as appropriate. Bike lanes should be added along streets and bike racks at destinations throughout the district. A comfortable streetscape will also be built at a human scale with compact development, interesting facades, accentuated entrances oriented to the sidewalk, and windows at eye level. Also important to a streetscape are green areas, including landscaped yards, public parks, and green strips in between the road and the sidewalk, which soften the landscape and provide a buffer from the automobile and pedestrian traveled way.

Listed below are a summaries of several major elements needed to create a safe and comfortable streetscape for pedestrians and bicyclists in the South Village Core.

Sidewalk and Pedestrian Paths. Sidewalk and pedestrian path design and construction should be in accordance with Vermont Agency of Transportation standards, the *Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning and Design Manual,* and the *Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines* (ADAAGA). All sidewalks should include a green strip or street furnishing zone in between the street and the sidewalk with street trees planted at least every 40 feet. Street tree cultivars should be deciduous, salt resistant, long lived, and shade giving. They should be planted carefully to nurture a long lived, healthy tree by following accepted guidelines, such as in *Planting Sustainable Landscapes—A Guide for Plan Reviewers* by the VT Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. In general, sidewalks and green strips or street furnishing zones proposed for "main" streets (central streets planned for commercial storefronts and a high level of pedestrian traffic) should be wider than those on side streets. The diagram below shows typical widths of sidewalks and green strips that could be applied in the South Village Core.



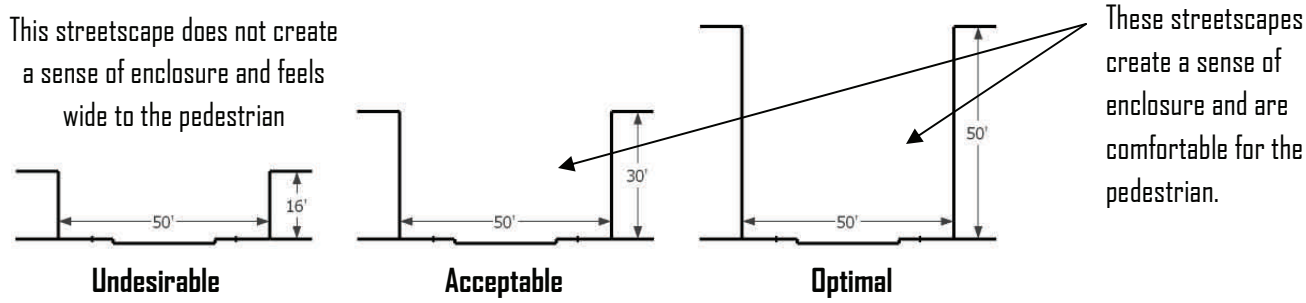
ROW width varies from approximately 50 to 100 feet.

On-Street Parking. On-street parking should be incorporated into the parking plan for the South Village Core in the future. On street parking provides additional convenient spaces, buffers the sidewalk from traffic, and can decrease the amount of surface parking lots needed. On-street parking along the state routes of 7 and 104A may not become a reality unless the Town applies for Class 1 designation of these road segments within the District. On-street parking is possible; however, on Ballard Road and future side streets.

Traffic Calming and Bike Lanes. Streets within the South Village Core should be designed so that pedestrians can safely cross them and so that bicycles can safely navigate them. Traffic calming improvements, such as raised cross walks and speed limits, and bike lanes along the busy streets of Route 7 and 104A are essential to creating a safe streetscape safe for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Building Height and Orientation. The height and orientation of buildings have a large impact on the feel of the streetscape. As noted earlier in the plan, it is desirable for buildings in the South Village Core to be at least 2 stories, be scaled and oriented to pedestrians, and to face the street. A village center streetscape should create a sense of enclosure and human scale - with street widths on the narrower side and building height approaching or equal to street width. Building facades should be parallel to sidewalks with minimal setbacks. At least one public entrance should be facing the street and be accentuated with architectural detailing and a direct pedestrian connection to the sidewalk. Building height to street width relationships are shown in the diagram below.

Building Height to Street Width Ratios



Parking Lot Location. The tradition of locating parking lots in between the building and the street is convenient and efficient for automobiles, but inconvenient and unsafe for pedestrians and detrimental to creating a human scaled streetscape, Parking lots in the South Village Core should be located to the side or the rear of a buildings front façade that faces the street. Doing so will allow for buildings to be set close to the street with a direct sidewalk connection, creating a sense of enclosure and a more pedestrian accessible environment.

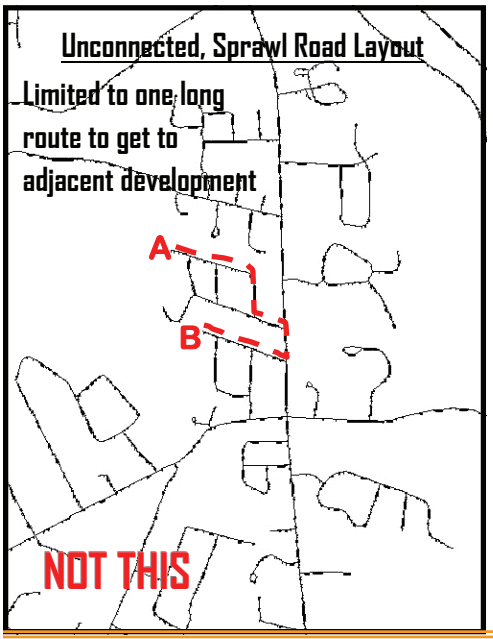
The parking lot for the McDonalds above is located on the side and rear of the building. The restaurant has an accentuated entrance facing the street and oriented to pedestrians. While the building does not have 2 stories, the height of the first floor and the steeply pitched roof add bulk to the building.

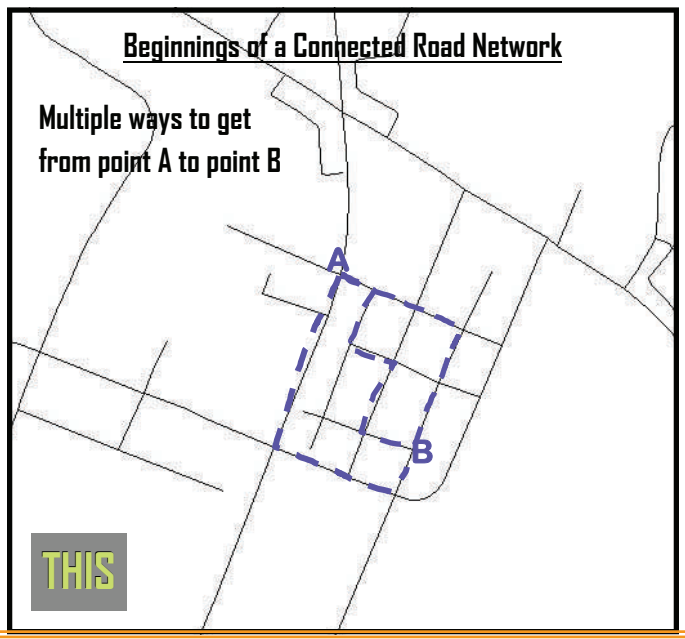
The parking lot for the grocery store above is located on the side of the building. While the nature of the use required the main public entrance to be close to the parking lot on the side, the front façade includes detailing and windows. There are 3 stories where the building faces the street, where height is important. For the rear, the developer preferred one story.

The parking lot for the restaurant shown above is located on the side and in the rear. The building has an accentuated entrance facing the street and a second story. In addition, architectural details such as the cupola and dormers add character.

Building a Public Road Network

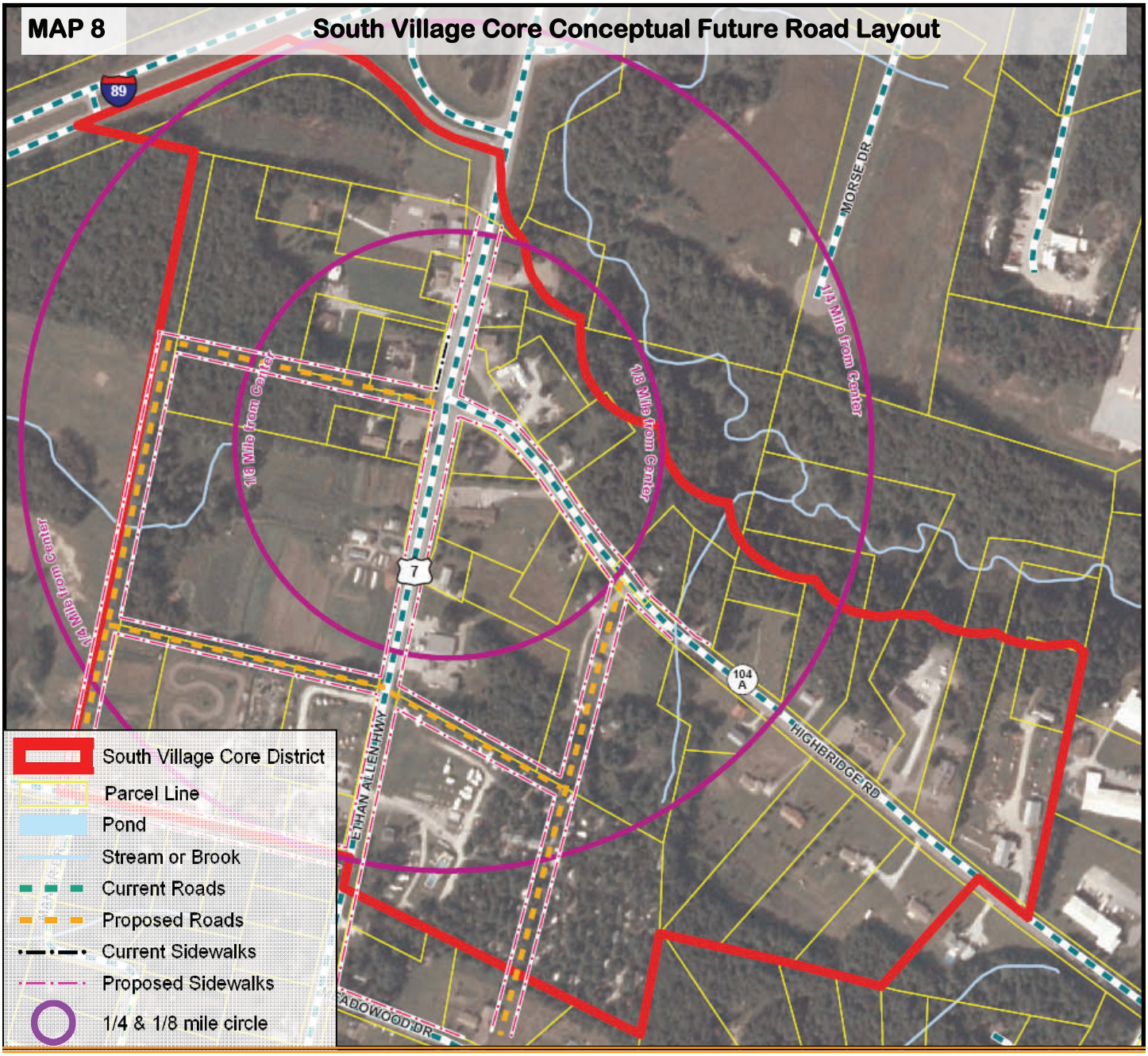
It is important that development in the South Village Core not only happen along the existing roads of Route 7, 104A and Ballard Road, but along new roads. Developing along new roads will allow for a concentration of higher density development in the South Village. Each development must carefully plan the layout of new roads from a district-wide perspective to create a network. If road connectivity is not planned for at early stages, opportunities can be lost to long lasting structures, private lawns, and infrastructure which could have been placed around a planned road.



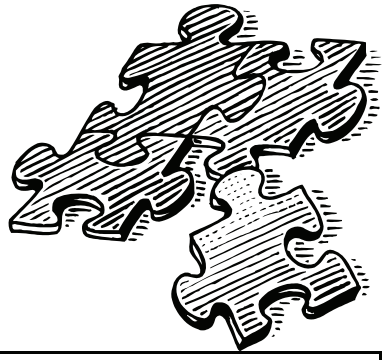


Connectivity increases the efficiency of providing services, increases pedestrian accessibility by creating multiple routes to get from point A to point B, and enhances community interaction by creating interconnected neighborhoods.

The Georgia Planning Commission has designated a conceptual future road layout for the South Village Core Zoning District, as shown in Map 8 below. The map is intended to conceptually propose a layout for a future network of roads. A road network includes roads that provide connection to other roads at each end, allowing for multiple ways to travel through the District. Dead ends are only included as part of a road network when connection at one of the ends is not possible. It should be stressed that Map 8 is conceptual and does not show exact locations for new roads. The exact locations of new roads in the South Village Core will be determined as property owners propose development under the purview of the Georgia Zoning Regulations. All subdivisions of land and developments that propose a new road should further the development of a road network. As the South Village is further developed and new roads are built, the number of alternatives for adding to the road network decreases and becomes less flexible. As this happens, an official map that designates exact locations for future roads may become necessary.



Future Considerations and Planning Needs



While this plan documents the extensive planning work completed for the South Village, there is still a lot of work to be done. Achieving the vision of the South Village is not dependent on one thing, but rather dependent on many interrelated projects coming together like puzzle pieces. Listed below is a matrix of future considerations and planning needs for the South Village Core. Each item is needed to achieve the vision of this plan. This list is not all inclusive; as these projects are completed, more projects will be identified as the vision for the South Village grows and evolves with time.

A Matrix of Future Planning Needs for the Georgia South Village		
Need	**Description of Problem**	**Proposed Actions**
1) Zoning and Subdivision Regulation Amendments	Amendments to the zoning regulations are needed that regulate development in the South Village Core in conformance with the goals of this Plan. Such amendments should include a new zoning district for the area with appropriate dimensional standards and site plan review standards to achieve a density and character similar to a historic Vermont village center.	The Planning Commission has proposed revisions to the Georgia Zoning Regulations. The Planning Commission should continue to work with the Selectboard on refining the revisions and gaining public support for them. Once they are adopted the Planning Commission should monitor their success and make changes as needed.
2) Public Support and Investment	In order for this plan to succeed, the voters and property owners of Georgia not only need to agree with this Plan, but need to believe in it just as the Planning Commissioners do. The Plan needs to be a plan of and for the townspeople.	Provide public notice for all planning efforts related to the South Village and seek public participation and input as much as possible.
3) Wastewater Treatment and Water Supply	Currently all wastewater treatment and water supply is managed individually on-site. Continuing to do so will impede progress towards achieving the vision of the South Village. For example, it will limit the potential density that could be achieved in the South Village Core District, including limiting the potential for locating many mixed uses on one site. In addition, site layout will be affected based on where good septic soils are located on an individual site.	Implement the recommendations of the Sewer Feasibility Assessment for the South Village completed by Stone Environmental. The recommendations include pursuing a contract with PBM Nutritionals for use of their sewer system, using good septic soils in the southeast area of the Village for one or more large community septic systems, or a combination of both. In the mean time, treating wastewater on an individual basis should be prohibited in favor of treating multiple uses, establishments, or residences with one system where feasible. The study also includes recommendations for pursuing public water supply.
4) Official Map	An official map identifies the locations of planned public improvements (e.g., school sites or road rights-of-way) to allow the municipality the opportunity to acquire land prior to development through dedication or purchase, and for consideration in the review of new development.	The Planning Commission should evaluate the need for an official map periodically.

A Matrix of Future Planning Needs for the Georgia South Village (Continued)		
Need	**Description of Problem**	**Proposed Actions**
5) Streetscape Improvements (including sidewalks)	Currently, the South Village Core District includes one short stretch of sidewalk in front of People's Trust Bank, no bike lanes, and no crosswalks. There are two more short stretches of sidewalk that are either in the permitting process or permitted, but not yet constructed. The existing sidewalk stretch in front of People's Trust includes a greenstrip, but there are no street trees planted in the greenstrip. More sidewalks, greenstrips with street trees, bike lanes, and safe crossing locations are needed to make the District more pedestrian friendly.	Complete a sidewalk and/or streetscape improvement feasibility study for the District. Such a study will include a survey of the Route 7, Route 104A, and Ballard Road rights-of-way, identify the location of utilities and existing drainage ditches/stormwater infrastructure in the ROW, propose an optimal location for sidewalks, greenstrips, street trees, crosswalks, medians, and other streetscape improvements that would make the South Village safe and attractive for pedestrians, and propose a preliminary cost estimate per linear foot of sidewalk and other recommended improvements. In the mean time, developers should be required to construct sidewalks with greenstrips and street trees along the road fronting the proposed development as part of any permit application.
6) Design Review	As presented in this Plan, creating the desired character in the South Village Core is dependent in part by the architectural design of buildings. Design review can be achieved by incorporating design guidelines or standards within zoning regulations and other ordinances, requiring design review by an advisory committee during the development review process, or a combination of both. There is currently minimal architectural design review incorporated into the draft zoning regulations.	The Planning Commission should consider periodically if a stronger design review process is appropriate for the South Village Core.
7) A Village Green	Historically, Vermont village centers have a central green as a focal point. A green creates an excellent focal point because of its ability to serve many different community needs, including casual gatherings and meeting places, outdoor community markets, individual recreation, community events, etc. Currently, the South Village does not have a location for a central green.	The Planning Commission should look for village green opportunities during development review and the Selectboard should pursue opportunities for land purchase or lease as appropriate lots become available. The Planning Commission should encourage project design to work around good locations for a village green and encourage dedication/lease/or sale to the Town.

References:

1) Commercial and Mixed Use Development Code Handbook. Oregon Transportation and Growth Management Program.

2) Fluvial Erosion Hazard Mapping and Phase 2 Assessment Report. Northwest Regional Planning Commission and Ross Environmental Associates for VT Emergency Management. February, 2008.

3) Georgia Village Plan, A Vision for the Future. Lamoureux and Dickenson Consulting Engineers, Inc. April, 2003.

4) Georgia South Village Economic Feasibility Study and Master Plan. Crane Associates, LLC. 2006

5) McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.

6) Town of Georgia Sewer Feasibility Assessments for the Historic Village and the Town Center. Stone Environmental Inc. May 25, 2005.

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