TOWN AND VILLAGE OF CHAMPLAIN
SMART GROWTH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
Community Profile (Task 9)
Chapter 3: Existing & Future Land Use
July 2025

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Chapter 3: Existing and Future Land Use

***Please note:** Yellow Highlighting is used throughout this chapter to "call out" statistics of note to the comprehensive planning process and readers.*

3.1 Existing Land Use

The New York State Real Property Tax Classification system identifies how land is used in the town. Every parcel of land is assigned a land use code. The table below describes existing land uses by acres and percentage of land area. Following the table is a map depicting existing land use.

Town-wide the predominant land uses are agriculture, residential, and vacant land. This is also the case in the Village of Champlain and Rouses Point. In the Village of Champlain, residential and commercial land uses are also significant. Rouses Point, however, has more distributed land uses with commercial and public services dominating.

Figure 1 - Photo courtesy of the Town/Village of Champlain

Existing Land Use, Town of Champlain Including Villages of Champlain and Rouses Point (2024)			Existing Land Use, Village of Champlain (2024)		Existing Land Use, Village of Rouses Point (2024)	
(Retrieved 2024 Town of Champlain & Clinton County Real Property Department)			(Retrieved 2024 Village of Champlain & Clinton County Real Property Department)		(Retrieved 2024 Village of Champlain & Clinton County Real Property Department)	
Land Use Category	Approx. Acreage	Percent of Total	Approx. Acreage	Percent of Total	Approx. Acreage	Percent of Total
Agriculture	11,300.10	37.04%	36.80	5.36%	30.40	4.22%
Vacant, former Agriculture	2,549.49	8.36%	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00%
Residential	7,813.17	25.61%	107.24	15.61%	57.45	7.98%
Commercial	802.62	2.63%	129.41	18.84%	76.32	10.60%
Recreation and Entertainment	366.61	1.20%	5.30	0.77%	25.70	3.57%
Community Services	330.93	1.08%	54.43	7.92%	25.10	3.49%
Industrial	82.90	0.27%	0.00	0.00%	51.50	7.16%
Public Services	335.50	1.10%	19.90	2.90%	59.12	8.21%
Wild, Forested and Conservation (includes public & private lands)	826.02	2.71%	0.00	0.00%	2.70	0.38%
Vacant	6,101.85	20.00%	333.81	48.60%	391.39	54.38%
Right of Ways etc.	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00%
Total Land (inc. Villages)	30,509.19	100.00%	686.89	100.00%	719.68	100.00%
Total Water	0.00		0.00		0.00	

Table 1 - Existing Land Use

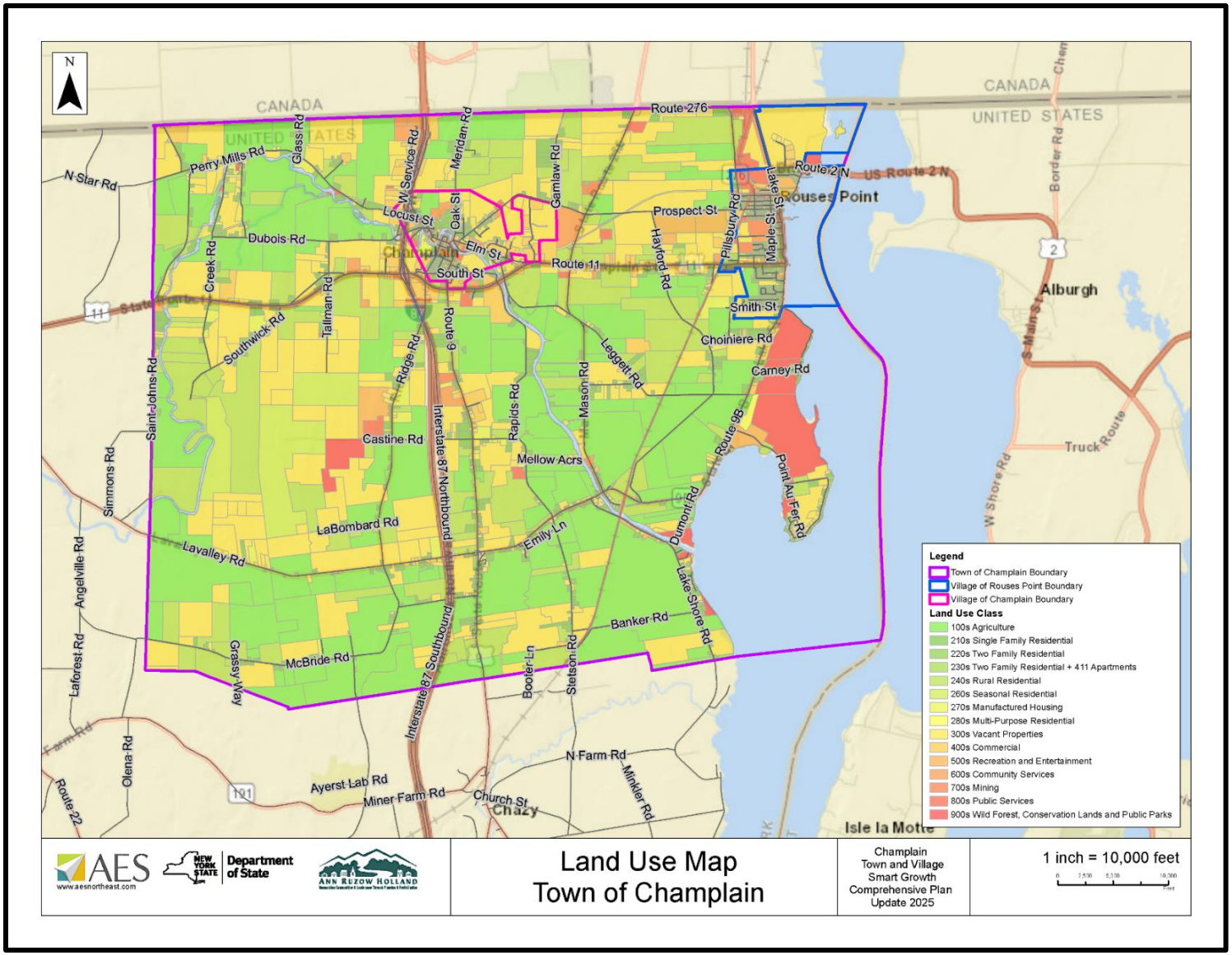

Figure 2 - Land Use Map, Town of Champlain

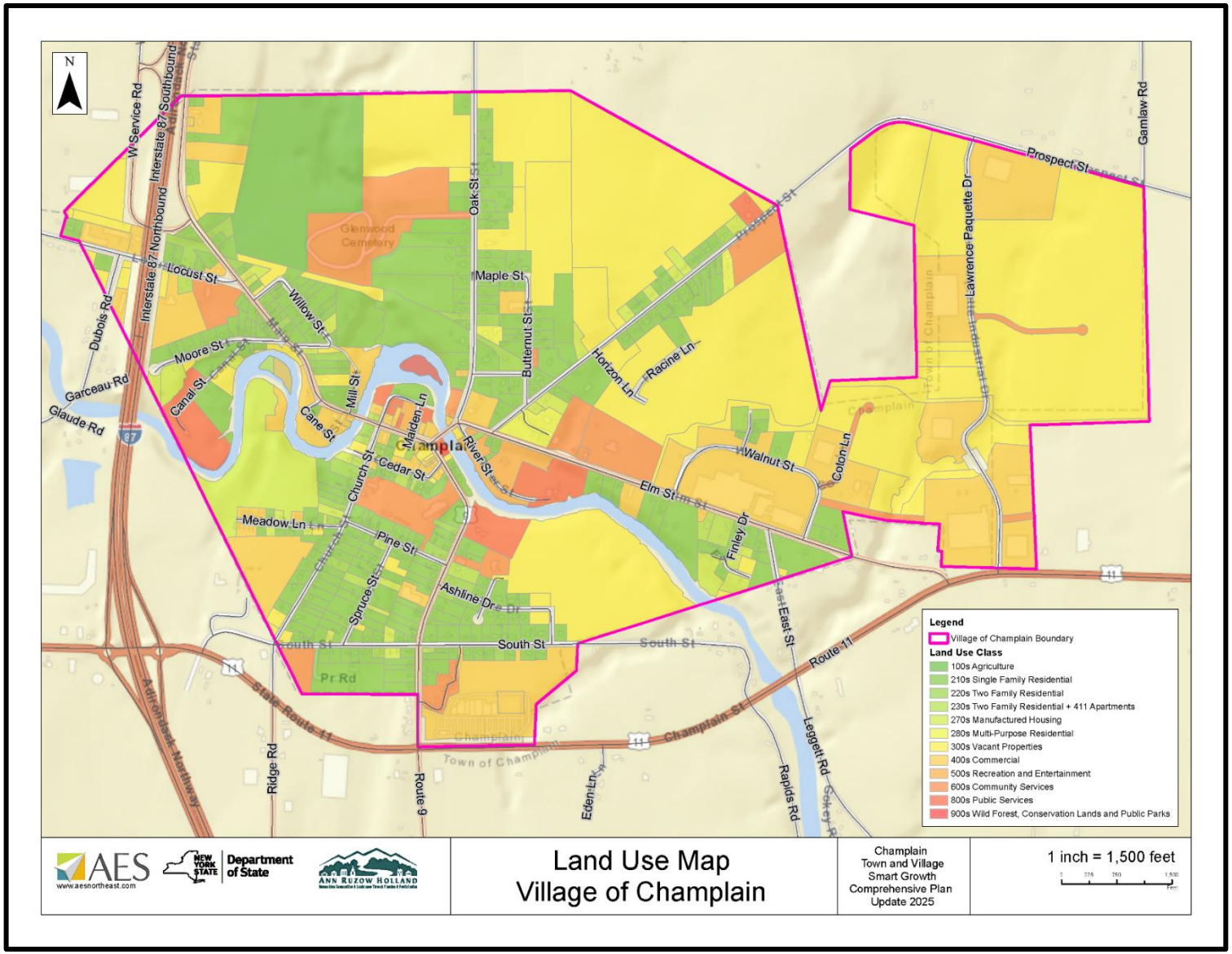

Figure 3 - Land Use Map, Village of Champlain

A town-wide and village-centered analysis of land use change and fragmentation was conducted. Change in the amount of land used for various purposes has been generally unremarkable. There doesn't appear to be much fractionalization of land occurring Townwide or in either Village. Townwide, the number of agricultural, vacant, and industrial parcels have slightly decreased, conservation parcels have slightly increased, while residential, commercial, and public service parcels have remained relatively stable.

Figure 4 - Photo courtesy of the Town/Village of Champlain

Land Use Changes Over Time 2018 - 2023 Town of Champlain Including Villages of Champlain and Rouses Point (Retrieved 2024 from Clinton County Real Property)								
Year	Prop. Class and Land Use	Agricultural and Vacant Lands	Residential & Apartments	Commercial & Recreational	Community & Public Services	Industrial	Wild, Forested, Conservation	Grand Total
2023	Total Acres	19,883.92	7,855.80	1,138.15	666.43	82.9	826.02	30,453.22
	% Total of Acres	65.29%	25.80%	3.74%	2.19%	0.27%	2.71%	100.00%
	Number of Parcels	704.00	2,209.00	227.00	109.00	4.00	15.00	3,268.00
2022	Total Acres	20,148.62	7,621.30	1,138.31	653.21	82.9	815.69	30,460.03
	% Total of Acres	66.15%	25.02%	3.74%	2.14%	0.27%	2.68%	100.00%
	Number of Parcels	721.00	2,200.00	226.00	108.00	4.00	14.00	3,273.00
2021	Total Acres	20,353.01	7,265.00	1,138.32	645.91	35.61	815.69	30,253.54
	% Total of Acres	67.27%	24.01%	3.76%	2.13%	0.12%	2.70%	100.00%
	Number of Parcels	711.00	2,205.00	229.00	109.00	4.00	14.00	3,272.00
2018	Total Acres	20,494.35	7,230.73	1,049.22	592.83	109.97	698.09	30,175.19
	% Total of Acres	67.92%	23.96%	3.48%	1.96%	0.36%	2.31%	100.00%
	Number of Parcels	722.00	2,203.00	216.00	102.00	7.00	13.00	3,263.00

Table 2 - Land Use Changes Over Time, Town of Champlain

Land Use Changes Over Time 2018 - 2023 Village of Champlain (Retrieved 2024 from Clinton County Real Property)								
Year	**Prop. Class and Land Use**	Agricultural and Vacant Lands	Residential & Apartments	Commercial & Recreational	Community & Public Services	Mining	Wild, Forested, Conservation	Grand Total
2023	Total Acres	370.61	108.44	133.51	74.33	0	0.00	686.89
	% Total of Acres	53.95%	15.79%	19.44%	10.82%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
	Number of Parcels	61.00	385.00	52.00	29.00	0.00	1.00	528.00
2022	Total Acres	370.61	108.44	133.67	74.33	0	0.00	687.05
	% Total of Acres	53.94%	15.78%	19.46%	10.82%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
	Number of Parcels	60.00	386.00	52.00	29.00	0.00	1.00	528.00
2021	Total Acres	379.61	108.44	133.67	67.03	0	0.00	688.75
	% Total of Acres	55.12%	15.74%	19.41%	9.73%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
	Number of Parcels	59.00	387.00	52.00	33.00	0.00	1.00	532.00
2018	Total Acres	376.11	125.34	130.47	56.43	0	0.00	688.35
	% Total of Acres	54.64%	18.21%	18.95%	8.20%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
	Number of Parcels	58.00	392.00	51.00	28.00	0.00	1.00	530.00

Table 3 - Land Use Changes Over Time, Village of Champlain

Land Use Changes Over Time 2018 - 2023 Village of Rouses Point (Retrieved 2024 from Clinton County Real Property)								
Year	Prop. Class and Land Use	Agricultural and Vacant Lands	Residential & Apartments	Commercial & Recreational	Community & Public Services	Industrial	Wild, Forested, Conservation	Grand Total
2023	Total Acres	421.79	83.33	76.14	84.22	51.5	2.70	719.68
	% Total of Acres	58.61%	11.58%	10.58%	11.70%	7.16%	0.38%	100.00%
	Number of Parcels	79.00	756.00	76.00	33.00	2.00	3.00	949.00
2022	Total Acres	425.59	83.33	76.14	84.22	51.5	2.70	723.48
	% Total of Acres	58.83%	11.52%	10.52%	11.64%	7.12%	0.37%	100.00%
	Number of Parcels	79.00	756.00	67.00	33.00	2.00	3.00	940.00
2021	Total Acres	424.18	82.33	77.45	84.22	51.11	2.70	721.99
	% Total of Acres	58.75%	11.40%	10.73%	11.66%	7.08%	0.37%	100.00%
	Number of Parcels	84.00	754.00	68.00	33.00	2.00	3.00	944.00
2018	Total Acres	399.93	80.55	76.46	36.12	78.57	2.70	674.33
	% Total of Acres	59.31%	11.95%	11.34%	5.36%	11.65%	0.40%	100.00%
	Number of Parcels	85.00	754.00	64.00	23.00	5.00	3.00	934.00

Table 4 - Land Use Changes Over Time, Village of Rouses Point

Subdivided Land Use Change: Parcel Trends 2018 - 2023 Town of Champlain Including Villages of Champlain and Rouses Point (Retrieved 2024 from Clinton County Real Property)			Subdivided Land Use Change: Parcel Trends 2018 - 2023 Village of Champlain (Retrieved 2024 from Clinton County Real Property)	Subdivided Land Use Change: Parcel Trends 2018 - 2023 Village of Rouses Point (Retrieved 2024 from Clinton County Real Property)
Year	**Prop. Class and Land Use**	**Grand Total**	**Grand Total**	**Grand Total**
2023	Total Acres	30,453.22	686.89	719.68
	Number of Parcels	3,268.00	528.00	949.00
2022	Total Acres	30,460.03	687.05	723.48
	Number of Parcels	3,273.00	528.00	940.00
2021	Total Acres	30,253.54	688.75	721.99
	Number of Parcels	3,272.00	532.00	944.00
2018	Total Acres	30,175.19	688.35	674.33
	Number of Parcels	3,263.00	530.00	934.00

Table 5 - Subdivided Land Use Change: Parcel Trends

3.2 Private Land

Figure 5 - Photo Courtesy of the Town/Village of Champlain

3.2.1 Agricultural Land

Private land comprises a predominant portion of the Town and Village of Champlain land area. Over 34,000 acres of land in private ownership represent more than 96% of Champlain's land. The dominant private land use is agricultural in nature with more than 22,000 acres of classified by NYS Real Property Tax Department as agricultural or agricultural vacant lands. In the Village, land area approximates 686 acres, and the predominant private land use is still agricultural or agricultural vacant lands at 54% of total land area.

Situated in the fertile Champlain Valley, the Town of Champlain boasts a rich agricultural heritage. The area supports diverse farming operations, including dairy farms, crop production, and livestock. The town's proximity to the Canadian border and access to major transportation routes enhance its agricultural viability.

Clinton County, New York, administers Agricultural District 07C, encompassing various municipalities, including the Town of Champlain and the Villages of Champlain and Rouses Point This district is part of New York State's Agricultural Districts Program, designed to protect and promote the availability of land for farming purposes. Landowners can apply to include their land in the district during the annual enrollment period, typically held in October. Enrollment offers protections against overly restrictive local laws, nuisance lawsuits, and certain public infrastructure projects that could negatively impact farming operations. It also provides eligibility for agricultural assessments, which can reduce property taxes by assessing land based on its agricultural value rather than market value. Being part of an agricultural district does not restrict landowners from developing their land for non-agricultural purposes. They retain the right to build structures or convert land to residential or commercial uses, subject to standard zoning regulations. For detailed maps and information on Agricultural District 07C, including parcel data and district boundaries, interested parties can refer to the Clinton County Planning Department's resources.

Private agricultural, vacant, and forested lands also represent significant natural resources, especially in these times of rapid climate change. Champlain is fortunate to possess prime farmland as well as "Soils of Statewide Importance" (see Chapter 2 Soils) that may contribute to food production as other areas of the country experience drought, fire, and flooding.

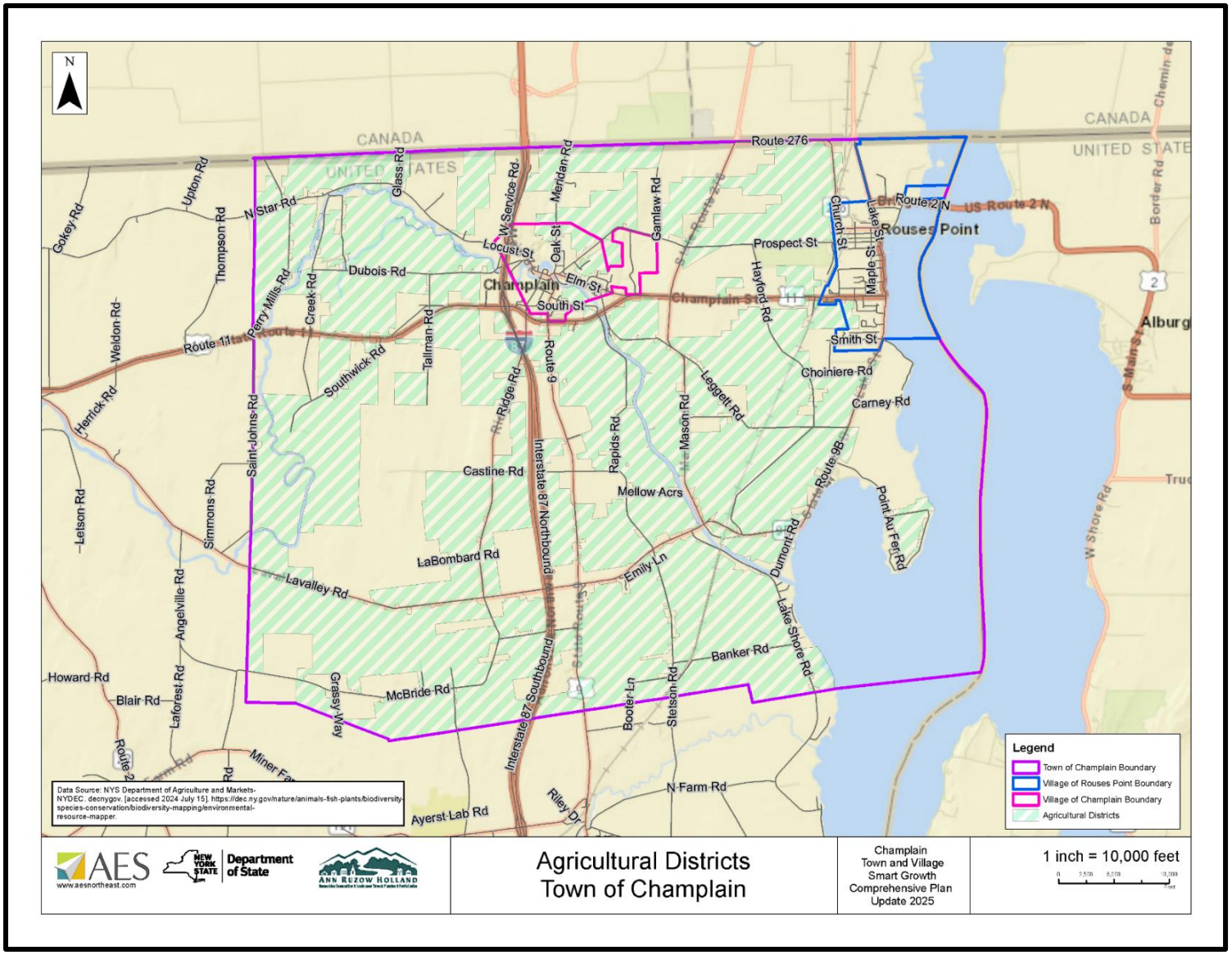

Figure 6 - Agricultural Districts, Town of Champlain

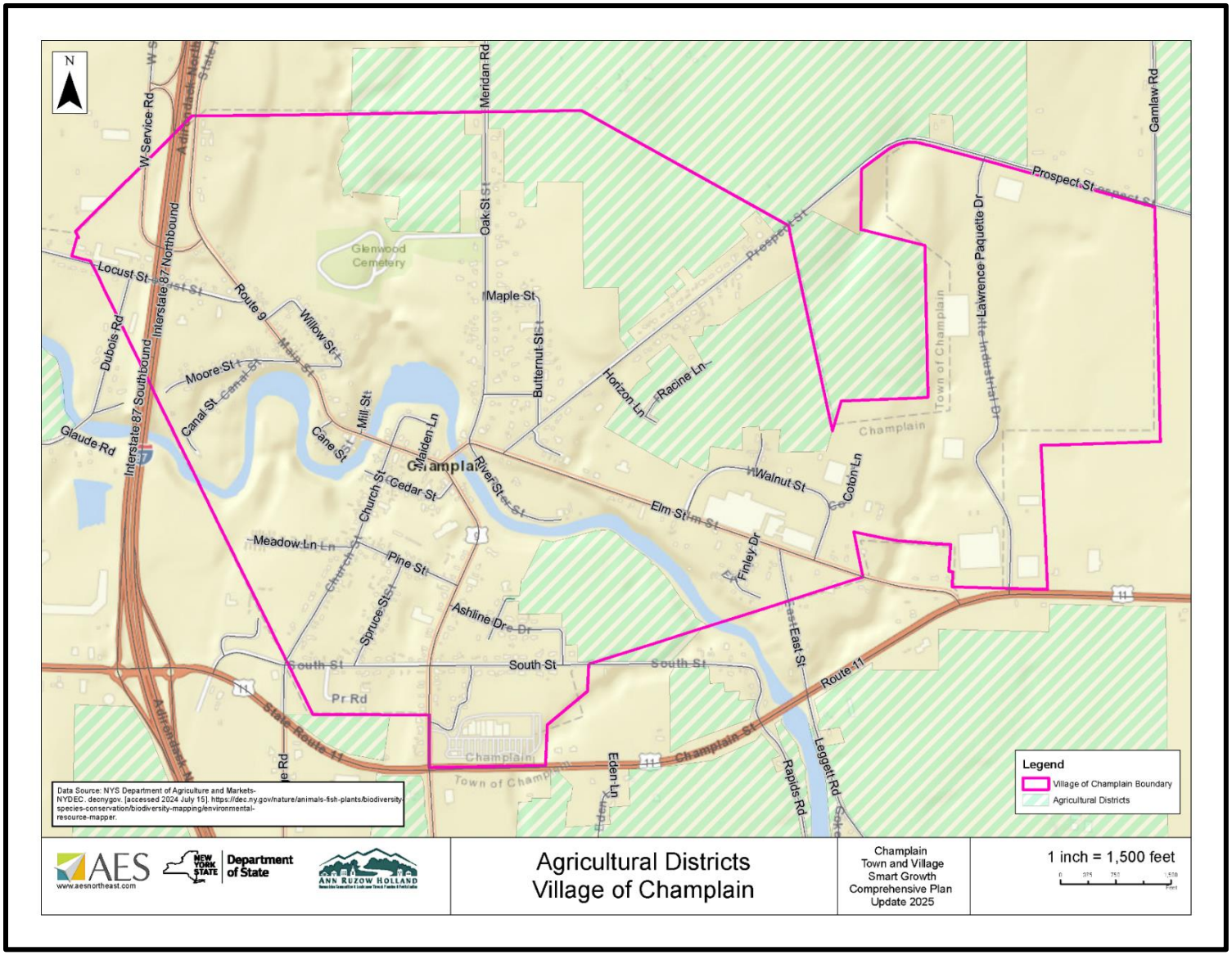

Figure 7 - Agricultural Districts, Village of Champlain

3.2.2 Residential Private Land

An analysis of housing-related uses on private land was conducted and the results are presented in the following table. Most of the town and villages' housing stock is in single-family use and residential uses account for a significant portion of the tax base.

Taxable Residential Property by Density Town of Champlain Including Villages of Champlain and Rouses Point (Retrieved 2024 Clinton County Real Property)					
Use	**Acres**	**%**	**Taxable**	**%**	**Assessed Value Per Acre**
Single family	1387.71	4.96%	$343,449,300	60.77%	$247,494
Two family	14.53	0.05%	$14,455,300	2.56%	$994,859
Three family	4.7	0.02%	$4,466,300	0.79%	$950,277
Rural res w/10+ acres	5023.83	17.96%	$27,323,700	4.83%	$5,439
Seasonal residences	1034.27	3.70%	$9,570,300	1.69%	$9,253
Mobile homes	285.5	1.02%	$9,870,600	1.75%	$34,573
Multiple mobile homes	13.53	0.05%	$811,100	0.14%	$59,948
Res multi-purpose/ multi-residence	44.7	0.16%	$3,609,000	0.64%	$80,738
Total residential	7,808.77	27.91%	413,555,600.00	73%	$52,960.40
Total Taxable All Uses	27,976.03	100.00%	$565,165,651	100.00%	$20,202

Taxable Residential Property by Density
(Retrieved 2024 Clinton County Real Property)

Town of Champlain Including Villages of Champlain and Rouses Point			Village of Champlain			Village of Rouses Point		
Use	Taxable	%	Taxable	%		Taxable	%	
Single family	$343,449,300	61%	$48,842,300	61%		$126,485,800	76%	
Two family	$14,455,300	3%	$3,601,300	5%		$8,077,800	5%	
Three family	$4,466,300	1%	$935,000	1%		$2,843,600	2%	
Rural res w/10+ acres	$27,323,700	5%	$0	0%		$200,000	0%	
Seasonal residences	$9,570,300	2%	$0	0%		$0	0%	
Mobile homes	$9,870,600	2%	$1,917,200	2%		$1,005,500	1%	
Multiple mobile homes	$811,100	0%	$60,000	0%		$158,600	0%	
Res multi-purpose/ multi-residence	$3,609,000	1%	$772,400	1%		$1,091,800	1%	
Total residential	$413,555,600	73%	$130,218,100	70%		$139,863,100	84%	
Total Taxable All Uses	$565,165,651	100%	$79,963,100	100%		$165,912,700	100%	

Table 6 - Taxable Residential Property by Density

3.3 Public and Conserved Lands

Information on public and conserved lands was collected from several sources. Very little of Champlain's land mass (3.5%) is conserved through public ownership, real property forest tax classifications, or conservation easements. Only one Unit Management Plan for Kings Bay Wildlife Management Area, produced by NYS DEC impacts lands located within the Town of Champlain. Almost 700 acres of Champlain land is shown by NYS Real Property Tax Department to be held in conservation easements by NYS DEC, but detailed information about these lands is not publicly available.

Municipally-Owned land includes parks, vacant properties, infrastructure services and facilities, and other uses. Chapter 4 of the Community Profile provides further information regarding the uses and purposes of municipally-owned lands.

Publicly Owned and Conservation Easement Lands (Retrieved 2024 NYS DEC and Clinton County Real Property)		
Land Classification	**Acres**	**% of Total Acreage of Town**
New York State Forested and Reforested Lands (931, 932, 941, 961)	13.03	0.04%
Other New York State Lands (NYS DOCS) Total State-Owned Lands	692.79	2.27%
NYS DEC Conservation Easements	0	0.00%
Town Owned	175.09	0.57%
Village of Champlain Owned Land	32.66	0.11%
Village of Rouses Point Owned Land	70.66	0.23%
Public School Owned Land	87.1	0.29%
All Other Lands (Private, etc.)	29,437.86	96.49%
Total Lands	**30,509.19**	**100.00%**

Table 7 - Publicly Owned & Conservation Easement Lands

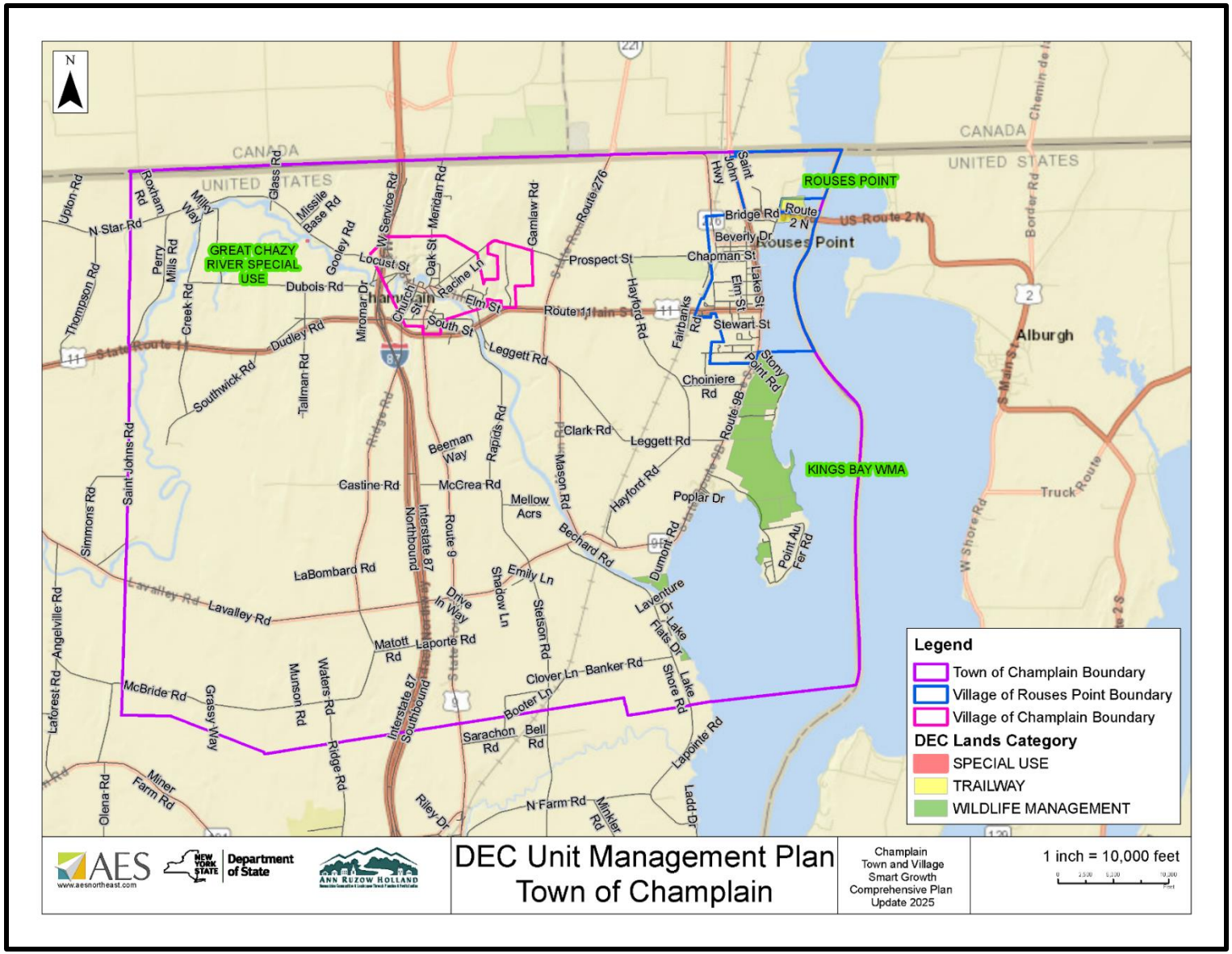

Figure 8 - DEC Unit Management Plan, Town of Champlain

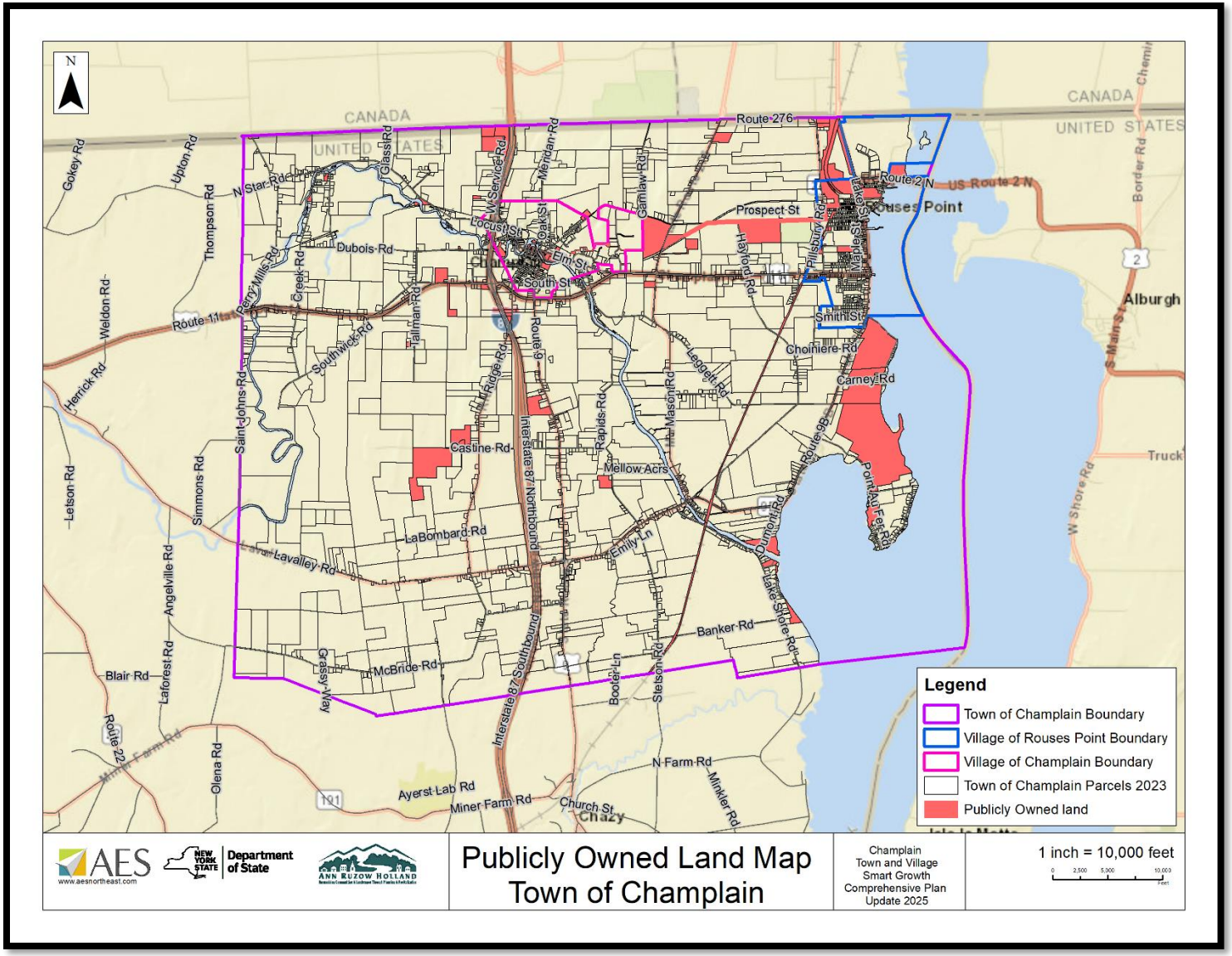

Figure 9 - Publicly Owned Land Map, Town of Champlain

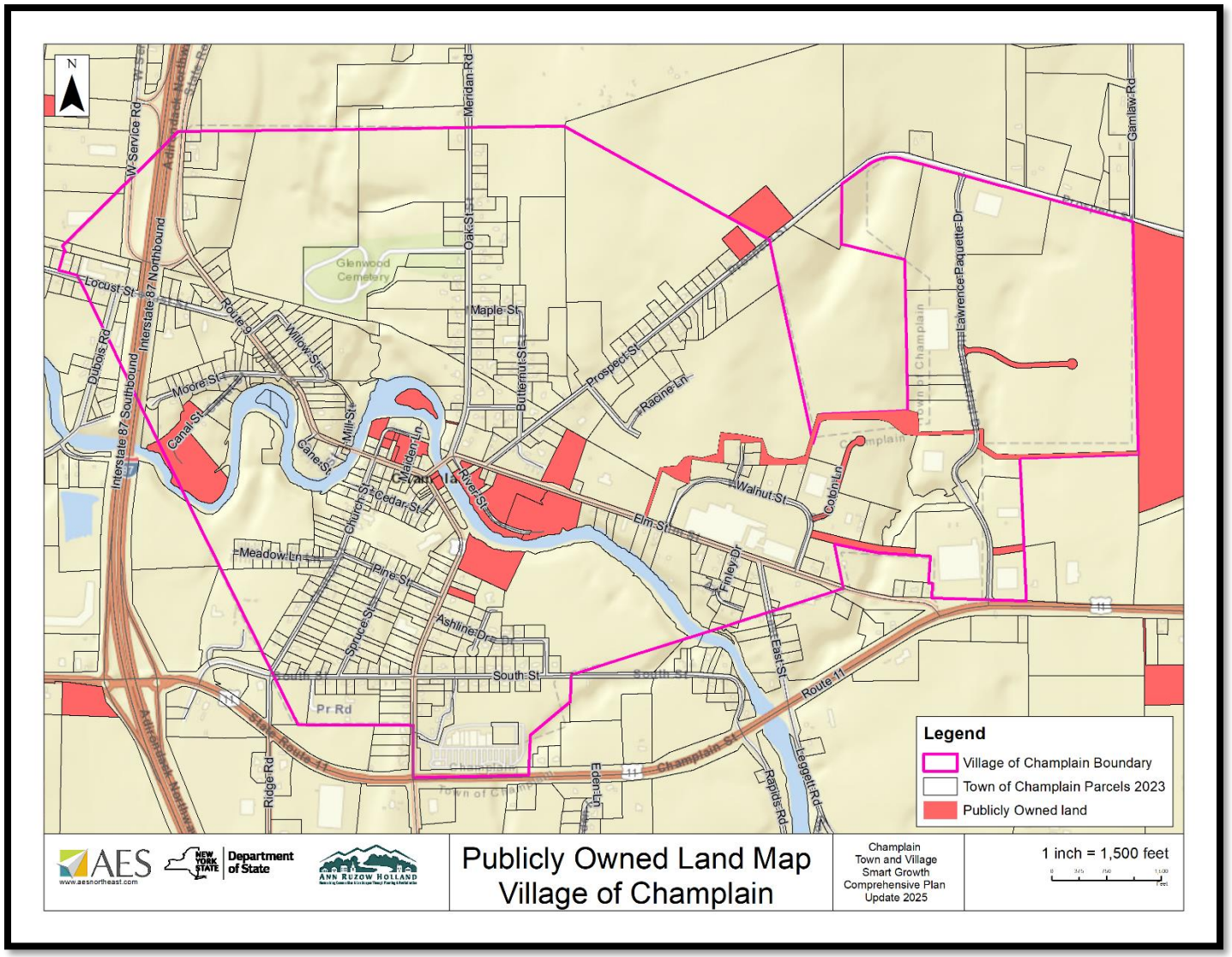

Figure 10 - Publicly Owned Land Map, Village of Champlain

3.4 Environmental Issues

3.4.1 Overview

Champlain faces several environmental risks due to its proximity to Lake Champlain and its position within the lake's watershed. Addressing these environmental risks requires a combination of infrastructure improvements, effective land-use planning, and regional cooperation to enhance resilience and protect the Town of Champlain's natural resources.

Flooding and Climate Change: Portions of lowland Champlain is increasingly susceptible to flooding over the next 30 years. Climate change has led to more frequent and intense rainstorms in the Lake Champlain Basin, resulting in increased erosion and nutrient runoff into the lake. These changes not only threaten property and infrastructure but also exacerbate water quality issues in the region. The 2011 Lake Champlain and Richelieu River floods serve as a reminder of the region's vulnerability to extreme weather events. During this period, Lake Champlain remained at flood stage for 67 days, causing significant damage to homes and infrastructure in the area.

Water Quality Degradation: Lake Champlain's water quality is compromised by excess nutrients, particularly phosphorus and nitrogen, originating from agricultural runoff, urban stormwater, and eroded streambanks. These nutrients fuel harmful algal blooms (cyanobacteria), which can produce toxins detrimental to human and animal health, leading to beach closures and impacting recreational activities. Various contaminants, including mercury, PCBs, and road salt chlorides, have been detected in Lake Champlain. While levels are generally low compared to more industrialized areas, these substances pose risks to aquatic life and human health. Mercury levels in sport fish have shown a downward trend since 2018, indicating some progress in addressing this issue.

Invasive Species: The lake is home to several invasive species, such as zebra mussels and sea lampreys, which disrupt the native ecosystem. These species can outcompete native organisms, alter habitats, and affect the lake's biodiversity.

Infrastructure and Wastewater Management: Aging infrastructure in the Town of Champlain presents environmental challenges. For instance, the proposed Sewer District No. 7 Project aims to improve wastewater management along the U.S. Route 11 corridor. While the project is not expected to have significant adverse environmental impacts, it underscores the need for ongoing infrastructure upgrades to protect environmental and public health.

Transportation of Hazardous Materials: The transportation of crude oil by rail through the Adirondack region, including areas near Champlain, raises concerns about potential spills and environmental contamination. Such incidents could have severe impacts on local ecosystems and water quality.

3.4.2 Environmental Risk[1][2][3]

An inventory was conducted of sites that present environmental risk to humans and animals. The series of maps, tables, and cited information represents hazardous materials sites in the Town and Village as documented by the US EPA and NYS DEC.

Very recently, the Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board in NY was selected to receive $1,155,000 from NYS. The grant will be used to conduct 20 environmental site assessments. It will also fund the preparation and maintenance of a site inventory, as well as the development of 20 reuse plans and ten cleanup plans, alongside community engagement activities. Assessment efforts include the Miromar property in the Town of Champlain.

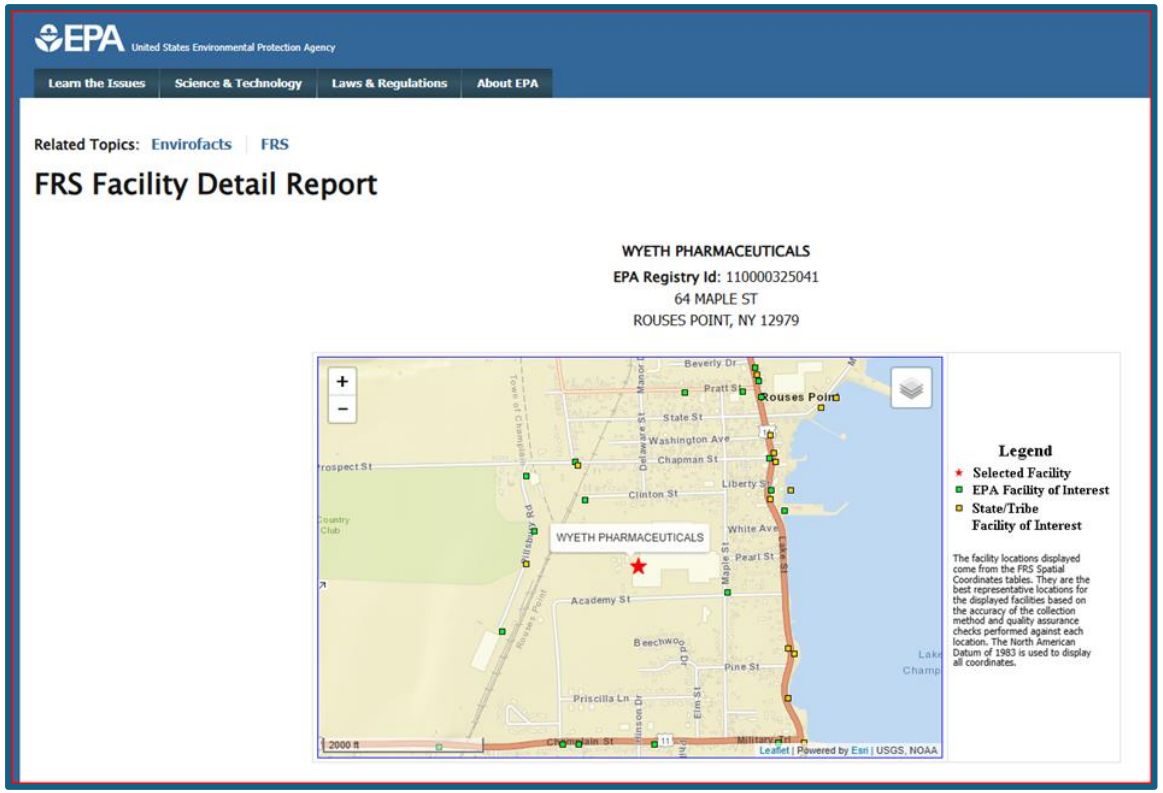

Figure 11 – EPA Environmental Risk Assessment

[1] https://frs-public.epa.gov/ords/frs_public2/fii_query_detail.disp_program_facility?p_registry_id=110000325041

[2] https://data.ny.gov/Energy-Environment/Environmental-Remediation-Sites-Map/jvqh-m7fz

[3] https://data.ny.gov/Energy-Environment/Environmental-Remediation-Sites/c6ci-rzpg/explore/query/SELECT%0A%20%20%60program_number%60%2C%0A%20%20%60program_type%60%2C%0A%20%20%60program_facility_name%60%2C%0A%20%20%60siteclass%60%2C%0A%20%20%60address1%60%2C%0A%20%20%60address2%60%2C%0A%20%20%60locality%60%2C%0A%20%20%60county%60%2C%0A%20%20%60zipcode%60%2C%0A%20%20%60swis_code%60%2C%0A%20%20%60dec_region%60%2C%0A%20%20%60latitude%60%2C%0A%20%20%60longitude%60%2C%0A%20%20%60control_code%60%2C%0A%20%20%60control_type%60%2C%0A%20%20%60ou%60%2C%0A%20%20%60project_name%60%2C%0A%20%20%60project_completion_date%60%2C%0A%20%20%60waste_name%60%2C%0A%20%20%60contaminants%60%2C%0A%20%20%60owner_name%60%2C%0A%20%20%60owner_address1%60%2C%0A%20%20%60owner_address2%60%2C%0A%20%20%60owner_city%60%2C%0A%20%20%60owner_state%60%2C%0A%20%20%60owner_zip%60%2C%0A%20%20%60disposal_name%60%2C%0A%20%20%60disposal_address1%60%2C%0A%20%20%60disposal_address2%60%2C%0A%20%20%60disposal_city%60%2C%0A%20%20%60disposal_zip%60%2C%0A%20%20%60disposal_state%60%2C%0A%20%20%60operator_name%60%2C%0A%20%20%60operator_address1%60%2C%0A%20%20%60operator_address2%60%2C%0A%20%20%60operator_city%60%2C%0A%20%20%60operator_state%60%2C%0A%20%20%60operator_zip%60%2C%0A%20%20%60georeference%60%0AWHERE%20caseless_one_of%28%60zipcode%60%2C%20%2212919%22%29/page/filter

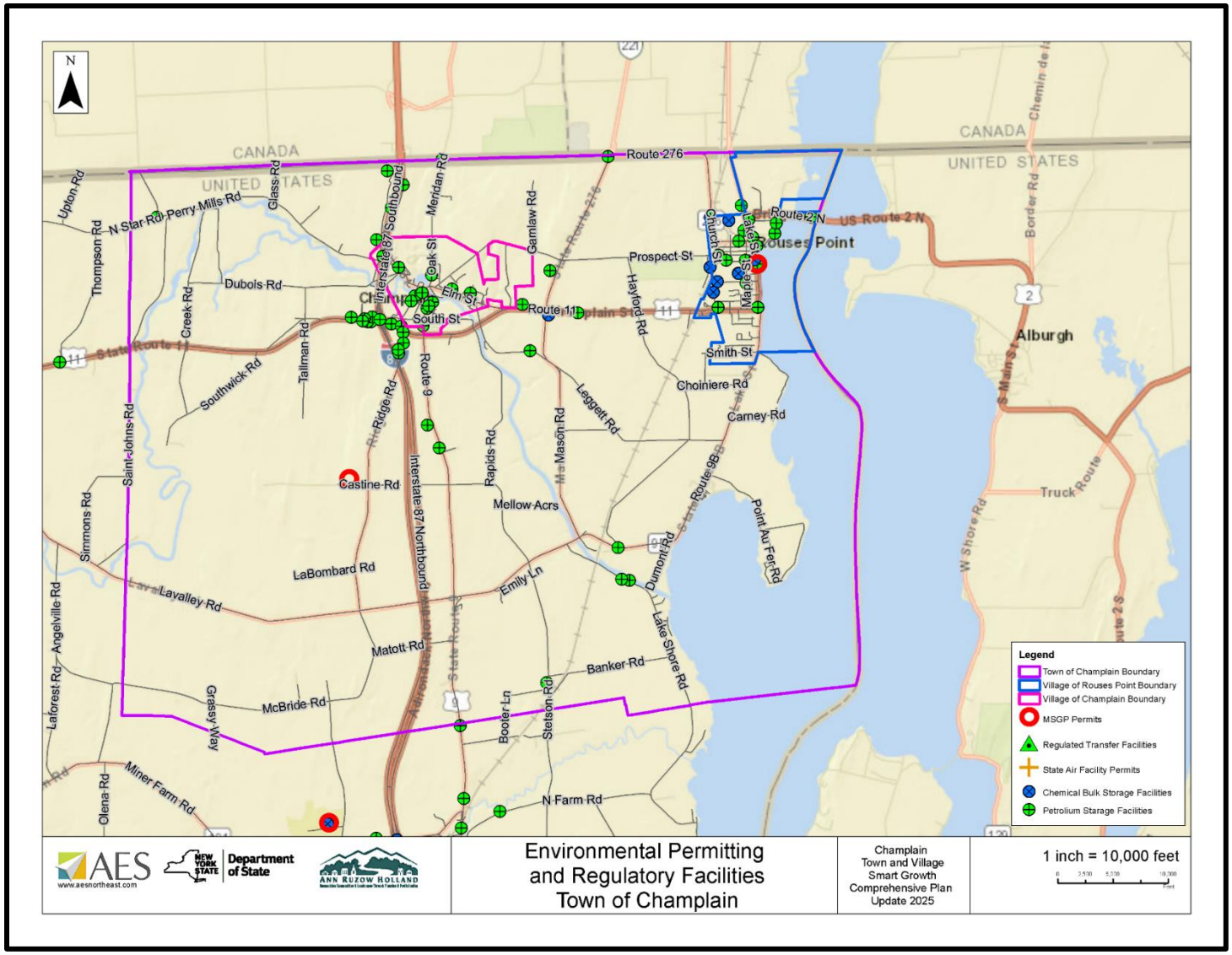

Figure 12 - Environmental Permitting and Regulatory Facilities, Town of Champlain

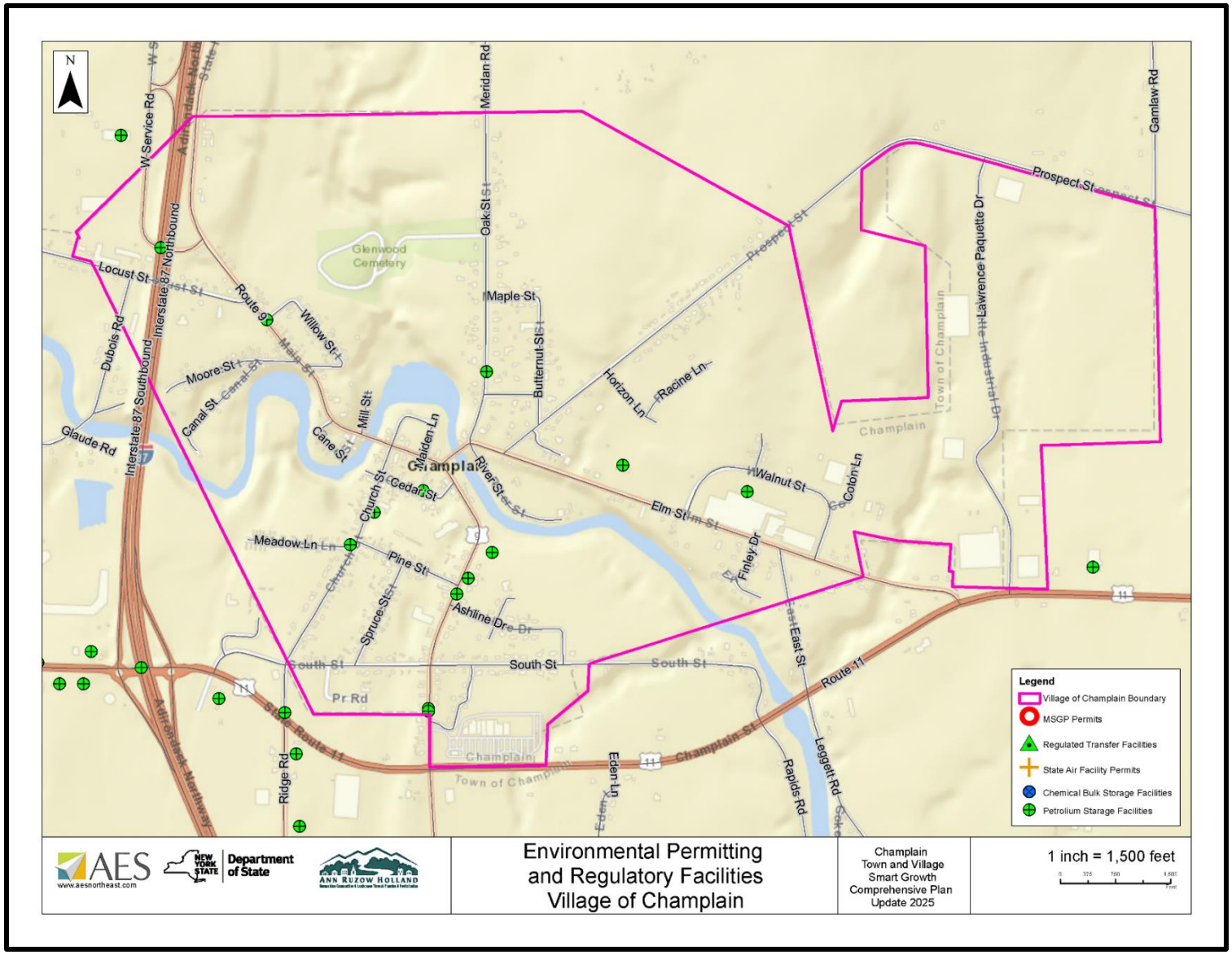

Figure 13 - Environmental Permitting and Regulatory Facilities, Village of Champlain

3.4.3 State Land Master Planning

Unit management plans (UMPs) assess the natural and physical resources present within a unit of state-owned land. They also identify opportunities for public use and recreation that are consistent with the classifications of these lands and consider the ability of the resources and ecosystems to accommodate such use. Recreation management plans (RMPs) are more limited in scope and identify public recreation and access opportunities on private lands where DEC has been granted such rights under an agreement called a Conservation Easement. UMPs and RMPs are written by DEC planners for lands managed by DEC. These lands include Forest Preserve, State Forests, Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), Environmental Education Centers, Campgrounds (Intensive Use Areas) and Conservation Easements (lands on which DEC holds public recreation rights).

The Town and Village of Champlain's public lands include one NYS DEC owned property. However, there is no evidence that a UMP exists for Kings Bay as none is listed as approved or under review by the DEC.[4] It is important for the Town and Village of Champlain to work with NYS DEC Regional Managers to promote and advocate suitable improvements that are practical, appropriate for the type of public land classifications, and improve accessibility for recreational purposes and nature tourism.

The Kings Bay Wildlife Management Area (WMA) provides for wildlife management, wildlife habitat management, and wildlife-dependent recreation. This WMA is 683 acres in size. The land was acquired by the state in the 1960s, primarily for waterfowl habitat enhancement. Formerly an agricultural area where hay, small grains, and firewood were harvested, the Kings Bay Wildlife Management Area is now comprised of hardwood swamp, cattail marsh, and reverted cattle pasture. Because of its agricultural history, the area provided an ideal base to practice wildlife management. Like most of the state's Wildlife Management Areas, Kings Bay WMA is managed by DEC's Division of Fish and Wildlife for wildlife conservation and wildlife-associated recreation (hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing, and photography). Primary recreational activities at Kings Bay are hiking, watchable wildlife, and fishing.

[4] https://dec.ny.gov/nature/forests-trees/dec-land-stewardship/rmp-ump#i

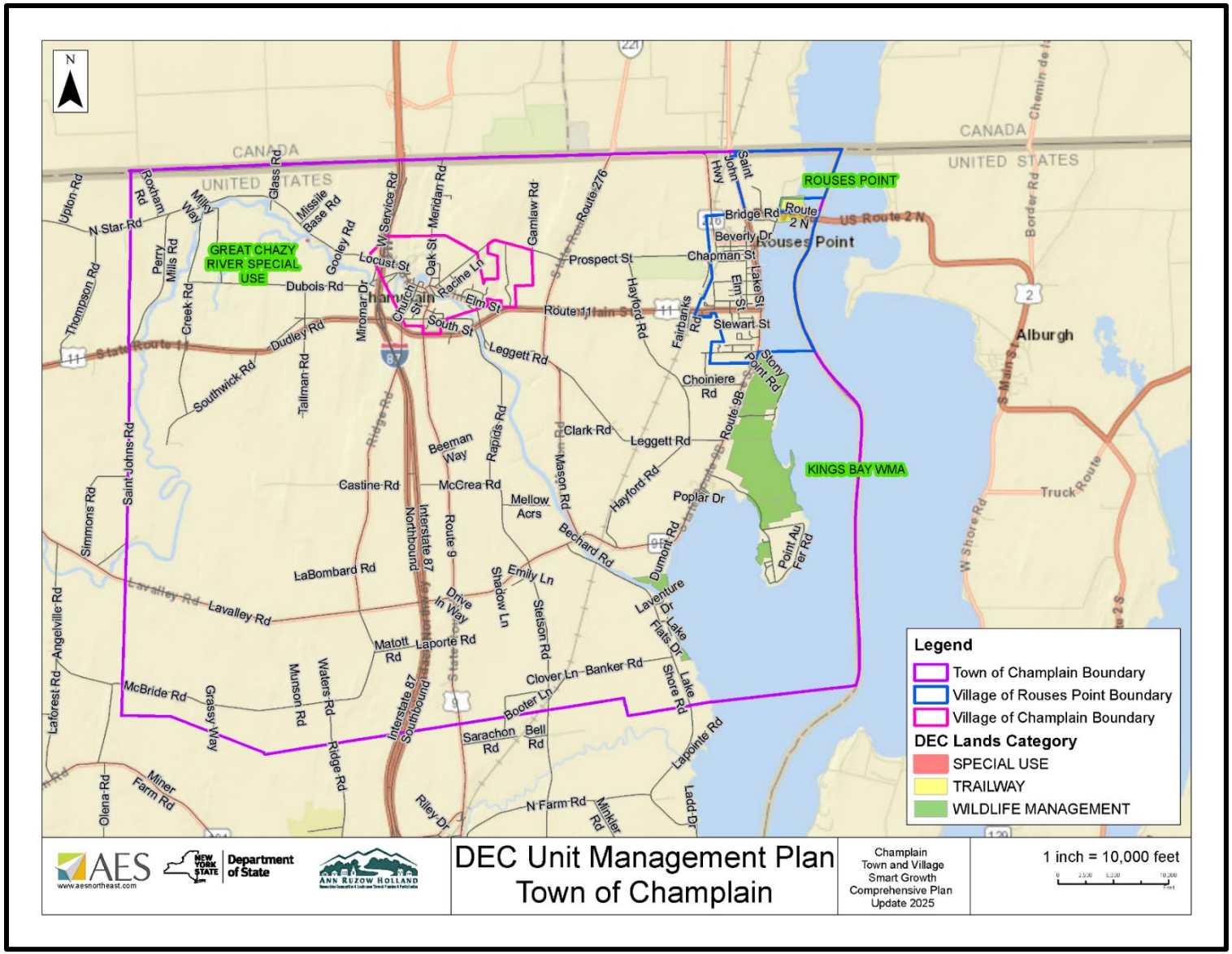

Figure 14 - DEC Unit Management Plan, Town of Champlain

3.4.4. NYS Freshwater Wetland Act Wetland Regulations

The State Legislature passed The Freshwater Wetlands Act (Environmental Conservation Law Article 24) in 1975 with the intent to preserve, protect, and conserve freshwater wetlands and their benefits, consistent with the general welfare and beneficial economic, social, and agricultural development of the state. The Act identifies wetlands on the basis of vegetation because certain types of plants outcompete others when they are in wet soils, and so are good indicators of wet conditions over time. These characteristic plants include wetland trees and shrubs, such as willows and alders; emergent plants such as cattails and sedges; aquatic plants, such as water lily, and bog mat vegetation, such as sphagnum moss. To be protected under the Freshwater Wetlands Act, a wetland must be 12.4 acres (5 hectares or larger). Wetlands smaller than this may be protected if they are considered of unusual local importance. Around every wetland there is an 'adjacent area' of 100 feet that is also regulated to provide protection for the wetland.

Certain activities are exempt from regulation; other activities that could have a negative impact on wetlands are regulated. A permit is required to conduct any regulated activity in a protected wetland or its adjacent area. The permit standards in the regulations require that impacts to wetlands be avoided and minimized. If the proposed activity will not seriously affect the wetland, a permit with various conditions is usually issued. If the proposed activity will affect the wetland, the benefits gained by allowing the action to occur must outweigh the wetland benefits lost, in order for a permit to be issued. Compensatory mitigation is often required for significant impacts to wetlands. This may include creating or restoring wetlands to replace the benefits lost by the proposed project.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) also protects wetlands, irrespective of size, under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Although the ACOE definition of wetland is slightly different than the state definition, the Clean Water Act protects basically the same thing -- areas of water or wet soils that support wetland plants.

Amendments to Article 24

In 2022, New York's Freshwater Wetlands Act (Environmental Conservation Law Article 24) was amended to increase application fees and make several important changes to the way the program will be administered. The current NYS Freshwater Wetlands Maps will no longer limit DEC regulatory jurisdiction to wetlands depicted on those maps. Instead, maps will become informational, and any wetlands that meet the applicable definition and criteria will be regulated by DEC and subject to permitting, regardless of whether they appear on the informational maps. Effective January 1, 2025, Small wetlands of "unusual importance" will be regulated if they meet one of 11 newly established criteria listed in the new legislation. Effective January 1, 2028 - The default size threshold of regulated wetlands **will decrease from 12.4 acres to 7.4 acres**. Small wetlands of "unusual importance" will continue to be regulated if they meet one of the criteria listed in the new legislation. As a result of the statutory changes noted above, DEC will be working to amend DEC's freshwater wetlands regulations and update procedural steps to implement these changes. Future opportunities for reviewing and providing comment on those efforts will be posted on the DEC website when they are available.

Wetland Maps

When enacted in 1975, The Freshwater Wetlands Act required DEC to map all those wetlands regulated by the Act with the exception of the Adirondack Park Region which is mapped by the Adirondack Park Agency (APA). This mapping requirement will be removed in January 2025 when the Amendments to Article 24 take effect.

However, the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) regulates most wetlands in New York State. There are no regulatory maps identifying wetlands regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under the Clean Water Act. Wetlands shown on the DEC maps are usually also regulated by the Corps, but the Corps also regulates additional wetlands not shown on the DEC maps. That is because DEC does not map wetlands smaller than 12.4 acres in size unless they are designated as 'wetlands of unusual local importance' (ULI). The National Wetlands Inventory, prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is a good source of information about where these smaller wetlands occur, but they are not regulatory maps and landowners should not rely on them exclusively.

Wetland Classification

Different wetlands provide different functions and benefits and to varying degrees. The Act requires DEC to rank wetlands in classes based on the benefits and values provided by each wetland. The wetland class helps to determine the best uses for each wetland. Higher class wetlands provide the greatest level of benefits and are afforded a higher level of protection. Lower class wetlands still provide important functions and benefits but typically require less protection to continue to provide these functions. The permit requirements are more stringent for a higher-class wetland than for a lower-class wetland.

The Clean Water Act regulates activities in a similar manner but has slightly different requirements. Landowners are encouraged to contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers if they anticipate undertaking activities in or near wet areas.[5]

[5] https://dec.ny.gov/nature/waterbodies/wetlands/freshwater-wetlands-program

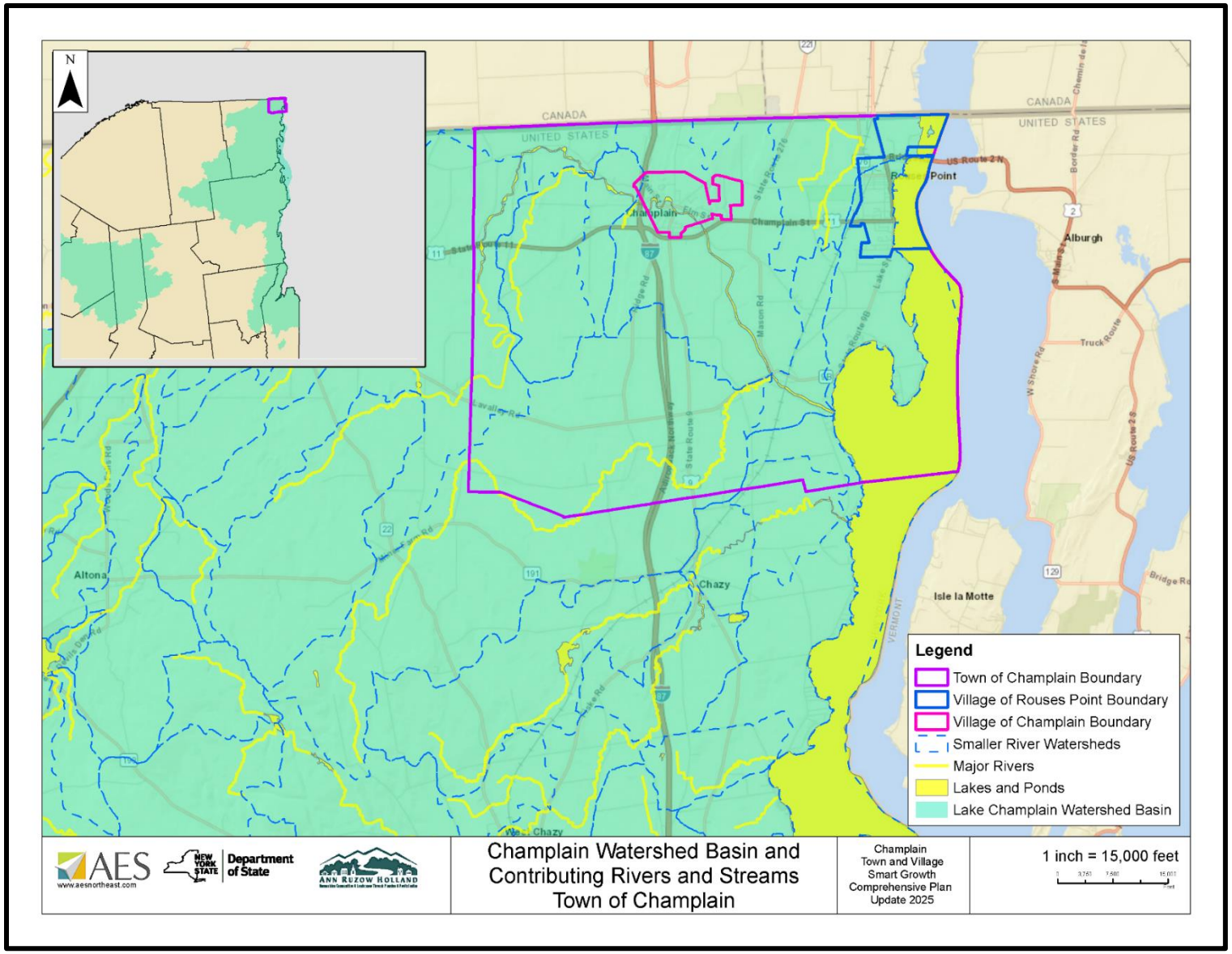

Figure 15 - Champlain Watershed Basin & Contributing Rivers and Streams, Town of Champlain

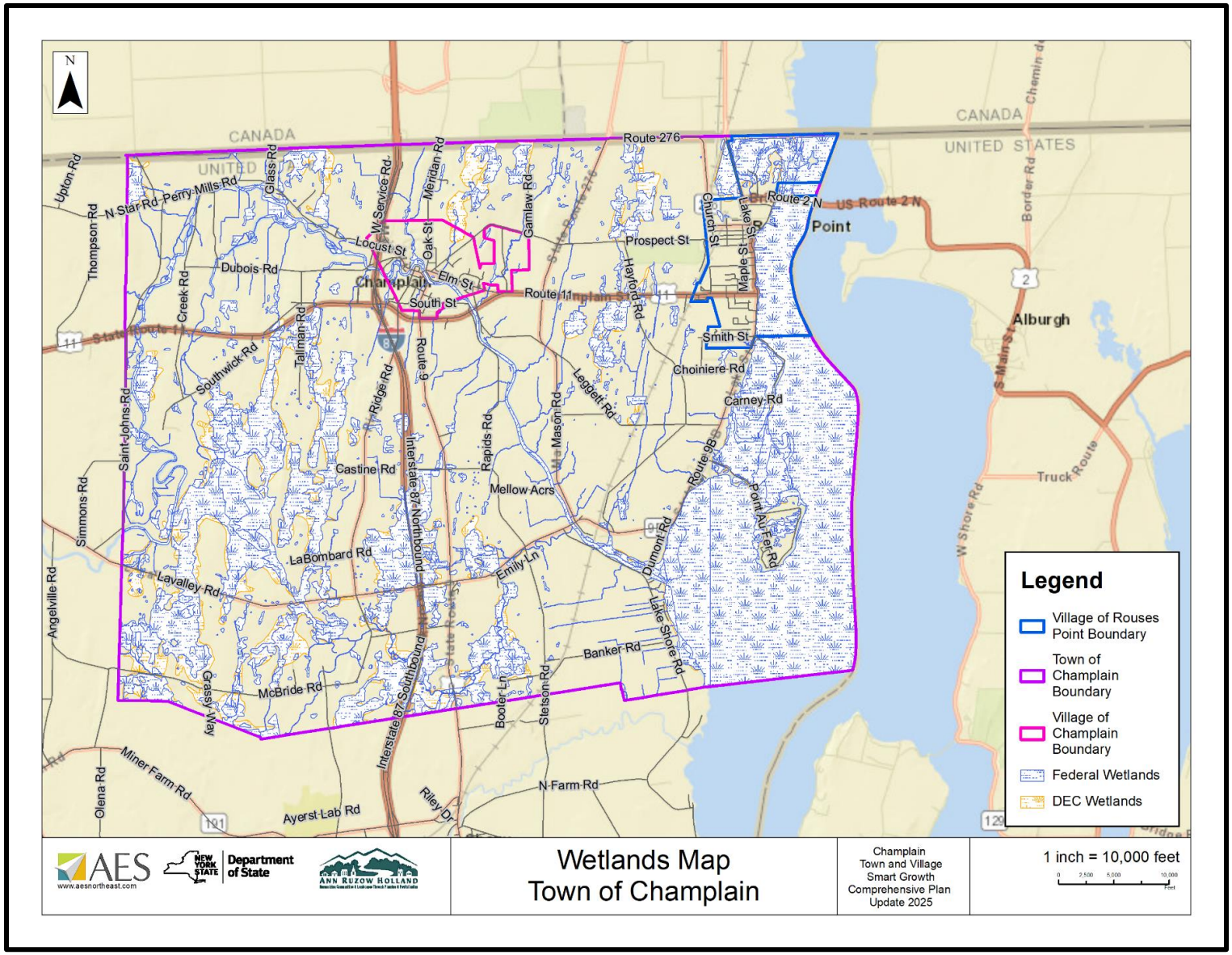

Figure 16 - Wetlands Map, Town of Champlain

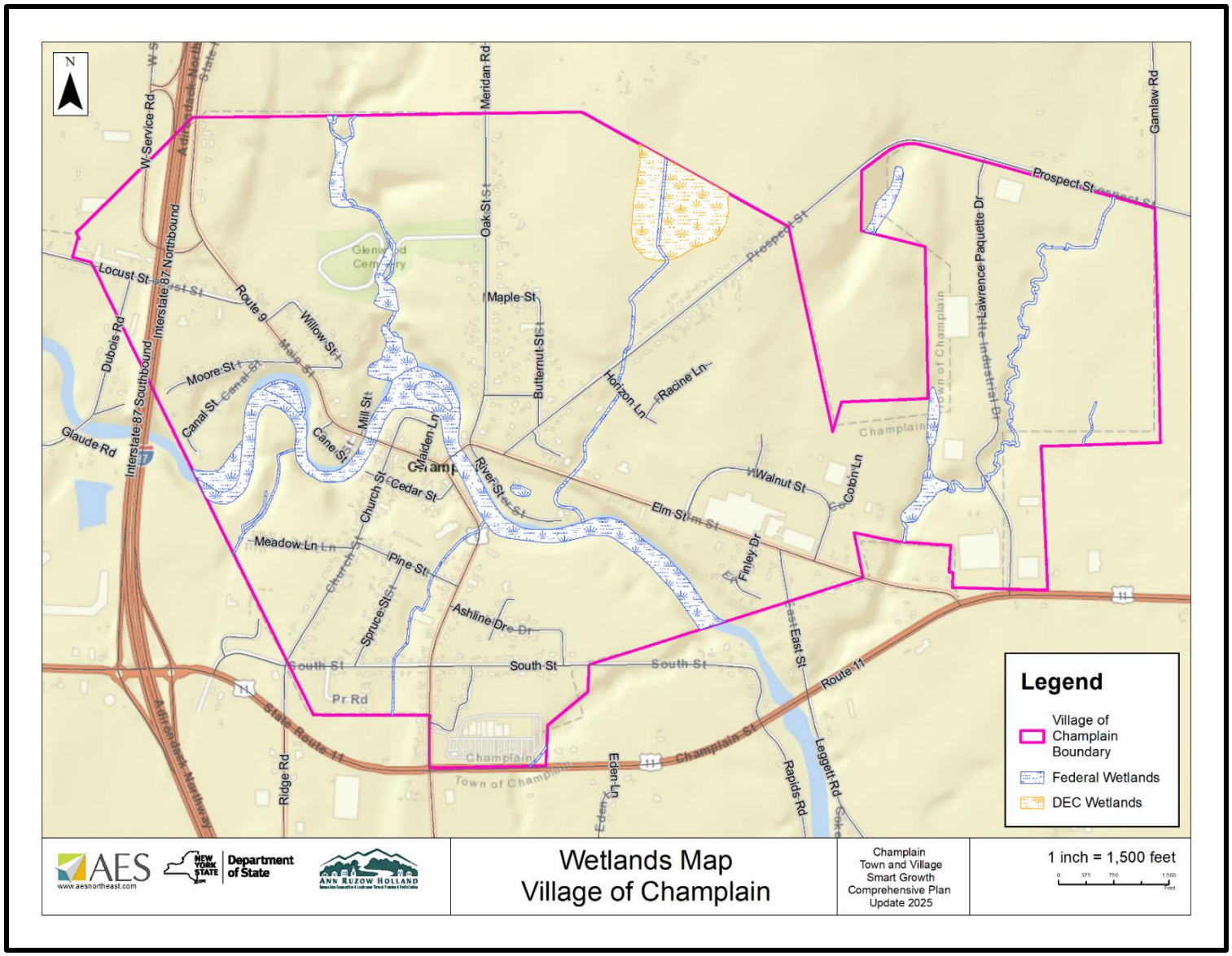

Figure 17 - Wetlands Map, Village of Champlain

The excerpt across is from the Town of Champlain, New York Zoning Code, specifically within its Supplemental Regulations concerning waterfront and watercourse protection. § 130-15 "Minimum lake and river frontage" establishes the 100-foot minimum lot width measured at the mean high water line of Lake Champlain and the Great Chazy River. § 130-24 "Watercourse protection" outlines the setback, tree and vegetation removal limits within specified distances from the mean high water mark of the Great Chazy River, Corbeau Creek, Beaver Creek, and Lake Champlain.

Town of Champlain Supplemental Regulations
§ 130-15Minimum lake and river frontage.
The minimum lot width measured between the point where the side lines of the lot intersect the mean high water line (as defined by the NYS DEC) of Lake Champlain and the Great Chazy River shall be 100 feet.
§ 130-24Watercourse protection.
This section shall apply to the Great Chazy River, Corbeau Creek, Beaver Creek and Lake Champlain.
A.
All structures shall be set back at least 50 feet from the mean high water mark of the stream, river or lake.
B.
Within 35 feet of the mean high water mark, not more than 30% of the trees in excess of six inches in diameter at breast height may be removed during any ten-year period.
C.
Within six feet of the mean high water mark, no vegetation may be removed except for the provision of a thirty-foot-wide clear area for each lot.
D.
The above standards shall not prevent the removal of diseased or rotten vegetation, or vegetation which presents a health or safety hazard.

Table 8 - Town of Champlain Supplemental Regulations

3.4.5 Water Quality Monitoring and Planning For Lake Champlain and the Great Chazy River Watershed

3.4.5.1 Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) Planning for Lake Champlain

Figure 18 - Photo courtesy of the Lake Champlain Committee

Harmful Algal Blooms that have been plaguing Lake Champlain and the Town of Champlain falls in the Isle LaMotte region for Lake Champlain Basin Planning. The contributors to the Total Maximum Daily Load are from both point and nonpoint sources throughout that region, including Agricultural Land Use, Natural Areas, Developed Land, and Open Water. "Like Port Henry, agricultural land use in the Isle La Motte sub-watershed comprises a small portion of the watershed (relative to forest) but contributes over half of the nonpoint source loading of phosphorus."[6] The management actions were designed to address the "Nutrient and sediment inputs from agricultural lands within the contributing watershed" as well as the "Nonpoint source sediment and nutrient inputs from the contributing watershed(e.g., ditches)" in the Isle LaMotte region that the Town and Village of Champlain fall in."[7]

The projects presented are laid out by priority. Priority 1 being necessary and to be evaluated to begin as soon as possible, Priority 2 being deemed as necessary with less immediate need, and Priority 3 being considered important with the least immediate need.

"Priority 1 Projects for Isle LaMotte are as follows:

Short-term (3 years)

1. Implement a livestock exclusion program to minimize soil erosion and nutrient loading to aquatic habitat caused by livestock access to tributaries to Lake Champlain. This project would be implemented by local" Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) "and other partners, and include:
    a. Installation of fencing on stable portions of the stream banks a minimum of 30 feet from the top of the bank.
    b. Installation of livestock watering stations outside the limits of riparian areas.
    c. Installation of stable stream crossings to minimize livestock impacts.

[6] Department of Environmental Conservation, "Harmful Algal Bloom Action Plan Lake Champlain," 79

[7] Department of Environmental Conservation, "Harmful Algal Bloom Action Plan Lake Champlain," 89

d. Establish vegetated riparian buffers within the fenced exclusion limits to inhibit or restrict nutrient-rich stormwater runoff and eroded soil from reaching the lake or tributary streams.

e. Rehabilitate degraded vegetated buffers within the fenced exclusion limits to improve riparian habitat function.

2. Implement a cost-share program where the State provides financial and technical support to farmers who plant cover crops on agricultural fields to reduce soil erosion and nutrient runoff.

3. Implement roadside ditch improvement projects that are likely to contribute the greatest reduction in erosion as identified in the Lake Champlain Watershed Water Quality Management Planning project. Best management practices could include:

a. timing of cleanout to minimize soil erosion.

b. properly sizing culverts and channels to avoid headcuts and other erosion.

c. use of cover crops to assist in ditch bank stabilization.

d. Installation of check dams or other facilities to reduce flow velocities, minimize erosion, and promote sedimentation.

Mid-term (3 to 5 years)

1. Implement alternative manure management practices into animal feeding operations to reduce nutrient loadings to Lake Champlain and its tributaries:

a. Review Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) and Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) plans and identify mutually beneficial alternatives to land application of manure.

b. Develop Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMPs) for animal feeding operations within the watershed to identify alternative manure storage and application practices.

c. Provide public outreach and education to discourage agricultural animal access to waterways and avoid the placement of manure in the drainage path of waterways."[8]

Priority 2 Projects for Isle LaMotte are as follows:

"Short-term (3 years)

1. Implement an inspection and maintenance program for near-shore septic systems:

a. Inspection and pump-out of all septic systems located within 250 feet of the lakeshore.

b. Replace failing systems with a 50% cost-share with individual property owners.

Mid-term (3 to 5 years)

1. Establish permanent riparian buffers where agricultural lands abut stream or lake habitat to protect banks and reduce soil erosion and nutrient loading. This may be accomplished by local SWCDs, non-profits, or other relevant stakeholders, through conservation easements and installing vegetative plantings and stream stabilization structures, to include:

[8] Department of Environmental Conservation, "Harmful Algal Bloom Action Plan Lake Champlain," 91-93

a. Establishment of vegetated riparian buffers to inhibit or restrict nutrient-rich stormwater runoff and eroded soil from reaching the lake or tributary streams.
b. Restoration of degraded vegetated buffers to improve riparian habitat function.

2. Implement runoff reduction BMPs on croplands to reduce stormwater and nutrient runoff and soil erosion from agricultural lands in the watershed. This project may include:

a. BMP Systems to promote stormwater retention and minimize concentrated runoff (e.g., rills, gullies).
b. Stabilization of drainage swales through establishment of vegetation and/or installation of check dams.
c. Installation of control facilities at the outlets of drainage swales (prior to entering the lake or tributaries) to promote sediment and nutrient capture."[9]

Figure 19 - Photo courtesy of the Lake Champlain Committee

Priority 3 Projects for Isle LaMotte are as follows:
"Long-term (5 to 10 years)
1. Complete a Watershed Management Plan for the Great Chazy River sub-watershed. The LCLGRPB has been awarded a LCBP grant to modify the workplan to include the entire Isle La Motte Lake Segment to align with the Lake Champlain TMDL and the HABs initiative.
2. Implement a stormwater management and reduction program within the Village of Rouses Point to reduce stormwater runoff and nutrient and sediment loading into Lake Champlain."[10]

[9] Department of Environmental Conservation, "Harmful Algal Bloom Action Plan Lake Champlain," 94

[10] Department of Environmental Conservation, "Harmful Algal Bloom Action Plan Lake Champlain," 95

Priority Subwatershed #12b - Outlet Great Chazy River									
Project ID	Project Narrative	County	Location (Lat/Long)	Jurisdiction	Phosphorus Loading Concern(s)	Projected Cost	Potential Funding Source	Involved Parties (Lead agency in Italics)	Time Frame
Town of Champlain									
12b-1	Promote and implement ag waste storage systems	Clinton	Various	Private	Agriculture	$260,000	USDA NRCS NYSDAM LCBP	*Clinton Co. SWCD,* USDA NRCS	Medium Term
12b-2	Implement agricultural riparian buffer program	Clinton	Various	Private	Agriculture Erosion	$225,000	FSA USDA NRCS NYSDAM LCBP	*Clinton Co. SWCD,* USDA NRCS	Short Term
12b-3	Implement streambank restoration program on Great Chazy	Clinton	Various	Private	Erosion	$500,000	NYSDEC NYSDAM USFWS LCBP	*Clinton Co. SWCD*	Medium Term
12b-4	Dredging of delta at mouth of Great Chazy River	Clinton	44°55'55.41"N 73°23'05.67"W	Public	Erosion	$1.5 M	NYSDOS NYSDEC LCBP	*Town, Landowners*	Short Term
Village of Champlain									
12b-5	Comprehensive stormwater management assessment	Clinton	Various	Public	Stormwater	$50,000	NYSDOS NYSDEC LCBP	*Village*	Short Term
12b-6	Implement residential stormwater reduction program	Clinton	Various	Private	Stormwater	$100,000	LCBP	*Clinton Co. SWCD*	Medium Term

Table 9 - Priority Subwatershed #12b - Outlet Great Chazy River

3.4.5.2 Lake Champlain Non-Point Source Pollution Sub Watershed Assessment and Management Plan[11]

This plan has the intended goals of identifying planning and implementation efforts that if completed, will reduce phosphorus inputs into surface waters from an array of sources, with the ultimate goal of a reduction of phosphorus levels in Lake Champlain. Specific recommendations/findings impacting the Comprehensive Plan are included in the following table.

Priority sub watershed #12b - Outlet Great Chazy River[12]

3.4.5.3 Lake Champlain Phosphorus Reduction Plan New York[13]

A report constituting as a first step in working toward a management plan to identify and address key phosphorus reduction goals and objectives specific to New York through the development of a Watershed Implementation Program.

[11] Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board, Champlain Watershed Improvement Coalition of New York, & New York State Department of State, March 2018

[12] The New York State Department of State, Lake Champlain Non-Point Source Pollution sub watershed Assessment and Management Plan," 124

[13] New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 2/3/14

Specific recommendations/findings impacting the Comprehensive Plan:

"There is much uncertainty and complexity of relevant processes and stressors within the Lake and its' watershed. To set and make reductions in the phosphorus load delivered to the Lake from point and nonpoint sources such as wastewater discharges, barnyards, agricultural fields, unstable river channels, urban centers, residential areas, back roads, and other areas, an ***adaptive implementation approach*** is needed. Throughout the development of the Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP), a balance of load reductions among the agriculture, wastewater and stormwater sectors will be determined. The reductions in agricultural loads are important because these loads represent a significant proportion of the total load and offer opportunities for achieving some of the greatest reductions through cost effective solutions. Recognizing that phosphorus reductions will need to come from all land sectors, we will seek to identify opportunities in wastewater treatment facilities and the developed landscape to implement cost effective technologies and practices to further reduce phosphorus loadings."[14]

3.4.5.4 Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Watershed Implementation Plan[15]

The State of New York had spent millions of dollars over the past 30 years to bring necessary improvements to the water quality of Lake Champlain, in large part by making efforts to mitigate the input of phosphorus and other pollutants that enter the lake across its 587 miles of shoreline spanning New York, Vermont, and Quebec Canada. This plan provides updated analysis of the sources of pollution by sector and a summary of past efforts and current recommendations on future projects prioritized for implementation.

Specific recommendations/findings impacting the Comprehensive Plan

"DEC has included a list of potential implementation projects for five sectors"[16] These are the "agricultural sector, forested sector, urban sector, wastewater sector, and septic sector."[17] There are a variety of funding programs identified in this plan from which to choose in working toward implementation. Isle La Motte is the TMDL Watershed that the Town and Village of Champlain are geographically connected to. Items identified in that watershed region will be what the Town and Village should focus on when looking at funding and implementation. Some of these items are the "Livestock exclusion fencing and riparian buffer program[18], completion of five comprehensive nutrient management plans[19], implementation of three manure management systems[20],

[14] New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, "Lake Champlain Phosphorus Reduction Plan New York, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation," 22-23

[15] New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 3/18/24

[16] New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, "Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Watershed Implementation Plan," 43

[17] New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, "Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Watershed Implementation Plan," 43

[18] New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, "Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Watershed Implementation Plan," 66

[19] New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, "Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Watershed Implementation Plan," 66

[20] New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, "Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Watershed Implementation Plan," 66

implementation of Trees for Tribs on Great Chazy River[21], implement streambank restoration program on Great Chazy[22], and implement residential stormwater reduction program for Village of Champlain."[23]

Figure 20 - Photo courtesy of the Town/Village of Champlain

3.5 Existing Land Use Related Regulations

Town of Champlain and the Village of Champlain have enacted specific local laws and ordinances that influence land use planning. This section of the profile will present several historical land use documents followed by a brief description of current regulations and land use maps.

[21] New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, "Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Watershed Implementation Plan," 70
[22] New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, "Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Watershed Implementation Plan," 70
[23] New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, "Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Watershed Implementation Plan," 77

3.5.1 Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Champlain, Village of Champlain, and Village of Rouses Point 1974[24]

Representing the FIRST land use plan for the Town and Villages, this report was prepared with the financial aid of a federal grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development under their Comprehensive Planning and Management Assistance Program as well as the New York State Office of Planning Services and Covered the period 1974-1979.

The document is primarily a land use plan and the information that was gathered to inform that plan involved research of existing plans and community input, much like this Comprehensive Plan Update. The plans were divided within this report between the Town of Champlain, the Village of Champlain, and the Village of Rouses Point. The trends reported bear a similarity to more recent concerns regarding availability of housing. Programs of urban renewal were recommended for the Villages. "The second primary recommendation involves a program to encourage construction of various types of housing within the Town of Champlain to be available to all income levels. Within the town itself single-family residences would be more appropriate due to the rural character of the countryside. However, some provision for two-and multi-family living should be made in the hamlet areas, such as Coopersville and Perry's Mills, and on the Outskirts of the two villages.[25]

Within the villages themselves, as has been indicated by the data previously discussed, a concerted effort to provide lower income apartment units as well as additional suitable single- and multi-family residences should be initiated as soon as possible. A Town-wide policy should be formulated concerning mobile home development, which has been rapid in recent years, and which should be property regulated and perhaps concentrated in specifically designated mobile home parks in appropriate locations…It is hoped, however, that the construction of other decent low-cost housing will considerably eliminate the pressures for mobile home acquisition.

Standards should be developed for all housing types within the town to ensure appropriate, safe, and sanitary construction and landscaping to enhance not detract from the visual appeal of the community."[26]

Additionally, the plan addressed issues with transportation and Community Facilities and Utilities. An Environmental Assessment Statement summarizes the overall findings of the plan. " Above all, this Comprehensive Plan – Phase I, outlines human benefits attainable from Champlain's natural environs and makes provisions to avoid environmental conflicts, be they concerning of the natural environment or human-caused community elements.

[24] Hans Klunder Associates, 1974

[25] Hans Klunder Associates, "Comprehensive Plan Phase I for the Town of Champlain, Village of Champlain and Village of Rouses Point, NY," IV-15

[26] Hans Klunder Associates, "Comprehensive Plan Phase I for the Town of Champlain, Village of Champlain and Village of Rouses Point, NY," IV-16

Phase I sets the state for further environmental planning through plan implementation measures such as subdivision regulations which would require environmental amenities, and a logical Public Open Space and Land Acquisition Plan and Program. In addition, it has taken into consideration those aspects that are of special community concern, such as sewer and water pollution control provisions, and has encouraged a future comprehensive planning phase adopting regulations to prevent disruption of the natural environs in Champlain."[27]

Additionally, the plan found that "Champlain…constitutes a largely rural community with prime agricultural lands within its confines, and the Plan, if accomplished as submitted, includes measures to enhance these natural phenomena."[28] These findings are relevant to the town as much now as they were in 1974.

3.5.2 Town of Champlain Comprehensive Land Use Plan Parts 1 & 2: Background Information and Analysis[29]

To be used as an advisory document, this is a two-part Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the Town of Champlain, focusing on physical resources, analysis of growth trends, examination of future needs, and examples of policies designed to ensure that growth in the best interest of the community will occur. The plan addressed a multitude of issues, providing background and analysis on the following relevant issues: Soils; Water Resources; Other Environmental Resources; Agriculture, Highways; Population and Housing Characteristics; Growth Trends; Statistical Profile of the Town of Champlain; Development Infrastructure; Potential for Commercial Development; Potential for Industrial and Warehousing Development; Potential for Residential Development; and Waste The general findings were: "Growth should be encouraged, but should be guided and controlled to a certain extent; Commercial and industrial development should be encouraged; Major commercial and industrial development should generally be confined to arterial highways and in industrial locations near the Village of Champlain and elsewhere, while most of the town should develop as residential mixed with occasional small businesses; Residential neighborhoods and property values should be protected; Affordable Housing should be provided for; All new development should be provided with adequate sewerage disposal; The rural character should be preserved; The continuation of agriculture should be encouraged; State and county highways should be preserved as safe, arterial routes while providing for development along them; A safe living environment and highway system should be provided; The visual environment should be protected; Water resources should be protected; Commercial waste disposal activities should be controlled; Future use of the Lake Champlain and Great Chazy River Shoreline should balance the interests of the public with those of property owners in the area; and Public participation in the planning process should be encouraged."[30]

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[27] Hans Klunder Associates, "Comprehensive Plan Phase I for the Town of Champlain, Village of Champlain and Village of Rouses Point, NY," EA-1

[28] Hans Klunder Associates, "Comprehensive Plan Phase I for the Town of Champlain, Village of Champlain and Village of Rouses Point, NY," EA-3

[29] Richard F. Lamb, AICP Associate Professor State University of New York, 1992/1993

[30] Richard F. Lamb, AICP Associate Professor State University of New York, "Town of Champlain Comprehensive Land Use Plan Parts 1 & 2: Background Information and Analysis," 87-89

3.5.3 Town of Champlain Current Land Use Regulations

The Town of Champlain manages land use and development through its comprehensive Zoning Law, detailed in Chapter 130 of the Town Code. This law establishes specific zoning districts, outlines permitted and special uses and sets dimensional requirements to guide orderly growth and maintain community character. The Town is divided into various zoning districts, each with designated permitted uses. These uses are detailed in the Permitted Use Charts, which specify allowed activities within each district. Uses not listed as permitted or allowed by special use permit are considered prohibited. Each zoning district has specific dimensional requirements, including minimum lot sizes, building setbacks, and maximum structure heights. For instance, single- or two-family dwellings have defined minimum lot sizes and setback distances based on their location and available utilities.

The Town's Code Enforcement Officer oversees compliance with zoning and building codes. Residents can contact the officer for information on permits, applications, and enforcement issues. Various applications, including those for building permits, area variances, and subdivisions, are available for download on the Town's official website. The complete and searchable text of the Town's Zoning Law is accessible online through the Town's website. For detailed information or specific inquiries, it's advisable to consult these resources or contact the Code Enforcement Officer directly. For the most current and comprehensive information, always refer to the Town's official publications or contact the relevant municipal offices.

The Town also administers the NYS Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code. The Town is in charge of day-to-day administration, issues building permits and certificates of occupancy/completion.

Beyond basic zoning provisions, the Town enforces supplemental regulations addressing various land use aspects:

- **Nonconforming Uses**: Guidelines for existing structures or uses that don't conform to current zoning laws.
- **Special Use Permits**: Procedures for obtaining permits for uses requiring special consideration due to potential community impact.
- **Variances and Appeals**: Processes for requesting deviations from zoning requirements or appealing decisions.
- **Administration and Enforcement**: Roles and responsibilities of officials in enforcing zoning laws.
- **Specific Use Regulations**: Standards for particular uses, such as adult entertainment, solar energy systems, and cannabis retail establishments.

Recent Amendments Include:

Solar Energy Systems: In 2023, the Town amended its zoning law to modify setback requirements for medium- and large-scale solar energy systems. Specifically, "Interstate 87" (I-87) was removed from the 500-foot setback restriction, adjusting the distances these installations must maintain from certain roadways.

Adult Uses and Entertainment: Article XI of the Zoning Law regulates adult entertainment establishments, specifying allowed zoning districts, location criteria, and operational standards to mitigate potential community impacts.

Cannabis Retail Sales and Dispensaries: Article XIV addresses the sale and distribution of cannabis products, defining permitted zoning districts and supplemental regulations to ensure such establishments align with community standards.

Control of Bio-Sludge and Waste: Article XII outlines regulations concerning the application, storage, and disposal of bio-sludge and other wastes, aiming to protect environmental quality and public health.

Existing Zoning Classification, Town of Champlain 2013 Revision (Retrieved 2025 Town of Champlain)

Classification	Intensity Guidelines	Total Acres	Percent of Total Town Area	Total non-State Acres	Percent of Non-State Acres	Total State Owned	Percent of State Lands
Commercial 1		63.50	0.2%	63.50	0.2%	0	0.0%
Commercial 2		1650.41	5.1%	1650.41	5.1%	0	0.0%
Conservation	No development	507.08	1.6%	12.16	0.0%	494.92	1.5%
Heavy Industrial		360.69	1.1%	360.69	1.1%	0	0.0%
Industrial/Commercial 1		2376.78	7.3%	2376.78	7.3%	0	0.0%
Industrial/Commercial 2		197.51	0.6%	197.51	0.6%	0	0.0%
Industrial/Commercial 3		306.48	0.9%	306.48	0.9%	0	0.0%
Industrial/Commercial 4		2509.99	7.7%	2509.90	7.7%	0.09	0.0%
Lake Area Commercial		105.69	0.3%	105.69	0.3%	0	0.0%
Light Industrial		5874.91	18.0%	5874.91	18.0%	0	0.0%
Residential		16363.46	50.2%	16215.50	49.8%	147.96	0.5%
Residential-Manufactured Homes		210.86	0.6%	210.86	0.6%	0	0.0%
Small Lot Residential		366.96	1.1%	304.11	0.9%	62.85	0.2%
Village		1406.57	4.3%	1406.57	4.3%	0	0.0%
Total Acreage within Town		32572.66	100.0%	30188.5	97.0%	705.82	2.2%

Table 10 - Existing Zoning Classification, Town of Champlain

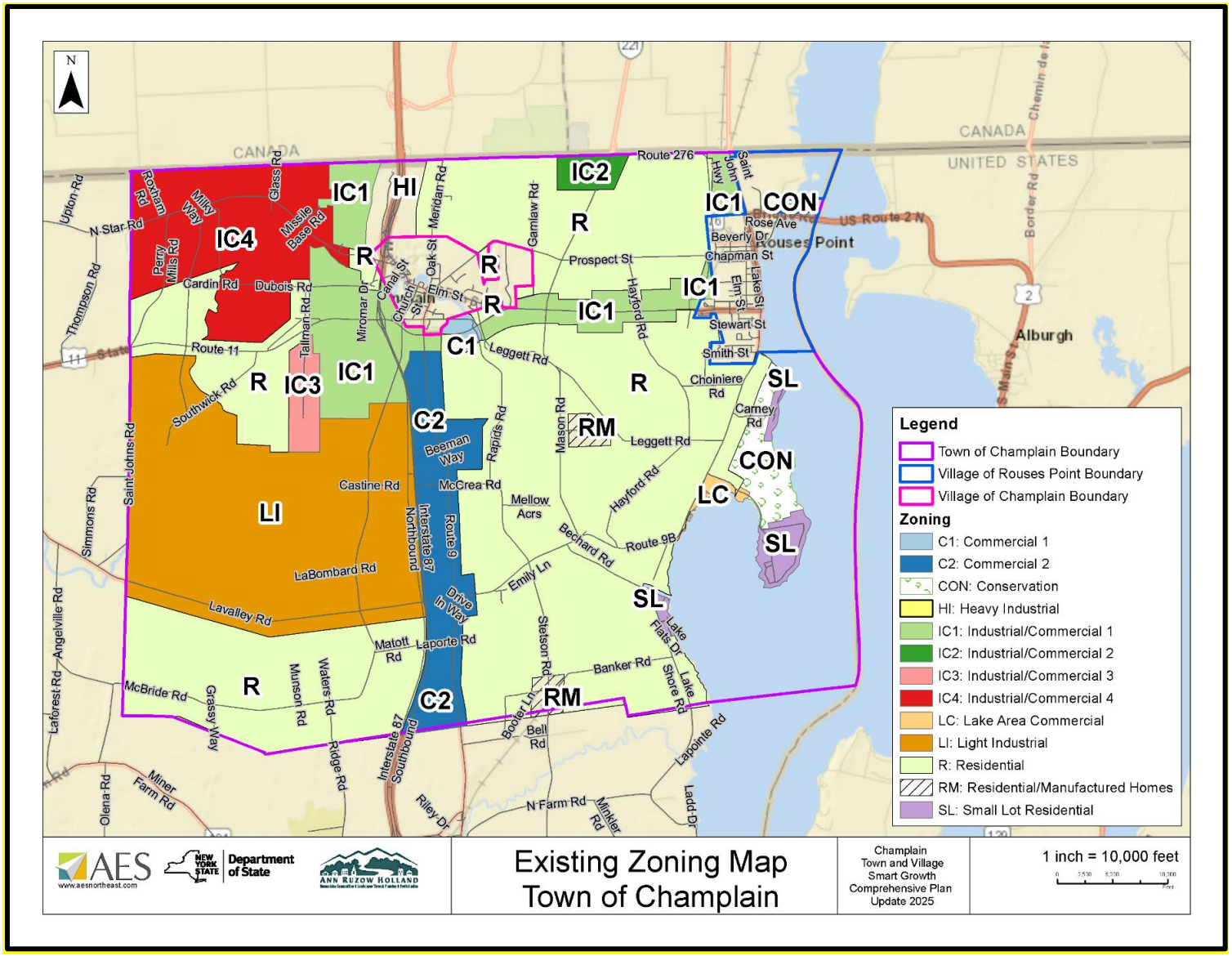

Figure 21 - Existing Zoning Map, Town of Champlain

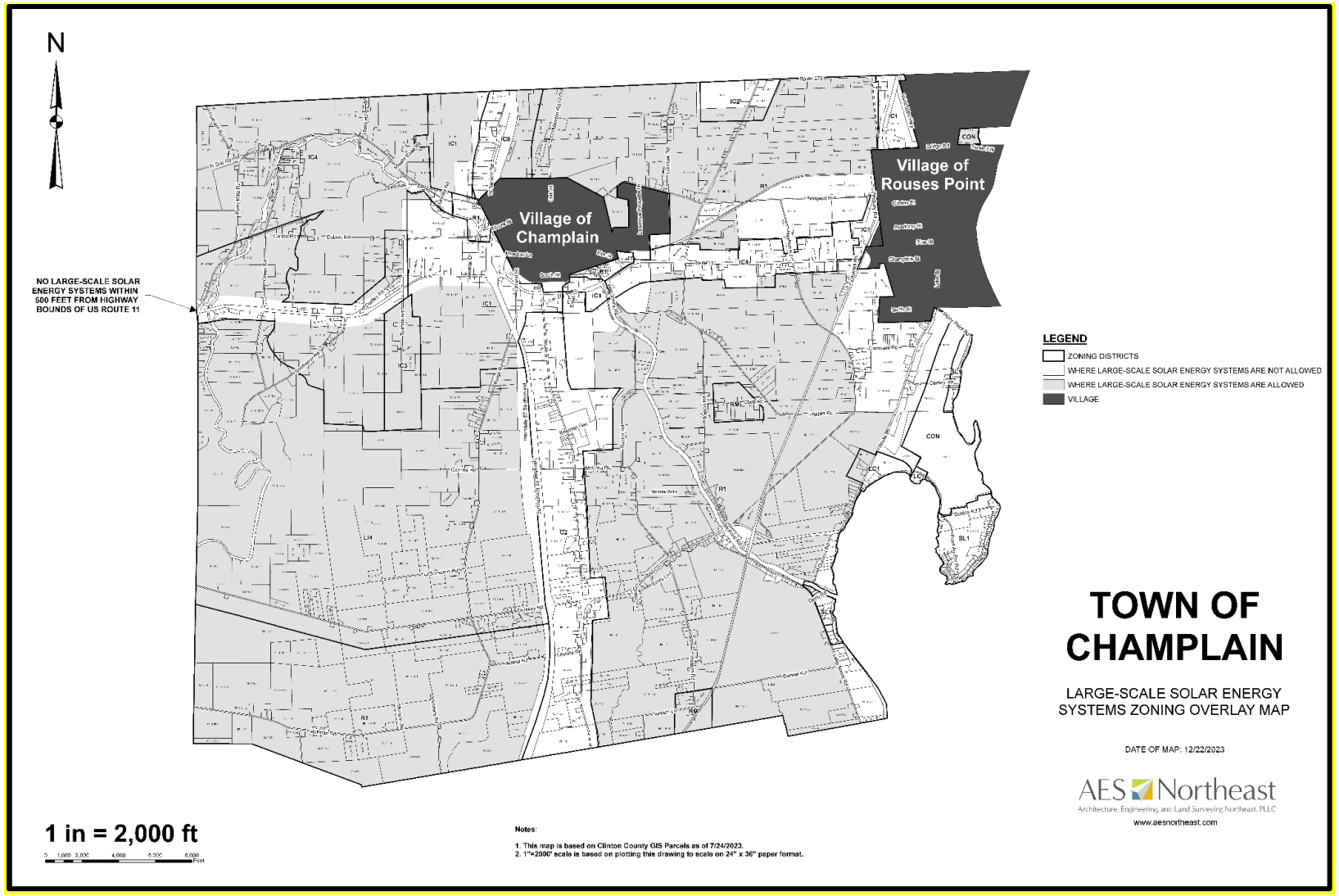

Figure 22 - Large Scale Solar Energy Systems Zoning Overlay Map

3.5.3.1 Issues and Concerns with Current Regulations

Town leadership in Champlain has undertaken a preliminary review of current zoning and land use regulations, identifying a series of emerging issues and areas of potential reform. This proactive approach is intended to better align the Town's regulatory framework with changing community needs, anticipated state-level policy shifts, and evolving development patterns.

Short-Term Rentals (STRs)
While short-term rentals are not currently a major issue in the Town, local leaders recognize the importance of anticipating their growth. Many municipalities across New York State are establishing regulations governing the location, operation, and oversight of STRs. Key questions under discussion include whether these rentals should be permitted in all zoning districts, whether they should be subject to special use permits, and whether a local registry or permitting system should be established to monitor and manage these uses.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
The Town is also evaluating the future role of accessory dwelling units, such as detached tiny homes or converted garages, on single-family lots. With New York State expected to advocate for the broader legalization of ADUs as a housing affordability and aging-in-place strategy, the Town must consider whether and where to allow them. Questions center on potential location, size, design standards, and occupancy rules.

Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) Zoning
Within the Village, discussions are underway about modifying the Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) district. Specifically, there is interest in removing Cedar Street from the DMU and permitting a broader range of commercial uses in that area, free from the more restrictive DMU standards.

Multi-Family Dwellings
Town and Village officials are exploring options to expand housing choice by allowing multi-family dwellings—defined as structures with more than two units—in a wider array of zoning districts. This reflects an increasing interest in accommodating rental and workforce housing options within the community.

Fence Regulations
A review of fence construction standards is also underway. Leaders are considering restrictions on certain materials, such as chicken wire, and examining whether minimum setbacks from property lines should be established to prevent disputes and maintain neighborhood aesthetics.

Single-Wide Mobile Homes
Although single-wide mobile homes are considered single-family dwellings under New York State law and cannot be outright prohibited in residential zones, the Town is interested in imposing certain aesthetic and site layout requirements. These may include skirting standards, minimum setbacks, and siting regulations to maintain neighborhood character.

Solar Energy Systems
Large-scale solar farms may be an emerging issue in Champlain. Accordingly, the Town has adopted regulations and a solar overlay district and is preparing to address smaller residential systems. Proposed regulations may establish placement criteria—such as prohibiting panels on street-facing roofs—or require setbacks for ground-mounted installations. These rules would ensure compatibility with adjacent land uses and preserve the visual integrity of neighborhoods.

Battery Storage Facilities
As battery storage technology becomes more common, especially in conjunction with renewable energy systems, the Town is assessing whether and where to allow commercial-scale battery storage facilities. Regulation would focus on zoning district eligibility, safety standards, and performance criteria.

Permitted Uses and Special Use Permits
There is growing interest in expanding the list of permitted uses in certain zoning districts to reduce the need for special use permits. This change could streamline development approvals, increase predictability for applicants, and encourage targeted commercial investment.

Small and Undersized Lots
For properties that do not meet current dimensional standards, the Town is considering whether to revise regulations to permit more flexibility in construction and remodeling. Options include reducing minimum lot sizes or creating performance-based standards that maintain health and safety while allowing modest development on smaller parcels.

Travel Trailers as Seasonal Housing
Travel trailers are increasingly being used as seasonal dwellings, especially along lakefront areas. The Town seeks to define how long these trailers may be permitted on-site, whether occupancy should be allowed, and if removal should be required after a certain period. A consistent approach would address both housing expectations and sanitation concerns.

Campgrounds
Similarly, the Town is evaluating where campgrounds should be permitted and what conditions should govern their approval, including density, services, and access requirements. This will help guide future applications and maintain compatibility with neighboring land uses.

Subdivision Regulations and Lakefront Development
Recognizing the unique character and environmental sensitivity of the Lake Champlain shoreline, the Town is exploring whether a separate zoning district should be created for lakefront areas. Such a district could establish different subdivision lot size standards and customized permitted uses to reflect waterfront priorities, such as scenic preservation, public access, and ecological protection.

Accessory Structures on Vacant Lots
Currently, it is standard practice to allow sheds, garages, and other accessory structures to be built on vacant lots. However, the Town is reconsidering whether this should continue, especially if these structures are not eventually accompanied by a principal dwelling. This review aims to ensure orderly development and prevent long-term underutilization of land.

Amish Sheds Converted to Homes
A final emerging concern involves the increasing trend of residents purchasing Amish-built sheds and converting them into residential dwellings. While such conversions may meet building code requirements when fully renovated, many structures still appear as sheds. The Town is weighing whether to continue allowing these conversions and, if so, under what design or appearance standards.

Solar Law Amendment
In February 2024, the Town of Champlain Town Board identified the need to revise the Town Zoning Law standards for large scale solar energy systems. All Large-scale solar energy systems shall require a building permit for construction and will be subject to a building permit fee as listed in the Town of Champlain building Permit Fee schedule.

This comprehensive, but preliminary review underscores Champlain's commitment to ensuring that local land use regulations remain responsive to community needs, compatible with state policy trends, and reflective of local values. As the Town prepares for future development pressures and changing housing preferences, a thoughtful update to the zoning ordinance may be warranted to address these concerns and provide clarity for residents, landowners, and developers.

3.5.4 Village of Champlain

The Village of Champlain enforces land use planning regulations primarily through its Zoning Law, which outlines specific requirements for various zoning districts, permitted uses, and dimensional standards. While the Village has its own set of regulations, it also aligns with certain provisions from the Town of Champlain's Zoning Law. The Village is divided into multiple zoning districts, each with designated permitted uses. These uses are detailed in the Permitted Use Charts, which specify allowed activities within each district. Uses not listed as permitted or allowed by special use permit are considered prohibited. Each zoning district has specific dimensional requirements, including minimum lot sizes, building setbacks, and maximum structure heights. For instance, single- or two-family dwellings have defined minimum lot sizes and setback distances based on their location and available utilities.

Beyond basic zoning provisions, the Village enforces supplemental regulations addressing various land use aspects:

- Nonconforming Uses: Guidelines for existing structures or uses that don't conform to current zoning laws.
- Special Use Permits: Procedures for obtaining permits for uses requiring special consideration due to potential community impact.
- Variances and Appeals: Processes for requesting deviations from zoning requirements or appealing decisions.
- Administration and Enforcement: Roles and responsibilities of officials in enforcing zoning laws.
- Specific Use Regulations: Standards for particular uses, such as adult entertainment, solar energy systems, and cannabis retail establishments.

For the most accurate and up-to-date information on any specialized ordinances, it's advisable to consult the Village's official notices or contact the Village Clerk directly. While the Village provides access to its zoning regulations, the full text of certain local laws is available for inspection at the Village Office during regular business hours. The Village's Code Enforcement Officer oversees compliance with zoning and building codes. Residents can contact the officer for information on permits, applications, and enforcement issues. For detailed information or specific inquiries, it's advisable to consult the Village's official resources or contact the Code Enforcement Officer directly.

Existing Zoning Classification, Village of Champlain 2017 Revision (Retrieved 2025 Village of Champlain)							
Classification	Intensity Guidelines	Total Acres	Percent of Total Town Area	Total non-State Acres	Percent of Non-State Acres	Total State Owned	Percent of State Lands
Residential 1		524.94	54.8%	524.94	54.8%	0	0.0%
Residential 2		35.50	3.7%	35.50	3.7%	0	0.0%
Residential 3		57.50	6.0%	57.50	6.0%	0	0.0%
Residential Multi Family		18.60	1.9%	18.60	1.9%	0	0.0%
Commercial		11.08	1.2%	11.08	1.2%	0	0.0%
Downtown Mixed Use		22.51	2.4%	29.20	3.1%	0	0.0%
Industrial/Commercial		52.30	5.5%	52.30	5.5%	0	0.0%
Industrial		48.90	5.1%	48.90	5.1%	0	0.0%
Planned Industrial Park		185.72	19.4%	185.72	19.4%	0	0.0%
Total Acreage within Town		957.05	100.0%	963.74	100.7%	0	0.0%

Table 11 - Existing Zoning Classification, Village of Champlain

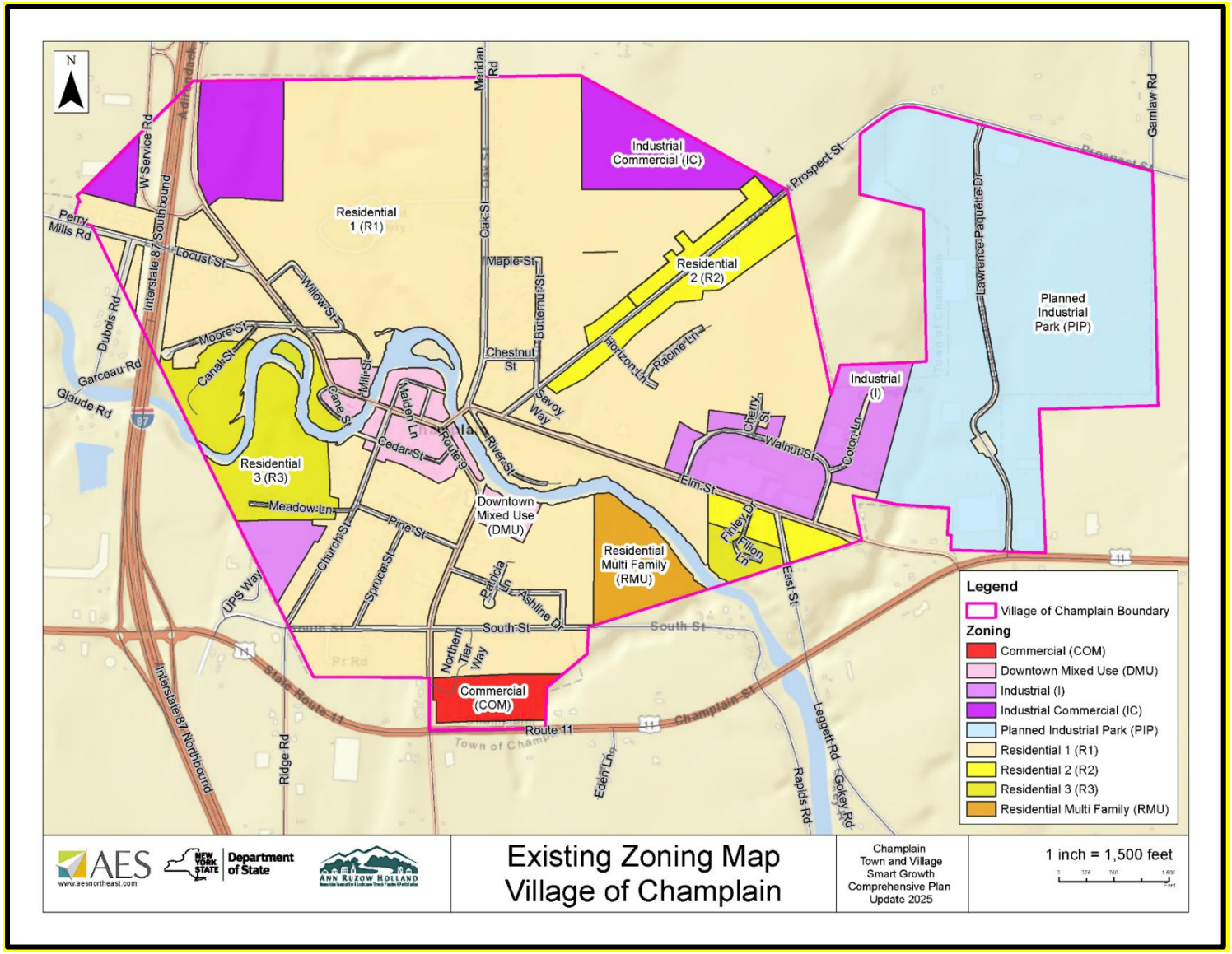

Figure 23 - Existing Zoning Map, Village of Champlain

3.5.5 Clinton County

At the county level, Clinton County has established an Agricultural District (Agricultural District 07C-See Section 3.2 of this Chapter for the Ag District Map) to support and protect farming activities. This district offers benefits such as protections against overly restrictive local laws and eligibility for agricultural assessments, which can provide property tax reductions for active agricultural lands. While the county provides this overarching agricultural framework, land use planning and specific regulations are primarily managed at the town and village levels.

The Town and Villages also comply with the NYS Sanitary Code with respect to on-site wastewater treatment systems which is administered by Clinton County Health Department.

3.6 Future Land Use: Development Resources and Constraints: Land Suitability Analysis Series

Future land use and development constraints on development of private land are best understood by conducting a land suitability analysis. The Champlain Town and Village ***Land Suitability Analysis*** represents one-way scientific data about where land could be developed is analyzed and presented. The scientific data collected was layered together in groups to create one for the Town of Champlain and one for the Village of Champlain. These classifications are based upon scientific information about the risks to nature and the environment (including water quality, water bodies, plants, animals, and soils) from building on the land. Decisions about where and how to build should factor in the risks.

The analysis is essential for making informed and optimized decisions about land use planning and management and can also help ensure that land is used in a way that minimizes environmental degradation, soil erosion, and deforestation. It pinpoints unsuitable areas (e.g., floodplains, high hazard risks, steep slopes, protected habitats) to avoid and thus reduce negative effects. From a planning standpoint, the analysis helps identify the best locations for roads, housing, and public services based on accessibility and sustainability. From a developer or investor perspective the analysis can help reduce expenditure by selecting land that requires minimal modifications.

This preliminary analysis presented on the following pages provides data-driven insights to support government policies regarding zoning amendments and land-use planning strategies.

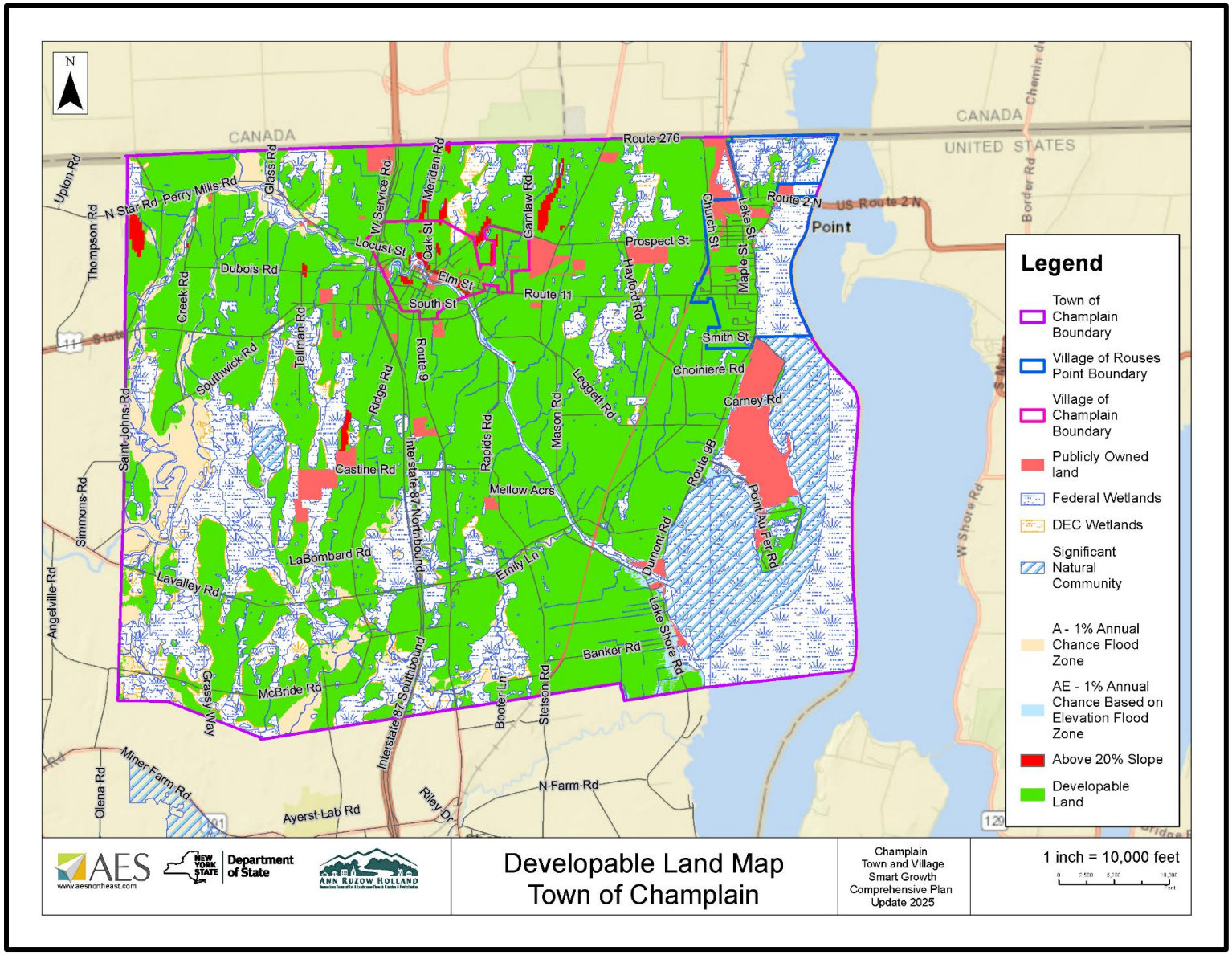

Figure 24 - Developable Land Map, Town of Champlain

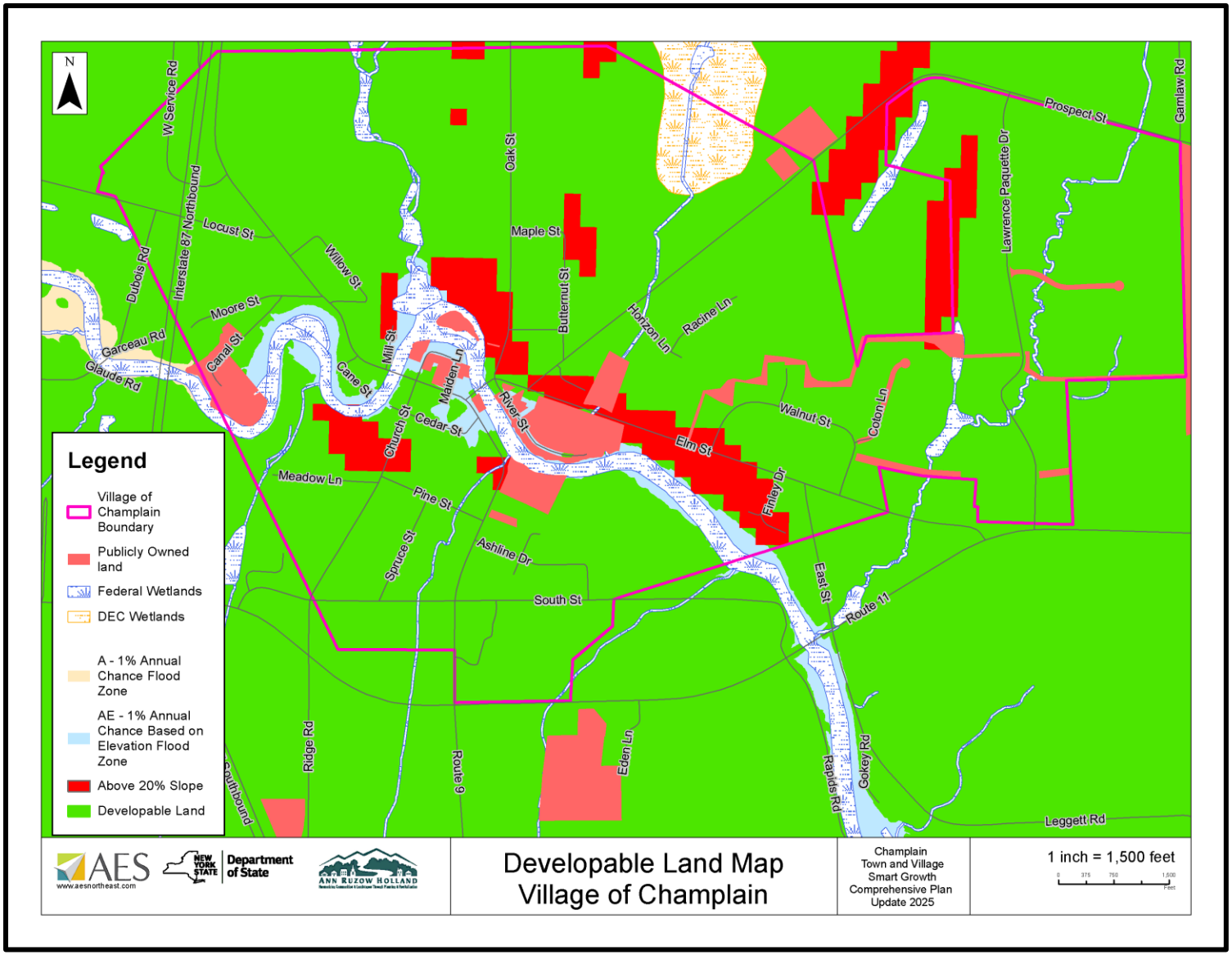

Figure 25 - Developable Land Map, Village of Champlain

3.7 Discussion of Existing and Future Land Use's Relationship to Smart Growth Principles

Chapter 3 of the Town and Village of Champlain Community Profile presents a data-rich and policy-grounded examination of land use that reflects a strong alignment with the ten principles of Smart Growth. From safeguarding farmland and promoting environmental sustainability to coordinating future development and infrastructure upgrades, this chapter lays the foundation for resilient and strategic community growth. While a future land use map has yet to be blueprinted, the suitability series presented in the previous section address where future land use can happen without environmental constraints, and where mitigation or avoidance are recommended.

Chapter 3 demonstrates strong alignment with Smart Growth Principles, especially in areas of agricultural preservation, environmental resilience, village-centered development, and housing diversity. With continued attention to transportation integration, compact design standards, and walkability, the Town and Village of Champlain are well-positioned to implement a future-oriented land use strategy that is both sustainable and community-driven. Chapter 3 provides a robust foundation for guiding future land use and zoning decisions, ensuring the values of smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth are embedded in every planning action.

1. Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty, and Critical Environmental Areas

The chapter underscores Champlain's agricultural identity—over 22,000 acres of farmland make up the majority of private land, and the area lies within Agricultural District 07C. The community is taking proactive steps to preserve farmland through land use regulation and enrollment in the NYS Agricultural Districts Program. This reflects the Smart Growth commitment to preserving natural and working lands.

Champlain also demonstrates a strong emphasis on wetland protection, watercourse buffers, and climate-responsive planning. The text's detailed treatment of environmental issues—including water quality, harmful algal blooms (HABs), and climate-related flooding—demonstrates integration of ecosystem preservation into land use policy.

One emerging future land use issue that Champlain has addressed through land use regulation development is the placement of solar farms in the community. A local law has been adopted and the map provided below describes allowable solar farm locations in the Town.

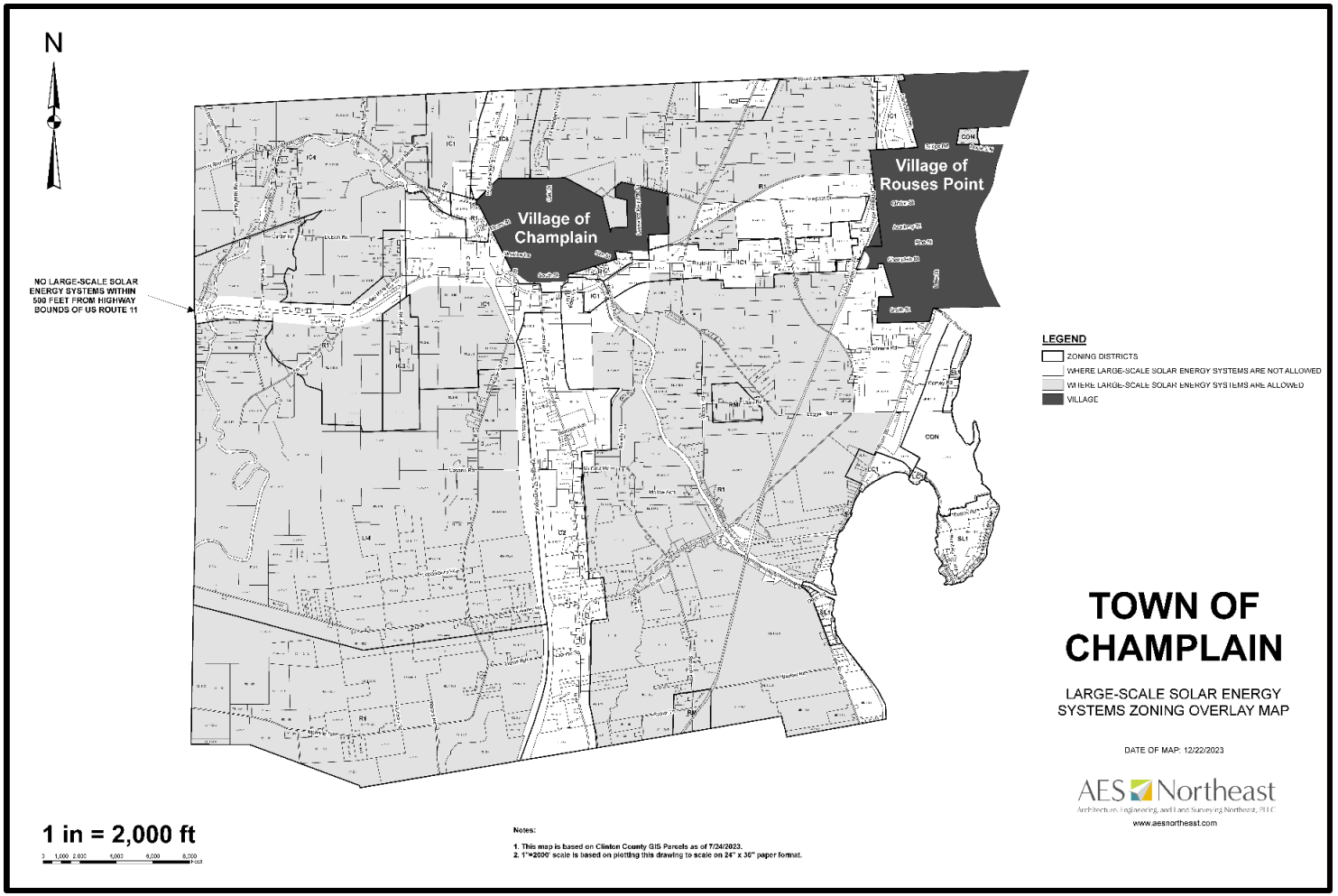

Figure 26 - Large Scale Solar Energy Systems Zoning Overlay Map

2. Protect and Enhance Environmental Quality

Section 3.4 thoroughly outlines environmental vulnerabilities—including nutrient loading, aging infrastructure, and hazardous waste sites—while presenting proactive plans such as:

- Water quality and phosphorus management in the Lake Champlain watershed
- Flood mitigation and infrastructure improvement projects (e.g., Sewer District No. 7)
- Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) priority interventions, including livestock exclusion fencing, riparian buffer restoration, and improved manure management

These efforts align with Smart Growth's emphasis on protecting air and water quality and reducing environmental hazards.

3. Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions

The document reflects ongoing collaboration across levels of government and stakeholders, including:

- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
- Clinton County Planning Department
- Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Local agricultural landowners

The integration of publicly funded land suitability analyses and watershed management initiatives into the planning process showcases meaningful multi-sector engagement in guiding land use decisions.

4. Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities

Champlain's land use regulations and zoning strategies emphasize infill and redevelopment within the Villages of Champlain and Rouses Point. These locations are recognized as centers of commerce and services, with infrastructure capacity already in place. The land suitability analysis provides a framework for concentrating growth in areas with lower environmental risk and higher development readiness. Additionally, future planning includes provisions for:

- Accessory dwelling units (ADUs)
- Short-term rentals
- Mixed-use development in and near village centers

These priorities support compact, walkable, and accessible development—a cornerstone of Smart Growth

5. Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair, and Cost-Effective

Chapter 3 provides a clear and well-structured overview of zoning laws, dimensional standards, and land use classifications, making development pathways more transparent. The analysis includes recent zoning amendments (e.g., solar system setbacks, cannabis retail sales, and adult entertainment uses), and discusses emerging concerns (e.g., battery storage, ADUs, STRs), which indicates a proactive and adaptive regulatory environment. Moreover, public access to digital zoning laws and application processes contributes to predictability and fairness in land use decisions.

6. Mix Land Uses

The chapter reflects interest in diversifying residential and commercial land uses, especially within village cores. Mixed-use development is supported through existing zoning and proposed amendments to increase flexibility, especially for multi-family housing and small business accommodations. This supports vibrant, diverse neighborhoods with access to services and housing.

7. Create Walkable Neighborhoods / Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place

Although the chapter does not explicitly discuss walkability, the emphasis on village-centered growth, protection of scenic lakefronts, and thoughtful regulation of residential aesthetics (e.g., fencing materials, accessory structures) contributes to creating distinctive, attractive communities. Potential development of a special lakefront zoning district further illustrates the commitment to design-sensitive planning and preservation of place-based identity.

8. Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices

While transportation planning is not the core focus of this chapter, infrastructure discussions related to U.S. Route 11 and railroad corridors, as well as flood vulnerability mitigation, imply a recognition of transportation and land use interdependence. Future comprehensive plan sections could more directly integrate multimodal access and connectivity strategies.

9. Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices

Housing diversity and affordability are significant priorities reflected in zoning regulations and historical plans dating back to 1974. Chapter 3 advocates for:

- Multi-family development in village areas
- ADUs to expand affordable rental options
- Mobile home regulation and integration
- Housing on small or undersized lots
- Senior and seasonal housing in appropriate locations

These strategies align with the Smart Growth objective of ensuring housing choices for all income levels and life stages.

10. Take Advantage of Compact Building Design

Champlain's policies encourage efficient land use through zoning density, infill development, and compact form in areas with infrastructure. The suitability analysis reinforces this by identifying development constraints and optimal areas, minimizing sprawl, and maximizing infrastructure investment.