

**TOWN GATEWAY
PRELIMINARY FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS
TOWN OF ST. ALBANS**

TCE# 17-176

Date:

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Prepared For:

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Town Gateway Preliminary Feasibility Analysis

Introduction

The Town of St. Albans desires to relocate the existing Town municipal offices and potentially the Department of Public Works (DPW) or a Public Safety Building (PSB) to a new location. The relocation of the municipal building would serve two main purposes. First, in order to provide the adequate office and vault space, public meeting space, handicap accessibility, and parking the current facility lacks, extensive upgrades to an aging facility would be required. Second, it would allow the municipal building to be located closer to the population center as the existing facility is located near the St. Albans Bay approximately 3 miles from the Town Center.

TCE was hired to perform a preliminary feasibility analysis on two separate parcels for the purpose of determining the major expenses of developing each lot and identifying potential development and or permitting hurdles. Site A is located at the northeast corner of Route 36 & Route 104 and is also referred to as the Lupu lot. Site B is located along Route 104 south of Route 36 and is also referred to as the Ingleside Equities lot. An Overall Natural Resource Map is included as Attachment A.

This preliminary feasibility report is not intended to be an all-encompassing report on each lot, but rather a high level analysis for parcel comparison purposes. It is anticipated that additional information will be uncovered as the development of either of the parcels is continued that may impact development costs, engineering design, and/or permitting. It should be noted that TCE's physical access to the Lupu parcel was restricted by the lot owner and owner's engineer. However, this report includes readily available public information regarding the Lupu lot to assist the Town in reviewing the parcel.



Overall Natural Resource Map Identifying Both Parcels, Attachment A

Site A – Lupu Parcel

Existing Site Physical Conditions

The parcel is currently owned by 144039 Canada, Inc. and consists of two adjoining lots totaling approximately 8 acres. The subject parcel is located at the northeast corner of VT Route 104 (Fisher Pond Road) & VT Route 36 (Fairfield Hill Road). Northwestern Dermatology and Northwestern Counseling & Support Services (NCSS) commercial sites border the parcel to the north, Fairfield Hill Road borders the site to the south, Interstate 89 borders the site to the east and Fisher Pond Road borders the site to the west. Stevens Brook traverses the site in an east-west direction near the north side of the site and a tributary of Stevens Brook traverses the site in a north-south direction on the eastern portion of the property.



Lupu Site Photo Taken from Route 104 Looking Southeast

The site is undeveloped, consisting largely of mowed agricultural fields. There is no obvious evidence of ledge outcrops on the property. However, the site presents evidence of fill as depicted in the historical aerial imagery below. Additional soil testing and borings should be conducted.



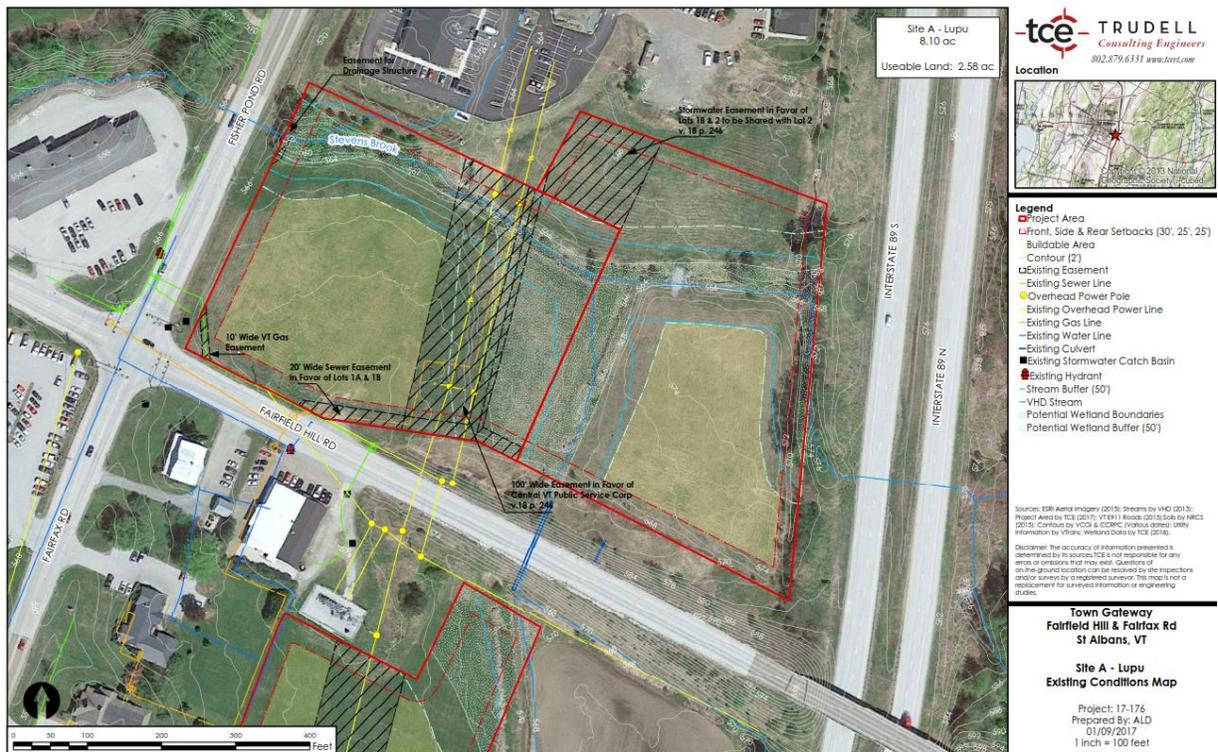
2003 Aerial Image



2009 Aerial Image

There are several easements on the Lupu property as shown on the Peter J. Morse Subdivision Map by Cross Consulting Engineers dated January 29, 1998, last revised July 6, 2004. A 100' wide power easement follows the transmission line running through the middle of the site, a sewer easement is located adjacent to the east side electric easement, a small gas line easement is located near the intersection of Fisher Pond Road & Fairfield Hill Road, and a small drainage easement is located near the northwest corner of the site where Stevens Brook crosses Fisher Pond Road. These easements are shown on the subdivision plat, which is included as Attachment B. TCE has also prepared a preliminary Existing Conditions Map, which is included as Attachment C.

There are two plateaus within this site with the western portion of the parcel being notably higher than the eastern portion of the parcel. Aerial photography shows an existing agricultural road over the Stevens Brook tributary connecting the parcels. Please refer to Attachment C for preliminary topographic information, which shows existing available Light Detecting and Ranging (LIDAR) 2' contour data. It should be noted that TCE received a copy of an Existing Conditions Map on the date of the submittal of this study to the Town (January 12, 2018) from the State Wetlands Office for the Lupu site by Ruggiano Engineering dated March 9, 2011 and revised July 14, 2016. This Existing Conditions Map, which includes more detailed topographic information, is included as Attachment O.



Lupu Parcel Preliminary Existing Conditions Map, Refer to Attachment C

Environmental Constraints & Natural Resources

A wetland assessment was not conducted by TCE on this site due to access restrictions. TCE contacted the State Wetland Office in December of 2017 and initial correspondence indicated that the site did not have a current wetland permit. TCE received additional correspondence from the State Wetlands Office included as Attachment D on January 12, 2018 (the date of the submittal of this feasibility report to the Town). The Existing Conditions Map associated with this correspondence is included as Attachment O, which shows a small pocket of Class III wetlands on the western portion of the parcel. It appears that the eastern portion of the parcel was not evaluated for wetlands by the State.

A State wetland advisory layer and hydric soils are present on this site as depicted on the State of Vermont's Natural Resources Atlas GIS database. The State Wetland Advisory layer shows most of this site as potential wetlands as depicted on the Overall Natural Resource Map, Attachment A. A site plan by Cross Consulting Engineers associated with VTrans Permit #3279 from 1998 also shows most of the eastern portion of the parcel as wetlands, which is included as Attachment E. It is possible that these wetlands are no longer present due to fill or agricultural maintenance and ditching. It is also possible that the State Wetlands office may approve impacts if wetlands are present.

TCE has estimated potential wetland boundaries and the associated buffers for purposes of this feasibility analysis conceptual land use planning as shown on the attached Concept Map, Attachment F. It should be noted that the western portion of the site may contain less wetlands as indicated on TCE's Concept Map in light of more recent information obtained on the date of the submittal of this report as shown on Attachment O. A full wetland delineation should be conducted if a current delineation does not exist. It is likely that a State Wetland Permit will be required for the development of this parcel.

Utilities

Existing utility information for this parcel is shown on the Existing Conditions Map, Attachment C. Existing utilities represent approximate locations and are shown for planning purposes only. A preliminary utility cost estimate for the Lupu parcel is included as Attachment G.

Water

TCE found evidence that an 8" municipal water line is stubbed to this site on Fairfield Hill Road as shown on the Existing Conditions Map. It is likely that a fire hydrant will be required for the development of this parcel. A cost estimate for the service extension and fire hydrant is included in the Appendix. It is likely that a Vermont Water System Permit to Construct will be required for this development.

Sewer

TCE found evidence that an 8" municipal sewer line is stubbed to this site on Fairfield Hill Road as shown on the Existing Conditions Map. It is assumed that a pump station and forcemain will be required for this site. A State Wastewater System & Potable Water Supply permit will be required for the development of this site.

Electric

Electric service in the area is provided by Green Mountain Power as shown on the Existing Conditions Map. Electric service is directly available to this site and could be obtained from a power pole within the right-of-way on Fairfield Hill Road. 3-phase power is available to the site.

Natural Gas

An existing natural gas line is located along Fairfield Hill Road as shown on the attached Existing Conditions Map. As-built information was obtained from Vermont Gas. An extension of the gas main is not anticipated other than the service line.

Transportation

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) indicated that two State of Vermont Agency of Transportation permits were previously issued for this site. Permit #3279 was issued on August 11, 1998 for a proposed access on VT 104. Permit #30534 was issued on October 5, 2005 for VT Route 36 & VT Route 104 intersection improvements. The intersection improvements appear to have been constructed in full, however, the access approved under Permit #3279 was never constructed by the completion date (12/1/98) and it was not built under Permit #30534. Both prior VTrans permits as well as correspondence with VTrans are included as Attachment H.

VTrans noted that a new access permit would need to be obtained for access to this parcel and that they prefer only one commercial access on a State Highway be allowed for this entire parcel. It is likely that the access would need to be located on Fairfield Hill Road to provide easy access to the traffic light, resulting in more efficient left turns to head south. A traffic impact study may be required by VTrans.

TCE is aware that the Town desires a second access point to the site. It is possible that a secondary access could be constructed to the north connect this parcel to the NCSS parcel. An existing agricultural crossing over Stevens Brook currently exists, which would need to be upgraded if a connection is pursued. The upgrade would likely involve Army Corps of Engineers permitting.

TCE did not find any evidence of a current Act 250 for this parcel and the parcel is less than 10 acres. However, it should be confirmed with the Act 250 Coordinator that no Act 250 permit is required. The site would not be subject to a trip based traffic impact fee if an Act 250 permit is not required.

Local Permitting

The site is located within the Mixed Residential/Commercial District as described in the Town of St. Albans Unified Development Bylaws effective November 28, 2016. Essential Public Services and Public Facilities are both conditional uses within the district. Dimensional requirements are shown below for site planning purposes.

Minimum Lot Size	20,000 s.f.
Minimum Frontage	125'
Minimum Front Setback	30'
Minimum Side & Rear Setback	25'
Maximum Building Height	50'
Maximum Lot Coverage	65%

The proposed uses of the site appear to conform to the conditional uses allowed within the zoning district. Further review will be necessary by the Development Review Board during the approval process. Site Plan approval and Conditional Use approval will be needed. Fees for the Town application process will be waived.

State Permitting

A Preliminary Permit and Fee Estimate Table is included as Attachment I.

Wetland Permitting

A State of Vermont Wetlands Permit will likely be required for this site if both the Municipal Building and DPW or a PSB are located on this site. It should be noted that State Wetland fees are currently \$0.75/s.f. for wetland impacts and \$0.25/s.f. for wetland buffer impacts. A preliminary estimate of impact fees for this parcel is included in the Preliminary Permit and Fee Estimate.

Stormwater

This parcel is located within the Stevens Brook watershed, which is considered an urban impaired watershed as noted on the State of Vermont's 2016 list of priority surface waters. An Individual State Stormwater Permit would be required for this site, assuming the total impervious surface area is greater than the one-acre jurisdictional threshold.

Erosion

A moderate risk Construction General Permit for Erosion Control would be required for this site, given construction disturbance will be greater than the one-acre jurisdictional threshold, the project's proximity to waters of the State, and the erodibility of the underlying soils.

Act 250

TCE did not find evidence of an existing Land Use Permit for this parcel, and commercial development on lots under 10-acres do not fall within Act 250 jurisdiction. However, TCE recommends reaching out to the Act 250 District 6 Coordinator and/or obtaining a legal opinion to confirm.

Conceptual Land Use Map

TCE has provided a Conceptual Land Use Map for the Lupu lot, Attachment F. The purpose of this map is to depict one possible layout option for the site based on the known site restrictions and assumed wetlands. It is possible that development of the eastern portion of the Lupu site may have limited development potential due to wetland and/or fill issues. Further field work and research is required before a more detailed site plan can be developed. It is expected that the Concept Map and layout will evolve as the project progresses through the public input and permitting process.

Site B - Ingleside Parcel

Existing Site Physical Conditions

The parcel is currently owned by Ingleside Equity Group and is known as the Central Parcel of the old Smith farm. The subject parcel is slightly less than 10 acres within the Central Parcel. The lot is east of the southeast corner of VT Route 104 (Fairfax Road) and VT Route 36 (Fairfield Hill Road). Fairfield Hill Road borders the parcel to the north, the SR Smith Realty office and farmstead borders the site to the south, Interstate 89 borders the site to the east and Fairfax Rd borders a portion of the parcel to the west. A tributary of Stevens Brook is located near the northeast corner of the site, a drainage ditch splits the north and south portion of the parcel and another drainage ditch runs along Fairfax Road. There is an existing 100' wide Green Mountain Power easement that follows the transmission line running through the middle of the site.



Ingleside Site Photo Standing on North Side Looking South

The site is undeveloped, consisting largely of agricultural fields. There is no obvious evidence of ledge outcrops on the property. Additional soil testing and borings should be conducted prior to development of the parcel. The site slopes gently from northwest to southwest. Please refer to the Existing Conditions Map, Attachment J.



Site B - Ingleside Existing Conditions Map, Attachment I

Environmental Constraints & Natural Resources

A wetland assessment was completed on December 12, 2017. The weather conditions were overcast, 6 degrees F, with several inches of snow on the ground. Wetland sample holes were augured in most portions of the site and the remaining underlying vegetation was examined. Due to the late season assessment which was outside of the normal growing season, all of these preliminary findings are subject to change and are dependent on an official growing season wetland delineation. The following provides a brief summary of findings.

The southern portion of the 10-ac project area is likely characterized by a Class II wetland (final confirmation will be needed by State of Vermont) that borders a portion of the western third of the corn field. This potential wetland is connected to the irrigation ditch that flows west between the corn field and the upland hayfield to the north before flowing south along Fairfax Rd. This ditch runs parallel to another larger ditch that appears to originate in the northeast corner of the cornfield parcel before flowing south and west. The two ditches are parallel to Fairfax Road and separated by a large side cast berm. Finding vegetation normally used to help support a wetland delineation was sparse due to the presence of corn cropland, although soils and hydrology in the area show evidence of a high water table (saturation, oxidized rhizospheres, and soil depletion).

The northern portion of the project area (north of the lateral ditch that defines the boundary between the cornfield and upland hayfield) is predominantly uplands with the exception of the eastern boundary. The eastern wetland is likely a Class II definitional wetland that begins approximately along the mapped hydric soil (Rumney variant silt loam soils) line and is connected to wetlands to the north and south.

TCE has estimated potential wetland boundaries and the associated buffers for purposes of this feasibility analysis conceptual land use planning as shown on the attached Conceptual Land Use Map, Attachment K. A full wetland delineation should be conducted. It is likely that a State Wetland Permit will be required for the development of this parcel.

Utilities

Existing utility information for this parcel is shown on the Existing Conditions Map, Attachment J. Existing utilities represent approximate locations and are shown for planning purposes only. A preliminary utility cost estimate for the Ingleside parcel is included as Attachment L.

Water

An 8" municipal water line is located west of the parcel on the north side of Upper Welden Street approximately 350' west of Fairfax Rd. The line is located within the public right-of-way of Upper Welden Street, so no easements would be required to tie into this line. However, the water line would need to be sleeved and bored under Route 104, which would require approval from VTrans.

An 8" municipal water line and hydrant is also located on the south side of Fairfield Hill Rd just west of the GMP substation. However, it appears that the south portion of the Ingleside parcel is more favorable to development, so the Upper Welden Street connection is closer and would not require the need for additional easements.

It is likely that a fire hydrant will be required for the development of this parcel. A cost estimate for the service extension and fire hydrant is included in the Appendix. It is likely that a Vermont Water System Permit to Construct will be required for this development based on the addition of the fire hydrant and extension of the water main to serve this project.

Sewer

TCE found evidence that sewer manhole and an 8" municipal sewer line is located west of the parcel on the south side of Upper Welden Street approximately 400' west of Fairfax Rd. Alternatively, an existing sewer manhole and 8" municipal sewer line is also located on the South side of Fairfield Hill Rd just west of the GMP substation. However, the Upper Welden Street connection is closer to the proposed development and would not require additional easements.

It is assumed that a pump station and forcemain will be required for this site. A cost estimate has been included in the Appendix. A State Wastewater System & Potable Water Supply permit will be required for the development of this site.

An alternative to a municipal sewer connection would be an onsite wastewater disposal system as the mapped soils seem favorable to an onsite treatment system.

Electric

Electric service in the area is provided by Green Mountain Power. Electric service is directly available to this site and could be obtained from a power pole within the right-of-way on Fairfield Hill Road. 3-phase power is available to the site.

The overall availability of developable land on the Ingleside parcel could be increased by relocating the transmission main along the eastern boundary of the proposed lot, which would involve the relocation of two power poles. This relocation could be cost prohibitive, but could be further explored if more land is deemed necessary for development purposes.

Natural Gas

An existing natural gas line is located along the west side of Fairfax Road as well as on the north side of Fairfield Hill Road. As-built information was obtained from Vermont Gas. An extension of the gas main is not anticipated other than the service line.

Transportation

TCE did not find evidence of an existing access plan for this parcel. Initial correspondence with VTrans indicated that only one commercial access would be allowed for the entire parcel. The VTrans preferred access location along Route 104 (Fairfax Rd) is directly across from Upper Welden Street. VTrans noted that the current proposed use of a municipal building and DPW or PSB would not trigger a traffic light at the new project access intersection at this time. There are currently traffic lights at the two major intersections north and south of this parcel. A traffic impact study may be required by VTrans.

TCE is aware that the Town desires a second access point to the site. It is possible that a secondary access could be approved and constructed at the north side of the parcel out to Fairfield Hill Road. TCE has shown potential secondary access routes on the Conceptual Site Plan for this lot. However, the access out to Fairfield Hill Road poses challenges with easements, power poles, slopes, and wetlands that should be further explored. It should also be noted that VTrans indicated that they would prefer a secondary access be for emergency ingress and egress only.

TCE found evidence that this parcel is likely subject to Act 250 under Land Use Permit #6F0391-1, further discussed below under the Act 250 heading. The parcel would be subject to VTrans transportation fees under Criterion 5. These potential fees are based on trip generation and shown on the attached Estimated Permit and Fee Schedule, Attachment M.

Local Permitting

The site is located within the Mixed Residential/Commercial District as described in the Town of St. Albans Unified Development Bylaws effective November 28, 2016. Essential Public Services and Public Facilities are both conditional uses within the district. Dimensional requirements are shown below for site planning purposes.

Minimum Lot Size	20,000 s.f.
Minimum Frontage	125'
Minimum Front Setback	30'
Minimum Side & Rear Setback	25'
Maximum Building Height	50'
Maximum Lot Coverage	65%

The subject lot will need to be subdivided from the larger Ingleside Equities parcel. The proposed uses of the site appear to conform to the conditional uses allowed within the zoning district. Further review will be necessary by the Development Review Board during the approval process. Site Plan approval and Conditional Use approval will be needed. Fees for the Town application process will be waived.

State Permitting

A *Preliminary Permit and Fee Estimate Table* is included as Attachment M.

Wetland Permitting

State wetland permitting will likely be required since it appears that a portion of the parcel along Fairfax Road contains wetlands. It should be noted that State Wetland fees are currently \$0.75/s.f. of wetland impact and \$0.25/s.f. of wetland buffer impact. A preliminary estimate of impact fees for this parcel is included in the Permit and Fee Estimate, Attachment M.

Stormwater

This parcel is located within the Stevens Brook watershed, which is considered an urban impaired watershed as noted on the State of Vermont's 2016 list of priority surface waters. An Individual State Stormwater Permit would be required for this site, assuming the total impervious surface area is greater than the one-acre jurisdictional threshold.

Erosion

A moderate risk Erosion Control Permit will likely be required for this site, given construction disturbance will be greater than the one-acre jurisdictional threshold, the project's proximity to waters of the State, and the erodibility of the underlying soils.

Act 250

It appears that the parcel may be subject to Act 250 under Land Use Permit (LUP)#6F0391-1, Attachment N. The master plan included in LUP #6F0391-1 includes the subject parcel. TCE recommends reaching out to the Act 250 coordinator and/or obtaining a legal opinion to confirm. While Act 250 permitting can prove challenging, TCE did not find any obvious red flags that would preclude development of the subject parcel.

The soils underlying the site are identified as "Primary Agricultural" during the proceedings for 6F039-1. It should be noted that offsite mitigation negotiations for at least a portion of the site have taken place that may alleviate the need for further agricultural soil impact fees. The Agency of Agriculture should be contacted for further confirmation once a Jurisdictional Opinion (JO) has been issued by the District Coordinator.

Conceptual Land Use Map

TCE has provided a Conceptual Land Use Map for the Ingleside Equities lot, Attachment K. The purpose of this map is to depict one possible layout option for the site based on the known site restrictions and assumed wetlands. Further field work and research is required before a more detailed site plan can be developed.

The Concept Map notes assumed potential wetlands, wetland buffers, setbacks and easements. A portion of the parking area is shown within the power easement, which would need to be approved by Green Mountain Power and a Joint Use Agreement would be required. It is expected that the Concept Map and layout will evolve as the project progresses through the public input and permitting process.

Conclusion

It is reasonable to assume that either of the sites explored as part of this initial feasibility study could be developed. A partial list of the main benefits and drawbacks for each site are included below.

Site A – Lupu Parcel

Benefits	Drawbacks
Less Expensive Utility Connections	Less Useable Development Area
Less Expensive Permitting Fees	Unknown Wetlands on Eastern Half of Site May Impact Development Potential
Prominent Corner Location for Municipal Building	Stevens Brook Crossing for Secondary Access

Site B – Ingleside Parcel

Benefits	Drawbacks
More Useable Development Area	More Expensive Permitting Fees
Greater Expansion Potential	Unknown Impacts of Wetlands
Greater Layout Flexibility & Connectivity Potential	Potential Act 250 Permitting

Land costs are not included as a factor in this feasibility study. It should be noted that while the assumed permit and fee estimate and utility extensions results in higher fees for the Ingleside Equities site, the expansion potential benefits of the Ingleside Equities site may outweigh the drawbacks.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this report is based on reasonable and customary engineering, planning and environmental research. It is not intended to be a guarantee of project approval or permitting, and is based on current regulations that are subject to change. It is possible that changes to the scope of the project may occur as the project moves through the approval process at the State and local levels.

Attachments

Attachment A: Overall Natural Resource Map
Attachment B: Morse Subdivision Plat
Attachment C: Lupu Existing Conditions Map
Attachment D: Lupu Wetland Correspondence
Attachment E: Morse Site Plan
Attachment F: Lupu Conceptual Land Use Map
Attachment G: Lupu Utility Cost Estimate
Attachment H: Lupu VTrans Permits & Correspondence
Attachment I: Lupu Permit & Fee Estimate
Attachment J: Ingleside Existing Conditions Map
Attachment K: Ingleside Conceptual Land Use Map
Attachment L: Ingleside Utility Cost Estimate
Attachment M: Ingleside Permit & Fee Estimate
Attachment N: Act 250 LUP #6F0391-1
Attachment O: Lupu Existing Conditions Map Received 1/12/2018