

**TOWN OF RICHMOND  
GATEWAY REZONING  
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

**1. What is The Gateway Commercial Zoning District?**

As depicted on the attached official Zoning Map, the Gateway Commercial Zoning District is the area within Richmond located on the east side of Route 2 between Interstate 89 and the Village.

Some relevant sections of the Richmond Town Plan:

***Gateway Area***

The purpose of the Gateway Area is to protect an area that has importance as a scenic entrance to the Town of Richmond, while providing for carefully planned mixed use development, including commercial and residential development. The size and shape of commercial buildings to be constructed in this area shall reflect those found in the village. Urban/suburban strip development and “big box” stores will be prohibited. Access to this area will be controlled by limiting curb cuts to US Route 2 and by providing an internal circulation road for new commercial development. Green space, landscaping to help screen parking from Route 2 and I-89, and other “character of the neighborhood” criteria must be met in order to retain the flavor of an entranceway to a rural and historic small town. As elsewhere in the Town, restoration and reuse of existing historic structures in this district is encouraged.

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5. Economic development shall be directed to areas that are designated as appropriate through the planning process and public review of the zoning ordinance. Locally owned and operated stores, farms, restaurants and other businesses are important to the Town, maintaining a vibrant village and contributing financially by broadening our tax base and providing employment opportunities for the Town’s residents. Business shall be encouraged both centrally and in identified outlying areas.

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3. Richmond village will continue to serve as the commercial and municipal center of the Town. Similarly, the Town will pursue residential development opportunities within Richmond village and new/other village areas, which are consistent with maintaining the character of Richmond’s neighborhoods and within the constraints imposed by topography, and resource protection areas.

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5. Promote a mix of residential and commercial uses in the village areas.

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3. The Planning Commission, Development Review Board and Selectboard will assess the current zoning regulations for compatibility with traditional village patterns and/or alternative design standards. Zoning will be amended if necessary to promote village-scale development.

4. The Planning Commission and Selectboard will work to ensure that residential growth will coincide with the ability of the Town to provide necessary services without imposing an unfair tax burden on existing residents, through the use of tools such as the Capital Budget and Program and Impact Fee Ordinance.

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3. Encourage a diversity of economic opportunities in Richmond.

4. Establish land use regulations that accommodate commercial and industrial growth;

promote multiple uses in the village; and preserve residential areas, farms and natural areas.

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5. Focus development in suitable areas and promote rates of development and methods that minimize impacts on Richmond's natural resources.

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1. Alleviate traffic congestion and its impacts in the village, while maintaining the dynamic commercial, civic and residential character of the village.

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3. Minimize the traffic impact generated by new development originating either in Richmond or in neighboring towns.

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1. The Planning Commission, Development Review Board and Selectboard will enact zoning and subdivision regulations and endorse transportation and utility infrastructure improvements which will foster the preservation of an historic village pattern surrounded by open land. The process of reviewing and modifying these regulations must seek extensive public input.

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2. Promote development patterns that concentrate growth in existing and new central areas and locate residential growth near work and shopping areas through Planning Commission proposed revisions to Town ordinances.

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### ***Chittenden County Regional Plan***

The Regional Plan places the Gateway Area and village in the Village Planning Area. All other areas, including the Commercial/Industrial and Jonesville Village Area, are placed in the Rural Planning Area. The above mentioned areas may see more commercial development than other Rural Planning Areas in the Town and County, and have been identified through the local planning process for such development.

[http://www.richmondvt.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/2012\\_Town-Plan\\_March.pdf](http://www.richmondvt.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/2012_Town-Plan_March.pdf)

## **2. Why is the Planning Commission rezoning the Gateway?**

The primary purpose of the proposed amendments is to increase the potential for commercial development within the mixed use zone, including increased flexibility in the location of new buildings. The amendments would affect properties on the northeast side of Route 2 (the Route 89 side), and would not include properties on the southwest side of Route 2 (the flood plain side). The Planning Commission is not proposing changes to the overall boundaries of the Gateway Commercial Zoning District.

## **3. What specific changes are being recommended for the Gateway Commercial Zoning District?**

- Maximum building size: The most significant change is increasing the building square foot maximum from 10,000 square feet to 17,000 square feet if increased setback requirements are met, and removing the 5,000 square foot maximum requirement for Light Manufacturing, Business and Professional Offices, and Research Laboratory. The existing 5,000 square foot maximum size is retained on Retail and Restaurant uses to maintain conformance with the Town Plan, **in which remains a statement of prohibition on “big box” stores.**

- Roof pitch: Flat roofing is proposed to be allowed for buildings with a footprint greater than 10,000 square feet.
- Exterior: Building exteriors will no longer be required to be wood or brick, or the appearance of wood or brick.
- Commercial development: Lastly, new development must have at least 40% of the gross floor area in commercial use. Residential development only is no longer allowable. This is to pursue the vision of commercial development for this area in the Town Plan.
- Additional conditional uses: Business Yards, Food Processing Establishments, Repair Garage, Private Club, and Tavern have been added to the list of conditional uses within the District.

#### **4. Why are these amendments important to consider now?**

At this time the Water/Sewer Commission is considering the feasibility of extending the water and sewer system to the Gateway area. Expanding this municipal system has been identified as (1) a method of supporting economic development and (2) a way to alleviate the financial burden on the modest numbers of current users. These proposed changes to the Gateway Commercial District will help to make the expansion of the municipal water and sewer system more economically feasible. As stated in the Town Plan:

1. Richmond's municipal water and sewer systems are under utilized, which drives up the cost for users. The sewage treatment plant is 30 years old, but underwent a major renovation to improve phosphorus reduction in 2005.

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5. Provide and maintain adequate sewer and water services at reasonable rates for Richmond's village.

#### **5. Do these proposed zoning amendments conform to the Town Plan?**

Yes. The proposed amendments further the goals and policies of the 2012 Richmond Town Plan by increasing the viability and flexibility of commercial development within the mixed use zone. The changes do not have an adverse effect on the availability of affordable housing. This proposal more specifically helps implement the Objectives as defined within the Economic Development Section of the Town Plan.

#### **6. How will we ensure that future developments fit with the character of our town?**

The Gateway Commercial Zoning District Regulations require that developments “fit with the character of the Town.” All new proposed developments must still be approved by the Richmond Development Review Board (DRB). The DRB review includes appropriateness of the development for the area and hearings are open to the public for comment.

**7. Will developers build big box stores along Route 2?**

The statement of prohibition on “big box” stores remains in the Gateway Commercial Zoning District Regulations.