TECHNICAL PLANS

### Future Land Use

**VISION CONNECTION**

* **Affordability:** Concentrating development in village areas means fewer roads to maintain and less auto dependence for residents.
* **Community for All Ages**: Younger and older generations increasingly want to live in downtowns, close to services, social opportunities, and more people.
* **Natural + Working Lands**: Directing development to village centers reduces the development pressure on our prime agricultural and natural lands.
* **Vibrant Downtown**: Focusing growth in village centers allows us to focus resources and amenities there, while attracting more people and energy.

Since the late 1970s, Richmond has recognized the importance of planning and regulating for its land use in protecting community character and quality of life. But Richmond’s zoning map and land use regulations have changed little since they were enacted during that time, and the regulations are not necessarily in line with Richmond’s land use goals today.

Richmond is poised to proactively direct future growth, investment and land use, which will help the town strategically advance the vision and the goals, targets, and actions outlined in this plan. Revisiting and adjusting our land use regulations will help us build vibrant village centers, maintain our rural character and working lands, create efficient transportation options, and improve affordability.

Today, Richmond’s land use is primarily a combination of undeveloped and agricultural land, scattered homes and compact neighborhoods, and areas of denser mixed-use or commercial development in village centers and along Richmond’s main transportation corridors. Richmond’s land use is also impacted by trends across the region. Our location on the eastern edge of Chittenden County means that Richmond is part of a regional growth center. We face far less pressure than towns closer to Burlington, but if Burlington continues to grow and housing prices to rise, more people will be seeking housing in Richmond and towns on the outskirts of the county. Williston has become the regional center for major chain stores, which means that Richmond is unlikely to face that type of development pressure. Richmond borders three towns that are even more rural (Huntington, Hinesburg, and Bolton), so the outlying agricultural areas are unlikely to face growth pressure from adjacent towns.

The Town of Richmond currently has a comprehensive set of zoning regulations. The zoning regulations evolve in conjunction with the town planning process. In order to implement the town plan, zoning regulations must match the intentions and goals provided in this document. Much of Richmond’s land is already constrained from certain uses or types of development in one or more ways. Our varied landscape includes many steep slopes, floodplains and wetlands, and other areas that cannot practically be developed or are protected by state or local regulations. Various parcels in Richmond also have legal development constraints, such as conservation easements or purchases by land trusts. The **Developable Areas Map** shows the areas of town that are not constrained and could be potentially developed. These are the areas where we need to identify ideal future land uses, and this map serves as a base map for future planning efforts. The remaining technical plans in this town plan also provide guidance for future land use, most specifically in the Natural and Cultural Resources and Economic Development technical plans.

Richmond’s desired future land uses take into account a number of factors: developable areas, Richmond’s vision, data on expected trends and demand, and public input during the town planning process. The **Future Land Use Map** illustrates broad categories of land use that we wish to see and encourage in town. It does not necessarily reflect current land uses, or even what is allowed under current zoning regulations. It does represent our vision for future land use, and a goal toward which we will work. The map includes 12 distinct land use categories, and defines the boundaries and purposes we wish to see in those areas.

**Priority Levels:** The Future Land Use Map assigns four priority levels to land uses, reflecting the degree to which the Town of Richmond will prioritize action or pursue strategies or investments in specific land use outcomes.

**Highly Encouraged** – the Town of Richmond shall proactively work with property owners to help achieve these activities. The town may develop new municipal programs to further or sustain these activities. These types of activities will be allowable under future land use regulations and may also be incentivized.

**Encouraged** - the Town of Richmond may work with property owners to help achieve these activities. These types of activities will be allowable under future land use regulations and may also be incentivized through bonuses or other incentive-based regulations.

**Allowed -** the Town of Richmond will not oppose or prohibit this type of use. Uses will be allowable under future zoning regulations.

**Prohibited** - the Town of Richmond will not allow this type of new development or activity, though pre-existing uses may be allowed.

##### Land Use Areas

The following table describes each of the designated land use areas in our Future Land Use Map, along with the specific uses and activities that will be encouraged, allowed, or prohibited in each. These uses do not encompass all possible allowance or prohibitions, but serve as a starting point for future zoning regulation.

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| **Natural and Working Lands**  Areas that protect sensitive natural areas such as critical wildlife habitat, steep slopes, and prominent ridgelines, while allowing for sustainable agriculture, forestry businesses, recreation, and limited residential use. | | | |
| **Highly Encouraged** | **Encouraged** | | **Allowed** |
| Forestry management activities and agricultural uses; subdivision development that clusters housing sites close together and sets aside larger areas of undeveloped land | Commercial activities that directly support the economic viability of agricultural and forestry uses, such as agricultural and forest product processing and agritourism; new conserved lands and new trail systems that connect with existing trails  New trail systems that connect with existing trails and new or expanded recreation areas | | Future residential development (though limited compared to other areas); on-site farm worker housing |
| **Rural Agricultural and Residential Areas**  Areas that maintain the rural character of the landscape while allowing for existing uses and activities such as low-density residential development and limited, small-scale commercial activities | | | |
| **Encouraged** | | **Allowed** | |
| Commercial activities that directly support the economic viability of agricultural and forestry uses, such as agricultural and forest product processing and agritourism; new subdivision development that clusters housing sites close together and sets aside larger areas of rural undeveloped land, development that does not inhibit scenic beauty | | New low-density residential development, along with home occupations; existing commercial activities; some new limited, small-scale commercial activities, which are compatible with rural landscapes and residential uses | |

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| **Neighborhoods**  Areas designed to enhance existing, and encourage new, residential neighborhood developments in proximity to village areas. Densities that are similar to, or slightly less dense than those historically found within the village areas. | | | |
| **Highly Encouraged** | **Encouraged** | | |
| Bike and pedestrian transport options and street tree plantings | Single-family homes, with accessory apartments and buildings with two-, three- or four-family housing units that are compatible in scale to adjacent development; shared amenities such as a playground, park, bus shelter, or other community gathering area | | |
| **Local Character Areas**  Areas that support and encourage unique local enterprises vital to Richmond’s character, culture, and economy; the areas currently host educational, recreational, and agricultural and forestry activities and serve as public gathering areas | | | |
| **Encouraged** | | | |
| New buildings that reflect a similar scale, massing, and orientation of historic Vermont farm/agricultural complexes or old mill/manufacturing buildings or new buildings or activities that support existing uses | | | |
| **Villages**  Dense centers that reinforce Richmond’s traditional historic settlement pattern. Village areas contain a mix of small-scale commercial and light industrial businesses and residential neighborhoods. Densities will be similar to those historically found within the village areas (ranging from less than 0.25 acres to 0.5 acres). The town will maintain or expand, the Vermont State Village Center Designation for a significant portion of these areas to help direct funding and resources to property owners for economic development and historic preservation. Historically residential side streets will be maintained and enhanced. The Richmond Village area contains all the land within the existing water and sewer service area. The Jonesville Village area contains the land primarily located within ¼ to ¾ mile of the intersection of US Route 2 and Cochran Road. | | | |
| **Highly Encouraged** | | **Encouraged** | **Allowed** |
| A mix of housing types; sidewalks, bike facilities, and local bus service, in addition to community gathering places, village-scale recreation areas and street tree plantings; new residential and commercial enterprise on undeveloped lands | | Private or community water and/or sewer system that helps facilitate future (re)development | Buildings containing a mix of uses and with multiple stories and with minimal setbacks |
| **Downtown**  A core business district that contains a mix of businesses and services in close proximity and easy walking distance, which is vital to the economic health, character, and cultural identity of the town. This area will contain the greatest density of mixed uses and multiple-story buildings with minimal setbacks. The town will consider new Vermont State Downtown Designation for this area to help direct an increased amount of funding, trainings, and resources to property owners for economic development and historic preservation. This is the area in the heart of the Richmond Village, including the land included within and around Richmond’s current Village Center Designation boundary. | | | |
| **Highly Encouraged** | | | |
| A mix of commercial, retail, and residential uses contained within multiple-story buildings  streetscape improvements that enhance a pedestrian-friendly environment balanced with adequate accommodation of parking | | | |

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| **Gateway Mixed Use Area** A mix of businesses and residences that complement the adjacent village area and maintain Richmond’s small town character*. The gateway includes the land from I-89 to the former village boundary* | | | | | | | | |
| **Highly Encouraged** | | **Encouraged** | | | | | | **Allowed** |
| Uses or facilities that are processing or selling local farm or forest products or hosting technology businesses; buffering and landscaping that minimizes the visual impacts of developments; bike and pedestrian transport options and street tree plantings | | A municipal water and sewer line extension to support mixed-use development; new buildings that reflect a similar scale, massing, and orientation of historic Vermont farm/agricultural complexes (such as the Conant Farm on Route 2) or old mill/manufacturing buildings (such as the Goodwin Baker Building or the Plant & Griffith building in Jonesville) | | | | | | Mix of commercial, light industrial, and residential uses |
| **River Road Commercial Area**  *What:* A commercial and industrial area, allowing for mixed commercial and residential use. This is the area in the vicinity of the Route 2 and River Road intersection, and contains a portion of the land that may be served by a future extension of the municipal water and sewer system | | | | | | | | |
| **Highly Encouraged** | | | | **Encouraged** | | **Allowed** | | |
| Buffering and landscaping that minimizes the visual impacts of developments | | | | Larger-scale industrial and commercial uses; bike and pedestrian transport options | | Commercial and residential mixed use | | |
| **Flood Hazard Overlay Area**  An overlay district that protects the public’s health, safety, and welfare from flood-related damages; improves flood resilience, river corridor equilibrium, and water quality; controls stormwater, erosion, sedimentation; and protects biodiversity and habitat. *This area includes all land in t*he National Flood Insurance Program’s Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) with a 1% chance of flooding, more commonly referred to as the 100-year floodplain. | | | | | | | | |
| **Highly Encouraged** | **Encouraged** | | | | **Allowed** | | **Prohibited** | |
| Establishment, restoration, and preservation of riparian areas | Recreation, transportation, agriculture, and forestry uses | | | | Existing uses and activities | | New housing units or new principal structures | |
| **Paths and Transit Routes**  A commercial and industrial area, with uses and enterprises similar to those currently in operation  Priority locations for bike and/or pedestrian paths are 1) between Richmond village and the Park and Ride 2) along Cochran Road | | | | | | | | |
| **Encouraged** | | | | | | | | |
| New bike and pedestrian paths that connect to existing paths and trail systems that link and connect to existing trail networks | | | | | | | | |
| **Scenic Viewsheds**  *What:* Areas that are necessary for maintaining or improving critical scenic views, typically requiring open space and/or traditional architectural designs*.*   1. The scenic view south eastward from Exit 11, providing an unobstructed view of Camel’s Hump 2. X 3. X | | | | | | | | |
| **Highly Encouraged** | | | **Encouraged** | | | | | |
| Development that does not impact scenic views | | | Development that minimizes visual impact of scenic viewsheds. | | | | | |

**GOALS & ACTIONS**

**GOAL 1:** **Richmond will have smart growth and land use or development and preserved town character**

* Invest in municipal infrastructure improvements that allow for new development
* Create incentives or policies that encourage affordable housing development
* Provide technical assistance to property owners
* Create zoning regulations that support the above mentioned uses and prohibitions
* Create form-based zoning regulations that include architectural and design requirements to be met in certain districts, especially mixed-use areas

**GOAL 2: Richmond will have protected, conserved, or specially designated lands including but not limited to floodplain, scenic viewsheds, ridgelines, and local character areas**

* Continue to prohibit development in sensitive or conserved areas such as floodplain or steep slopes
* Purchase lands in order to permanently protect, conserve, or control development of them
* Create specialized zoning exemptions or regulations for local character area properties
* Create zoning overlay zones that provide further restriction of partial areas or multiple districts