TECHNICAL PLANS

**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.

### Future Land Use

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. Richmond’s zoning regulations, however, 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, improve affordability, and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. This revision of zoning and subdivision bylaws will require substantial public input. Newly adopted Vermont legislation will also play a role in this process including Act 171 and Act 174, as well as the regional planning documents for Chittenden County.

**CURRENT LAND USE**

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 such as Act 250. Various parcels in Richmond also have legal or regulatory development constraints, such as conservation easements.

**FUTURE LAND USE**

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** and the following list of areas illustrate 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. We have identified 7 distinct land use areas. Each area has unique characteristics and varying levels of existing density and development potential. Below you will find further detail for each area including the general state that each area is currently in regarding development and land use. The remaining technical plans in this town plan also provide guidance for future land use.

Upon completion of the Town Plan, the planning commission will begin to update our land use regulations to align with the goals and actions articulated in the plan. Bylaws will be flexible to allow for creative economic opportunities that can, in turn, support current patterns of development and rural character. Any new development constraints will need to be designed to preserve valued resources while still allowing for growth. This task will require significant public input and discussion.

Additional thinking will be required to incorporate Vermont’s two new major statutes that have become law since the visioning process for this plan was undertaken. These laws, enacted in 2016, are Act 174, the “Energy Improvements Development Act,” and Act 171, the “Timber Harvesting and Forest Lands Act.” Public discussion will need to consider siting for renewable energy facilities, which will be essential to meet the state’s energy supply goals, and to consider ways to minimize forest fragmentation.

##### Land Use Areas

1. **Northwest Industrial-Commercial:** 
   * + **Location**: Land near and around River Road (Route 117) to the northwestern side of i-89 interchange, extending along primarily the east side of Governor Peck Road and a portion of the western most end of West Main Street.
     + **Purpose**: This area, with its existing 3-phase power and broadband, and minimal existing residences, is ideally suited for commercial and industrial uses that might not be suitable in the Village downtown area.
     + **Current Uses:** A mix of commercial, industrial, and vacant properties as well as a solar array and gas station/quick stop
     + **Future Uses:**
       - A mix of commercial and industrial uses, such as warehousing, manufacturing, wholesale and retail businesses
       - Uses that may require larger tracts of land than are available in other commercial areas of Richmond
       - Secondary multi-family or other residential or mixed uses
       - Could be served by a future extension of the water and wastewater system

1. **Gateway:** 
   * + **Location:** Area extending along the north/northeast side of Route 2 (West Main) from the village boundary to the I-89 interchange.
     + **Purpose:** Commercial, light industrial and residential uses that may not fit in Richmond Village but could be advantaged by proximity to the downtown area. Moderate density development and buildings that reflect a similar scale to historic agricultural or manufacturing buildings (such as the Goodwin-Baker Building). New buildings should be compatible with existing residential uses.
     + **Current Uses:** Commercial and residential uses, some mixed uses, a few private companies and businesses with moderate density
     + **Future Uses:** 
       - Commercial, light industrial, ~~and~~ residential and mixed uses
       - Development that would not be suitable for the village or downtown commercial spaces
       - Historic preservation or creative reuse of existing structures is encouraged to maintain Richmond’s character
       - Could be served by a future extension of the water and wastewater system
2. **Villages** 
   1. **Richmond Village:**

* **Location**: Land encompassing contiguous areas of Jericho Road, Bridge Street, East Main Street, West Main Street, Thompson Road and side streets, south and west of the interstate. Also encompassing the existing water and sewer system, and historic village boundaries.
* **Purpose:** Serves as the commercial and residential hub of the Town. This area reinforces the traditional settlement pattern and provides a central location for civic activities and services. There should be a variety of housing options, while respecting the historic character of the existing dwellings. The Town will maintain the “Vermont State Village Center” designation and consider a “Designated Downtown” for a significant portion of this area to help direct resources to property owners for economic development and historic preservation. Different parts of the Richmond Village Area may be considered separate districts for zoning purposes.
* **Current Uses:** Commercial and residential uses, mixed commercial and residential use~~,~~ and public spaces and buildings
* **Future Uses:**

Commercial and residential uses, including a broader application of mixed uses and multiple-story buildings

Single family and multi-family homes and accessory dwellings

Accessory uses such as home-based businesses or cottage industries,

Public open spaces and buildings,

Historic preservation and creative reuse or redevelopment of existing buildings and structures,

“Complete streets” improvements, including enhanced transportation modes such as sidewalks, paths, public transit stops, and bike paths/lanes,

Compatible scale recreational areas

* 1. **Jonesville:**
* **Location**: Land within ¾ of a mile of the Route 2 and Cochran Rd intersection
* **Purpose**: A secondary commercial and residential center with the potential for providing services for nearby residences as has been the case historically. The purpose is similar to that of Richmond Village, with high density development potential, only on a smaller scale. There may be different zoning districts within this area.
* **Current Uses:** Currently residential and a few commercial businesses as well as a post office and recreational access to the Winooski River
* **Future Uses:**

Commercial and small scale industrial and mixed uses,

Residential uses including multi-family homes and accessory dwellings

Accessory uses such as home-based businesses or cottage industries

“Complete streets” improvements including enhanced transportation modes such as paths, public transit stops, and bike paths/lanes

Recreational areas

1. **High Density Residential**
   1. **Riverview Commons Area:** 
      * + - **Location:** Land in the northwest corner of Richmond that includes the Riverview Commons Mobile Home Park and surrounding residential lands.
          - **Purpose:** To provide affordable housing in a densely settled neighborhood, which provides residents with efficient traffic facilities, public utilities such as water and wastewater services, community areas and comfortable spacing between individual homes. Shared amenities such as a park, playground, bus shelter, or other gathering areas are desirable as are street tree plantings and bike and pedestrian transport options.
          - **Current Uses:**

Primarily residential with some accessory uses

* + - * + **Future Uses:**

Single-family mobile homes

Other single-family, multi-family and accessory dwellings

Accessory uses such as home-based businesses or cottage industry.

Could be served by a future extension of the water and wastewater system

Could be served by the construction of walkable or bikeable transportation systems that link the neighborhood with Richmond Village, the Park and Ride facility, and the schools.

* 1. **North of Richmond Village Area:** 
     + - * **Location:** Land north of Richmond Village and north of i-89 up to the Jericho town border
         * **Purpose:** Moderate tohigh density residential and accessory uses, Shared amenities such as parks, playgrounds, and community areas are desirable, as are street tree plantings and bike and pedestrian options within the neighborhoods.
         * **Current Uses:** Primarily residential, some cottage industry, or home-based businesses, and some accessory agricultural uses
         * **Future Uses:**

Single-family homes and multi-family homes that are compatible in scale with adjacent development, accessory dwellings

Accessory uses such as home-based businesses and cottage industries.

Could be served by a future extension of the water and wastewater system

Could be served by the construction of walkable or bikeable transportation systems that connect the neighborhoods with the Richmond Village, the Park and Ride facility, and the schools.

* 1. **Greater Jonesville Area:**
     + - * **Location:** Areas to the north and south of Jonesville Village
         * **Purpose:** To provide moderate to high density residential areas and accessory uses near the commercial center of Jonesville. Amenities such as parks, playgrounds, and community areas are desirable, as are street tree plantings, and bike and pedestrian transport options.
         * **Current Uses:** Primarily residential, some cottage industry, or home-based businesses and some accessory agricultural uses
         * **Future Uses:**

Single-family homes, and multi-family homes that are compatible in scale with adjacent development, and accessory dwellings

Accessory uses such as home-based businesses and cottage industries

Could be served by a future extension of the water and wastewater system

1. Rural-**Commercial**
   * + - * **Location:**
   1. **Route 2:** Area on either side of Route 2, west of Greater Jonesville
   2. **Cochran Road:** Area on either side of Cochran Road east of Richmond Village
      * + - **Purpose:** These are currently open space lands containing unique enterprises that contribute to Richmond’s special character. Additional commercial activities that diversify and support the existing uses of these enterprises will be allowed. New buildings that reflect a similar scale, massing or orientation as historic Vermont agricultural or manufacturing complexes are desirable. Commercial strip development is to be avoided, and existing conservation easements and natural resources protections will continue to apply.
          - **Current Uses for both locations:** Agricultural, residential, and recreational/commercial uses, and some accessory commercial or recreational uses~~.~~
          - **Future Uses for both locations:**

Continued existing uses

Commercial and recreational uses that complement or diversify current uses, such as provision of event spaces, recreational activities, value-added enterprises, and agricultural and forestry-related uses

1. **Significant Natural Areas:** High Priority Contiguous Habitat Units, High Priority Forest Blocks, and Habitat Connectors
   * + - **Location:** These areas are found in Richmond’snortheast quadrant, eastern and southern borders, southwest border and Bryant Hill. They have been defined by state and regional mapping efforts.
       - **Purpose:** To minimize forest fragmentation and protect significant natural resources and the ecological services they provide. These areas will have the lowest density of development in Richmond.
       - **Current Uses:** conserved lands, low density residential, ~~or~~ and agricultural and forestry uses, with some accessory uses such as cottage industries and home-based businesses
       - **Future Uses:** 
         * further conservation or protection of these areas
         * uses that minimize forest fragmentation, soil erosion, and water pollution
         * uses that minimize impacts to scenic views, ridgeline habitat connectors, sensitive ecosystems, and steep slopes
         * low density residential or agricultural development that is clustered and in the fringes of these areas,
         * uses that are compatible with Act 171 such as forestry and maple sugaring
2. **Agricultural-Residential:** 
   * + - **Location:** Land that occurs throughout Richmond outside of the previously described land use areas.
       - **Purpose:** These are rural areas with low density residential development, and forestry uses. They provide much of Richmond’s prized rural character. Cottage industries, home-based businesses and commercial activities that directly support the economic viability of agricultural and forestry industries are allowed.
       - **Current Uses:** Primarily residential, some agricultural and forestry, some small scale accessory commercial, cottage industry, or home-based businesses
       - **Future Uses:** 
         * Low to moderate density residential uses
         * Development that occurs on agricultural and forested land should be clustered and should minimize fragmentation of forest lands and prime agricultural soils
         * Home occupations, cottage industry, agricultural, and forestry businesses will be encouraged as well as commercial activities that directly support economic viability of agricultural and forestry uses.
         * All development in this area should be compatible with rural landscapes

**GOALS & ACTIONS**

**GOAL 1:** **Encourage “smart growth” as defined in Vermont statutes, which allows development while preserving Richmond’s rural character.**

1. Invest in municipal infrastructure improvements that allow for new development
2. Create policies that encourage affordable housing development
3. Provide technical assistance to property owners
4. Create zoning regulations that support the above mentioned uses and prohibitions
5. Create form-based zoning regulations that include architectural and design requirements to be met in certain districts, especially mixed-use areas
6. Explore density-based zoning when updating the land use regulations

**GOAL 2: Protect important natural lands including but not limited to floodplain, scenic viewsheds, and high priority forest blocks.**

1. Continue to prohibit damaging or dangerous types of development in sensitive or conserved areas such as floodplain or steep slopes
2. Restrict certain types of development in sensitive or high priority natural areas
3. Encourage development that protects natural areas and preserves scenic and/or historic character of Richmond