

TO: Richmond Selectboard

FROM: Ravi Venkataraman, Town Planner

DATE: December 17, 2021

SUBJECT: Update on Zoning for Affordable Housing study

### Background

Since April 2021, the town has been investigating methods to increase the housing stock in town with the help of consultant Brandy Saxton of PlaceSense. This study is better known as the “Zoning for Affordable Housing” study. This project is supported by a \$20,000 Municipal Planning Grant from Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development.

So far, Saxton has completed a number of tasks identified in the [project scope of work](#). She has conducted surveys on housing and housing needs among town residents and non-residents seeking housing in Richmond. She also has completed an analysis of the draft zoning regulations the Planning Commission has compiled, and provided recommendations based on planning practices and trends. Further detail about the analysis and recommendations are in the “Technical Memorandum” section of this memo.

Saxton is currently reaching out to stakeholders in town—local developers, younger residents (aged 35 and younger), senior residents (aged 65 and older), and employers. She is putting together draft zoning regulations based on information in the technical memorandum, feedback received at public meetings, and input the Planning Commission received during its outreach efforts earlier this year.

The draft zoning regulations will be available in coming months. A public meeting to present the ideas in the draft zoning regulations and to receive comment is slated to occur in the coming months. More details about the public meeting are to follow in the coming weeks.

### Technical Memorandum

After the Planning Commission completed its community outreach work in March 2021, it had drafted zoning regulations for zoning districts in the village based on the input it had received. These draft documents are enclosed for your review.

Saxton reviewed both the current zoning regulations and the draft zoning regulations the Planning Commission composed. In response, she provided a technical memo to the Housing Committee and Planning Commission in October 2021. This technical memo is an analysis of the current zoning regulations and draft zoning regulations, and includes recommendations based on planning practices and state planning goals. The technical memo also includes an analysis of conformance of the draft zoning regulations with the [Neighborhood Development Area state designation program](#) administered by Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

The analysis and recommendations Saxton drafted are in the enclosed technical memorandum. I have highlighted portions of the document to underscore particular facts and findings. **Please note that the recommendations she has provided in the technical memo are not final recommendations. These recommendations are solely based on planning practices and state planning goals. Final**

**recommendations will be in the form of draft zoning regulations, and will incorporate feedback she received and will receive in forthcoming focus group sessions with stakeholders.**

### Zoning Amendment Process

The Planning Commission is expected to receive the final deliverables in February 2022. After the Planning Commission receives the final set of deliverables—the final report which includes the finalized draft zoning regulations—the commission will review the contents. The commission may edit the documents to create consensus before forwarding zoning amendments to the Selectboard. The commission's finalization of draft zoning regulations and approval is to be determined based on its need for review time of the final deliverables.