

Town of Richmond
Zoning Bylaw Amendment Report
For
Proposed Village Downtown District

This report is in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4441 (c) which states:

When considering an amendment to a bylaw, the planning commission shall prepare and approve a written report on the proposal. A single report may be prepared so as to satisfy the requirements of this subsection concerning bylaw amendments and subsection 4384 (c) of this title concerning plan amendments...The report shall provide:

(A) Brief explanation of the proposed amendment and...include a statement of purpose as required for notice under §4444 of this title:

PURPOSE: To create a zoning district for the core of Richmond Village that will allow for higher density residential and commercial mixed use development. This amendment will help to establish zoning regulations that are in line with smart growth principles and the Richmond Town Plan. Affected parcels will be removed from the Village Commercial District and become the Village Downtown District.

The proposed amendment will create an entirely new zoning district within the village area of the Town of Richmond. The 14 parcels include the following: PS0023, BR0052, BR0048, BR0039, BR0038, BR0030, BR0027, BR0026, WM0013, EM0010, EM0013, WM0004, WM0035, DS0022. The town plan passed in November of 2018, and the town is now authorized by that passage to amend the zoning ordinance and create regulations that will allow smart growth in Richmond's core business area. The residential density is increasing from 3 units per acre to 24 units per acre. Parking is now a bedroom-based parking supply for residential, and commercial parking is not changing. This district will require street-floor commercial uses, and will limit residential uses to upper floors to maintain a traditional village use pattern. The parcels in this district are exceptionally small, and some are exempt from on-site parking. New residential development on parcels with a parking exemption will require parking plans that identify where the developer or owner intends for tenants and patrons to park. Another facet of this new district is requiring compatibility of size, scale, color, materials, and character of the district, and construction utilizing materials similar or the same to the existing buildings of the district, being required for all new construction and all new or remodeled exterior facades.

And shall include findings regarding how the proposal:

- 1. Conforms with or furthers the goals and policies contained in the municipal plan, including the effect of the proposal on the availability of safe and affordable housing:*

The following is language from the 2018 Richmond Town Plan:

(From Goals and Actions)

- When updating zoning regulations, explore ways to allow for non-traditional housing types, ways to encourage the creation of new business enterprises;
- Promote economic opportunities on town media platforms, and create economic development incentives for development that meets “smart growth” standards and preserves Richmond’s history and character;
- Adjust land use regulations to allow for and encourage new industrial/commercial and mixed use development, and explore the creation of zones or districts to attract and support businesses in specific sectors such as a cultural district or green development zone;
- Maintain and upgrade zoning regulations and development review policies to ensure that concentrated growth occurs in designated growth centers, thus bringing residents and businesses in close proximity;
- Adopt and maintain a zoning ordinance based on “smart growth” principles, with most development concentrated in the village, neighborhoods, downtown, gateway mixed use areas to reduce vehicle miles travelled from housing to shopping and to public transit options;
- Create policies that encourage affordable housing development;
- Encourage development that protects natural resources and preserves scenic and/or historic character of Richmond;
- When updating zoning regulations, identify opportunities for development of a variety of housing types, for example allowing mixed residential and commercial use, higher unit density, or unique accessory housing in certain areas that will be identified during said update;
- Encourage concentrated residential development in areas identified for growth;
- Continue to prohibit the construction of new principal structures in the Special Flood Hazard Areas of the Winooski and Huntington Rivers;
- Adopt zoning regulations that include Vermont’s Smart Growth principles such as concentrated downtown development in order to maintain Richmond’s historic settlement pattern and village character;
- Encourage “smart growth” development in the village center or downtown, or near transit options, to reduce car travel distances;

2. Is compatible with proposed future land uses and densities of the municipal plan:

The following is language from the 2018 Richmond Town Plan:

(From Future Land Use)

Richmond Village:

Location: Land encompassing areas of Jericho Road, Bridge Street, East Main Street, West Main Street, Thompson Road, Cochran Road, Huntington Road, and side streets, south and west of the interstate, contiguous to the existing water and wastewater district.

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 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, agricultural, 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, two-family, and multi-family homes and accessory dwellings
- Accessory uses such as home-based businesses or cottage industries
- Agricultural and accessory agricultural uses
- 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

3. *Carries out, as applicable, any specific proposals for any planned community facilities:*

Not applicable to any community facilities