

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Richmond Selectboard

FROM: Virginia Clarke, Planning Commission Chair

DATE: September 16, 2021

SUBJECT: Testimony for the Williams Hill Road Hearing

The Richmond Planning Commission offers the following testimony in the matter of the discontinuance of the Class 4 road from the end of the traveled portion of Williams Hill Road southward to the vicinity of Palmer Road:

1. The Planning Commission supports the retention of this 0.7 mile section of Williams Hill Road as a Class 4 road.

The commission concluded that retaining this section of Williams Hill Road supports the following 2018 Town Plan goals and actions:

- Ensure that Richmond residents can meet basic needs and access affordable goods and services, including in times of emergency, as well as support or provide further services for residents when possible
- Increase resilience of town infrastructure to be able to withstand a variety of hazards and disasters

Furthermore, retaining the ROW in the location of this Class 4 road best serves the Town of Richmond's interests. In terms of planning practice, keeping the right-of-way would enable the town and its residents to utilize the right-of-way in case of unforeseen circumstances, such as road closures on Hinesburg Road. By retaining the right-of way, the Town would also be able to flexibly plan for growth (should the need arise in the future) as a network of collector roads improves traffic circulation between destinations.

2. Additionally, creating and maintaining a trail over this Class 4 road is consistent with the Richmond Town Plan and its goals.

The Planning Commission cites the following 2018 Town Plan goals and actions:

- Decrease the amount of fossil fuels used for transportation by the town government, residents and businesses in Richmond through conservation and improved efficiency.
  - Encourage walking and the use of bicycles and facilitating the substitution of electricity and renewable fuels for fossil fuels.
- Maintain a "Complete Streets" policy that encourages multi-modal transportation options such as walking and biking in addition to vehicle traffic
- Support interconnectivity of trails and connectivity of trails with destinations such as the market or park and ride in order to provide non-motorized means of travel
- Support and create outdoor recreation opportunities that are available to the public.

The Planning Commission's conclusions on the matter are based upon the following materials: a summary of events, petitions and proposals leading up to this hearing; information provided by the Town Manager, Town Planner and various attorneys; information concerning the disposition of other Class 4 roads in Richmond; and, above all, the Richmond Town Plan.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on behalf of the Planning Commission if you have any questions.