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INTRODUCTION

“Looking back to 2018, looking forward to 2034”

Town Plan 2026

As is usual with the passage of time, some things change, and some things remain the same. Ten years ago, we undertook an extensive townwide outreach process to understand and characterize the vision and goals of Richmond residents, and most of this work remains as true today as it was then. We have updated this outreach through events, surveys and our more extensive use of the Front Porch Forum online chat tool.

Meanwhile, the world around us has changed. Old problems have taken on new importance. Our infrastructure is older and in need of repair. The scarcity of housing, and the increasingly severe rainfall events as climate change worsens, have reached levels that some term crises. Important new work by the Agency of Natural Resources has identified the necessity of maintaining functional natural ecosystems across the state and has mapped crucial areas in their “Vermont Conservation Design” work. The Vermont legislature has taken a deeper dive into municipal and regional affairs; and the federal government appears to have entered a new phase of radically reduced support and limited funding for programs we have embraced, which may translate into financial hardship for us over the life of this Plan.

For this Plan, we have taken elements from our 2018 Plan and then added in the new statewide goals and visions, adopted into law, which we, as citizens of our beautiful state of Vermont, must now add to our own local goals and visions. As we look back at 2018, we also look forward to what we might achieve by 2034.

Town Vision

For the 2018 Town Plan, Richmond conducted an extensive community engagement process that identified a vision to be "the most livable small town in Vermont," supported by eleven specific priorities around community character, affordability, opportunity, and resilience. During our 2025 outreach, we heard those same values reaffirmed. Residents love Richmond's strong community, small-town character, rural landscape, available services, and accessible location.

But we also heard new urgency around challenges that have intensified: housing availability and affordability, rising costs, climate adaptation and flooding, and balancing conservation with recreation. Our outreach work led us to Richmond's **vision for the 2026 Town Plan:**

> **We will preserve Richmond's working and natural landscapes, village character, and community spirit while expanding opportunities, improving access and strengthening resilience for all residents.**

This means expanding housing choices, supporting local businesses, improving transportation options, enhancing recreation while protecting natural resources, strengthening infrastructure against climate impacts, and maintaining community engagement that helps us tackle hard problems together. This Town Plan takes a forward-thinking approach to emerging opportunities and challenges while honoring and strengthening our close-knit community and rural character.

In order to fulfill this vision, we have developed a series of **goals** and **actions**, **organized** into eleven **Sections.** Each Section discusses a topic that is required by Vermont's municipal planning statute (24 VSA 4382).

VISION – Local, regional or statewide community desired outcomes
GOAL - A specific aim to reach a desired vision
ACTION - A method of achieving a goal
Each ACTION will be assigned one or more "owners" to carry out the task.
"OWNERS" of ACTIONS – may be elected or appointed officials, committees, community groups, Town staff, or Richmond residents

Purposes of the Town Plan

The purpose of this plan is to guide community members and leaders in carrying out the actions that will help achieve our goals over the next eight years. It is the roadmap that informs our decisions about everything from where new housing can be built to how we protect the Winooski River; from keeping the village vibrant to preparing for the next flood. The Plan charts our way forward, through our challenges, towards our vision.

The Plan is created by the community, for the community. The tools we have are, first and foremost, the energy and ideas of our residents, but in addition we can utilize public investments, incentives, state and regional resources, land use regulations, education, community collaboration, and other implementation strategies.

In addition, by law, an approved Town Plan allows Richmond to apply for grants to support planning activities; participate in state programs that support specific growth areas and economic revitalization such as the Village Center designation program; work with neighboring towns to reduce conflicts; have a greater say in legal actions, and have more success in managing growth while preserving rural character. Without an approved Plan we would not be able to adopt and revise our land use regulations (zoning and subdivision) or develop a Capital Budget and Plan.

This Plan, more so than previous Plans, integrates regional and statewide stakeholders into our planning efforts. Our elected officials in the state legislature have looked ahead as our rural economy evolves; our infrastructure and our population age, and climate change brings unwanted weather events. The statewide vision to preserve our natural heritage and biodiversity for future generations has imposed new standards and now requires our active participation. At the same time, growth and development must have a place within our borders. New challenges abound, and this Plan represents our best effort to address those challenges.

Adherence to Richmond Policies on Inclusion

Richmond has been an inclusionary town since the building of the Round Church in 1812 as a multi-faith community resource. In the language of the deed, we read:

> "Each shall peaceably share if requested their equal share of said house."

In modern times, this Plan and our planning process are subject to Richmond's Policy on Inclusion, which was passed as a non-binding resolution on March 7, 2017, at Town Meeting. The Policy on Inclusion states: "Be it resolved that we the people of Richmond celebrate diversity and welcome all people no matter their color, the religion they practice, their ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or gender identity."

The Policy on Inclusion has been enhanced by the town's policy of Fair and Impartial Policing for the Richmond Police Department, approved by the Richmond Police Chief and Selectboard in 2021. In 2025 the current Selectboard authorized a year-round posting of signage outside the Town Center which states: "Black Lives Matter" and "All are welcome here."

Plan Responsibilities

- **Planning Commission**

The Richmond Planning Commission is responsible for overseeing the readoption of the Town Plan every eight years.

- **Town Plan Steering Committee**

The Town Plan Steering Committee consists of Richmond residents who have volunteered to participate in this planning process and have given many hours to community outreach and Plan drafting. The Committee's responsibilities are complete with the adoption of this plan, and the committee will dissolve.

- **Selectboard**

The Selectboard must officially approve the recommended plan after holding one or more public hearings and subsequently warns the Plan for a townwide vote. The Selectboard is also responsible for adopting town policies and making critical decisions to implement the Plan.

- **Town Staff**

Town staff have provided technical and logistical support and guidance throughout this planning process, including helping to organize and publicize events and opportunities to engage the public. They are also charged with leading many of the implementation steps, and with supporting and following the plan as they carry out their responsibilities.

- **Town Boards + Committees**

Richmond has several official town boards and committees which oversee particular aspects of the community's activities. Each committee provided input into relevant goals or plan sections, and each is responsible for leading or implementing most of the actions related to its area of expertise. A list of these groups can be found in the Data and Additional Information Appendix6 (Entry 11).

- **Community Members + Other Groups**

The Richmond community was responsible for providing the input that helped shape the vision, actions and priorities, and will be subject to the policies and actions that the plan defines. Many actions cannot happen without resources and energy from local non-profits, businesses, schools or community members, and the involvement of many community members is critical for the success of the plan.

- **Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC)**

The CCRPC is responsible for confirming that the municipal plan is consistent with the state planning goals as defined in Vermont statute 24 VSA §4302 and contains all the

required elements as specified in 24 VSA §4382. This board also ensures that each municipality's plan does not conflict with the plans of neighboring towns, the regional ECOS Plan, and the Vermont state planning laws. CCRPC also assists in the preparation and printing of the maps found in the Plan.

- **Vermont State Legislature**

Since the visioning process for Town Plan 2018, numerous important pieces of state legislation have been adopted that significantly impact our 2026 document. These statutes aim to promote statewide goals through the planning and actions of individual towns. A number of them mandate municipal action directly, others do so by way of mandates to the regional planning commissions (In our case, CCRPC). Several set in motion studies by the Agency of Natural Resources that will result in mandates over the next few years. Most of these new laws relate either to the creation of housing, the mitigation of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas pollution, or the conservation of forest land and biodiversity. The goals of these statewide efforts cannot be achieved without the active participation of the towns, and the Vermont legislature has determined that the health and welfare of all residents will be negatively impacted if these goals are not met. A list of these statutes can be found in the Data and Additional Information Appendix.

Plan Structure

- **Introductio**n
- **Sections (eleven Required Elements) with Accompanying Map(s)**
  Each of the eleven Sections covers a topic that state statutes (24 VSA 4382) require us to consider in a municipal plan. The initial **Narrative** of each Section discusses current conditions and issues for the future. This is followed by **Goals** and the **Actions** that we plan to take to achieve these goals. Finally, a **map or maps** relevant to the topic appear at the end of most sections.
- **Implementation Table**
  The action items from all the Sections are gathered in an **Implementation Table**, which sets out a timeframe for, and ownership of, these tasks. This table may be distributed to all town committees to be used as a self-contained guide to municipal goals and actions to be undertaken by various sectors of the community including elected and appointed officials, committees, town staff, interest groups and community members over the lifetime of the Plan.

- **Appendix**

  Data and Additional Information

  Most Plan Sections have additional graphics, statistics, inventories, references, historical details or other information that is helpful for a deeper understanding of the material found in the Sections. Lists of relevant state statutes, community organizations and town governing bodies, and sources for further information can also be found here; as well as a description of the community outreach process that was carried out during 2025. The location of each topic covered in the Appendix is shown on the "Content" page at the start of this document.

Compatibility

This plan in its entirety has been determined to be compatible with the plans of the surrounding towns including Williston, Jericho, Bolton, Huntington, and Hinesburg. It has also been determined to be compatible with both the CCRCP's 2018 Chittenden County ECOS Plan and the draft 2026 Chittenden County ECOS Plan.

Section 1

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Vision Connection: We will strengthen Richmond's community spirit by supporting social connections, civic engagement, and the activities that bring neighbors together.

Overview

In this town plan, Community Development encompasses everything from basic services like our food shelf and local doctor's office to civic engagement through town committees and recreational opportunities like our trail network and farmers market. Our goal is to sustain what works well for current residents while expanding access for those who may join our community.

Community Spirit

Richmond, like many Vermont towns, highly values the community spirit of the town. This spirit is evident through the way residents have helped one another during recent flooding, and also when one of us experiences severe hardship. Often there are many willing to help however they are able. The" Vermont Strong" mentality is evident in good times as well as bad, but once everyone is taken care of after a disaster, it is sometimes more difficult to keep up that level of engagement. Continuous, meaningful involvement and work in solving local issues remains challenging.

Richmond has 19 committees and groups of volunteers, so there are those willing to help on matters they feel are important, but equally, our pool of "free" community labor is sometimes stretched thin. And although there are many volunteers, other than the chance meetings in places around town, there is not enough organized communication amongst volunteers, boards and committees. The town government may be able to play a role in this. Our participation in the online chat tool Front Porch Forum, which has expanded exponentially since its founding in 2000, has helped us to stay connected and keep most of us informed most of the time. But loudspeakers will amplify all voices, including those who are misinformed.

A community is built on the human need for connection. Ensuring that this connection is prioritized through policies and development activities will foster a stronger community.

Small Town Character

Richmond's distinct small-town character is defined primarily by:

- The landscape, its scenic vistas and pastoral settings
- Compact town-center
- Architectural heritage with historic structures such as the Round Church
- Functioning agricultural enterprises
- High-quality outdoor recreational activities

Many residents appreciate the town's modest scale, yet many cannot find housing and growth pressures are very evident. The state's "housing crisis" combined with the dynamics of the construction industry and our lack of easily developed land, push us towards a wealthier, more homogenous, demographic. Decisions regarding land development made by our town officials as well as by local builders and landowners will have substantial implications for balancing economic vitality, meeting housing needs, handling growing recreational activities while preserving rural character. The new regional Future Land Use mapping system may assist Richmond to better achieve this balance. (see Housing and Future Land Use for more information)

Basic Needs

Access to essential services such as healthy affordable food, clean water, energy, emergency and medical care, quality housing, transportation, and supplies are an important element of community development. Although these resources may be available locally, not all residents have equitable access. Access may be limited by service cost and eligibility, cultural or language barriers, transportation, hours of availability, or service provider capacity. Certain groups are disproportionately impacted by inaccessibility to essential services, including but not limited to Black, Indigenous, and people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, individuals with low incomes and/or education attainment, older adults, children and pregnant people, individuals with disabilities, and people living in rural communities.

Richmond's Food Shelf and Thrift Store, and the ReFind Boutique provide low or no cost food and affordable clothing to their customers. While some access to healthy food for low-income Vermonters is provided by VYCC, by donations to the Food Shelf from home gardens, and through Farmers Market acceptance of EBT, there is more to do to develop a local food system that supports our farms and meets Richmond's goal for equity and

inclusion. Richmond lacks a pharmacy and laundromat, but many other needs are met by Richmond Market & Beverage (grocery), Richmond Home Supply (hardware & lumber) as well as more boutique stores, a bank and three gas stations, all offering convenience store items. There is a dentist, a general practice doctor's office and a pediatrician, but childcare options remain inadequate.

Though we have a park and ride facility near at i-89 Exit 11 which is utilized by Green Mountain Transit Bus #86, the frequency is poor with no buses running after 6PM. Other public transportation is conspicuously absent, and there are residents that could benefit from a service that could shuttle people to and from hotspots. (see more in Transportation).

Government

A key part of the Richmond community is our government. Transparency and inclusion are always the goal. But the number of concurrent issues the town is working on causes attrition in engagement. Shifts in culture and demographics have led to less public participation in traditional meetings in the recent past and recruitment for boards and commissions is sometimes difficult. But despite this, volunteerism remains a valued part of Richmond's small-town character. And importantly, volunteers are always gladly welcomed, as an engaged community is one that will remain vibrant. Event management and publicity have improved with more extensive use of the Front Porch Forum and other platforms, but more could be done with a recreation director or coordinator. Similarly, cross-committee coordination could also be improved.

Cultural Amenities

The town offers various social, cultural, and recreational activities, some official and some not. These range from traditional town produced events like the 4th of July parade & fireworks and the Winter Holiday Market as well as citizen led events like the Friday Food Affair and our Halloween festivities which draw people from neighboring towns. Other community highlights include celebrating Richmond's agricultural heritage with the Farmers Market offering local produce and boutique crafts. Local farms offer blueberry and wildflower picking, corn, meat, eggs and sunflower mazes. Richmond carries on long-standing Vermont traditions such as Town Meeting Day.

Community Recreation

Outdoor recreation is central to the Richmond community and has been mentioned as a reason people choose to settle here. Richmond hosts sporting events like running, bike and ski races. Many are hosted by Cochran's Ski Area, one of a half dozen non-profit ski areas in

the United States. Richmond has school programs wherein children can bike, ski, hike, and swim. There are also multiple community parks in Richmond hosting soccer, baseball and, new for 2025, pickleball. Richmond's location in Chittenden County gives residents even more opportunities and easy access to cultural and recreational activities in nearby cities like Burlington and Montpelier. But there is also a desire for more local programs and facilities. There are longstanding aspirations for a community pool, tennis courts, basketball courts, safer bike and pedestrian routes. Funding remains the barrier to these. A paid community Recreation Director, experienced at fund raising and coordinating existing recreational activities, might be helpful to the Town.

Public access to trails and waterways offers biking, running, tubing, canoeing and paddleboarding. This access is provided through a mix of public and private lands with landowner's permission. The increasing use of these lands is obvious to all with the rise in popularity for gravel and mountain biking in particular leading to perceived pros and cons for Richmond, including safety. No matter the perception, outdoor recreation is a fundamental part of the Richmond community, maybe bigger than ever.

Public Health, Community Services & Special Populations

Richmond is home to many retirees and seniors who are supported by several community organizations. Richmond can help meet the needs of its seniors by providing opportunities to connect with others, learn new things, pursue creative interests, be healthy and contribute to their community. The Community Senior Centers of Richmond, Huntington and Bolton offer over 25 activities each week and join Hale and Hearty in helping seniors live life to the fullest. Young families with children may be attracted by our good schools, excellent library and plentiful junior recreational offerings, almost all of which are run by volunteers. Our Community Cares Camp provides a low-cost summer recreational program for kids, and counselor training for teens.

The town can encourage these populations indirectly through its policies and by supporting education, business growth, and diverse housing options. Future planning should include additional resources, when available, for children to enhance current afterschool, library, summer camp, childcare, and art programs. Young adults often come to Richmond to find a temporary home at the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, a successful program since 1985 that offers paid outdoor service experiences for people aged 15 and up. Housed in the historic Monitor Barn, preserved by the Richmond Land Trust, VYCC members build skills in conservation, agriculture and leadership while improving the health of Vermont's water, forests, working land and outdoor recreation infrastructure. More public Health information and resources can be found in the Data and Additional Information Appendix.

Challenges

Substance use remains a significant concern affecting the nation, Vermont, and Richmond. Rates of alcohol, cannabis, and illicit drug use are higher than the US average (Vermont Department of Health, 2025). The rate of opioid-related deaths has nearly tripled in the last decade (Vermont Department of Health, 2025). This issue is associated with noticeably increased crime rates, impacting public health and safety. Substance use influences community dynamics and sustainability. Public health, safety, and communication are amongst residents' highest priority and Richmond aims to assist its residents in managing the effects of this crisis. Challenges in neighboring communities also have implications for Richmond. Addressing these needs may involve enhancing volunteer networks, promoting collaboration among prevention groups, and improving communication systems. Success will require cooperation between government entities and residents. (More information about public health resources can be found in the Data and Additional Information Appendix.)

The modern era of divisive politics affects Richmond just like anywhere else. Transparency in government, allowance for public comment and even application of bylaws is key to maintaining a fair balance and freedom of expression in what is otherwise a strong community of caring residents.

There are wider challenges throughout Chittenden County to which Richmond is not immune. Our community is generally a safe place, but break-ins and theft do happen. Details on the status and community support for Richmond's police, fire and rescue services, as well as utilities like water and wastewater services for the Village, can be found in the Utilities and Facilities section of this Plan.

GOALS & ACTIONS

GOAL 1: Enable Richmond residents to access basic needs, affordable goods, and services.

ACTIONS:

1. Create a contingency to replace SNAP benefits if/when they lose federal funding. ***(Selectboard)***
2. Continue to support the Richmond Food Shelf and Thrift Store with anything they reasonably need to provide low or no cost food and clothing to those needing this service. ***(Town Administration, Selectboard, Town-wide)***

3. Form a task force to develop and implement additional strategies for food security and to promote the connection between food and farming. **(Richmond Racial Equity, Selectboard, Town Wide)**
4. When revising zoning, find new options to permit non-traditional housing types and encourage the development of new business ventures during zoning regulation updates. ***(Planning Commission, Planning Department, Selectboard)***
5. Ensure town policies and regulations work together with public health programs and resources within and beyond Richmond. ***(Selectboard)***
6. Consider ways to support Richmond Market & Beverage in their expansion to include a Pharmacy in this expansion. ***(Selectboard, Planning Commission, Town-wide)***
7. Consider ways of increasing opportunities for childcare providers, including supporting programs like the Youth Librarian and investigate a municipal property tax benefit for those providing in-home childcare. ***(Selectboard, Library staff)***
8. Continue ongoing public use of municipal buildings and grounds, including spaces such as the Community Room and Volunteers Green, for events like the Richmond Farmers Market, Holiday Market, book sale, and other accessible shopping opportunities. ***(Selectboard, Library staff, Town-wide)***

GOAL 2: Enhance civic engagement, and communication through transparent governance.

ACTIONS:

1. Sustain open and transparent communication channels via established platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Front Porch Forum, Times Ink, and MMCTV. Actively publicize opportunities for participation and volunteering, including livestreaming meetings through MMCTV and/or YouTube. ***(Town Administration, MMCTV)***
2. Continue to ensure full compliance with Vermont's Open Meeting Law by all town staff, boards, and commissions. ***(Selectboard, all Committees)***
3. Look at ways to align efforts of town boards, commissions, and staff to promote greater collaboration, communication and efficiency. ***(Selectboard, Planning Commission, Planning* Department*)***
4. Ensure the town website is kept up to date and designed in a manner which is user - friendly and easily accessible as a reference resource. ***(Town Administration)***
5. Uphold the town's inclusivity policy across municipal workplaces, boards, commissions, and media outlets. ***(Selectboard)***
6. Acknowledge and celebrate volunteer contributions through formal recognition and promotional efforts on the website and on social media (if agreeable). ***(Selectboard)***

GOAL 3: Support and develop outdoor recreation opportunities accessible to the public.

ACTIONS:

1. Collaborate with landowners willing to provide public access to privately held natural and open space areas. ***(Selectboard, Conservation Commission, Richmond Land Trust)***
2. Assist the Richmond Land Trust and Vermont Land Trust in efforts to conserve natural resources that allow for public recreational use. ***(Selectboard, Conservation Commission)***
3. Ensure collaboration among the Trails Committee, Andrews Community Forest Committee, Conservation Commission, Planning Commission. Encourage collaboration with other relevant regional organizations, including through a dedicated outreach staff position, such as a Recreational Director, if funding can be made available and if a specific job description can be developed by the groups. ***(Selectboard, Planning Commission)***
4. Develop and distribute materials that encourage responsible and safe enjoyment of Richmond's natural areas, including trail maps, informational kiosks, enhanced parking, improved access, and signage. Post notices of events on social channels. ***(Selectboard, Conservation Commission)***
5. Support established outdoor recreation venues such as Cochran's Ski Area, Chittenden County Fish & Game, the Andrews Community Forest and the local trail network. ***(Selectboard, Trails Committee)***
6. Endorse and support programs and opportunities for outdoor recreation, including access to the Winooski River, swimming, cross-country skiing, skating, mountain biking, and more. Establish recreational parking areas when feasible. ***(Selectboard, Conservation Commission, Parking Advisory Committee)***

GOAL 4: Continue supporting community social activities.

ACTIONS:

1. Consider adding a town outreach/communications role to coordinate and communicate town government, recreational matters, as well as plan and promote community events on all communications channels. ***(Selectboard)***
2. Promote arts and cultural events for residents and visitors on all communications channels. ***(Selectboard, Town-wide)***
3. Continue to seek funding options for new recreation and engagement programs. ***(Selectboard, administration)***

4. Ensure zoning allows sustainable recreational businesses and projects on public and private land, such as community centers and performance spaces. ***(Planning Commission, Selectboard)***

GOAL 5: Maintain and enhance public health

ACTIONS:

1. Support public health initiatives within and beyond Richmond by maintaining policies and resources that facilitate the operation and development of critical facilities and programs. Enhanced public health infrastructure can be achieved through a Health in All Policies approach. The American Public Health Association's Health in All Policies guide contains examples of how local governments can support health. ***(Selectboard)***
2. Continue to collaborate with the Howard Center, the Vermont Department of Health, and other public health providers, to promote resources and initiatives aimed at addressing substance abuse, as well as other significant issues such as domestic violence. ***(Selectboard)***
3. Work with the Vermont Department of Health to conduct health impact assessments when considering the potential effects of any major proposed policy, plan, program or project to judge the health outcomes in Richmond and the distribution of those effects within the population. ***(Selectboard, Health Officer)***

GOAL 6: Efficient and Effective Community Service from Town Government

ACTIONS:

1. Improve the planning and zoning process: ***(Planning Department, Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, DRB)***
    a. Strengthen the DRB's Rules and Procedures in regard to the following activities:
        i. Performing site plan visits and carefully reviewing the site plan portion of applications
        ii. Staying current on state statutes
        iii. Improving communication with Planning Commission and staff about newly adopted zoning regulations
        iv. Reviewing conditional use application procedures to allow for broader use of administrative approval
    b. Continue to review the Town's Planning and Zoning webpage to make it more user-friendly and clearer

c. Revise the Subdivision Regulations to allow for “major” and “minor” subdivision categories
d. Revise the Zoning Regulations to provide clear development standards for infill development (such as 3–4-unit multi-family projects) to allow for administrative approval
e. Incorporate “internal planning policies” into initial instructions given to applicants so they have full requirements at the start of a project
f. Provide applicants with a comprehensive list of the state permits that will be required for their particular project, and indicate when, in the municipal review process, each permit will be required
g. Educate town residents that “character of the neighborhood” may not be used to appeal affordable housing projects (Act 47)
h. Ensure that zoning regulations have adequate development standards for DRB review of applicable projects in the Tier 1b overlay district

2. Create a place to gather issues/concerns/complaints about how the town conducts matters. Implement action plans to explain to residents how processes work now and how they can be improved. ***(Administration)***

Section 2

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Vision Connection: We will expand opportunities for local businesses, good jobs, and economic vitality that supports residents while respecting our village character.

Current Conditions in Richmond

Many residents find that Richmond is a town where you can find much of what you need without leaving home. From hardware to haircuts, baked goods to bike repairs, the village center offers a diverse array of businesses within a few walkable blocks. It's the kind of place where you might run three errands and see five neighbors, the small town feeling that people want to keep.

The village center anchors this activity with the Market, the Home Supply, restaurants, and even a brewery. Professional services include banks, lawyers, and accountants, while personal services range from physical therapy to a long-standing doggy daycare. Recent additions include an expanded bakery and new bookstore, with a new restaurant growing into Big Spruce's former space, even promising year-round creemees.

Richmond's larger employers span from traditional (the school system, Harrington's) to cutting-edge (Greensea Systems leads the world in underwater robotics technology). The Vermont Youth Conservation Corps provides statewide significance while creating work and learning opportunities for young people. Local farms offer eggs, meat, vegetables, and abundant blueberries, as well as employment opportunities.

Home-based businesses throughout town represent significant but less visible economic activity. The notable service gap remains a pharmacy, long discussed but challenging given proximity to multiple Williston options.

Most future economic growth likely falls into three categories: retail or service businesses; small-scale, home-based, or cottage industries; and food, farm, and recreation enterprises.

Key Trends & Changes Since 2018

Recent years have brought both business closures and new arrivals. The simultaneous closure of the Hatchet and the Big Spruce restaurants (now re-opening under new management) created some visible urgency around business attraction and retention, while new enterprises demonstrate ongoing entrepreneurial energy.

The housing crisis, significantly worsened during COVID as people moved to Vermont, now affects workforce availability. Businesses face recruitment challenges as potential employees find Richmond housing rental and purchase costs prohibitive, if not impossible.

While the convenience of online shopping and unexpectedly fast rural delivery continues to erode bricks-and-mortar retail, other trends like strengthening interest in local food systems are a positive development. The Richmond Farmers Market has grown in both vendor participation and community support. Work-from-home arrangements have reduced commuting while potentially increasing local spending and creating opportunities for home-based businesses.

Richmond's Context & Competitive Advantages

Richmond’s location is convenient enough for easy access to employment and shopping elsewhere, yet it retains an authentic small-town character that draws people home. This location creates both opportunities and competition. While Williston's comprehensive big-box retail draws customers for many shopping needs, its proximity alleviates pressure for similar development here and may support Richmond's focus on specialized, service-oriented businesses that don't compete with chain stores.

Recent community input shows strong support for economic development that strengthens local businesses while preserving this balance. Residents want businesses that meet daily needs, provide quality jobs, offer recreation and culture opportunities, and support natural resources and working lands. Cochran's Ski Area is a great example of the sort of business that makes Richmond unique: a community-supported recreational facility for skiing and biking that also operates maple syrup production on the same land, demonstrating how Richmond businesses can be both economically viable and community-rooted.

The town is attracting increasing numbers of recreational visitors for skiing, mountain biking, river floating, and swimming holes. These visitors represent opportunities to capture spending in local restaurants and shops, supporting the village businesses that serve daily community needs.

Challenges & Opportunities

The housing crisis represents a significant constraint on Richmond's economic development potential, especially when combined with the limited building potential in the Village and elsewhere. While this challenge extends far beyond what any single municipality can address, its effects permeate throughout the local economy. Housing policy is addressed comprehensively in the Housing section of this plan.

Several other practical challenges shape business development in Richmond. Commercial space remains both limited and expensive, making it difficult for new enterprises to establish themselves or for existing businesses to expand. Parking constraints in the village

center affect both employees who work downtown and customers who want to support local businesses. Market conditions throughout the region have made affordable dining options particularly challenging to sustain. Even though community members often express interest in seeing something like the old Bridge Street Grill return, the economic realities of food costs, labor, and commercial rent make low-priced restaurants difficult to operate successfully anywhere.

Despite challenges, there are always opportunities. Numerous other small towns similar to Richmond have developed successful approaches to business retention and attraction, offering lessons worth learning and adapting to local circumstances. As Richmond continues rewriting its zoning regulations, there are opportunities to build in additional support for local businesses through regulatory improvements. (See Community Development, Goal 6)

Richmond has become a significant recreational destination, and while residents hold different perspectives about promoting this trend, it makes sense to find ways to encourage recreational visitors to spend time and money in the village center. Collaboration between recreational organizations and local businesses could create mutually beneficial relationships that support the community economy while managing impacts thoughtfully.

GOALS AND ACTIONS

GOAL 1: Support and encourage strong and diverse local businesses and a local economy

ACTIONS:

1. Encourage formation of an independent volunteer group to conduct regular business visits, gather feedback, and serve as liaison between businesses and town government. ***(Town-wide)***
2. Explore and develop ways to encourage recreational visitors to spend time and money in the village center, such as directional signage at recreation access points, visitor information materials highlighting local businesses, and collaboration with recreational organizations. ***(Town-wide, Highway Department)***
3. Use local businesses for municipal purchases of goods and services whenever feasible. ***(Administration, Selectboard)***
4. Continue to renew Richmond's Village Center designation when required and utilize state and federal tax credits for building rehabilitation, access to funding priority, and state programs that promote economic development. ***(Planning Department, Administration)***

GOAL 2: Strengthen Richmond's agricultural and forest economy, food access, and local food systems

ACTIONS:

1. Research and implement strategies to increase local food production and purchasing at both municipal and community levels, supporting food security and access for all residents. ***(Planning, Department, Town-wide, Richmond Racial Equity)***
2. Explore regulatory means of supporting the viability of farm and forest-based land uses. ***(Selectboard, Town-wide)***

GOAL 3: Update land use regulations to support business development

ACTIONS:

1. Continue to update zoning regulations to allow mixed-use development, commercial zones, and business-supportive land uses while protecting working lands. ***(Planning Commission)***

Section 3

EDUCATION

Vision Connection: We will expand opportunities for learning and skill development for all, from early childhood through adulthood, building capacity for our community's future.

Overview

Richmond is a member of the Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District (MMUUSD), which also serves Bolton, Huntington, Jericho, Underhill, and Underhill ID. The district's excellent reputation reflects the dedicated efforts of teachers, staff, school boards, administrators, residents, parents, volunteers, and students alike. The district's mission is to provide high-quality learning opportunities that meet the needs of both students and the wider community, now and into the future.

As Vermont and the nation shift toward knowledge and service-based economies, Richmond recognizes the critical role of education in preparing citizens for evolving careers, civic engagement, and lifelong learning.

Early Childhood

Over the past several years, early learning programs for preschool children have seen steady enrollment. Approximately 81% of eligible preschool children participate in publicly funded programs through Act 166 partnerships between public and private providers. As of 2025, the Camels Hump Middle School is home to a Preschool Daycare program through Part 2 The Early Years, providing care 5 days a week with the support of Act 166 funding. Richmond Elementary School also offers a 2- or 4-day preschool program for three and four year olds, with students who have developmental needs being given priority over typically developing students. Other public school-based preschool programs in Bolton and Huntington also now offer full-day preschool options, and full-day Kindergarten is standard in the district. However, demand continues to exceed capacity, particularly among private providers. As preschool capacity expands, the Town and School District should ensure equitable access for families of all racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds through inclusive outreach and support.

Current Challenges

Specifically at the Richmond Elementary School and Camels Hump Middle School campuses there are several challenges surrounding the location and environmental circumstances. In the winter and spring there are ongoing issues with water accumulating in the front field which results in conditions unsuitable for recess such as ice, slush, or excessive mud. When this happens, recess is moved into the drop off circle creating challenges of its own due to safety issues and an overall lack of parking at the schools. Stormwater infrastructure work was completed in 2025 and will hopefully have positive impacts on these issues; however additional solutions may need to be explored. Another concern is the close proximity to Highway I-89 due to noise, visibility and overall safety. School leadership has expressed an interest in exploring the possibility of planting trees such as Norway spruce along the edge of the property for mitigation.

An ongoing challenge for the school district involves transportation across its large 200-square-mile territory. Long bus routes consume significant time and costly fossil fuels. Many students face rides longer than half an hour each way, which affects both student well-being and transportation costs. Parents frequently drive children to and from school to avoid lengthy bus rides, contributing to traffic congestion in Richmond village. The Town and School District should continue exploring more efficient, sustainable transportation options, such as electric buses, smaller buses for outlying areas, and better coordination of school and community transportation needs.

Student Support and Community Partnerships

Like communities across Vermont, Richmond's schools have been impacted by the opioid crisis and other public health challenges. Increasing numbers of children experience trauma or unstable home environments, which significantly affects their learning. Schools are often called upon to provide social, emotional, and health support that stretches resources and staff capacity. Recognizing that the public health and economic challenges can disproportionately impact students and families of color, schools should continue strengthening trauma-informed, culturally responsive supports to ensure all children have equitable access to learning. The Town recognizes the need for strong partnerships between municipal services, health care providers, and schools to ensure comprehensive support for students and families.

Community Use of School Facilities

Richmond's school buildings are more than places of learning, they are central gathering places for voting, Town Meetings, sports events, performances, and emergency shelter during disasters. The district has expressed interest in collaborating with the community to make unused space available for adult education, senior programs, and community events. The local Cub Scout pack has used Camels Hump Middle School for meetings for several years and other groups such as pickleball players make use of the gym there too.

Perhaps most notable is the use of the school facilities for after-school programming. Two different programs run out of Richmond Elementary School to help families with after school care. The first is Part 2 and the second is fondly referred to as Mr. G's, initially run by the RES physical education teacher Mr. Godfrey for RES students. As of the 25/26 school year, the Vermont Outdoor Adventure program (Mr. G's) has expanded to welcome elementary students from the entire district and offers several different programs to choose from.

The Town should encourage the continued use of school facilities for multicultural events, programs and gatherings that celebrate and support Richmond's diverse community. It is important we continue to foster this community use and engagement as people frequently visiting the schools are more likely to be proud of our schools and supportive of public education. This is essential to our future both locally and statewide.

Changing Enrollment and Future Planning

Some schools in the district were seeing a decline in student enrollment in the years prior to the 2018 Plan, but not all have continued this trend. Richmond Elementary School has been holding strong at over 300 students between 2022-2025. These trends may see future shifts as well. Recent state legislation and regional planning efforts (e.g., Act 181 of 2024) have established new housing targets for Chittenden County municipalities, including Richmond. Depending on which growth scenario the Town pursues (low, mid, or high), Richmond could see an increase of 202 to 606 new housing units by 2050. This growth could potentially reverse prior enrollment declines and place new demands on school facilities and resources. Richmond must plan proactively with MMUUSD to ensure that educational facilities, staffing, and transportation systems are prepared for possible increases in enrollment. The hope is that in addition to a potential increased enrollment an expanded housing stock would also provide greater housing for schoolteachers and support staff.

Education Reform and System Changes

Over the next eight years, Richmond's schools, as part of the MMUUSD, will be affected by Vermont's Education Transformation Act of 2025 (Act 73). This legislation establishes a statewide per-pupil funding model and requires the creation of larger regional school districts, with new boundaries scheduled for adoption in 2027 and implementation beginning in 2028. As a result, MMUUSD will eventually become part of a new governance structure, with state-level funding replacing locally approved budgets.

The specific implications for Richmond are not yet known. Changes may include adjustments in school board representation, shifts in class sizes, or modifications to program offerings as regional resources are coordinated. State officials will also be reviewing district structures and facilities, which could influence how schools across the region are organized. While the details of these changes will emerge in the coming years,

Richmond may experience both structural and programmatic adjustments as the statewide system is implemented.

GOALS & ACTIONS

GOAL 1: Support high-quality educational opportunities for all ages and income levels

ACTIONS:

1. Continue supporting preschool partnerships and seek opportunities to expand capacity, particularly for private early childhood providers. Expansion efforts should include outreach to underserved and multilingual families to ensure equitable participation. ***(Richmond, representatives to MMUUSD School Board, Richmond Elementary School, Richmond Racial Equity)***
2. Encourage collaboration amongst the Town and regional partners to maintain and improve programs and resources. ***(Richmond representatives to MMUUSD school board, Richmond Elementary School)***
3. Support arts, technical education, and career-focused programs that enhance student engagement and workforce readiness and engage with emerging technologies ***(Richmond Representatives to the MMUUS School Board, Town-wide)***
4. Promote professional development opportunities, especially in trauma-informed instruction and support anti-bias education, equity practices, and culturally responsive communication. ***(Richmond State Representative, Richmond representatives to the MMUUSD School Board, Richmond Racial Equity)***
5. Provide education programs aimed to help solve problems caused by the opiate crisis. ***(Richmond State representative, Richmond representatives to the MMUUSD School Board, Vermont Public Health Department)***
6. Continue to support the use of town facilities, such as the community room at the library and the Radiate Art space in the town center, for recreational and educational programs. ***(Selectboard, Library)***
7. Promote partnerships with neighboring towns and nonprofit organizations to expand educational and enrichment opportunities beyond the classroom and help work to reduce racial disparities in access to enrichment and learning resources. ***(Selectboard, Richmond representatives to the MMUUSD School Board, Town-wide, Richmond Racial Equity)***
8. Encourage utilizing the school spaces for multicultural and diverse events and offerings which could complement the Spanish immersion program and encourage more diverse perspectives and experiences for the community. Consider the barriers to access for diverse and marginalized groups. **(Richmond representatives to the MMUUSD School Board, Town-wide, Selectboard, Richmond Racial Equity)**

GOAL 2: Partner with the school district to improve transportation efficiency and sustainability

ACTIONS:

1. Evaluate opportunities to shorten school bus routes and reduce costs. When evaluating route changes the Town and District should ensure that transportation adjustments do not create new barriers for marginalized or lower income families. ***(Richmond representatives to MMUUSD School Board, Richmond Climate Action Committee, Richmond Racial Equity)***
2. Explore use of electric or hybrid buses, smaller vehicles, and more flexible routes design. Support the pursuit of grant opportunities for these purposes. ***(Richmond Climate Action Committee, Richmond representatives to the MMUUSD school board)***
3. Improve multimodal transportation options for students, including sidewalk and bike route Improvements and increased ridership of school buses to reduce traffic congestion and increase sustainability. ***(Selectboard, Highway Department, Richmond Climate Action Committee, Town-wide)***

GOAL 3: Work with the school district to maintain infrastructure and promote schools as community hubs

ACTIONS:

1. Support use of school facilities for civic events, adult education, after-school programming, and emergency preparedness; collaborate with MMUUSD to ensure public access. Community use should include equitable access so that residents of all races, cultures and backgrounds feel welcome and included. ***(Selectboard, Town-wide, MMUUSD, Richmond Racial Equity)***
2. Support investment in school buildings as key community infrastructure through building maintenance and improvement with an emphasis on energy conservation. ***(Richmond representatives to MMUUSD school board, Richmond Climate Action Committee)***
3. Coordinate on emergency shelter planning, energy efficiency upgrades, and public space enhancements. ***(Selectboard, Administration, Richmond representatives to the MMUUSD school board)***
4. Support the Richmond Elementary and Camels Hump Schools in pursuing the planting of trees or other barriers to block highway noise, visibility, and increase safety through land use regulation guidance and pursuit of potential grant or funding sources. ***(Selectboard, Highway Department, Richmond representatives to the MMUUSD school board)***
5. Compare the 2018 Stormwater Study with the 2025 Stormwater infrastructure work at RES and CHMS to determine if there are further steps that may be taken to improve resilience to stormwater and snow melt, particularly in areas necessary for children to safely access the outdoors such as the playground.

(Planning Department, Richmond representatives to the MMUUSD school board)

GOAL 4: Plan for the future, including enrollment changes; regional education changes; and education policy changes

ACTIONS:

1. Participate in state and regional discussions on new school district boundaries and governance. Attention should be paid to how state-level district consolidation affects educational equity and access for historically marginalized groups. ***(Richmond State Representative, Richmond Representatives to MMUUSD School Board, Richmond Racial Equity)***
2. Support MMUUSD forums, outreach, and public engagement to keep residents informed and involved. ***(Richmond representatives to the MMUSD school board)***
3. Monitor how regional consolidation may affect enrollment, facilities, and shared impacts with neighboring towns; and how these changes may relate to Richmond's municipal services, planning opportunities, and long-term strategies. ***(Richmond state representative, Richmond representatives to the MMUUSD school board)***
4. When revising land use regulations and capital budgets, consider changes occurring in the educational system. ***(Planning Commission, Selectboard)***

Section 4

EMERGENCY RESILIENCE

Vision Connection: We will strengthen Richmond's resilience by preparing for climate hazards, protecting critical infrastructure, and building community capacity to respond to disasters.

Current Conditions in Richmond

Richmond sits in a beautiful but vulnerable spot, nestled in the Winooski River valley between the Green Mountain foothills and Champlain lowlands. The river runs right through the heart of our community, and when it floods, it can cut our town in half. Our rural roads wind through hills and follow streams, making them particularly susceptible to washouts.

The numbers tell a sobering story. Richmond has more than 99 buildings in the 100-year floodplain, making us one of the top 10 highest-risk towns in Vermont. Many of our culverts are still undersized for severe storms, and six of our 25 bridges are functionally deficient. Our designated emergency shelter at Camel's Hump Middle School sits on the north side of the river, creating access problems when flooding isolates the southern half of town.

As one resident put it: "I live in the flood zone and am constantly threatened." This captures where we are in late 2025, a community that has developed what you might call “weather wariness born from experience.”

Key Trends & Changes Since 2018

Richmond has moved from managing occasional flooding to confronting chronic disasters. Four major floods between 2019 and 2024 show the escalating pattern: Halloween 2019 caused $100,000 in damage. July 2023 brought two separate "historic and catastrophic" events in one week, costing $500,000. December 2023 taught us the harsh lesson of re-damage, destroying repairs barely six months old. July 2024 delivered the devastating blow with $2 million in damage that depleted our reserves entirely, forcing a small tax increase.

But Richmond hasn't just been rebuilding, we've been building back better. Due to the diligent work of our Town Road Foreman and his crew, we've made remarkable progress. We've upsized and replaced approximately 30 culverts in road washouts, improved all ditches to 12-24 inches deep (well above the 8–12-inch standard), and upgraded critical infrastructure like the Hillview culvert from 8 to 10 feet with larger armoring stones. The

Besaw and Bates culverts were expanded from 4 to 5 feet. This proactive approach means we're not just fixing what broke, we're strengthening it against future events.
The pandemic tested our systems differently but just as thoroughly. COVID-19 required sustained adaptation across every aspect of municipal life for two years. We learned to govern remotely, transformed our library into a digital hub, and our rescue service became a regional vaccination center. The experience revealed that modern emergencies don't fit neat categories and that community networks are often more agile than formal government responses.

New climate threats are emerging beyond flooding. Wildfire risk has been elevated to a state priority and poor air quality from distant wildfires is now a reality. We're experiencing "weather whiplash" where intense storms alternate with drought periods, creating multiple hazards in the same year. Vermont's warming winters are producing more destructive ice storms and heavy wet snow that threaten our electrical grid.

Our central vulnerability isn't any single threat but cascading infrastructure failure. When ice storms knock out power, residents on private wells lose water. Without heat or communication, medical emergencies multiply. Roads become impassable, isolating emergency services when they're needed most. This chain reaction hits rural communities harder because we're more spread out and more dependent on private systems.

Richmond-Specific & Regional Context

Richmond doesn't face these challenges alone. The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission has become crucial for coordinating emergency response and sharing solutions across our region. During both the pandemic and recent floods, this collaboration prevented municipalities from operating in isolation.

Our timing for updating this plan is strategically advantageous. Vermont's new Resilience Implementation Strategy was completed in July 2025, making Richmond among the first communities that can integrate the finished framework. This alignment opens doors to state and federal funding that prioritizes communities whose local planning meshes with statewide climate goals.

Through the pandemic and subsequent disasters, we've seen Richmond at our best. Neighbors come out and support each other when systems fail. The pandemic revealed that our most effective emergency response assets aren't government departments but our community networks. Residents organized mutual aid before formal programs existed. Front Porch Forum became essential infrastructure for coordinating assistance. This community resilience isn't a luxury; it's becoming essential infrastructure.

Priority Challenges & Opportunities

Richmond has embraced strategic hardening and futureproofing as our approach to infrastructure rebuilding, which is essential but incredibly expensive. Five major areas have

been identified that still need mitigation work that will require different FEMA funding mechanisms. Projects like the needed upgrades on Snipe Ireland Road could cost more than half a million dollars, expenses too large for the town to fund alone but essential for long-term resilience. Other priority areas include Stage Road (which has failed twice), an underground stream system from Jericho Road that daylights at Richmond Rescue, and major erosion control work needed on Dugway Road where the Huntington River threatens the roadway.

This reality doesn't mean giving up. It means being smarter about where we invest limited dollars and building community capacity to help each other when infrastructure fails. Through the pandemic and subsequent disasters, we've seen that our community networks can be formalized into neighborhood-level preparedness systems.

Residents have been clear about priorities: infrastructure hardening first, simple emergency communications that actually work, and focus on public assets where limited dollars have the broadest impact. They want to move beyond what one called the "whack-a-mole approach" of fixing the same problems repeatedly.

The transformation Richmond needs isn't just about infrastructure but about shifting from reactive to proactive thinking. Instead of waiting for disasters and scrambling to rebuild, we're planning for the climate we'll actually have and building systems that can handle it.

GOALS AND ACTIONS

GOAL 1: Build Climate-Resilient Infrastructure and Safe Development

ACTIONS:

1. Continue systematic upgrades of undersized culverts and drainage systems, with town budget where possible and FEMA assistance where necessary for larger projects prioritized by the Town Road Foreman. ***(Highway Department, Selectboard, Administration)***
2. Align with the state-level Vermont Resilience Implementation Strategy by adopting climate-resilient infrastructure design standards for all municipal public works projects, requiring roads, culverts, and bridges to incorporate design standards based on climate projections (50- or 100-year storm intervals plus climate change factors) rather than historical data alone. ***(Highway Department, Selectboard, Planning Commission)***
3. Require emergency services approval for all new development to ensure safe access for emergency vehicles, with special consideration for steep, narrow, or winding access routes. ***(Selectboard, Planning Commission, E-911 Coordinator, Fire Department)***
4. Explore administrative support options to reduce FEMA paperwork burden on Town Road Foreman so he can focus on infrastructure construction and

maintenance work. ***(Administration, Selectboard)***

5. Work with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Rivers Program to develop river corridor protection zoning as established by Act 121 and based upon DEC created maps. This will likely be a requirement by 2028. ***(Planning Commission)***
6. Continue to strictly regulate development in the Special Flood Hazard Area ***(Planning Commission, Zoning Administrator, DRB)***

GOAL 2: Strengthen Community Emergency Preparedness

ACTIONS:

1. Establish a Community Resilience Hub by designating and hardening a community facility (Town Center, Library, or other suitable locations) with backup power, secure water access, and redundant communications to serve as cooling centers during extreme heat events and warming/charging centers during prolonged winter power outages. ***(Selectboard, Library)***
2. Consider establishing a volunteer Town Emergency Coordinator position to coordinate volunteer networks, emergency communications, and work with the town's Emergency Operations Staff during disasters **(*Selectboard, Town-wide)***
3. Address emerging climate hazards by developing an Extreme Heat Response Plan with voluntary registry and wellness-check protocols for vulnerable residents, adopting a Community Wildfire Protection Plan with defensible space education. ***(Selectboard, Emergency Management Director)***
4. Improve emergency shelter accessibility by developing sheltering plans for residents south of the Winooski River when flooding isolates them from the designated shelter at Camel's Hump Middle School, and creating protocols for domestic animal sheltering during disasters. ***(Selectboard, Emergency Management Director)***
5. Update the Local Emergency Management Plan to reflect Richmond's specific vulnerabilities and recent disaster experience, including flood-specific evacuation procedures for residents south of the Winooski River, multi-day power outage protocols, and formal integration of community partners like Front Porch Forum and local organizations into emergency response procedures. ***(Emergency Management Director)***

GOAL 3: Coordinate Regional Resilience and Funding

ACTIONS:

1. Consider establishing a voter-approved Disaster Mitigation and Recovery Fund capitalized by dedicated annual appropriations to provide stable local matching funds for federal grants (FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance, PROTECT Program) and cover non-reimbursable disaster expenses, avoiding emergency tax increases like the one required in 2026. ***(Selectboard, Town Treasurer)***

2. Align local planning and capital improvement decisions with Vermont Resilience Implementation Strategy and the Richmond Annex of the Chittenden County All-Hazards Mitigation Plan to maximize eligibility for state and federal funding opportunities, and utilize the Transportation Resilience Planning Tool (TRPT) to prioritize road and bridge vulnerability projects for PROTECT Program funding. ***(Selectboard, Highway Department*** *Emergency Management Director****)***
3. Complete geomorphic assessments for the Winooski River main branch and implement river corridor protection measures as part of nature-based flood mitigation solutions, coordinating with Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission and neighboring municipalities on watershed-wide resilience planning. ***(Conservation Commission, Planning Commission, Planning Department)***
4. Strengthen regional emergency coordination by updating mutual aid agreements with neighboring fire departments and emergency services, and participating in regional resilience planning initiatives through CCRPC and Vermont Emergency Management. ***(Selectboard, Emergency Management Director)***

Section 5

ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Vision Connection: We will strengthen resilience through sustainable energy practices that reduce costs, lower emissions, and prepare Richmond for climate challenges.

Background

Climate change is already having significant effects on Richmond. Flooding and extreme weather events; adverse health outcomes from breathing fossil fuel combustion products; increasing invasive species, in water (blue-green algae) and on land (tick-borne diseases such as Lyme disease); hardships for traditional Vermont industries such as skiing and maple syrup production, and the effects on agriculture of hyperthermic stress on livestock and crop loss from flooding and drought are increasing as our climate becomes warmer.

The science is clear: the burning and utilization of fossil fuels is responsible for the creation of atmospheric greenhouse gases that are warming the planet. The resulting climate change, with its current and future challenges, creates an imperative for all of us – on a personal, local, regional and global level - to manage our energy policies such that the use of fossil fuels declines are rapidly as possible. **As we will continue to need energy, this means in practice that we need to transition our energy supply to renewable sources. With our current technology, this translates into electricity produced from sources such as wind and solar, which do not produce troublesome greenhouse gases.**

But here's the dilemma that we face. Because of the increasing severity of climate change impacts – in Richmond, primarily flooding – the momentum seems to have shifted from

prevention to adaptation. Our focus has become recovery and resilience, leaving less room to work towards fossil fuels reduction. This is understandable. It is very difficult to work towards a global goal, when our (human) energy is needed to work on the local problems, such as increased flooding, that climate change is causing.

Our task now is to focus on both prevention and adaptation.

We are fortunate that the goal of fossil fuel reduction continues to be recognized and important in Vermont. Through its legislation and policies, the state of Vermont has articulated ambitious goals for reducing fossil fuel use, despite the complete lack of support at the federal level as of 2025. Approved in 2020, the "Global Warming Solutions Act" sets out the State's energy and climate goals.

This work is being done by the Vermont Climate Council and the Agency of Natural Resources, who were tasked with creating a "Climate Action Plan." In conjunction with this plan, Vermont's Public Service Department maintains a "Comprehensive Energy Plan," updated in 2022, which provides municipal and regional energy use standards.

Accordingly, our town's energy policies and actions must be coordinated with the following statewide goals.

- Obtain 90% of all energy across all major sectors (transportation, heating and electricity) from renewable sources by 2050, with the interim goals of 25% renewable by 2025 and 45% renewable by 2035.
- In the transportation sector, we meet 10% of our energy needs from renewable energy by 2025 and 45% by 2040.
- In the thermal (heating) sector, meet 30% of our energy needs from renewable energy by 2025 and 79% by 2042.
- In the electricity sector, obtain 75% of our energy needs from renewable energy by 2032.
- Reductions in greenhouse gas emissions: 26% reduction from 2005 levels by 2025; 40% reduction from 1990 levels by 2030, and 80% reduction from 1990 levels by 2050.

Current and Ongoing Actions

The Richmond Climate Action Committee is working within Richmond, CCRPC, and with other town energy and climate committees and with the statewide organization "Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network" (VECAN) to explore all ways of conserving energy, using it efficiently, and transitioning to renewable energy sources. Our town Energy Coordinator has been instrumental in helping us to take action. His retirement in 2025 has created the need for a new Energy Coordinator to take up this important work
High on the actions list is **Education.** Working through our Energy Coordinator and our Richmond Climate Action Committee, we continue to promote and adopt climate change policies and solutions among our residents. Encouraging conservation and the efficient use of energy, both by the Town and by individuals, remains a priority. Adopting efficiency measures, such as energy upgrades to town buildings and purchasing energy efficient town vehicles, requires voter support for Selectboard action. A recent full assessment of needed energy-reducing upgrades to our historic Town Center building failed a bond vote, so more work is needed here. Funding is always problematic, and we may face even less funding if the federal government continues to deny climate-change. Our elementary and middle schools have continued to harness the sun's energy through the use of the large rooftop solar array installed in 2011. Work needs to be done to reach the weatherization and heat-pump installation targets of Table B2 (see Energy in the Data and Additional Information Appendix) by 2035 and 2050, and we support the state goals for workforce development in these industries to help achieve these targets.

In addition, we should continue to promote the economic benefits of using fewer fossil fuels. More than 80% of all of the money that we as consumers pay to buy heating oil and gas, and gasoline and diesel for our vehicles, leaves the state. This revenue could support local jobs and programs if it was used to provide locally- produced power and thus remain within the state. The state's clean energy industry already employs 1 in 16 working Vermonters, and many of these jobs offer more competitive wages than the low-wage end-distribution jobs in the fossil fuels industry.

Our Richmond Free Library has enthusiastically supported the Climate Change educational mission. A Community Art Exhibit entitled "What Will Suffice: Artists Respond to the Climate Crisis" was held in 2021 at the library and generated an amazing outpouring of artwork and poetry including a well-received catalog of the work on display. Starting in 2023 and ongoing, the library and our Climate Action Committee have hosted book discussion groups on climate-related topics with the idea of keeping the issues visible. Displays at Town Meetings over the last six years have featured photos of neighborhoods full of homes with rooftop solar arrays, and free offerings and information from Efficiency Vermont, among other educational strategies to encourage individual action. The library also upgraded its HVAC system, including the installation of heat pumps, in 2021 as one of its sustainability initiatives.

Weatherization of homes and businesses is an important way to reduce the energy needed for building heating. We are fortunate to have the services of "**Efficiency Vermont,**" a statewide agency that provides professional advice and assessment, technical services and financial support to our residents to assist us in upgrading our buildings to conserve energy. In conformance with State law Richmond requires the submittal of certification of compliance with the Residential or Commercial Building Energy Standards for new construction or major renovations before issuing a Certificate of Occupancy.

Reducing greenhouse-gas emissions through non-fossil-fueled **transportation** strategies has its place in our efforts. More electric/gasoline hybrid cars (such as the Toyota Prius) and plug-in electric cars (such as the Nissan Leaf, Chevy Volt and the Tesla) and pick-up trucks are showing up on Richmond streets due to individual initiative. Zoning regulations that require all fuel stations and new multi-family buildings to install EV charging equipment have been put in place in the last few years and implemented for the first time with the 2023 Mobil station rebuild. Our Selectboard purchased a Tesla cruiser after exhaustive analysis of the cost savings of EV's, but the reduction of our police force has currently idled the car. The Town installed its first dual-port municipal EV in our Town Center in 2020 with the help of a state grant, and this has seen significant use.

Several bike-pedestrian studies have been completed for downtown sidewalks but have not been acted on. A path to the Park and Ride Lot at Exit 11 from the Village on state Route 2 has been scoped, but the funding has been difficult to obtain for this infrastructure. A special committee has been formed to develop funding options for this Park and Ride path goal. Our Climate Action Committee has investigated mini-public transit options but has found that our density does not provide a sustainable model for general transit at this time. However, SSTA does provide "public" transit in the form of the "Chittenden County Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities" program, which provided 198 trips for Richmond residents in the last fiscal year. This program also meets a transportation equity goal.

Richmond has developed into a bicycling hub of sorts over the last six years, with both recreational cycling, especially mountain biking, and bicycle commuting on the increase. The resulting interest in road safety for cycling, and the uptick of e-bikes on the roads, has increased as this mode of transport has increased, and the Town is taking steps to address this need. This Plan's **Transportation** section has more on this development. Richmond looks to local organizations such as Local Motion to help us promote walking and bicycling and better understand the infrastructure needed for these activities. Programs and tools such as the Vermont Community Energy Dashboard, which was reformulated in 2024 by the Energy Action Network as the "Vermont Energy Dashboard" provides free and open access data on progress towards energy goals. "Smart Grid technology" and Efficiency Vermont (the nation's first electric efficiency utility) have been developed to facilitate changes in habits and physical improvements for more efficient vehicle energy usage.

Our **land use policies**, with the goal of "smart growth," have benefitted from zoning changes within the last few years that promote density within the village core with its municipal water and sewer service. Residential densities have increased in our designated "Village Center" and surrounding neighborhoods in response to Acts 47 and 181, and we have broadened our housing diversity in these areas. Our ordinances encourage "compact growth," and for our 2026 Plan we have adopted the new land use categories that stress conservation of natural and working lands, and reduction of forest fragmentation This further encourages compact development and less road miles traveled. After the adoption of this Plan, the Planning Commission will work to bring our large Agricultural/ Residential Zoning District into compliance with the state's rural area designations. We are aiming for a "walkable" town with as much growth as possible occurring in the central village area to reduce car travel.

Our increases in **renewable energy generation** have occurred primarily through individual roof-top solar arrays. Solar panels have sprung up on roofs and in backyards throughout the town to power homes and businesses. Local solar arrays that power a neighborhood or a small number of homes are appearing or are being developed. Legal and regulatory "net metering" frameworks to enable these efforts are being refined as we enter this new energy territory. Battery storage technology has improved, as well as battery-leasing programs from the major electric utilities. We also host a GMP array near Exit 11. Our updated energy assessment from CCRPC assures us that we have adequate siting opportunities for renewable energy free of known or potential natural resource constraints.

A majority of Richmond residents utilize traditional sources of electricity such as Green Mountain Power, VELCO and Vermont Energy Co-op. These companies support the transition to renewables, and have begun to offer renewable source options, such as GMP's "renewable energy support" program in which, for a small surcharge, all of one's electricity needs can be met through, or support, renewable sourcing. The utility also provides discounts and incentives for transitioning to electric vehicles, including free level 2 EV chargers and discounted electric rates for vehicle charging. In addition, GMP has launched its "First in Nation 2030 Zero Outages Initiative" which combines battery energy storage with line undergrounding and system storm-hardening. GMP also offers numerous rebates for a variety of products and services that contribute to energy efficiency. All of these programs that target individual effort help us to meet our energy goals.

The *Municipal Energy Data Guide* found in the Data and Additional Information Appendix provides usage data and energy siting standards that were developed by CCRPC for Richmond to meet the guidelines of Act 174 as established by the Public Service Department and the Public Utility Commission.

Any proposed renewable energy facility that is to be connected to the grid will need to avoid any local or state known or possible constraints (see Table C3 in the *Municipal Energy Data Guide* in the Appendix) and should be located in an area mapped as suitable for wind or

solar production as applicable (see maps). Preferred sites for solar installations include those on previously impacted areas such as brownfields, parking lots, previously developed areas and gravel pits/quarries or on or near existing structures. Ground-mounted solar larger than 15 kw AC and wind turbines with a hub height larger than 30 meters should be located outside of Richmond's downtown. The Town believes that renewable energy projects are more likely to receive public support if the public can see a direct benefit to the community. One way this benefit can be seen is if a significant portion of the off takers are from one or more of the following groups: low to moderate income; municipal or public institutions; educational institutions; affiliated with a non-profit; or is the project of a resident or business in the Town of Richmond.

Consideration of Equity Impacts of Policies and Actions

As policies and actions are developed and implemented the Town of Richmond will consider what communities will be most impacted and who will receive the most benefits and burdens related to specific actions. Certain populations are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and to policies that are developed to address it. As actions and policies are considered, it is important to ask the questions below to empower more inclusive decision-making:

GOALS & ACTIONS

GOAL 1 - TRANSPORTATION: Decrease the amount of fossil fuels used for transportation by the town government, residents and businesses in Richmond with the goal of 98% of light duty residential vehicles in Richmond be EVs or Hybrid EVs by 2050 (see Data and Additional Information for full current and projected statistics)

ACTIONS:

1. Continue to refine the zoning ordinance to reflect "smart growth" principles, with most development concentrated in the village, neighborhoods, downtown, and central mixed-use areas to reduce vehicle miles travelled. ***(Planning Commission)***
2. Encourage walking and biking by providing safe and convenient bike/ped infrastructure such as bike lanes and sidewalks. ***(Planning Commission, Highway Department, Selectboard)***
3. Develop and support "complete streets" and "share the road" policies **(*Planning Commission, Highway Department, Selectboard)***
4. Support the electrification of vehicles by requiring and/or providing private and public EV charging stations whenever possible through zoning, advocating for compliance with Residential and Commercial Energy Standards requirements for EV charging, and other mechanisms; and adding prominent signage. ***(Planning Commission, Energy Coordinator, Richmond Climate Action Committee)***
5. Allow charging stations wherever there is parking and update sign standards **(*Planning Commission)***
6. Consider energy efficiency and electrification when planning for and purchasing municipal vehicles, recognizing there may be limited options at this time for heavy duty vehicles and vehicles for first responders. ***(Selectboard, Energy Coordinator)***

GOAL 2 - THERMAL: Decrease the amount of fossil fuels used for heating and cooling buildings through weatherization, efficiency and renewable heat sourcing with the goal that 93% of residences use heat pumps for heating by 2050 (see Data and Additional Information)

ACTIONS:

1. Endorse and support Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards and Commercial Building Energy Standards, mandated by state law, require all new construction, renovations, alterations and repairs to meet specific energy conservation and efficiency measures, and require developers, to self-certify correctly. ***(Planning Commission, Zoning Administrator, DRB)***
2. Identify conservation and efficiency opportunities in municipal buildings and facilities and act on them whenever they arise. Prioritize energy efficiency when renovating or upgrading buildings. Develop a plan for financing efficiency upgrades to our Town Center building that is acceptable to voters. ***(Town Center Building and Campus Committee, Energy Coordinator)***
3. Promote energy conservation practices and efficiencies among all municipal employees. ***(Energy Coordinator, Administration)***

4. Support and utilize community resources and partners such as Efficiency Vermont and the EAN Energy Dashboard. ***(Richmond Climate Action Committee, Energy Coordinator)***
5. Support educational activities such as town energy fairs, literature distribution and energy committee activities that provide residents with information about energy conservation and renewable heating options like air-source heat pumps, ground source heat pumps, advanced wood-burning, battery storage options, and programs such as GMP's renewable surcharge. ***(Richmond Climate Action Committee)***
6. Coordinate with Efficiency Vermont, Vermont Gas and the state Weatherization Assistance Program to describe and promote these programs through the town Website. ***(Energy Coordinator, Richmond Climate Action Committee)***

GOAL 3 – ELECTRIC SECTOR AND RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION: Encourage and support local renewable electric generation in the Town that is in conformance with the actions outlined in this plan with the goal of doubling generation of renewable energy by 2050. (See Data and Additional Information)

ACTIONS:

1. Update land use regulations to include permitting steps, development parameters, standards, aesthetic values, and mitigation requirements specific to renewable energy projects ***(Planning Commission, Planning Department)***
2. Require that renewable energy generation facilities not take place in areas with known constraints and explore alternatives to and then mitigate adverse impacts in areas with possible constraints, as identified in the constraints section of this plan (see Table C3 in Data and Additional Information). In determining whether known or possible constraints are present, on-site field verification should be conducted. ***(Planning Commission, Conservation Commission)***
3. Designate specific locations as preferred sites for the siting of net-metered solar generation projects. ***(Planning Commission)***
4. Continue to participate in and promote net-metering arrangements whenever possible. ***(Selectboard, energy Coordinator, Town-wide)***
5. Ensure that the long-term management plan for the Town Forest allows for sustainable energy production for the benefit of the town, such as sustainable biomass harvesting (firewood). ***(Andrews Community Forest Committee)***
6. Investigate grid constraints when considering renewable energy facilities ***(Planning Commission, Selectboard)***
7. Consider renewable energy to offset municipal energy use. ***(Energy Coordinator, Selectboard)***

GOAL 4 – TOWN ENERGY COORDINATOR: Continue to fully utilize the position of Town Energy Coordinator to help the Selectboard and Planning Commission develop plans and policies that meet equity guidelines to reduce the Town's energy consumption,

reduce its reliance on fossil fuels, increase the percentage of renewables used to meet its energy needs, and help town residents make progress towards these goals

ACTIONS:

1. Reappoint a Town Energy Coordinator whenever the position becomes vacant. ***(Selectboard, Town-wide)***
2. Develop an energy action plan for the Town to implement the energy goals and actions in this plan and assist with evaluating investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities that benefit the town. ***(Richmond Climate Action Committee)***
3. Ensure that actions and policies meet equity goals of the Vermont Climate Council's "Guidance for a Just Transition" by not increasing burdens for low income, disabled, or other vulnerable residents. ***(Energy Coordinator)***
4. Maintain energy consumption and emissions data for municipal buildings and vehicles to analyze efficiency and evaluate costs and benefits of investments in reduction of fossil-fuel usage. ***(Energy Coordinator)***
5. Educate the community on energy efficiency, energy conservation and renewable energy technologies and techniques. ***(Richmond Climate Action Committee, Energy Coordinator)***
6. Assist the Town with applying for grants and incentives to reduce energy use and increase the use of renewable energy. ***(Energy Coordinator)***
7. Update the 2007 Town of Richmond Energy Conservation Policy. ***(Energy Coordinator, Richmond Climate Action Committee, Selectboard)***

(see also Transportation, Housing, Natural Resources, Education, Data and Additional Information Appendix)

Section 6

FUTURE LAND USE

Vision Connection: We will preserve Richmond's working landscapes and village character by directing growth to appropriate locations while protecting our most valued resources.

This section of the Town Plan describes the continuity between the way Richmond's land is used today, and the way we envision that use changing over the next eight years and beyond. It provides a framework for modifying our land use regulations and for debating our competing territorial interests. We aim to strike a balance between preserving what we love about the existing landscape, while allowing our community a vision of growth. We also understand that we are part of a larger region, and of a state, whose shared goals and visions must be considered along with our own.

Much of Richmond's land is constrained by its topography and location within the foothills of the Green Mountains and its proximity to the Winooski River. Steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands and streams make development difficult, such that much of the easily developable land has been developed. Much of the remaining land has intrinsic value as natural and working lands, which we now know to be important for sustaining functioning ecosystems, as well as for providing local food, and for mitigating climate change.

Open space and rural character have long been of value to Richmond residents, which fits well with our natural constraints and with new understanding of the "services" provided by the natural world. What is now more challenging is the lack of space for "smart growth" and increased housing. Our downtown area is spanned by railroad and river, and available for only a modest amount of infill development. Our commercial space is also limited, and further challenged by current market conditions, making "walkable communities" even harder to create.

Other Vermont villages and towns have found themselves in this same dilemma, and because of the widespread nature of similar issues, the state legislature has taken recent steps to develop a statewide framework for rebalancing the equation between protected natural lands and residential growth. Act 181, adopted in 2024, created a new set of **land use designations** that fine-tune the application of Act 250, our longstanding and valuable land use law. In the more densely populated village centers, reduced Act 250 oversight will encourage residential development, while in the lower density outlying areas, consisting mainly of residences, farms and forests, Act 250 oversight is increased. Other programs such as the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department's project entitled "Vermont Conservation Design" provide guidance as to how we may maintain a functioning

ecosystem across the landscape far into the future. We will utilize these new state guidelines to help us maintain the integrity of our essential natural systems.
.
Our Land Use Plan must also recognize the real effects of local climate change and strive to mitigate them. We must avoid development on steep slopes and within stream corridors to help prevent the washouts and "fluvial erosion" we experienced in 2023 and 2024. Increased heat and drought can be mitigated by protecting forests and improving their resilience. Our river and stream corridors should be allowed to function without interference, as floodplain and riparian regulations are our best protection against the "inundation flooding" that we have seen in our village from rainstorms in the last few years. Biodiversity and species survival, as well as climate resilience, can be enhanced by identifying and protecting contiguous forests and "habitat connectors" between natural areas, and by conserving well-vegetated wetlands and shorelines. The Vermont Climate Action Plan identifies other "nature-based solutions" to help us reduce our contributions to climate change.

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 commercial and residential development in the village center and along Richmond's main roads. 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 less pressure than towns closer to Burlington, but if Burlington continues to grow and housing prices 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, but may face the need for even more residences. Richmond borders three towns that are even more rural (Huntington, Hinesburg, and Bolton), so, in general, the outlying agricultural areas are unlikely to face growth pressure from adjacent towns.

Richmond shares borders with five municipalities: Jericho, Bolton, Huntington, Hinesburg, and Williston. The land on both sides of all these shared boundaries falls within the three new "Rural" categories on the 2026 ECOS FLU map, and, in terms of the current 2018 ECOS FLU map, Richmond's current large "Agricultural/Residential" Zoning District (covering a majority of the Town) is compatible with the "Rural Planning Areas" of neighboring towns. There is no evidence in the town plans of these adjoining municipalities that these conditions will change.

As the CCCRPC's 2018 ECOS Plan will still be in effect in March of 2026, when Richmond's 2026 Plan is adopted, Richmond's new FLU designations can be seen to be compatible with the older ECOS plan as well, except where new state laws and CCRPC's interpretation thereof have led to differences. For example, the areas within CCRPC's 2026 designation "Planned Growth Areas," correspond to the 2018 land use category "Village".

Future Land Use

Our future land use (FLU) is described by the following categories and accompanying map. The map is quite different from our 2018 "fuzzy" map, primarily because the Vermont state legislature has mandated a new state-wide and regional map design in order to more broadly understand and compare land use in different regions of the state, and to manage growth. The new map design combines enhancing our existing built environment, especially housing, in areas of moderate and high density, while also enhancing protections for the rural character and biodiversity of the state. Our municipal FLU map must be compatible with this state-wide and regional map design for it to be approved by our regional planning commission (CCRPC).

Our municipal FLU map utilize the categories found in the new Regional FLU map, a step that was taken to ensure compatibility. The definitions are overlapping and flexible enough, however, to allow our Planning Commission to work within this framework but still consider our own local knowledge and goals. Any zoning revision work utilizing this map will be done gradually after the new Plan is approved and will require substantial public input. Currently lawfully existing businesses, residences and land-uses will, of course, be grandfathered.

Some zoning revisions will likely affect our large Agricultural/Residential Zoning District which covers much of Richmond. The new map design has divided the state's "rural" areas into three categories: "Rural: General," "Rural: Agriculture and Forestry," and "Rural: Conservation", to better identify and protect Vermont's significant natural resources. These designations differ primarily in the emphasis given to developed land versus working or undeveloped land, and we will likely be looking carefully at how we can best use these designations in our "Ag/Res" rural area.

We are hoping that the new map design will be useful as well in developing targeted regulations for such challenging issues as the siting of renewable energy facilities; the minimization of forest fragmentation; the preservation of wetlands, surface waters, habitat connectors and biodiversity, and the development of additional housing.

It is possible that our Richmond FLU map may undergo some changes, likely minor, over the 8-year lifespan of this Plan. There are several reasons why this might happen. Firstly, the new statewide FLU map, upon which our map and our regional planning commission's map are based, will not be finalized until it is reviewed by the newly created state Land Use Review Board (LURB) in the spring of 2026. The regional planning commission will then amend their map if necessary. We may then wish to make changes to our map…

Secondly, the compressed timeline for adoption of this state- and county-wide mapping plan has not really allowed adequate time for each parcel in Richmond to be individually reviewed for accuracy. Richmond will undertake this review as time allows and as individual landowners have had a chance to examine their parcel(s). As these changes at

the granular level are reported and reviewed, the Richmond Planning Commission will amend our map after a Public Hearing.

Land Use Categories

A. Village Center

Location: Land located within our existing municipal water and sewer service area that includes the current Village Downtown, Village Residential/Commercial, and Village Commercial Zoning Districts,

- **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 within walkable distances of the residents. The area provides the highest density of residential units that can be accommodated in Richmond. 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 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:** Residential uses, mixed commercial and residential use, commercial uses and public spaces and buildings
- **Future Uses:**
  - Commercial and residential uses, including a broader application of mixed uses and multiple-story buildings; infill development where feasible
  - Single family, two-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,

B. Planned Growth Areas

- **Location:** These areas are adjacent to, and still within walking distance of the village center, and are served by municipal water and sewer service. They are essentially a part of what is considered Richmond Village but may be separated from the Village Center by the Winooski River and its floodplain while still being connected by curbed sidewalks and a pedestrian bridge crossing. These areas currently encompass the zoning districts Village Residential Neighborhood South, Village Residential Neighborhood North, Round Church Corners Complex Commercial and

portions of the Village Residential/Commercial Districts. Parks and schools occur in these areas. A portion of the Agricultural/Residential Zoning District (the Farr Farm uplands) may be incorporated into this area at some future date.

- **Purpose:** Traditional settlement areas within walking distance of the Village Center, consisting of a mix of residential neighborhoods, commercial and mixed use buildings, arranged largely along the main roads and their side streets. There is some opportunity for infill development in areas that are out of the floodplain. The vision is to tie these areas more closely to the Village Center.
- **Current uses: Residential**, commercial, recreational and mixed uses with adjacent open space.
- **Future uses:** Similar to Village Center future uses

C. Transition / Infill Area

- **Location:** Area extending along the north/northeast side of Route 2 (West Main) from the village boundary to the Mobil Gas Station at the I-89 interchange. This area encompasses the Gateway Zoning District.
- **Purpose:** The Gateway was created and named as such to be the attractive entrance to the historic Richmond Village. It is an area with commercial, light industrial, and residential uses that may not fit spatially in Richmond Village but could be advantaged by proximity to the downtown area. This area is located within the municipal water and sewer district but has not yet had service lines extended into it. The feasibility of these extensions has been debated for some time, but the ultimate goal of taking these services to the Riverview Common mobile home park, just beyond the Gateway, to allow further affordable housing development there, remains important to our planning. If that can be accomplished, the Gateway itself may be further developed, and fulfill the Transition Area goal of a higher-density, mixed use area. Commercial uses are allowed as well as residential uses, but linear commercial strips are prohibited in the zoning for the Gateway District.
- **Current Uses:** Low density commercial, residential, and mixed uses
- **Future Uses:**
  - Commercial, light industrial, residential, and mixed uses
  - Development that might not be suitable for the village or downtown commercial spaces. Commercial uses that do not require municipal water and sewer services may be expanded if the lines cannot be extended, thus expanding our self-sufficient commercial base.
  - Historic preservation or creative reuse of existing structures is encouraged to maintain Richmond's character
  - Could be served by the construction of walkable or bikeable transportation systems that link the area to Richmond Village, the Park and Ride, or the Northwest area of town

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

D. Resource-based Recreation Area

- **Location: Cochran's** Ski Area, located on the south side of Cochran Road just east of Richmond Village
- **Purpose:** An open space area based on the recreational uses of skiing and mountain trails for hiking and biking, with significant forested acreage that supports maple sap harvesting. Economic activity depends upon the naturally forested surrounding land and thus is likely to remain open. Additional structures that support the economic activities here may be developed.
- **Current uses:** skiing, trails for hiking and biking, sugarbush, forestry, community gatherings
- **Future uses:** continuation of the current uses; commercial or recreational activities that complement the current uses, such as provision of event space, value-added forestry jobs, maple syrup processing, carbon sequestration or other. Could be served by the construction of walkable or bikeable transportation infrastructure that link the area to Richmond Village

E. Enterprise areas

- **Location**: Near Exit 11 in the Northwest corner of Richmond. Encompasses the Industrial/Commercial and Commercial Zoning Districts, a moderate-sized Green Mountain Power solar array, and a fuel station that serves the highway. Also included in this area is the Kenyon Rd area of natural resource extraction
- **Purpose**: The Exit 11 portion of this area supports several moderate-sized commercial or light-industrial operations, but as it borders on a large residential mobile home park, it is not really suited to heavy industrial uses. Planned Unit Developments that include residential units are allowed but commercial uses are favored. This area could support more development if the water and sewer district were further expanded and the lines were extended. The Kenyon Rd gravel pit is also surrounded by residential uses.
- **Current uses**: A mix of commercial and light-industrial uses with residential uses intermixed, natural resource extraction
- **Future uses**:

- A mix of commercial and light-industrial uses with minimal nuisance factors, such as warehousing, manufacturing and distribution facilities, wholesale and retail businesses
- Multifamily or other mixed uses as Planned Unit Developments
- Energy or utility facilities with minimal nuisance factors
- Could be served by a future water and sewer system
- Continued resource extraction in existing area with this use

F. Hamlet

- **Location: "Jonesville"** is the small area that constitutes the historic cluster of houses and businesses along Route 2 at the intersection with Cochran Road, near the eastern border of Richmond. This area is currently zoned as the Jonesville Commercial District and consists of a small branch post office, several businesses and residences.
- **Purpose:** As residential uses in the vicinity of the hamlet have mostly expanded outwards along
  Stage Road, Snipe Ireland Road, Wes White Hill, Dugway Road and Route 2, the central commercial area no longer seems to function as a "core" for these neighborhoods. Most of the residents look to Richmond Village as their "downtown." This area does not seem to be evolving into a commercial hub, and its proximity to the Winooski River generates an ever-present risk of flooding with heavy rainfall. The residences surrounding the small commercial area are categorized as Rural: General on the FLU map (see below).
- **Current uses:** mostly commercial, a few residences
- **Future uses:** It is difficult to know exactly how this area will evolve, given the constraints of floodplain, roadway and railroad tracks. Likely will be similar to current for the foreseeable future until a more extensive visioning process is undertaken.

The next three land-use categories encompass Richmond's lower density, more rural areas. They are based upon the designations created by ACT 181 which are now incorporated into 24 VSA § 4348(a), the regional map statute.

G. Rural: general

- **Location:** ***Primarily*** low-density residential development with occasional limited commercial uses which occurs along the roadways in our Agricultural / Residential Zoning District. The large Riverview Commons mobile home park neighborhood is located in the northern portion of the area, with road frontage on VT Route 117.
- **Purpose:** Lots are of varying sizes, with some larger lots that maintain open space and promote agricultural, or forestry uses. This type of development promotes the rural appearance of the town with relatively low housing density and commercial activity and allows for the preservation of some natural features and a traditional working landscape. Structures are generally located along existing roadways. These areas are not served by municipal water and sewer.
- **Current uses:** residential, limited commercial, natural areas, farm and forest land, recreation
- **Future uses:** similar to current

H. Rural: agricultural and forestry

- **Location:** Mostly larger lots with limited road frontage found throughout Richmond's lower density, mostly rural areas.
- **Purpose:** These areas include forest blocks and agricultural land and are often enrolled in the state's Use Value Appraisal ("Current Use") program for agricultural or forest productivity. They are important for protecting water quality as well as providing critical wildlife habitat and connectors, flood storage, aquifer recharge, outdoor recreation and the production of natural goods. They contribute to the local economy, rural character and scenic beauty. Low density residential and commercial uses that are compatible with working lands and natural resource industries may occur. These areas promote the working landscape and the rural economy. Some parcels may also contain high priority natural resources such as forest blocks, wildlife corridors, wetlands or other ecosystem resources as mapped by ANR.
- **Current uses:** Low density residential, farm and forest lands, compatible commercial activities, recreation
- **Future uses:**
    - Residential development in these areas will be managed to retain the benefits of open space and working lands. Development that occurs on agricultural and forested land should be clustered and should minimize fragmentation of forest lands and prime agricultural soils
    - Residential uses will follow conservation design principles to preserve the rural landscape.

- Farm and forest lands may be allowed commercial uses and worker housing exemptions to sustain their viability as working lands
- Habitat connectors should be preserved to ensure that plants and animals are able to move freely between habitats
- Some parcels may become conserved in part or in their entirety in future. Areas currently mapped as high priority may be considered for Rural**: Conservation** designation (see below).

I. Rural: conservation

- **Location:** Areas mapped as "significant natural resources" in the Vermont Conservation Design program from the Agency of Natural Resources and areas protected from development through conservation easements, Current Use or other mechanisms.,
- **Purpose:** These are primarily large, intact forest blocks and surface water areas that function as essential ecosystems and maintain biodiversity. They include areas of natural resources of regional and statewide significance, including flood hazard areas, forest blocks, river corridors, wetlands, and areas with conservation easements or other legal protections such as enrollment in the Current Use Program. A few parcels may be actively managed for timber production. They contribute to Richmond's prized rural character and natural resource benefits and should have development constraints.
- **Current Uses:** limited residential uses, forestry and farming, recreation, and commercial activities that directly support the economic viability of agricultural and forestry industries,
- **Future Uses:**
  - All development in this area should be compatible with preservation of significant natural resources, including flood hazard areas, interior forest blocks, river corridors, wetlands, habitat connectors and significant natural and species communities.
  - All agricultural and forestry activity on parcels enrolled (partially or entirely) in the Current Use program shall continue to be allowed as long as such activity complies with required management practices.

GOALS & ACTIONS

GOAL 1: Encourage "smart growth" as defined in Vermont statutes, which promotes development and adds housing in higher density areas while preserving Richmond's rural character.

ACTIONS:

1. Invest in municipal infrastructure improvements that allow for new development where appropriate ***(Selectboard, Water and Sewer Commission, Planning Commission)***
2. Create policies that encourage residential development, including affordable housing, especially in areas of existing municipal services. ***(Planning Commission, Housing Committee,)***
3. Revise zoning to fully align with Acts 47 and 181. ***(Planning Commission, Planning Department, Housing Committee)***
4. When revising the zoning, use "smart growth" guidelines and Vermont Conservation Design recommendations such as clustering of housing, and road and driveway length restrictions to inform development in the rural areas ***(Planning Commission, Planning Department)***
5. Utilize the new statewide land use framework in zoning revisions to refine the mapping of areas designated for development and those designated for conservation in order to preserve the scenic and historic qualities of Richmond ***(Planning Commission, Planning Department)***
6.. Update zoning regulations to ensure adequate review standards for projects in the Tier 1B Overlay District, as Tier 1B exempts smaller housing projects in the village core from Act 250 review. ***(Planning Commission, Planning Department)***

GOAL 2: Assure integrity of important natural lands including but not limited to high priority forest blocks, riparian areas, natural communities, agricultural land, floodplains, high elevations and scenic viewsheds

ACTIONS:

1. Continue to uphold regulations that protect areas that are prone to inundation flooding, fluvial erosion or washouts, such as floodplain, river corridors, steep slopes and soils prone to erosion. ***(DRB, Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission)***
2. Update the zoning regulations to manage development in sensitive or high priority natural areas as mapped by the Agency of Natural Resources including the Landscape, Community and Species Level features of Vermont Conservation Design and other professional assessments such as Science to Action. ***(Planning Commission, Conservation Commission)***
3. Update zoning regulations with river corridor zoning standards based on Agency of Natural Resources mapping and recommendations. ***(Planning Commission, Planning Department., Conservation Commission)***
4. Encourage land conservation to help meet Act 59's goal of 30% of Vermont's land conserved by 2030. ***(Conservation Commission, Richmond Land Trust)***
5. Update zoning regulations to allow for commercial activities that will help ensure the viability of working agricultural and forest lands, and Resource-based recreation areas ***(Planning Commission)***
6. Incorporate "nature-based solutions" from the Vermont Climate Action Plan into zoning revisions when possible. ***(Conservation Commission, Planning Commission)***

7. Review the Richmond FLU map when the Land Use Review Board has completed its Tier 3 and Road Rule regulations, when any significant changes are made to the regional FLU map, and whenever on the ground corrections are requested by parcel owners. Following such reviews, the map shall be amended, if necessary, through a public hearing process. ***(Planning Commission)***
8. At least once every two years the Richmond FLU map should be adjusted to reflect changes in tax-map parcel boundaries. ***(Planning Commission)***

(see also other Sections, such as Natural Resources and Housing, with Goals related to land use)

MAPS:

- Current Land Use
- Future Land Use
- See also:
    - Natural Resources Maps for Certain Development Constraints
    - Community Development for Current Land Use and Zoning Districts

Section 7

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Vision Connection: We will preserve the village character that makes Richmond distinctive by protecting historic buildings, sites, and the archival records that tell our community's story.

It is hard to imagine Richmond without its historic architecture. From the Round Church to the downtown business area to bridges and farms, Richmond's historic sites and structures contribute to its distinctive small-town character. These places have retained their vitality because their owners have maintained and adapted them to serve evolving needs without obscuring their ties to the past. Upholding Richmond's character as a vibrant small town that is both forward-looking and grounded in tradition will depend in part on preserving the integrity of these historic structures as the town continues to evolve.

Richmond's historic resources also include the documents, photographs and artifacts that tell the story of its past. The Town preserves and assures accessibility of public records such as land transactions, birth, death and marriage records, and accounts of Town business. The non-profit Richmond Historical Society also collects and preserves Richmond-related historic documents, photographs and other artifacts, as well as maintains the Round Church on behalf of the Town. Additional historic grounding comes from traditions and events that celebrate continuity with the past. The Town provides space for events that have become popular local traditions, such as the 4th of July festivities and the Richmond Farmers Market. History programs sponsored by the Richmond Historical Society, Richmond Community Senior Center and the Richmond Free Library, among others, also take place in Town facilities.

Sites and Structures

More than 100 sites in Richmond are listed in the Vermont Register of Historic Places. Most of these were identified in a Historic Sites and Structures Survey conducted in 1976 by the state's Division for Historic Preservation. The survey designated North (West) Main Street and Bridge Street as historic districts, with 28 and 34 sites, respectively, meeting its historic significance criteria. It also identified 50 historically important sites outside the two districts.

Eight of these state-recognized historic places also appear in the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places. These include the Round Church (which has been designated a National Historic Landmark as well), the Jonesville Academy building, the

Winooski River Bridge (Checkered House Bridge), the Martin Bates farmstead (Birdseye Building and Anand properties), the Richmond Underwear Factory (Goodwin-Baker Building), the M.S. Whitcomb farm (Venture Farm/Monitor Barn farm), Gray Rocks (Andrews Farm), and the Richmond Congregational Church.
State and/or nationally recognized historic sites for which the Town of Richmond is directly responsible include the Round Church, the Town Center and Library buildings and the Bridge Street Bridge.

The Town also maintains two historic cemeteries dating back to the early 1800s: the Village Cemetery on Bridge Street and the Hill (Fays Corner) Cemetery accessed from Cemetery Road.
A site's historic significance derives from its distinctive architectural features and from elements that bear witness to its traditional importance in the community. The Vermont Register of Historic Places describes the features deemed historically significant in each listed property.[1] Maintenance, restoration and reuse of historic properties in Richmond should include stewardship of these distinctive features to retain as much as possible the site's historic integrity. To help owners understand their properties' historic significance, a list of all of Richmond's State and National Register sites should be included on the Town website and by a link to the Richmond Historical Society's (RHS) website. Links to organizations that can help owners of historic properties plan and fund appropriate preservation projects would also be valuable additions.

Richmond's Designated Village Center status, which provides important resources for protecting the historic integrity of Richmond Village, was renewed in 2019, and will need to be renewed again in 2027. Designated Village Center benefits include tax credits for eligible preservation projects and priority consideration for state grants aimed at village revitalization.

Public awareness is critical to preserving Richmond's historic sites and other assets. Building placards, digital information sources (e.g. QR codes) and links to other local historical resources on the Town website would help residents and visitors better appreciate the heritage of the town's developed landscape as well as the people and events that shaped it.

Records and Artifacts

Historic photos, records, artifacts and stories provide context for understanding Richmond's historic settings and the people who have inhabited them. Continued Town stewardship of these resources entails continued preservation of public records. It also includes working with the Richmond Historical Society and others interested in Richmond

[1] These listings may be found through the State of Vermont Agency on Commerce and Community Development Online Resources Center: https://orc.vermont.gov/Resource/Show-Resource-Table.aspx.

history to save, interpret and share materials that deepen an understanding of Richmond's past. As the Town and RHS collections continue to grow, more storage space will be needed. A long-term goal should be to work with the RHS to secure safe, climate-controlled storage space to meet future needs. Another long-term goal should be to collect digital images of fragile historic artifacts and records and make these images available online. Yet another goal should be to have all gravestones in the Town's two historic cemeteries digitally inventoried as well as cleaned and repaired.

Traditions

Traditional public gatherings offer generations of residents a common ground of shared experience which strengthens their connection to the community. History programs also strengthen community ties by broadening public understanding of the events, people and traditions that have made Richmond what it is today. The Town should continue to embrace these activities by providing facilities and helping with publicity and volunteer recruitment.

Richmond's most well-known structure – the Round Church – illustrates how stewardship of historic resources can enrich the town. The church's more than 200-year history is deeply woven into the life of the community. For 160 years, it served as Richmond's Town Meeting Hall, site of many difficult decisions regarding how to keep the community safe and strong. As a place of marriages, christenings and funerals, the Round Church has touched the lives of thousands of families, leaving indelible memories. Over the years, thousands more have collected memories of church services, concerts, the annual Carol Sing, the sledding hill, etc. Others have come as tourists, seeking out a historic landmark and finding an attractive town. Like the Round Church, Richmond's historic places, artifacts, traditions and stories are reminders and beacons: they bear witness to the past, provide links between generations, and weave into the memories of those who engage with them. By protecting and celebrating these resources, the Town helps residents and visitors alike to know and care more about Richmond.

GOALS & ACTIONS

GOAL 1: Protect, maintain and celebrate Richmond's buildings of historic significance

ACTIONS:

1. Protect and preserve the Round Church by continuing to provide liability and property insurance as well as routine grounds maintenance ***(Selectboard, Highway Department)***
2. Plan funding and implementation of major renovations as needed to preserve historical integrity and enhance the Round Church property ***(Richmond Historical Society Board of Directors, Selectboard)***

3. Protect, preserve and continue to fully utilize the Town Center and Library buildings. ***(Town Center Building and Campus Committee, Administration, Library staff)***
4. Encourage the preservation and utilization of privately owned buildings of historic significance within the town ***(Richmond Historical Society, Town-wide)***
5. Reapply for the State of Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development's Village Center Designation every eight years (current until 2027) ***(Planning Commission, Selectboard)***
6. Revise the Town website to include a list of Richmond's state- and nationally recognized historic sites as well as links to historic preservation resources that could help owners to manage these properties so as to preserve their integrity **(*Richmond Historical Society, Administration)***
7. Work with the Planning Commission to ensure that town regulations allow for historic interpretive signage and historic markers and develop and install historic signage and/or QR codes linking to historic information on relevant sites. ***(Planning Commission, Planning Department, Richmond Historical Society)***
8. Develop a walking and/or driving tour of the Town's historic sites by using the historic site lists and QR codes on the website ***(Richmond Historical Society)***

GOAL 2: Preserve and protect Richmond's archaeological sites and cemeteries

ACTIONS:

1. Oversee regular maintenance of the grounds, public access routes and grave markers at the Town's two historic cemeteries: the Village Cemetery on Bridge Street and the Hill (or Fay's Corner) Cemetery accessed from Cemetery Road. ***(Cemetery Commission)***
2. Create and preserve digital files of all Town cemetery listings, including images of gravesite markers as well as burial records and coordinate with the Find-A-Grave organization, which reports that more than 90% of the grave markers in Richmond's' five cemeteries have been photographed by their owners. ***(Cemetery Commission, Town Clerk, Administration)***
3. When archaeological sites or artifacts are discovered during Town or State projects requiring an archaeological resource review, document the material and assess preservation options ***(Richmond Historical Society)***

GOAL 3: Preserve, share and celebrate Richmond's historic cultural assets including records, photographs, artifacts and oral histories

ACTIONS:

1. Continue to publicize and provide space for Richmond history programs and displays sponsored by the Richmond Historical Society and Richmond Community Senior Center, among others, and continue to support and advertise public events that have become local cultural traditions. ***(Library staff)***

2. Update the Town website's Richmond History page with information about recent town history provided in the 2026 Town Plan's Data and Additional information Appendix. ***(Richmond Historical Society webmaster, Administration)***
3. Digitally preserve fragile public records, such as land records and birth, marriage and death records dating back to the late 18th and 19th centuries. ***(Town Clerk, Richmond Historical Society)***
4. Continue to pursue funding to obtain high-quality equipment and a paid assistant to properly digitize the Historical Society's collection. ***(Richmond Historical Society Board of Directors)***
5. Find secure, climate-controlled storage locations for historic cultural assets not stored in the Town Vault ***(Town Center Building and Campus Committee)***
6. Get a solid commitment from the Town Selectboard to recognize the Archives as a permanent**,** not optional**,** part of the town's resources. ***(Selectboard, Richmond Historical Society Board of Directors)***

(see also Utilities, Facilities and Public Safety Sections; and see more about Richmond's history in the Data and Additional Information Appendix)

Section 8

HOUSING

Vison Connection: We will improve access to housing opportunities for current and future residents while supporting the village character and affordability that make Richmond livable.

Overview

Richmond is a great place to call home. We are proud of our strong public schools, committed local businesses, rural character, and the array of town-sponsored events that take place each month. However, Richmond's appeal has also made it increasingly difficult for many people to secure or stay in housing here.

While the housing challenges we face are real, they are not particularly unique to Richmond, nor are they new. These pressures have been brewing across Vermont for decades. In 2020, housing affordability and availability challenges reached crisis levels across Vermont and within Richmond. That year, the housing vacancy rate fell to 1% in Chittenden County, and more than 50% of Richmond residents identified as "cost burdened" or "severely cost burdened." As of May 2025, the median home sale price in Richmond was $395,000, representing a 92% increase in the median home sale price over just five years. Like many rural Vermont towns, Richmond's housing stock is aging. Most of our homes were built between 1960 and 2000, and older homes often come with higher maintenance and energy costs. New home construction in Richmond dropped significantly in the 1990s and 2000s and has remained slow ever since. Over the past two decades, most new construction in Richmond has consisted of single-family detached homes. As of 2025, Richmond's housing stock consisted of:

- 1,216 single-family detached homes
- 55 single-family attached homes
- 387 units of housing within a multifamily dwelling (2–9-unit buildings)
- 140 mobile home units

Only 32 of Richmond's homes are "permanently affordable" apartments (See Data and Additional Information Appendix). Many are discovering that there is a limited supply of smaller and more affordable homes, both for young families looking to put down roots and for residents hoping to downsize.

Since our 2018 Town Plan, we have recognized that diverse housing options are essential for community sustainability, workforce development, vibrancy, and minimizing personal stressors. In 2020, the Richmond Selectboard formed a Housing Committee to fulfill an Action Item in our 2018 Plan. The Housing Committee was tasked with gathering and

analyzing demographic data; generating housing policy recommendations; advising the Selectboard, Planning Commission, and others on housing-related issues; and educating the community on these topics.

In 2022 the Housing Committee engaged Planning Consultant Brandy Saxton to complete the *Town of Richmond Zoning for Affordable Housing* study and create a report entitled Richmond *Housing Report* in collaboration with residents, town staff, and the Housing and Planning Committees. (See the Data and Additional Information Appendix for a link to the full report). This report made policy and regulatory recommendations, concluding that additional community outreach and education would be necessary to implement many of the recommendations. This report helped to inform the Goals and Action Items that the Housing Committee has developed for this Plan.

Local Actions and Results

Creating more diverse and affordable housing is a complex challenge that cannot be solved solely through municipal action. However, local action is crucial, and Richmond has started to make a concerted effort to address the problem. Beginning in 2023, Richmond's Planning Commission and Selectboard have taken significant steps to enable the development of more diverse, affordable housing in our town. Applications for Accessory Dwelling Units, conversions of commercial space to dwelling units, and small multi-family dwellings (3-4 units) have increased significantly in the short time these new regulations have been in place.

The Richmond Zoning Regulations and enabling statutes now allow**:**

- Accessory dwellings and duplexes on the same-sized lot as a single family dwelling in any residential district
- Multi-family buildings with up to 4 dwelling units on the same sized lot as a single family dwelling in any residential district that is served by municipal water and sewer service
- Increased residential density, smaller minimum lot size and reduced parking minimums in residential districts served by water and sewer
- A program offering regulatory incentives for affordable housing development. (See the Data and Additional Information Appendix for a list of zoning ordinance updates from 2022 through 2025).

Many of these changes were mandated by two pieces of state legislation passed to encourage housing development without impacting our natural environment.

State Legislation and its impact on Richmond

Act 47, the Housing Opportunities Made for Everyone (HOME) Act (2023) aims to increase housing development and address the affordability crisis. To address affordability, the

HOME Act established several new programs focused on rental assistance and homeowner affordability for middle-income households. The HOME Act also included municipal regulatory reforms aimed at creating housing opportunities near village centers. By 2025, Richmond's Planning Commission had incorporated most of the required changes into the Zoning Regulations after holding public hearings.

The HOME Act also requires regional planning commissions to assign to each Vermont town a goal for dwelling unit creation by 2050. These targets were created through a careful methodology that considers each town's landscape, existing water and sewer infrastructure, size, and location. Richmond's assigned target ranges are as follows:

- For 2030 - 96/102/120 (low / medium / high targets)
- For 2050 – 207/360/539

These numbers annualize to:

- For 2030 – 19/20/24, and
- For 2050 – 8/14/22

The targets are aspirational, generated by the state legislature and distributed by CCRPC in an effort to meet the state's current housing needs. The numbers for the shorter term (2030) are higher as the projected curve of housing needs is highest in earlier years. The targets may change upon review by the state Land Use Review Board (LURB). There are no penalties for not meeting these targets, and the targets may prove ambitious due to the many factors that influence residential construction. **The Housing Committee recommends that Richmond aspire to reach the middle target of 16 new units each year, which would add 404 new homes to our housing stock by 2050.**

Act 181 (2024) builds on this by requiring that new housing be "compact development" and follow "smart growth" principles. This means that nearly all residential growth should take place in existing village centers, downtowns, and the immediate surrounding areas designated as "planned growth areas" or "village areas." This will avoid disrupting the rural, agricultural, and forested countryside. An additional program developed by Act 181 and adopted by the Richmond Selectboard allows new qualifying housing projects of less than 50 or fewer dwelling units on 10 acres or less in the municipal water and sewer service area to be designated as "Tier 1B" making them exempt from Act 250 oversight. This will reduce the cost of development and hopefully encourage the development of new "smart growth" housing. As of late 2025, one housing project had already made use of this provision to move forward.

Looking Ahead

The Goals and Actions that follow outline how Richmond will continue working toward its housing targets over the life of this plan. Additional strategies that can be employed to facilitate the creation of more affordable and diverse housing options in Richmond can be found in the Housing Committee's *Strategic Housing Plan* and Brandy Saxton's 2022

Richmond Housing Report. (See the Data and Additional Information Appendix for the *Strategic Housing Plan* and additional housing data.)

GOALS & ACTIONS

GOAL 1: Strive to achieve the municipal housing targets established by the HOME Act by enabling the creation of diverse, resilient, and quality housing options for residents and potential residents from all walks of life.

ACTIONS:

1. When updating zoning regulations, continue to expand 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 appropriate districts. ***(Planning Commission, Housing Committee)***
2. Support discussions that consider infrastructure investment that facilitates the development of new/improved housing stock, such as extending the water/wastewater infrastructure to support the development and long-term growth of housing. ***(Housing Committee, Planning Commission, Water and Sewer Commission)***
3. Continue to support the growth and mission of the Richmond Housing Committee and promote discussion of its *Strategic Housing Plan*. ***(Planning Commission, Selectboard, Housing Committee)***
4. Encourage concentrated residential development in areas identified for growth as recommended in the Future Land Use Maps through infill strategies such as ADUs, multi-family housing, and an increase in the allowable building height. ***(Planning Commission, Housing Committee)***
5. *Work* to revise zoning and subdivision application forms to present regulations and internal policy requirements clearly in a transparent and user-friendly manner. Include basic information about processes and timelines to educate applicants from the start. ***(Planning Commission)***

GOAL 2: Support the creation of housing that is more affordable and attainable for low- and moderate-income households.

ACTIONS:

1. Create policies that encourage affordable housing development in accordance with and extending beyond state mandates. ***(Selectboard, Housing Committee, Planning Commission)***
2. Support the continued development and long-term success of Riverview Commons by maintaining communication with residents and the owner to understand the needs of this neighborhood. ***(Housing Committee)***

3. Collaborate with and support the work of the Richmond Racial Equity group to engage with underserved communities to understand and support their housing needs. ***(Housing Committee)***
4. Foster broader community support for affordable housing through education and outreach to homeowners, landowners, business owners, for-profit housing developers, and town representatives. ***(Housing Committee)***
5. Investigate the creation of a housing trust fund to support eligible affordable housing projects or land acquisitions. Potential funding sources could include donations, registration fees, small budget allocations, or other creative mechanisms to be determined. ***(Housing Committee, Selectboard)***
6. Explore a partnership with non-profit affordable housing developers such as Habitat for Humanity, Champlain Housing Trust Fund, or Cathedral Square to support the development of future community projects when opportunities arise. ***(Housing Committee, Planning Department)***
7. Pursue planning or implementation grants for the creation of affordable housing through agencies such as the Department of Housing & Community Development, Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, and other sources. ***(Housing Committee, Planning Department)***

GOAL 3: Educate Richmond residents about the availability of State and Federal funding programs that assist homeowners and renters with improving housing suitability and affordability, including programs focused on rehabilitating old homes, weatherization, and altering the number of units in a home.

ACTIONS:

1. At least annually, generate informational documents for Richmond residents highlighting state or federal programs that provide financial assistance or tax benefits for home improvements or alterations. ***(Housing Committee)***
2. When applicable, organize community educational events with invited guests from relevant government and non-governmental agencies about new or existing financial assistance programs for homeowners, landlords, renters, and developers. Examples of relevant agencies include the Vermont Housing Finance Agency or the Department of Housing and Community Development. ***(Housing Committee)***

Housing
Richmond, VT
2026 Town Plan
Legend
2025 Tax Parcel Boundary
Type
Multi-Family
Mobile Home
Single Family
Type Unkown
Senior Residence
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
N
Sources:
Housing Type, Roads: Enhanced 911 data, 2025
Town Boundary: VCGI, 2025
Disclaimer:
The accuracy of information presented is determined by its sources. Errors and omissions may exist. The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission is not responsible for these. Questions of on- the-ground location can be resolved by site inspections and/or surveys by registered surveyor. This map is not sufficient for delineation of features on-the-ground. This map identifies the presence of features, and may indicate relationships between features, but is not a replacement for surveyed information or engineering studies.
CHITTENDEN COUNTY RPC
Communities Planning Together
11/3/2025
JERICHO
WILLISTON
JERICHO
BOLTON
HUNTINGTON
BOLTON
HUNTINGTON
Richmond Village

Section 9

NATURAL RESOURCES

Vision Connection: We will preserve Richmond's working landscapes (our farms, forests, and natural areas) that provide ecological, economic, and recreational benefits to all residents.

Overview

Richmond's natural and working landscapes, ranging from the forested foothills of the Green Mountains to the fertile Winooski River Valley, are vital to the town's ecological health, rural character, and quality of life. These lands provide clean water, critical wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and scenic beauty, while also supporting a strong sense of place and attracting residents and visitors alike. These resources, which provide critical ecosystem services: clean water, flood mitigation, air purification, recreational space, working lands, biodiversity, and scenic beauty, are increasingly at risk.

In recent years, Richmond has experienced firsthand the intensifying impacts of climate change and pressures from development that can fragment forests and strain water resources. The catastrophic July 2023 and July 2024 flood events revealed the significant impact that stormwater runoff, fluvial erosion, and insufficient or undersized drainage infrastructure play in worsening flood damage. These events led to road and culvert washouts, slope failures, erosion, agricultural losses, and long-term ecological disturbance. As a result, the Town is pursuing a renewed and focused commitment to flood resilience. This includes things from infrastructure inventory and improvements to a renewed emphasis on natural resource-based solutions like wetland preservation, stormwater mitigation, riparian buffers, and forest protection. Recent legislative changes at the state level also align with Richmond's growing focus on environmental resilience.

Impactful Legislation

Richmond's challenging topography which includes steep slopes, narrow valleys, and extensive stream networks demands careful planning. Updated state legislation reinforces this urgency. Act 171 requires towns to identify and protect forest blocks and habitat connectors. Act 154 requires that we integrate environmental justice principles into planning decisions. And 24 V.S.A. §4302(c)(10) mandates the adoption of a policy regarding the extraction of earth resources.

Additionally, Act 181 encourages residential growth to take place in existing village centers, downtowns, and the immediate surrounding areas. The Town is pursuing these compact and climate-smart development strategies. In 2025, the Selectboard voted to opt into Tier 1B Act 250 exemption status in the Town's village centers and designated growth areas. This decision will promote infill and reduce development pressure in ecologically sensitive rural and upland areas. In combination with Act 250 changes on the horizon, including a new limit on the length of roads to reduce forest fragmentation, these changes will serve to preserve our natural resources, forest blocks, and habitat connectors even further.

In 2023, Vermont adopted Act 59, committing the state to conserve 30% of its land by 2030 and 50% by 2050 to protect biodiversity and build climate resilience. The law recognizes that forests, wetlands, and natural ecosystems are essential to Vermont's long-term environmental health and public safety. Richmond's existing conservation efforts include protection of large forest blocks, floodplain forests, and riparian corridors contribute directly to these statewide goals. As implementation of Act 59 advances, the Town will continue identifying opportunities to encourage permanent conservation that support connected, climate-resilient, and ecologically significant landscapes. Richmond is already taking action to reach these goals on the ground.

Forests for our Future

Much of the northeast quadrant of Richmond is forested. This forested area is part of the large Mt Mansfield Forest Block, which is rated as a "highest priority forest block" by the Vermont Conservation Design program from the Agency of Natural Resources (this block is colored green on our Future Land Use map) The forest consists of a number of conserved parcels, as well as parcels in the Vermont Current Use Program (also called the Use Value Appraisal Program) for forestry, and other undeveloped parcels.

The "Highest Priority" designation indicates that this is an area of unfragmented, interior forest land that is crucial for maintaining ecological function and wildlife survival. The forest is home to a variety of animal species such as bobcat, moose, black bear, nesting birds and other animals that require large areas of intact landscapes and the ability to move between habitats, as well as significant plant communities. This forested land also contributes to preserving water quality and providing climate mitigation and resilience.

The Andrews Community Forest, a 428 acre parcel owned by the Town of Richmond, anchors the southwest corner of this forest block and contributes to the effectiveness and connectivity of the ecosystem. The ACF was purchased on March 27, 2018 through the generosity of the Andrews Family, the joint efforts and support from the Town of Richmond, Richmond Conservation Commission, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, Vermont Land Trust and many community members. The management and stewardship of the ACF

is assigned to the Andrews Community Forest Committee, who have been working for several years to revise the original management plan. Any revisions to the Management Plan must strike an appropriate balance among the goals of protecting ecological, timber, recreational, educational, open space and scenic values. The committee's challenging task has been to identify management priorities for different sections of the forest to address water quality, habitat protection and other conservation values, while developing guidelines for creating and maintaining recreational trails and timber harvesting.

A second smaller town-owned forest is the Stage Road Community Forest. This 30 acre parcel is accessed from Stage Road via a VAST trail though neighboring lands and is largely undisturbed, contributing to the maintenance of the larger forest ecosystem.

Meanwhile, warmer winters, hotter summers and precipitation extremes will change the composition and character of our forests. Already, exotic insects and diseases are removing healthy beeches, ash and other trees from our forests, yards and roadsides. Some of these trees, like beech and butternut, will no longer be available to serve bears, birds and other wildlife as critical food sources for winter survival. Warming temperatures are even expected to spell the end of Vermont's iconic sugar maples.

Outdoor Recreation

It is well known that physical activity in the out-of-doors is health-building and should be encouraged. There are many opportunities for outdoor recreation in Richmond. Within the ACF alone can be found hiking, running, walking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, hunting, birdwatching, and biking on designated trails. Other publicly accessible trails and trail networks on private and public lands, such as the Beeken Rivershore, the Preston Legacy, the Old Jericho Rd and the Johnnie Brook Road/Cross Vermont Trails, provide additional hiking and biking opportunities. The Richmond Trails Committee oversees the maintenance of existing public trails outside the ACF, and the Andrews Community Forest Committee is in charge of the trails within the ACF borders, all of which must coexist with the Forest's conservation and other goals. Richmond Mountain Trails, a local chapter of the Vermont Mountain Bike Association, supports and assists in the management of multiuse trails that allow biking, collaborating with the Trails Committee and the Conservation Commission.

Richmond's natural resources can also be enjoyed by boating, fishing, swimming and tubing on the Winooski River; sledding on the Willis Hill Preserve and the Round Church Hill; alpine skiing and riding at Cochran's Ski Area; and simply enjoying the out-of-doors at Volunteer's Green, Browns Court and Round Church parks. Outdoor sports venues include baseball, softball and soccer fields, pickleball courts (as of 2025) and a toddler-endorsed playground.

Working Lands and Agriculture

Richmond's farms and forests have long shaped the town's landscape, economy, and identity. While some traditional dairies continue to operate successfully, the agricultural community in Richmond, and across Vermont, is transforming. A combination of market changes, declining milk prices, climate pressures, and evolving consumer demand has made it increasingly difficult for conventional operations to remain viable. In response, many farmers and land-based enterprises are adapting in creative and resilient ways.

New models of agriculture, forestry, and land stewardship are emerging throughout Richmond. Some farms have diversified into vegetable production, value-added goods, educational programs, and agro-tourism to maintain economic viability and preserve working landscapes. Two local examples are: Conant's Riverside Farm with their coveted sweet corn and pumpkins; and Farr Farms Sunflower Stroll and other on-farm experiences which have connected Richmond residents and visitors to local food systems in new and engaging ways. Similarly, the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC) received approval in 2025 to expand its operations to include seasonal worker housing to support its growing role in regenerative agriculture and youth workforce development. These efforts reflect a broader shift toward community connected, diversified, and environmentally conscious land use.

Richmond's town policies must support this next generation of land-based enterprises. Regulatory flexibility, targeted incentives, and land use planning that promotes "smart growth" and protects large tracts of open land are all essential. As the Town continues to invest in flood resilience, climate adaptation, and affordable housing, it must also ensure that its agricultural and forestry communities remain viable, visible, and valued. The future of working lands in Richmond depends on balancing tradition with innovation and on treating agriculture and forestry as both economic drivers and foundational elements of community life.

Conservation Organizations and Reserve Fund

Richmond has a few notable conservation organizations. Among them is the Richmond Land Trust which has helped conserve the Willis Hill Preserve, Gillett Pond, Huntington Gorge, major parts of the VYCC campus, and the Ruth and Warren Beeken Rivershore Preserve, among other locations. Regional and national conservation organizations such the Vermont Land Trust and the Nature Conservancy also assist in the conservation of land in Richmond through easements and other programs. Invasive plant control efforts along the Winooski River have continued for over 15 years by the Great Richmond Root-Out! and the Richmond Pulls Together, as well as other work by community volunteers. Richmond

also has an extensive trail system which the Richmond Trails Committee manages. The Andrews Community Forest Committee is responsible for the stewardship and management of the town forest. The Richmond Conservation Commission informs government decisions and provides recommendations for conservation related expenditures.

Richmond's commitment to land conservation remains strong. The Richmond Conservation Reserve Fund is an essential tool. Richmond voters established the Fund in 2005 to enable the Town, through the Selectboard, to support initiatives that benefit important local natural, agricultural and historic resources. To date, it has generated over $575,000 for those projects while bringing in over $2.2 million in matching funds for those same efforts. They include establishing the Andrews Community Forest, conserving large sections of the Winooski and Huntington River forested shorelines, saving Gillett Pond, renovating the Town Center portico, restoring flood-damaged trails, inventorying plant and wildlife populations, and dozens of other local, citizen-led initiatives. In 2025, the Town used CRF funds to help preserve 11.2 acres of Silver Maple–Ostrich Fern Floodplain Forest along the Winooski River, an ecologically significant parcel providing flood storage, water quality benefits, and rare habitat. The Richmond Conservation Commission provides recommendations to the Selectboard about the use of the CRF funds. Beyond funding and partnerships, strong land use regulations remain the backbone of long-term conservation.

Conservation and Land Use

The following three categories of natural areas are the most pertinent to future land use planning because they encompass large, ecologically significant tracts of land. While neither the Town nor the State seeks to prohibit all land uses in these areas, they must be carefully considered when creating regulations and making development decisions. It is more important to implement regulations which require responsible stewardship such as "smart growth", green building practices, or green stormwater infrastructure, than it is to completely prohibit use.

I. Contiguous Habitat Units (CHUs) are areas of continuous natural cover and are defined and mapped in the *Science to Action Natural Resources Inventory* as "assemblage(s) of wildlife habitat features such as forested riparian buffers, ledges, deer wintering areas, wetlands, mast stands, and early successional habitats which function together as units of diverse and relatively continuous wildlife habitat." These areas are critical for providing food, shelter, and breeding grounds for many species, including those identified in Vermont's Wildlife Action Plan as "species of greatest conservation need." The importance of protecting forest blocks is also emphasized in Act 171, which requires municipalities to identify these areas in their

town plans and take steps to minimize fragmentation through future development policies.

II. Habitat Connectors are corridors that allow wildlife to travel between forest blocks and CHUs. These linkages are necessary for animals to access seasonal resources, find mates, and adapt to environmental stressors such as climate change, habitat loss, and increasing development. The presence and protection of these corridors are especially important in a landscape like Richmond's, where steep terrain, roads, and scattered development can quickly limit ecological mobility. Habitat connectors are also mapped in Richmond's *Science to Action* inventory and are included in the implementation requirements of Act 171.

III. Riparian Areas include rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds, along with adjacent lands such as river corridors, wetlands, and floodplains. These ecosystems are vital to maintain ecological diversity, water quality, and wildlife habitat. They also serve a key role in protecting the community from flood impacts. The historic floods of July 2023, December 2023, and July 2024 reinforced the need to safeguard riparian areas as natural flood management systems. Forested buffers, wetlands, and intact floodplains absorb and slow water, reducing erosion and protecting downstream infrastructure. Much of this land is already regulated under the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program. Some protections are within Richmond's zoning bylaws, but additional protections such as stormwater bylaws, river corridor bylaws, and strengthened wetland protections should be explored to improve the town's long-term flood resilience.

Building on this framework, the Town has further categorized critical natural features that intersect with land use planning.

Category	Conservation Priorities
Geology and Landforms	Steep slopes over 30% grade Huntington River Gorge East Cliffs along Dugway Road and cliffs west of Snipe Island Brook Scenic viewsheds including the view of Camel's Hump from the Gateway, Bryant Hill, and

	Gillett Pond Ridgelines over 900ft in elevation
Soils and Deposits	Primary agricultural soils (state mapped) Sand and gravel deposits not yet identified
Agricultural and Forestry Lands	Soil erosion prevention Flood mitigation Current Use Program
Groundwater Resources	State Source Protection Areas Groundwater Recharge Areas
Wetlands, Riparian Areas, Surface Waters	Winooski River floodplain Gillett Pond, Richmond Pond, Lake Iroquois Wetlands and vernal pools including 6 significant wetland natural communities, 8 vernal pools, and those yet to be mapped Streams including perennial and intermittent Huntington and Winooski Rivers Riparian Areas
Rare and Sensitive Ecological Communities	13 significant natural communities Silver Maple-Ostrich Fern Floodplain Forest, dry oak forests, and rich northern hardwood forests
Habitat and Wildlife	11 Contiguous Habitat Units (CHUs) and critical habitats Habitat for species identified in Vermont's Wildlife Action Plan Habitat Connectors Forest Blocks

A wide array of existing policies and programs already provide a foundation for protecting the above areas such as the Richmond Zoning Regulations, Federal Floodplain Regulations, the Richmond Water Supply Protection Ordinance, Act 17, Act 250, Act 64, Act 171, Act 59, the Current Use program, the CCRPC ECOS Plan, Chittenden County Uplands Conservation project, Lake Champlain and Winooski River Tactical Basin Plans, etc. See the almanac or Science to Action Natural Resources Inventory for more details.

Earth Resource Extraction

Richmond's policy on the extraction of earth resources aims to provide for the wise and efficient use of, and to facilitate the appropriate extraction of, earth resources and to properly restore and preserve the aesthetic qualities of the extractive area. The complete policy details can be found in our Zoning Regulations in the Conditional Use section. Any application for this use must be heard by the Development Review Board.

Looking Ahead

To ensure these natural systems continue to serve the community, Richmond must look ahead with intention and care. Richmond's natural landscape, defined by steep slopes, wide floodplains, and expansive forest blocks, presents both limitations and opportunities. While these physical features restrict development in many areas, they also provide powerful natural defenses against flooding, climate impacts, and ecological degradation. When paired with thoughtful land use policy and community stewardship, Richmond's natural barriers become conservation assets.

Moving forward, the Town will continue to embrace a dual strategy: directing growth to compact village centers in line with Act 181, while also preserving and restoring ecologically significant lands throughout the broader landscape. Our ability to succeed will depend on maintaining strong partnerships with local and regional conservation organizations, fully utilizing tools like the Conservation Reserve Fund, and ensuring that zoning and infrastructure policies align with the latest science on flood resilience and biodiversity.

As climate change accelerates and development pressures intensify, Richmond has the opportunity to lead by example, protecting natural systems not only for their beauty and biodiversity, but for the safety, health, and long-term sustainability of the entire community.

GOALS & ACTIONS

GOAL 1: Protect, enhance, and restore Richmond's natural areas

ACTIONS:

1. Develop and maintain GIS-based maps of sensitive natural areas and conservation priorities to inform zoning map revisions and land use regulation decisions. ***(Conservation Commission, Planning Department)***
2. Define "trail" and "recreation path" in the Zoning Bylaw and develop regulations for the creation and management of trails and trail networks, especially in natural areas.

(Planning Commission, Trails Committee, Conservation Commission, Andrews Community Forest Committee)

3. Revise land use regulations in rural areas using "smart growth" principles such a clustered development and restricted road lengths to reduce forest block fragmentation, and loss of wildlife connectors and contiguous habitats ***(Planning Commission, Conservation Commission***
4. Strengthen or create clear land use regulations for development in steep or high areas, including slopes between 20% and 35%, ridgelines over 900ft in elevation and continue to prohibit structural development on slopes greater than 35%. ***(Planning Commission)***
5. Continue to provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont's earth resources and to facilitate the appropriate extraction of these resources and the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the extraction area. ***(Planning Commission, Planning Department, DRB)***
6. Pursue funding and partnerships with state and regional organizations to support conservation efforts. ***(Conservation Commission, Selectboard)***
7. Continue to support invasive species control efforts on both private and public land including removal and mitigation of Japanese Knotweed, Garlic Mustard, Barberry Buckthorn, and other fast spreading non-native plants. **(*Conservation Commission, Town-wide)***
8. Provide educational resources and links on the town website about best management practices and environmental permitting tools. Conduct outreach to landowners about conservation and environmental stewardship of natural areas. ***(Conservation Commission, Administration)***
9. Develop an Environmental Justice review policy related to decisions such as land use regulation and conservation-reserve spending. ***(Planning Department, Planning Commission, Selectboard)***
10. Regularly monitor changes in local ecosystems, such as species populations, tree growth or water quality, to track climate change impacts and help inform future planning and actions. Support citizen science programs through which residents can monitor local wildlife, plants or environmental changes. ***(Conservation Commission)***
11. Raise public awareness about impacts to local ecosystems, including providing information about planting native species, water conservation and reducing pesticide usage. ***(Conservation Commission)***

GOAL 2: Strengthen Richmond's flood resilience by reducing exposure to flooding and erosion through land use planning

ACTIONS:

1. Continue to prohibit the construction of new principal structures in the Special Flood Hazard Areas. **(*Planning Commission, Zoning Administrator, DRB)***
2. Revise land use regulations and applications to require disclosure of all surface waters including rivers; streams (perennial and intermittent); creeks; brooks; wetlands; seeps; springs and other surface waters. **(*Planning Commission, Planning Department)***
3. Revise zoning to include River Corridor Bylaws. ***(Planning Commission)***
4. Review land use regulations to ensure adequate surface water setbacks to protect wetlands and riparian areas. ***(Planning Commission, Conservation Commission)***
5. Promote restoration of degraded floodplain systems and wetlands. **(*Conservation Commission, Planning Commission)***
6. Participate in regional efforts to map and assess surface waters and monitor quality. ***(Conservation Commission, Selectboard)***
7. Develop municipal Stormwater Bylaws that control and treat runoff from impervious surfaces to prevent erosion and sedimentation. ***(Planning Department, Planning Commission, Highway Department)***
8. Revise land use regulations to prioritize Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) and Low Impact Development (LID). **(*Planning Commission)***
9. Continue to require compliance with all state or federal land use permits. ***(Planning Department, Zoning Administrator, DRB)***

GOAL 3: Support and preserve healthy, resilient working lands and agricultural soils

ACTIONS:

1. Promote best management practices for farm and forest operations through municipal and state resources sharing. ***(Conservation Commission)***
2. Revise land use regulations to allow for value-added or accessory enterprises for working lands. **(*Planning Commission*)**
3. Continue to support the farmers market, VYCC, and other agricultural enterprises that provide locally grown food or value-added products. ***(Town-wide, Selectboard)***
4. Encourage participation in the VT Use Value Appraisal (Current Use) Program, the federal Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) program, and other land conservation or valuation programs. ***(Town-wide, Conservation Commission)***

GOAL 4: Utilize best management practices for Richmond-owned, publicly accessible natural and recreational areas

ACTIONS:

1. Finalize and maintain a management and trails plan for the Andrews Community Forest through open public discussion and decision making, such that it remains a place where conservation, education, recreation and forestry can coexist harmoniously. ***(Andrews Community Forest Committee)***
2. Protect natural communities such as wetlands, streams, native species, soil health, and ecological processes on town-owned land. ***(Conservation Commission)***
3. Engage in ecological forestry and logging practices on town-owned forested lands, including compliance with state guidelines. ***(Andrews Community Forest Committee, Conservation Commission, Selectboard)***
4. Inventory improvements and update trail maps on town-owned parcels open to the public. Manage trails to protect neighboring property owner rights and respect sensitive natural areas. ***(Trails Committee, Andrews Community Forest Committee, Conservation Commission)***
5. Create a Municipal Properties Management Policy including rights of way, access, safety, and maintenance in order to ensure both natural resource protection and proper land stewardship. Consider anticipated costs while drafting town budgets and fund allocations. **(*Conservation Commission, Selectboard)***
6. Utilize the conservation reserve fund to protect important natural resources and public access to them where appropriate. ***(Conservation Commission, Selectboard)***

GOAL 5: Maintain Richmond's rural character and scenic beauty

ACTIONS:

1. Encourage creative development that minimizes visual impacts on the natural landscape. ***(Planning Department, Planning Commission, Town-wide)***
2. Support land use regulations that mitigate noise pollution and light pollution. ***(Planning Commission)***
3. Continue to support land use regulations that include "smart growth" principles. **(*Planning Commission)***
4. Through research and community input, identify and implement land use regulations which serve to protect neighboring parcels from potential adverse effects of development. ***(Planning Department, Planning Commission)***

Maps and Data Layers

The following maps will be maintained and updated in coordination with CCRPC and State agencies and shall be used in conjunction with the Future Land Use map to inform future zoning maps due to the constraints to development they may pose.

Forest Blocks and Habitat Connectors
River Corridors and Flood Hazard Areas
Wetlands and Surface Waters
Steep Slopes and Erosion Risk Zones
Conservation Lands and CRF-Preserved Parcels
Recreation and Trail Assets
Surface Waters and Source Protection Areas

Conserved Areas and Current Use Program
Richmond, VT
2026 Town Plan
Legend
2025 Tax Parcel Boundary
Conserved Areas
Act 250 Agricultural Soil Mitigation Area
Use Value Appraisal Properties for Forestry and Agriculture (2022)
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
N
Sources:
Roads: Enhanced 911 data, 2025
Town Boundary: VCGI, 2025
Conserved Areas: ANR, 2024
Current Use : ANR, 2022
Act 250 Soil Mitigation: VCGI, 2016
Disclaimer:
The accuracy of information presented is determined by its sources. Errors and omissions may exist. The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission is not responsible for these. Questions of on-the-ground location can be resolved by site inspections and/or surveys by registered surveyor. This map is not sufficient for delineation of features on-the-ground. This map identifies the presence of features, and may indicate relationships between features, but is not a replacement for surveyed information or engineering studies.
CHITTENDEN COUNTY RPC
Communities Planning Together
11/3/2025
JERICHO
WILLISTON
JERICHO
BOLTON
FAYS CORNER
JONESVILLE
Richmond Village
HUNTINGTON
HINESBURG
BOLTON
HUNTINGTON

Hydrologic Features
Richmond, VT
2026 Town Plan
Legend
ANR River Corridor - 2019
FEMA Floodway
Hydric Soils
Significant and Advisory Wetlands
2025 Tax Parcel Boundary
Groundwater Source Protection Area
Community
Small Streams
<.25 square mile drainage area
.25 - .5 square mile drainage area
.5 - 2 square mile drainage area (Minimum ERAF Requirement)
Flood Hazard Areas
1-percent annual chance floodplains with elevations
1-percent annual chance floodplains without elevations
1-percent annual chance zone of shallow flooding 1-3 feet
0.2-percent annual chance flood hazard zone
Municipal Roads General Permit Segment Scoring
Does Not Meet
Partially Meets
Fully Meets
Incomplete Data
Closed Drainage
Not Connected; Not Town Highway
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
N
Sources:
Roads: Enhanced 911 data, 2025
Town Boundary: VCGI, 2025
FEMA Flood Hazard AND Floodway: ANR, 2022
Ground Water Source Protection: ANR, 2022
Wetlands: ANR, 2024
MRGP Segments: ANR, 2023
Disclaimer:
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JERICHO
BOLTON
FAYS CORNER
JONESVILLE
Richmond Village
HUNTINGTON
HINESBURG
BOLTON
HUNTINGTON

Ridgelines + Slope
Richmond, VT
2026 Town Plan
Legend
Ridgeline over 900 ft.
2025 Tax Parcel Boundary
Slope 35% or greater
Slope 20% or greater and Less than 35%
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
N
Sources:
Roads: Enhanced 911 data, 2025
Town Boundary: VCGI, 2025
Slope: derived from 10m DEM
Contours: derived from LIDAR
Disclaimer:
The accuracy of information presented is determined by its sources. Errors and omissions may exist. The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission is not responsible for these. Questions of on-the-ground location can be resolved by site inspections and/or surveys by registered surveyor. This map is not sufficient for delineation of features on-the-ground. This map identifies the presence of features, and may indicate relationships between features, but is not a replacement for surveyed information or engineering studies.
CHITTENDEN COUNTY RPC
Communities Planning Together
11/3/2025
JERICHO
WILLISTON
JERICHO
BOLTON
SAYS CORNER
JONESVILLE
Richmond Village
HUNTINGTON
HINESBURG
BOLTON
HUNTINGTON

Wildlife Habitat + Forest Blocks
Richmond, VT
2026 Town Plan
Legend
2025 Tax Parcel Boundary
Wildlife Travel Corridor (Science to Action)
Continguous Habitat Units "CHU" (Science to Action)
Landscape Components: Overall Priority (Interior Forest, Connecting Forest, Geological Diversity, Surface Water & Riparian Areas)
Highest Priority
Priority
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
N
Sources:
Roads: Enhanced 911 data, 2025
Town Boundary: VCGI, 2025
Wildlife Corridor + CHUs: Arrowwood Consulting
Landscape Priority: Vermont Conservation Design, ANR, 2024
Disclaimer:
The accuracy of information presented is determined by its sources. Errors and omissions may exist. The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission is not responsible for these. Questions of on-the-ground location can be resolved by site inspections and/or surveys by registered surveyor. This map is not sufficient for delineation of features on-the-ground. This map identifies the presence of features, and may indicate relationships between features, but is not a replacement for surveyed information or engineering studies.
CHITTENDEN COUNTY RPC
Communities Planning Together
11/3/2025
JERICHO
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BOLTON
SAYS CORNER
JONESVILLE
Richmond Village
HUNTINGTON
HINESBURG
BOLTON
HUNTINGTON

Section 10

TRANSPORTATION

Vision Connection: We will improve access through safe, sustainable transportation options while enhancing the walkable village character that residents value.

Transportation and climate change

According to the Vermont Climate Council, the largest single source (40%) of greenhouse gas emissions in the state comes from transportation. Looking at Richmond, it is quite obvious why this is so. Most residents commute to work outside Richmond in single-occupancy-gasoline-powered cars. Many satisfy their basic needs for supplies, services and cultural or recreational activities in the same fashion.

How are we to reach our climate goals with our small village center and our longstanding car-centric habits? There are three possible pathways which need attention and action. 1) meeting more of our needs through "active transportation" by traveling on foot or by bike; 2) electrifying our vehicles, while at the same time transitioning our electricity to renewable sources; and 3) developing modes of community or public transportation, including ridesharing, bus, van pooling and train services. This is the climate change prevention task, and we will talk about each of these strategies below.

In addition to transportation's **contribution to** the problem of climate change, there is the matter of climate change's **effect on** our transportation system. In 2023 and 2024 Richmond experienced three significant flooding events from very heavy rains in an 18-month period. We lost roads, culverts, paving and town structures due to inundation and fluvial erosion. We found that our transportation system lacks the fiscal and physical resilience required to navigate future climate events. This is the **adaptation** task, talked about below and in the Emergency Resilience Section.

Trails on hillsides need to be carefully constructed to avoid contributing to fluvial erosion and increased sediment and phosphorus burden in streams. The Town will work with the Richmond Trails Committee and Richmond Mountain Trails to make sure trails are constructed and maintained according to regulations and best practices.

Complete streets

A guiding principle in Richmond's transportation planning for several years has been the "complete streets" concept, in which roads are designed for all modes of transportation. Walking and biking – often referred to together as "active transportation" - are outlined in our 2018 Town Plan "Transportation Vision Connection" (p.35) as ***"Supporting the Town's goals of affordability, economic opportunities, mobility and transportation options, roadway safety and supporting natural and working lands."***

Several studies have been conducted to plan for complete streets. However, funding to carry out many of the recommendations from these studies has not materialized. See the Data and Additional Information Appendix for a list of studies.

The Richmond Bike, Walk and Trails Plan of 2021-22 envisions incorporating roadway improvements with trail connections. These improvements will provide bikers and pedestrians with expanded options for functional travel and recreation.

There has been opposition to mountain biking trails in several public locations in Richmond in recent years, with concerns about impacts to conservation goals being expressed. Mountain biking on private trails continues to be popular and is considered to attract younger residents and increase revenues to local businesses.

Some safety improvements to our transportation infrastructure have been made. Cochran Rd is popular with pedestrians and bikers, and roadway signage and speed bumps have been installed to reduce vehicle speed and improve safety for pedestrians and bikes. Fog lines have been added on Cochran Rd, Huntington Rd, Hinesburg Rd, East Hill Rd and Wes White Hill Rd. A speed study reduced the speed limit on Hinesburg Rd from 45 to 40 mph from the intersection with Huntington Rd to just past Mansfield Way.

A longtime goal has been to develop a safe bike/ped path from the Village to the Park and Ride at Exit 11. A small improvement to the current situation was made with the state repaving project in 2022-24 when shoulders were widened to 5 feet where possible. A committee was formed in 2025 to try to develop funding for a more extensive project along Route 2 from the Village to the Riverview Commons mobile home park.

The selectboard rejected a long-planned sidewalk on the east side of Bridge St. as well as pedestrian safety improvements to the Bridge St / Thompson Rd / Cochran Rd / Huntington Rd intersection, due to concerns about expense.

On the other hand, the highway department continues to pursue and implement their long-range streetscape upgrade plan. Some of the implemented goals already achieved include new 5 ft. wide concrete sidewalks, storm drainage systems, and the paved Volunteers Green parking lot. Additionally, new crosswalks have been added on Bridge St with manually activated crossing signals, and "sharrows" (share the road signage) and new

flexible delineators have been added in the village. The highway department will continue their work on this plan with the future installation of concrete sidewalks on East and West Main Streets. We also now enjoy a new traffic signal at the intersection of Bridge St. and Route 2 that was part of the state's Route 2 upgrade project.

Our road foreman has achieved significant cost and productivity efficiencies by bringing projects like these in house, while contracting out other projects where it makes sense. These savings are an often unseen and under-appreciated benefit of having long-term, budget-conscious town staff.

Electrification of vehicles

An increasing number of electric cars are appearing on Richmond streets. The Richmond Police Department even purchased a Tesla patrol car. Although it turned out not to meet the department's needs it did demonstrate significant savings in fuel and maintenance costs. As the variety of electric vehicles continues to expand, there may be more opportunities to acquire more appropriate electric vehicles for town use. The Town has installed a dual port EV charger in the Town Center parking lot, and the new Mobil station at Exit 11 now includes 2 fast chargers as required by our updated zoning ordinance.

Vehicle electrification seems to be the most promising way to reduce transportation emissions, as the appeal of a more efficient engine is unlikely to go away. Despite climate change denial at the federal level as of 2025, the market and the state of Vermont continue to support vehicle electrification, with EV chargers planned for every 30 miles along I-89. This project, combined with current vehicles with much longer range, should reduce "range anxiety" and encourage purchases. See Energy Section for more on this subject.

Community and public transportation

Studies have shown that there is not enough population density in Richmond to support a traditional bus service. However, the Burlington-Montpelier highway bus link, served by our Exit 11 Park and Ride lot, proved popular for a time, and may be a model for some future service. Another model is the Tri Valley Transit that operates between Vergennes, Middlebury and Bristol in Addison County. This transit mode has proved so successful at serving towns with low population densities that it has extended services to Montpelier and Burlington, with stops in Ferrisburgh, Charlotte and Shelburne. Another line serves Hinesburg, Starksboro and South Burlington. The service is dependent on federal funding, however, which may not always be available. Publicly funded SSTA runs a senior and disabled shuttle service, called the Chittenden County Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities Transportation Program, which provided 198 trips to Richmond residents in the 2025 fiscal year. This service helps us to meet our equity-focused goals for transportation.

The Amtrak train from Burlington to NYC has proved to be popular and is a delightful ride! The short commute from Richmond to Burlington is easy, and long-term parking is not too expensive. If you don't mind the longer trip time, there is an alternate line from Waterbury station to NYC. Both options provide a good way for a Richmond resident traveling to New York to reduce their carbon footprint.

Ideas percolate for micro-transit and internet-enabled ridesharing schemes, which parents of sports-team students often organize on their own. These include an idea for shuttling students to the Camel's Hump Middle School from some nearby location to alleviate the morning traffic congestion at the Bridge St / Route 2 intersection, which is just one of the ideas waiting to be championed and implemented.

Roadway resilience and adaptation

Our road system was designed for a less extreme climate, and it will take time to adapt. With miles of impermeable surfaces, roads are one of the greatest contributors to non-point source pollution and water quality degradation. When roads wash out, erosion and sedimentation are increased, thus burdening lands downstream. New housing development or clear-cutting for timber high up on hillsides may contribute to downstream fluvial erosion and should be considered when permitting. Many of our culverts are too small to accommodate current flows, and the Highway Department has begun replacing them with larger ones. Roadside ditches may need deepening and more frequent clearing. The armoring of culverts that carry stream flows beneath roads may need upgrading. Best practices for management of our gravel and paved roads will have to be studied and carried out as finances permit. Integrating these upgrades will be timed to coincide with other road maintenance or subsurface infrastructure projects. See more on this topic in the Emergency Resilience Section.

Local, regional and state documents inform us of our transportation policies and activities. These include our own ordinances, the Chittenden Active Transportation Plan, VTrans goals and permits, and the CCRPC ECOS Plan for transportation. Each year the Richmond Highway Department improves several road segments to maintain compliance with the Municipal General Roads Permit, and all roads are routinely maintained on a rotating schedule.

GOALS AND ACTIONS

GOAL 1: Maintain a "Complete streets" policy that encourages multi-modal transportation options such a walking and biking in addition to vehicular traffic.

Actions:

1. Add sidewalks, crosswalks and other pedestrian safety measures in the Village Center, where feasible, to improve safety and promote walkability. ***(Planning Commission, Selectboard, Highway Department)***
2. Request bike/ped improvements from the Vermont Department of Transportation (VTrans) when state highway and bridge projects are undertaken within Richmond. ***(Planning Department, Selectboard)***
3. Continuing working with partner agencies and organizations to identify and test best practices in bike and pedestrian safety and implement lower cost improvements that have been identified such as better signage and road markings. ***(Highway Department, Selectboard)***
4. Consider connectivity of on-road bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure with off-road trail systems where there will be minimal impacts on natural lands with conservation values ***(Trails Committee, Parking Advisory Committee, Highway Department, Committee to Explore Path Funding)***
5. Support local efforts to encourage active transportation such as Walk to School, Go! Vermont, bike safety programs through Local Motion, and Vermont Health Department programs ***(Richmond Climate Action Committee)***

GOAL 2: Improve safety and efficiency of public roads and bridges.

Actions:

1. Enforce speed limits on roads with high pedestrian and bicycle use. This may include additional policing or other strategies. ***(Selectboard, Police Department)***
2. Enforce parking bans with fines or other strategies on the traveled portion of roads near recreation areas to ensure the safe passage of emergency and other vehicles. ***(Selectboard, Police Department)***
3. Develop parking for recreational activities in areas where needed, when possible. ***(Parking Advisory Committee, Highway Department, Selectboard)***
4. Continue to maintain roads and roadsides on a regular schedule ***(Highway Department)***

GOAL 3: Increase the resilience of our transportation infrastructure

Actions:

1. Continue to identify and upgrade undersized culverts. ***(Highway Department)***
2. Use best management practices to manage erosion and run-off during road construction and maintenance. ***(Panning Department, Highway Department)***
3. Establish a driveway ordinance that will direct stormwater flows into town storm drainage systems and prevent run-off onto neighboring properties or roadways.

(Planning Commission, Planning Department, Highway Department, Selectboard)

4. Prioritize upgrades to portions of the transportation infrastructure most likely to be damaged in flooding or fluvial erosion events. ***(Highway Department)***
5. Consider potential for hillside land clearing, development or trail building to increase fluvial erosion on downstream sections of hill roads. (***Planning Department, DRB, Highway Department***).

GOAL 4: Encourage transportation options that reduce automobile miles traveled either within or from Richmond.

Actions:

1. Promote modes of transport such as the Montpelier-Burlington bus link, Amtrak train to New York, or other partially public transport options in conjunction with car travel ***(Richmond Climate Action Committee)***

Section 11

UTILITIES, FACILITIES & PUBLIC SAFETY

Vision Connection: We will strengthen resilience by maintaining and upgrading the infrastructure systems (water, wastewater, communications, and facilities) that serve our community.

The town owns various properties, including the town center, library, and several departments. The town center and library, as historic sites, require additional maintenance and funding to preserve their character while updating them. Several town facilities have been audited for energy efficiency. Richmond residents value reliable, essential infrastructure, without unneeded extras. And though maintenance has been carried out, the town is currently facing significant investment in the near term to ensure the continued operation of several town owned and operating facilities, utilities and systems.

Facilities

The Richmond **Town Center** houses the town government, police department, post office and related departments. Currently, the building is badly in need of significant repairs and upgrades. Defective, unhealthy and inefficient heating and cooling systems need to be replaced; energy-efficient windows which would replace old, drafty ones should be installed; and lower-level flooding solutions that would meet current regulations need to be developed. At the same time, the historic appearance of the building must be maintained. A dedicated committee worked for several years with an architect with the conclusion being to renovate the building in a single effort. This was to be financed through a multi-million-dollar bond, which was voted down due to the high cost at town meeting day in 2025. As of this writing, a new committee is working on a proposal for spreading out the cost to retain usability of the building.

The **Richmond Free Library** building, whose basic structure dates to 1879, began as the Universalist Church. In 1991 this building began to house the library, and in 2003, the building was further renovated with private and grant funding. The three-floor library now hosts a large collection of materials for loan, and makes available the Community Room and Mezzanine Lounge, which are key spaces for local groups and individuals to gather, work, and learn. With 30,000 annual visits in fiscal year 2025, Richmond residents make great use of their library's facility and services. Close cooperation with the Community Senior Center has also increased activities and client visits. It is essential that the building

be assessed, maintained and enhanced on a regular basis to ensure safety and access and provide a multitude of services to a growing community. Citizens of Richmond have voiced a desire to strengthen and enhance recreational, community, and cultural facilities in the Town. The library is an integral part in meeting those demands.

Richmond Free Library and its budget are overseen by the publicly elected Library Board of Trustees, who work with the Select Board to make repairs and improvements to the building. Heating and cooling rely on a combination of heat pumps and gas boilers. Federal grants were used to update the HVAC in 2021 and funded exterior siding and steeple repairs in 2024. The original slate roof needs repair or replacement and should be addressed within the next 10 years. Regular assessment and maintenance of the building are vital for safety, accessibility, provision of services, and to keep this historic structure available for decades to come.

The landmark **Round Church and park**, maintained jointly by the town and the Richmond Historical Society, is used for special occasions and attracts many visitors. A complete description can be found in the Historic Resources Section of this Plan.

Public Safety - Police, Fire and Rescue

Richmond offers several public safety facilities and services to its residents:

- Municipal police
- A volunteer fire department
- Richmond Rescue; a contracted local ambulance / private rescue service.

The **Police Station,** housed within the Town Center, was ultimately deemed to be adequate for our current needs, after several other options had been considered. Unlike many communities in eastern Chittenden County, which depend on the State Police for law enforcement, Richmond maintains its own **town police force.** The community has experienced considerable changes both in public support for the police (mostly due to cost) and in officer retention. As of 2025, Richmond employs one commissioned Police Sergeant - a reduction from the staffing level of a Chief and five patrol officers in 2018. To ensure continued coverage, Richmond has worked previously with the town of Hinesburg, sharing police resources between the two municipalities, with the idea of merging services in a Union Municipal District. As of 2025, the current strategy is to continue to build our own department, while actively exploring other options. When the department is rebuilt, the Richmond Police Department Mission Statement, first presented to the Selectboard by Richmond Racial Equity for consideration in 2022, may be considered once again. This document, consisting of four goals, aims to reflect community values and expectations

around policing. Our officers are members of the regional New England Police Benevolent Association Union.

The **Richmond Fire Station** houses Richmond's volunteer fire squad consisting of a Chief, Assistant Chief, three Captains, and one Lieutenant - about 14 active members' total. The members receive a small per-call stipend. Despite the difficulty of attracting new members, the department successfully handles various emergencies - from motor vehicle accidents on interstate 89 and local roads, to medical assists and fires. They have automatic and reciprocal mutual aid with Bolton Fire Department, and work within a broader mutual aid network coordinated by Shelburne.

The 1970's fire station is showing its age but remains functional with needed repairs / upgrades. The fleet is maintained and sufficient, and includes: a 2016 pumper tanker, a 2018 pumper tanker, a 2024 utility truck, and a heavy rescue vehicle that is scheduled to be replaced in December 2025. The town water tank ensures reliable pressure and volume for firefighting.

The Richmond Fire Department is not immune to the challenges facing volunteer departments across the country. (funding, membership, attendance, increasing regulations, etc.) But they continue to perform well and hope to improve their service to the community in the coming years in cooperation with other town entities. Richmond values its dedicated volunteer team.

Richmond Rescue, situated on Railroad Street, is a private emergency medical and rescue organization that provides services under contract to Richmond and other regional municipalities. Funding for the organization is generated through subscriptions, donations, service fees, and municipal contracts. Dispatch operations are managed by the Shelburne service, which also handles fire dispatching, while certain 911 calls are routed through the state police. The service is considering expanding their facility to handle the increased demand for their services.

Roads and Highway

The **Highway Department building** is currently adequate for their needs. The highway department vehicles include a roadside mower, four dump trucks, an excavator, a grader, a front-end loader, two trailers, a small tractor, a snow blower and 3 pickup trucks. Highway vehicles are replaced relatively often compared to other town vehicles and are maintained regularly due to their high level of wear and tear. The Highway Department also maintains other town vehicles including Water Resources vehicles and police cruisers. See additional information about the Highway Department in the Transportation Section.

Recreational Facilities

The town owns two Community Forests – the 30-acre Stage Rd Forest, and the 428-acre Andrews Community Forest. These are managed for both recreation and conservation. More information on these town forests can be found in the Natural Resources Section.

Volunteers Green is the main area for markets, sports, and public events. There is also the Browns Court ballfield area, located on Brown's Trace Road near the schools. Maintaining infrastructure to support growing recreational use of Richmond's natural resources is increasingly difficult in the face of climate change.

Volunteers Green, located in the heart of town, is a convenient, centralized open space for public recreation, and relaxed socializing. Its playground is the meeting place for all Richmond toddler parents. The location of this park, in the floodway of the Winooski River, has been the subject of much discussion since the damage and expense caused by the flooding events of 2023 and 2024. There is also the Browns Court ballfield area which has a softball field and in 2025 recently had 4 pickleball courts installed. Overocker Park, on Cochran Road, provides access to the Winooski, and a small green space known as Round Church Park allows contemplation of the historic structure and a gathering place for runners and cyclists.

Maintaining infrastructure to support growing recreational use of Richmond's natural resources is increasingly difficult in the face of climate change.

Utilities

Richmond's Water Resources Department provides water and sewer services to a defined Water and Sewer District, which consists primarily of the central Village area. The District was expanded in 2024 to include the Gateway area, but no lines have been installed. A Board of Commissioners manages the policies and spending decisions of this department. The system is an expensive one to run for a relatively small number of customers, and the Town is studying ways to increase the customer base without raising the costs for Village residents. Despite this, clean water supply and treated wastewater quality remains high.

Richmond's Municipal Water System sources water from a well near the Round Church, supplying a 750,000-gallon reservoir for village residents' water usage and town-wide fire protection. Recent capital improvements have modernized infrastructure alongside town road projects with more updates planned. The system is regulated by an ordinance from 1965.

The Wastewater Treatment Facility on Esplanade is at the end of a major 20-year study and will require significant overhaul and investment soon due to aging equipment. The most

recent significant expenditures were in 2005, when the secondary extended air facility underwent an upgrade to full tertiary capacity with septage receiving, filtration and biological and chemical phosphorus removal with dewatering; and in 2009, when the collection system completed an upgrade with manhole replacements, pipe linings, and line consolidations.

A 1972 ordinance, available at the Town Clerk's office, established the governance of Richmond's wastewater system uses, hookups. Management is handled by the Water Resources department. An additional ordinance was adopted in 1993 which addresses future hookup allocation.

Stormwater drainage is not combined with wastewater, but customer drain lines and flood planning need continued attention to lessen impacts on the wastewater system. Increased frequency of flooding will likely require upgrades to this system. Many have already been constructed after the floods of 2023 and 2024. But more work will be needed, and this will represent a cost increase for the town. This system is managed by the Highway Department.

Utilities & Facilities not owned by Richmond but used within the town include the electrical grid, natural gas, mobile phone and device coverage, and trash collection. The town waste facility is owned by Richmond but operated by a private business.

GOALS & ACTIONS

GOAL 1: Maintain and enhance municipal facilities and grounds in a cost-effective manner where appropriate and necessary.

ACTIONS:

1. Ensure proper maintenance and public accessibility of Volunteers Green for both residents and visitors. Consider altering the park layout to reduce damage from flooding. ***(Highway Department, Three Parks Committee, Selectboard)***
2. Adhere to the objectives outlined in the Town Forest management plans. (see more in Natural Resources) ***(Andrews Community Forest Committee, Trails Committee, Conservation Committee, Town-wide)***
3. Support the Historical Society's initiatives to preserve the Round Church and its surrounding parcel. ***(Selectboard, Richmond Historical Society)***
4. Create alternative plans to maintain the Town Center building and parking areas to meet the operational needs of town officials and staff, reduce fossil fuel consumption, and maintain its historic features. ***(Town Center Building and Campus Committee, Selectboard)***
5. Continue to lease or rent municipal spaces and grounds to businesses and organizations to maximize space utilization and sustain revenue. ***(Town Administration)***

6. Maintain the Richmond Fire Department and Richmond Highway Department buildings and equipment. ***(Highway Department, Selectboard)***
7. Implement building improvement projects for the library to maintain the historical structure's functionality and preserve historic features. ***(Library Trustees, Selectboard)***
8. Utilize diverse funding sources, including tax revenues, to implement facility maintenance in a fiscally responsible manner. ***(Selectboard)***

GOAL 2: Maintain and upgrade municipal <u>utilities</u> and related infrastructure as needed, while managing costs effectively.

ACTIONS:

1. Utilize findings from the 20-year water study completed in 2025 to inform wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure maintenance and improvements and guide planning for future environmental and usage changes ***(Water Resources Department, Highway Department, Selectboard)***
2. Maintain water and wastewater infrastructure with a focus on reliability. Continue to discuss the limitations on housing creation that our water and wastewater policies hold us to. ***(Water Resources Department, Housing Committee, Planning Commission, Selectboard)***
3. Improve stormwater infrastructure. Upgrade stormwater drainage systems to comply with state regulations and develop plans to address flash flooding issues in vulnerable areas ***(Highway Department, Water Resources Department, Selectboard)***
4. Maintain asset management practices and update them based on changing climate and usage conditions, with an emphasis on cost distribution and planning for equipment replacement. Employ various funding sources, including potential tax resources, to support these. ***(Administration, Town Treasurer, Selectboard)***
5. Revise the capital plan to reflect evolving climate and building maintenance requirements, considering residents' concerns about tax levels. ***(Selectboard, Administration, Town Departments)***
6. Review inventory of potential lead pipe supplies and identify opportunities for stormwater connection upgrades at that time. ***(Water Resources Department, Highway Department)***
7. Continue applying impact fees to help offset operational costs. ***(Planning Department, Zoning Administrator, Town Treasurer, Selectboard)***

GOAL 3: Facilitate access to external or private utilities and facilities for residents, including waste removal, electricity, heating, and telecommunication services.

ACTIONS:

1. Assess options for collaborating with service providers to enhance internet speed, availability, and cell service coverage within the town. ***(Selectboard, Town Administration)***
2. Continue participation in Chittenden Solid Waste District initiatives and work with the operators of the town waste facility. ***(Selectboard)***
3. Coordinate with Vermont Electric Cooperative and Green Mountain Power to maintain reliable electricity access for all residents. ***(Selectboard)***

(see also Transportation, Community Development, Energy, Emergency Resilience, Historic Resources)

Recreation
Richmond, VT
2026 Town Plan
Legend
Trail
Playground
Recreation Field
Cochran's Ski Area
Huntington Gorge
Canoe Access
Robbins Mountain Wildlife Management Area
Chittenden County Fish & Game Club
Audubon Center
Richmond Town Forest
0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles
N
Sources:
Roads and Trails: Enhanced 911 data, 2025
Town Boundary: VCGI - 2025
Disclaimer:
The accuracy of information presented is determined by its sources.
Errors and omissions may exist. The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission is not responsible for these. Questions of on-the-ground location can be resolved by site inspections and/or surveys by registered surveyor. This map is not sufficient for delineation of features on-the-ground. This map identifies the presence of features, and may indicate relationships between features, but is not a replacement for surveyed information or engineering studies.
CHITTENDEN COUNTY RPC
Communities Planning Together
11/3/2025
JERICHO
WILLISTON
JAYS CORNER
RICHMOND TOWN FOREST
Volunteers Green
Cochran's
Canoe Access
CHESTNUT HILL
Huntington Gorge
Chittenden County Fish & Game Club
Robbins Mountain Wildlife Management Area
Audubon Center
HUNTINGTON
HINESBURG
BOLTON
HUNTINGTON
Richmond Village
BROOK RD
VALLEY VIEW
Volunteers Green
Canoe Access
Cochran's Ski Area

IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

RICHMOND TOWN PLAN IMPLEMENTATION				
Technical Plan	**Goal, Action**	**Action Language**	**Primary Party**	**Time**
Community Development (CD)	1.1	Create a contingency to replace SNAP benefits if/when they lose federal funding.	Selectboard	Short Term
CD	1.2	Continue to support the Richmond Food Shelf and Thrift Store with anything they reasonably need to provide low or no cost food and clothing to those needing this service	Town Administration, Selectboard, Town-wide	Ongoing
CD	1.3	Form a task force to develop and implement additional strategies for food security and to promote the connection between food and farming.	Richmond Racial Equity, Selectboard, Townwide	Short Term
CD	1.4	When revision zoning, find new options to permit non-traditional housing types and encourage the development of new business ventures during zoning regulation updates	Planning Commission, Planning Department, Selectboard	Ongoing
CD	1.5	Ensure town policies and regulations work together with public health programs and resources within and beyond Richmond.	Selectboard	Ongoing
CD	1.6	Consider ways to support Richmond Market & Beverage in their expansion to include a pharmacy.	Selectboard, Planning Commission, Town-wide	Ongoing
CD	1.7	Consider ways of increasing opportunities for childcare providers, including supporting programs like the Youth Librarian and investigate a municipal property tax benefit for those providing childcare.	Selectboard, Library staff	On-going
CD	1.8	Continuing public use of municipal buildings and grounds, including spaces such as the Community Room, and Volunteers Green for events like the Richmond Farmers Market, Holiday Market, book sale, and other accessible shopping opportunities.	Selectboard, Library staff, Town-wide.	Ongoing
CD	2.1	Sustain open and transparent communication channels via established platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Front Porch Forum, Times Ink!, and MMCTV. Actively publicize opportunities for participation and volunteering, including Livestreaming meeting through MMCTV and YouTube.	Town Administration, MMCTV	Ongoing

CD	2.2	Continue to ensure full compliance with Vermont's Open Meeting Law by all town staff, boards and commissions.	Selectboard, all committees,	Ongoing
CD	2.3	Look at ways to align efforts of town boards, commissions, and staff to promote greater collaboration, communication and efficiency.	Selectboard, Planning Commission, Planning Staff	Ongoing
CD	2.4	Ensure the town website is kept up to date and designed in a manner which is user-friendly and easily accessible as a reference resource	Town Administration	Ongoing
CD	2.5	Uphold the town's inclusivity policy across municipal workplaces, boards, commissions, and media outlets.	Selectboard	Ongoing
CD	2.6	Acknowledge and celebrate volunteer contributions through formal recognition and promotional efforts on the website and on social media (if agreeable).	Town Administration	Ongoing
CD	3.1	Collaborate with landowners willing to provide public access to privately held natural and open space areas.	Selectboard, Conservation Committee, Richmond Land Trust	Ongoing
CD	3.2	Assist the Richmond Land Trust and Vermont Land Trust in efforts to conserve natural resources that allow for public recreational use.	Selectboard, Conservation Commission	Ongoing
CD	3.3	Ensure collaboration among the Trails Committee, Andrews Community Forest Committee, Conservation Commission, Planning Commission. Encourage collaboration with other relevant regional organizations, including through a dedicated outreach staff position, such as a Recreational Director, if funding can be made available and if a specific job description can be developed by the groups.	Selectboard, Planning Commission	Ongoing
CD	3.4	Develop and distribute materials that encourage responsible and safe enjoyment of Richmond's natural areas, including trail maps, informational kiosks, enhanced parking, improved access, and signage. Post notices of events on social channels	Selectboard, Conservation Commission	Ongoing
CD	3.5	Support established outdoor recreation venues such as Cochran's Ski Area, Chittenden County Fish & Game, the Andrews Community Forest and the local trail network.	Selectboard, Trails Committee	Ongoing
CD	3.6	Endorse and support programs and opportunities for outdoor recreation, including access to the Winooski River, swimming, cross-country skiing, skating, mountain biking, and more. Establish recreational parking areas when feasible.	Selectboard, Conservation Commission, Parking Advisory Committee	Ongoing

CD	4.1	Consider adding a town outreach/communications role to coordinate and communicate town government, recreational matters, as well as plan and promote community events on all communications channels.	Selectboard	Ongoing
CD	4.2	Promote arts and cultural events for residents and visitors on all communications channels.	Selectboard, Town-wide	Short Term
CD	4.3	Continue to seek funding options for new recreation and engagement programs.	Selectboard, Administration	Ongoing
CD	4,4	Ensure zoning allows sustainable recreational businesses and projects on public and private land, such as community centers and performance spaces.	Planning Commission, Selectboard	Short Term
CD	5.1	Support public health initiatives within and beyond Richmond by maintaining policies and resources that facilitate the operation and development of critical facilities and programs. Enhanced public health infrastructure can be achieved through a Health in All Policies approach. The American Public Health Association's Health in All Policies guide contains examples of how local governments can support health.	Selectboard	Ongoing
CD	5.2	Continue to collaborate with the Howard Center, the Vermont Department of Health, and other public health providers, to promote resources and initiatives aimed at addressing substance abuse, as well as other significant issues such as domestic violence.	Selectboard	Ongoing
CD	5.3	Work with the Vermont Department of Health to conduct health impact assessments when considering the potential effects of any major proposed policy, plan, program or project to judge the health outcomes in Richmond and the distribution of those effects within the population.	Selectboard, Health Officer	Short Term
CD	6.1	Improve the planning and zoning process	Planning staff, ZAO, Planning Commission, DRB	Ongoing
CD	6.2	Create a place to gather issues/concerns/complaints about how the town conducts matters. Implement action plans to explain to residents how processes work now and how they can be improved.	Administration	Ongoing
Economic Development (ED)	1.1	Encourage formation of an independent volunteer group to conduct regular business visits, gather feedback, and serve as liaison between businesses and town government.	Town-wide	Ongoing

ED	1.2	Explore and develop ways to encourage recreational visitors to spend time and money in the village center, such as directional signage at recreation access points, visitor information materials highlighting local businesses, and collaboration with recreational organizations.	Selectboard, Town-wide, Highway Dept.	Ongoing
ED	1.3	Use local businesses for municipal purchases of goods and services whenever feasible.	Administration, Selectboard	Ongoing
ED	1.4	Continue to renew Richmond's Village Center designation when required and utilize state and federal tax credits for building rehabilitation, access to funding priority, and state programs that promote economic development.	Planning Department, Administration	Short Term
ED	2.1	Research and implement strategies to increase local food production and purchasing at both municipal and community levels, supporting food security and access for all residents.	Richmond Racial Equity, Town-Wide	Ongoing
ED	2.2	Explore regulatory means of supporting the viability of farm and forest-based land uses.	Planning Commission	Ongoing
ED	3.1	Continue to update zoning regulations to allow mixed-use development, commercial zones, and business-supportive land uses while protecting working lands.	Planning Commission	Ongoing
Education (Ed) ***Note: MMUUSD refers to Richmond Representatives to the District***	1.1	Continue supporting preschool partnerships and seek opportunities to expand capacity, particularly for private early childhood providers. Expansion efforts should include outreach to underserved and multilingual families to ensure equitable participation.	MMUSD, Town-Wide, Richmond Racial Equity	Ongoing
Ed	1.2	Encourage collaboration amongst the Town and Regional partners to maintain and improve programs and resources.	MMUSD, Town-Wide	Ongoing
Ed	1.3	Support arts, technical education, and career focused programs that enhance student engagement and workforce readiness and engage with emerging technologies.	MMUSD, Town-Wide, Richmond Racial Equity	Ongoing
Ed	1.4	Promote professional development opportunities, especially in trauma informed instruction and support anti-bias education, equity practices, and culturally responsive communication	MMUSD, Town-Wide, Richmond Racial Equity	Long Term
Ed	1.5	Provide education programs aimed to help solve problems caused by the opiate crisis.	Richmond State representative, MMUUSD, Town-Wide, Vermont Dept. of Public Health	Long Term

Ed	1.6	Continue to support the use of town facilities, such as the community room at the library and the Radiate Art space in the town center for recreational and educational programs	Selectboard, Library Trustees	Ongoing
Ed	1.7	Promote partnerships with neighboring towns and nonprofit organizations to expand educational and enrichment opportunities beyond the classroom and help work to reduce racial disparities in access to enrichment and learning resources	Selectboard, Library, Richmond Racial Equity	Ongoing
Ed	1.8	Encourage utilizing the school spaces for multicultural and diverse events and offerings which could complement the Spanish immersion program and encourage more diverse perspectives and experiences for the community. Consider the barriers to access for diverse and marginalized groups.	MMUUSD, Townwide, Selectboard, Richmond Racial Equity	
Ed	2.1	Evaluate opportunities to shorten school bus routes and reduce costs. When evaluating route changes, the Town and District should ensure that transportation adjustments do not create new barriers for marginalized or lower income families.	MMUUSD, Richmond Climate Action Committee, Richmond Racial Equity	Ongoing
Ed	2.2	Explore the use of electric or hybrid buses, smaller vehicles, and more flexible route design. Support the pursuit of grant opportunities.	MMUUSD, Richmond Climate Action Committee	Long Term
Ed	2.3	Improve multimodal transportation options for students, including sidewalk and bike route improvements and increased ridership of school buses to reduce congestion and increased sustainability.	Selectboard, Highway Department, Richmond Climate Action Committee, Townwide	Long Term
Ed	3.1	Support use of school facilities for civic events, adult education, after school programming and emergency preparedness; collaborate with MMUUSD to ensure public access. Community use should include equitable access so that residents of all races, cultures and backgrounds feel welcome and included.	Selectboard, Townwide, MMUUSD, Richmond Racial Equity	Ongoing
Ed	3.2	Support investment in school building as key community infrastructure through building maintenance and improvement with an emphasis on energy conservation.	MMUUSD, Richmond Climate Action Committee	Ongoing
Ed	3.3	Coordinate emergency shelter planning, energy efficiency upgrades and public space enhancements.	MMUUSD, Richmond, Selectboard, Administration	Long Term
Ed	3.4	Support Richmond Elementary and Camels Hump schools in pursuing the planting of	Selectboard, Highway	Ongoing

		trees or other barriers to block highway noise, visibility and increase safety through land use regulation guidance and pursuit of potential grant or funding sources.	Department, MMUUSD	
Ed	3.5	Compare 2018 Stormwater Study with the 2025 stormwater infrastructure work at RES and CHMS to determine if there are further steps to be taken to improve resilience to stormwater and snowmelt, particularly in areas necessary or children to safely access the outdoors such as the playground.	Planning Department, MMUUSD	Ongoing
Ed	4.1	Participate in state and regional discussions on new school district boundaries and governance. Attention should be paid to how state-level district consolidation affects educational equity and access for historically marginalized groups.	Richmond State Representative, MMUUSD School Board, Richmond Racial Equity	Ongoing
Ed	4.2	Support MMUUSD forums, outreach, and public engagement to keep residents informed and involved.	MMUUSD School Board	Short Term
Ed	4.3	Monitor how regional consolidation may affect enrollment, facilities, and shared impacts with neighboring towns and how these changes may relate to Richmond's municipal services, planning opportunities and long term strategies.	Richmond State Representative, MMUUSD School Board	Long Term
Ed	4.4	When revising land use regulations and capital budgets, consider changes occurring in the educational system.	Planning Commission, Selectboard	Long Term
Emergency Resilience (ER)	1.1	Continue systemic upgrades of undersized culverts and drainage systems with town budget where possible and FEMA assistance where necessary for larger projects prioritized by the Town Road Forman.	Highway, Selectboard, Administration	Long Term
ER	1.2	Align with the state level Vermont Resilience Implementation Strategy by adopting climate resilient infrastructure design standards for all municipal public work projects, requiring roads, culverts and bridges to incorporate design standards based on climate projections (50 to 100 year storm intervals plus climate change factors) rather than historical data alone.	Highway, Selectboard, Planning Commission.	Long Term
ER	1.3	Require emergency services approval for all new development to ensure safe access for emergency vehicles, with special	Selectboard, Planning Commission, E-	Short Term

		consideration for steep, narrow or winding access routes.	911 Coordinator, Fire Department	
ER	1.4	Explore administrative support options to reduce FEMA paperwork burden on Town Road Forman so they can focus on infrastructure construction and maintenance.	Town Administration, Selectboard	Short Term
ER	1.5	Work with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Rivers Program to develop river corridor protection zoning as established by ACT 121 and based on DEC created mapping. This will likely be a requirement by 2028.	Planning Commission	Long Term
ER	1.6	Continue to strictly regulate development in the Special Flood Hazard Area	Zoning Administrator, Development Review Board, Planning Commission	Ongoing
ER	2.1	Establish a Community Resilience Hub by designating and hardening a community facility (Town Center, Library, or other suitable location) with backup power, secure potable water access, and redundant communications to serve as cooling centers during extreme heat events and warming/charging centers during prolonged winter power outages.	Selectboard, Library	Long Term
ER	2.2	Consider establishing a volunteer Town Emergency Coordinator position to coordinate volunteer networks, emergency communications and work with the town's Emergency Operations Staff during disasters.	Selectboard, Townwide	Long Term
ER	2.3	Address emerging climate hazards by developing an Extreme Heat Response Plan with voluntary registry and wellness check protocols for vulnerable residents. Adopt a Community Wildfire Protection Plan with defensible space education.	Selectboard, Emergency Management Director	Long Term
ER	2.4	Improve emergency shelter accessibility by developing sheltering plans for resident south of the Winooski River when flooding isolates them from designated shelter at Camel's Hump Middle School and creating protocols for domestic animal sheltering during disasters.	Selectboard, Emergency Management Director	Long Term

ER	2.5	Update the local Emergency Management Plan to reflect Richmond's specific vulnerabilities and recent disaster experience. Develop flood specific evacuation procedures for residents south of the Winooski River, multi-day power outages, and formal integration of community partners like Front Porch Forum and local organizations into emergency response procedures.	Emergency Management Director	Ongoing
ER	3.1	Consider establishing a voter approved Disaster Mitigation and Recovery Fund capitalized by dedicated annual appropriations to provide stable local matching funds for federal grants (FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance, PROTECT Program) and cover non-reimbursable disaster expenses to avoid emergency tax increases as occurred in 2026.	Selectboard, Town Treasurer	Long Term
ER	3.2	Align local planning and capital improvement decisions with the Vermont Resilience Implementation Strategy and the Richmond Annex of the Chittenden County All-Hazards Mitigation Plan to maximize eligibility for state and federal funding opportunities. Utilize the Transportation Resilience Planning Tool (TRPT) to prioritize road and bridge vulnerability project for PROTECT Program planning.	Selectboard, Highway Department.	Long Term
ER	3.3	Complete geomorphic assessments for the Winooski River and implement river corridor protection measures as part of nature base flood mitigation solutions. Coordinate with CCRCP and neighboring municipalities on watershed wide resilience planning.	Conservation Commission, Planning Department, Planning Commission.	Mid Term
ER	3.4	Strengthen regional emergency coordination by updating mutual aid agreements with neighboring first responders. Participate in regional resiliency planning initiative with CCRCP and Vermont Emergency Management.	Selectboard, Emergency Management Director	Mid Term
Energy (E)	1.1	Continue to refine the zoning ordinance to reflect "smart growth" principles, with most development concentrated in the village, neighborhoods, downtown, and central mixed-use areas to reduce vehicle miles travelled.	Planning Commission	Ongoing

E	1.2	Encourage walking and biking by providing safe and convenient bike/ped infrastructure such as bike lanes and sidewalks.	Planning Commission, Highway Department, Selectboard	Ongoing
E	1.3	Develop and support “complete streets” and “share the road” policies	Planning Commission, Selectboard, Highway Department.	Ongoing
E	1.4	Support the electrification of vehicles by requiring and/or providing private and public EV charging stations whenever possible through zoning, advocating for compliance with Residential and Commercial Energy Standards requirements for EV charging, and other mechanisms; and adding prominent signage.	Planning Commission, Energy Coordinator, Richmond Climate Action Committee	Mid Term
E	1.5	Allow charging stations wherever there is parking and update sign standards	Planning Commission	Ongoing
E	1.6	Consider energy efficiency and electrification when planning for and purchasing municipal vehicles, recognizing there may be limited options at this time for heavy duty vehicles and vehicles for first responders.	Selectboard, Administration	Ongoing
E	2.1	Endorse and support Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards and Commercial Building Energy Standards, mandated by state law, require all new construction, renovations, alterations and repairs to meet specific energy conservation and efficiency measures, and require developers, to self-certify correctly.	Planning Commission, Zoning Administrator, DRB	Ongoing
E	2.2	Identify conservation and efficiency opportunities in municipal buildings and facilities and act on them whenever they arise. Prioritize energy efficiency when renovating or upgrading buildings. Develop a plan for financing efficiency upgrades to our Town Center building that is acceptable to voters.	Town Center Building and Campus Committee, Energy Coordinator	Ongoing
E	2.3	Promote energy conservation practices and efficiencies among all municipal employees.	Energy Coordinator, Town Administration	Ongoing
E	2.4	Support and utilize community resources and partners such as Efficiency Vermont and the EAN Energy Dashboard.	Energy Coordinator, Richmond Climate Action Committee	Ongoing

E	2.5	Support educational activities such as town energy fairs, literature distribution and energy committee activities that provide residents with information about energy conservation and renewable heating options such as air-source heat pumps, ground source heat pumps, advanced wood-burning, battery storage options, and programs such as GMP's renewable surcharge.	Richmond Climate Action Committee	Short Term
E	2.6	Coordinate with Efficiency Vermont, Vermont Gas and the state Weatherization Assistance Program to describe and promote these programs through the town website.	Energy Coordinator, Richmond Climate Action Committee	Ongoing
E	3.1	Update land use regulations to include permitting steps, development parameters, standards, aesthetic values, and mitigation requirements specific to renewable energy projects	Planning Commission, Planning Department	Long Term
E	3.2	Require that renewable energy generation facilities not take place in areas with known constraints and explore alternatives to and then mitigate adverse impacts in areas with possible constraints, as identified in the constraints section of this plan (see Table C3 in Data and Additional Information). In determining whether known or possible constraints are present, on-site field verification should be conducted.	Planning Commission, Conservation Committee	Ongoing
E	3.3	Designate specific locations as preferred sites for the siting of net-metered solar generation projects.	Planning Commission	Short Term
E	3.4	Continue to participate in and promote net-metering arrangements whenever possible.	Selectboard, Energy Coordinator. Townwide	Short Term
E	3.5	Ensure that the long-term management plan for the Town Forest allows for sustainable energy production for the benefit of the town, such as sustainable biomass harvesting (firewood).	Andrews Community Forest Committee	Short Term, Ongoing
E	3.6	Investigate grid constraints when considering renewable energy facilities.	Planning Commission, Selectboard	Short Term
E	3.7	Consider renewable energy to offset municipal energy use.	Energy Coordinator, Selectboard	Ongoing
E	4.1	Reappoint a Town Energy Coordinator whenever the position becomes vacant.	Selectboard, Townwide	Ongoing

E	4.2	Develop an energy action plan for the Town to implement the energy goals and actions in this plan and assist with evaluating investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities that benefit the town.	Richmond Climate Action Committee	Ongoing
E	4.3	Ensure that actions and policies meet equity goals of the Vermont Climate Council's "Guidance for a Just Transition" by not increasing burdens for low income, disabled, or other vulnerable residents.	Energy Coordinator	Long Term, Ongoing
E	4.4	Maintain energy consumption and emissions data for municipal buildings and vehicles to analyze efficiency and evaluate costs and benefits of investments in reduction of fossil-fuel usage.	Energy Coordinator	Short Term
E	4.5	Educate the community on energy efficiency, energy conservation and renewable energy technologies and techniques.	Richmond Climate Action Committee, Energy Coordinator	Ongoing
E	4.6	Assist the Town with applying for grants and incentives to reduce energy use and increase the use of renewable energy	Energy Coordinator	Short Term
E	4.7	Update the 2007 Town of Richmond Energy Conservation Policy.	Richmond Climate Action Committee, Energy Coordinator Selectboard	Ongoing
Future Land Use (FLU)	1.1	Invest in municipal infrastructure improvements that allow for new development where appropriate	Selectboard, Water and Sewer Commission, Planning Commission	Short Term
FLU	1.2	Create policies that encourage residential development, including affordable housing, especially in areas of existing municipal services.	Planning Commission, Housing Committee	Mid Term
FLU	1.3	Revise zoning to fully align with Acts 47 and 181.	Planning Commission, Planning Department and Housing Committee	Short Term
FLU	1.4	When revising the zoning, use "smart growth" guidelines and Vermont Conservation Design recommendations such as clustering of housing, and road and driveway length restrictions to inform development in the rural areas	Planning Commission, Planning Department	Mid Term
FLU	1.5	Utilize the new statewide land use framework in zoning revisions to refine the	Planning Commission,	Long Term

		mapping of areas designated for development and those designated for conservation in order to preserve the scenic and historic qualities of Richmond	Planning Department	
FLU	1.6	Update zoning regulations to ensure adequate review standards for projects in the Tier 1B Overlay District, as Tier 1B exempts smaller housing projects in the village core from Act 250 review.	Planning Commission, Planning Department	Short Term
FLU	2.1	Continue to uphold regulations that protect areas that are prone to inundation flooding, fluvial erosion or washouts, such as floodplain, river corridors, steep slopes and soils prone to erosion.	DRB, ZAO, Planning Commission	Short Term
FLU	2.2	Update the zoning regulations to manage development in sensitive or high priority natural areas as mapped by the Agency of Natural Resources including the Landscape, Community and Species Level features of Vermont Conservation Design and other professional assessments such as Science to Action.	Planning Commission, Conservation Commission	Mid Term
FLU	2.3	Update zoning regulations with river corridor zoning standards based on Agency of Natural Resources mapping and recommendations.	Planning Commission, Planning Department, Conservation Commission	Mid Term
FLU	2.4	Encourage land conservation to help meet Act 59's goal of 30% of Vermont's land conserved by 2030.	Conservation Commission, Richmond Land Trust	Long Term
FLU	2.5	Update zoning regulations to allow for commercial activities that will help ensure the viability of working agricultural and forest lands, and Resource-based recreation areas	Planning Commission	Mid Term
FLU	2.6	Incorporate "nature-based solutions" from the Vermont Climate Action Plan into zoning revisions whenever possible	Conservation Commission, Planning Commission	Long Term
FLU	2.7	Review the Richmond FLU map when the Land Use Review Board has completed its Tier 3 and Road Rule regulations, when any significant changes are made to the regional FLU map, and whenever on the ground corrections are requested by the owners. Following such reviews, the map shall be amended if necessary though a public hearing process.	Planning Commission, Planning Department	Ongoing
FLU	2.8	At least once every two years the Richmond FLU map should be adjusted to reflect changes in tax-map parcel boundaries.	Planning Commission, Planning and Department	

Historic Resources (HR)	1.1	Protect and preserve the Round Church by continuing to provide liability and property insurance as well as routine grounds maintenance	Selectboard, Highway Department	Ongoing
HR	1.2	Plan funding and implementation of major renovations as needed to preserve historical integrity and enhance the Round Church property	Richmond Historical Society Board of Directors, Selectboard	Ongoing
HR	1.3	Protect, preserve and continue to fully utilize the Town Center and Library buildings.	Town Center Building and Campus Committee, Administration, Library staff	Ongoing
HR	1.4	Encourage the preservation and utilization of privately owned buildings of historic significance within the town	Town-Wide, Historical Society	Ongoing
HR	1.5	Reapply for the State of Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development's Village Center Designation	Planning Commission, Selectboard	Short Term
HR	1.6	Revise the Town website to include a list of Richmond's state- and nationally recognized historic sites as well as links to historic preservation resources that could help owners to manage these properties so as to preserve their integrity	Historical Society, Town Administration	Short Term
HR	1.7	Work with the Planning Commission to ensure that town regulations allow for historic interpretive signage and historic markers and develop and install historic signage and/or QR codes linking to historic information on relevant sites.	Planning Commission, Planning Department, Historical Society	Short Term
HR	1.8	Develop a walking and/or driving tour of the Town's historic sites by using the historic site lists and QR codes on the website.	Historical Society	Short Term
HR	2.1	Oversee regular maintenance of the grounds, public access routes and grave markers at the Town's two historic cemeteries: the Village Cemetery on Bridge Street and the Hill (or Fay's Corner) Cemetery accessed from Cemetery Road.	Historical Society, Cemetery Trustees	Ongoing
HR	2.2	Create and preserve digital files of all Town cemetery listings, including images of gravesite markers as well as burial records and coordinate with the Find-A-Grave organization, which reports that more than 90% of the grave markers in Richmond's' five cemeteries have been photographed by their owners.	Town Administration, Cemetery Commission, Historical Society	Long Term
HR	2.3	When archaeological sites or artifacts are discovered during Town or State projects requiring an archaeological resource review,	Historical Society	Long Term

		document the material and assess preservation options		
HR	3.1	Continue to publicize and provide space for Richmond history programs and displays sponsored by the Richmond Historical Society and Richmond Community Senior Center, among others, and continue to support and advertise public events that have become local cultural traditions	Library Staff	Ongoing
HR	3.2	Update the Town website's Richmond History page with information about recent town history provided in the 2026 Town Plan's Data and Additional information Appendix.	Historical Society, Town Administration	Short Term
HR	3.3	Develop a plan to digitally preserve fragile public records, such as land records and birth, marriage and death records dating back to the late 18th and 19th centuries	Town Administration, Historical Society	Long Term
HR	3.4	Continue to pursue funding to obtain high-quality equipment and a paid assistant to properly digitize the Historical Society's collection	Richmond Historical Society Board of Directors	Ongoing
HR	3.5	Find secure, climate-controlled storage locations for historic cultural assets not stored in the Town Vault	Town Center Building and Campus Committee	Long Term
HR	3.6	Get a solid commitment from the Town Selectboard to recognize the Archives as a permanent, not optional, part of the town's resources.	Selectboard, Richmond Historical Society Board of Directors	Short Term
Housing (H)	1.1	When updating zoning regulations, continue to expand 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 appropriate districts.	Planning Commission, Housing Committee	Ongoing
H	1.2	Support discussions that consider infrastructure investment that facilitates the development of new/improved housing stock, such as extending the water/wastewater infrastructure to support the development and long-term growth of housing.	Housing Committee, Planning Commission, Water and Sewer Commission	Ongoing
H	1.3	Continue to support the growth and mission of the Richmond Housing Committee and promote discussion of its *Strategic Housing Plan*.	Planning Commission Selectboard, Housing Committee	Ongoing
H	1.4	Encourage concentrated residential development in areas identified for growth as recommended in the Future Land Use Maps through infill strategies such as ADUs, multi-	Planning Commission, Housing Committee	Short Term

		family housing, and an increase in the allowable building height.		
H	1.5	Work to revise zoning and subdivision application forms to present regulations and internal policy requirements clearly in a transparent and user-friendly manner. Include basic information about processes and timelines to educate applicants from the start.	Planning Commission	Long Term
H	2.1	Create policies that encourage affordable housing development in accordance with and extending beyond state mandates.	Planning Commission, Selectboard, Housing Committee	Ongoing
H	2.2	Support the continued development and long-term success of Riverview Commons by maintaining communication with residents and the owner to understand the needs of this neighborhood.	Housing Committee	Ongoing
H	2.3	Collaborate with and support the work of the Richmond Racial Equity group to engage with underserved communities to understand and support their housing needs.	Housing Committee	Mid Term
H	2.4	Foster broader community support for affordable housing through education and outreach to homeowners, landowners, business owners, for-profit housing developers, and town representatives.	Housing Committee	Ongoing
H	2.5	Investigate the creation of a housing trust fund to support eligible affordable housing projects or land acquisitions. Potential funding sources could include donations, registration fees, small budget allocations, or other creative mechanisms to be determined.	Housing Committee, Selectboard	Short Term
H	2.6	Explore a partnership with non-profit affordable housing developers such as Habitat for Humanity, Champlain Housing Trust Fund, or Cathedral Square to support the development of future community projects when opportunities arise.	Housing Committee, Planning Department	Long Term
H	2.7	Pursue planning or implementation grants for the creation of affordable housing through agencies such as the Department of Housing & Community Development, Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, and other sources.	Housing Committee, Planning Department	Ongoing
H	3.1	At least annually, generate informational documents for Richmond residents highlighting state or federal programs that provide financial assistance or tax benefits for home improvements or alterations.	Housing Committee	Short Term

H	3.2	When applicable, organize community educational events with invited guests from relevant government and non-governmental agencies about new or existing financial assistance programs for homeowners, landlords, renters, and developers. Examples of relevant agencies include the Vermont Housing Finance Agency and the Department of Housing and Community Development.	Housing Committee	Ongoing
Natural Resources (NR)	1.1	Develop and maintain GIS-based maps of sensitive natural areas and conservation priorities to inform zoning map revisions and land use regulation decisions.	Planning Department, Conservation Commission	Mid Term
NR	1.2	Define “trail” and “recreation path” in the Zoning Bylaw and develop regulations for the creation and management of trails and trail networks, especially in natural areas.	Planning Commission, Conservation Commission, Trails Committee, ACF Committee	Short Term
NR	1.3	Revise land use regulations in rural areas using “smart growth” principles such as clustered development and restricted road lengths to reduce forest block fragmentation, and loss of wildlife connectors and contiguous habitats	Planning Commission, Conservation Commission	Short Term
NR	1.4	Strengthen or create clear land use regulations for development in steep or high areas, including slopes between 20% and 35%, ridgelines over 900ft in elevation and continue to prohibit structural development on slopes greater than 35%.	Planning Commission	Short Term
NR	1.5	Continue to provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont's earth resources and to facilitate the appropriate extraction of these resources and the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the extraction area.	Planning Commission, Planning Department, DRB	Ongoing
NR	1.6	Pursue funding and partnerships with state and regional organizations to support conservation efforts.	Conservation Commission, Selectboard	Long Term
NR	1.7	Continue to support invasive species control efforts on both private and public land including removal and mitigation of Japanese Knotweed, Garlic Mustard, Barberry Buckthorn, and other fast spreading non-native plants.	Conservation Commission, Townwide	Short Term
NR	1.8	Provide educational resources and links on the town website about best management practices and environmental permitting tools. Conduct outreach to landowners about conservation and environmental stewardship of natural areas.	Conservation Commission, Administration	Short Term

NR	1.9	Develop an Environmental Justice review policy related to decisions such as land use regulation and conservation-reserve spending.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, Selectboard	Mid Term
NR	1.10	Regularly monitor changes in local ecosystems, such as species populations, tree growth or water quality, to track climate change impacts and help inform future planning and actions. Support citizen science programs through which residents can monitor local wildlife, plants or environmental changes.	Conservation Commission	Ongoing
NR	1.11	Raise public awareness about impacts to local ecosystems, including providing information about planting native species, water conservation and reducing pesticide usage	Conservation Commission	Ongoing
NR	2.1	Continue to prohibit the construction of new principal structures in the Special Flood Hazard Areas.	Planning Commission, ZAO, DRB	Short Term
NR	2.2	Revise land use regulations and applications to require disclosure of all surface waters including rivers; streams (perennial and intermittent); creeks; brooks; wetlands; seeps; springs and other surface waters.	Planning Commission, Planning Department	Short Term
NR	2.3	Revise zoning to include River Corridor Bylaws.	Planning Commission	Long Term
NR	2.4	Review land use regulations to ensure adequate surface water setbacks to protect wetlands and riparian areas.	Planning Commission, Conservation Commission	Mid Term
NR	2.5	Promote restoration of degraded floodplain systems and wetlands.	Planning Commission, Conservation Commission	Ongoing
NR	2.6	Participate in regional efforts to map and assess surface waters and monitor quality.	Conservation Commission, Selectboard	Ongoing
NR	2.7	Develop municipal Stormwater Bylaws that control and treat runoff from impervious surfaces to prevent erosion and sedimentation.	Planning Dept. Planning Commission, Highway Dept.	Mid Term
NR	2.8	Revise land use regulations to prioritize Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) and Low Impact Development (LID).	Planning Commission	Mid Term
NR	2.9	Continue to require compliance with all state or federal land use permits.	Planning Dept. ZAO, DRB	Ongoing
NR	3.1	Promote best management practices for farm and forest operations through municipal and state resources sharing.	Conservation Committee	Short Term

NR	3.2	Revise land use regulations to allow for value-added or accessory enterprises for working lands.	Planning Commission	Mid Term
NR	3.3	Continue to support the farmers market, VYCC, and other agricultural enterprises that provide locally grown food or value-added products.	Townwide, Selectboard	Ongoing
NR	3.4	Encourage participation in the VT Use Value Appraisal (Current Use) Program, the federal Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) program, and other land conservation or valuation programs.	Townwide, Conservation Commission	Ongoing
NR	4.1	Finalize and maintain a management and trails plan for the Andrews Community Forest through open public discussion and decision making, such that it remains a place where conservation, education, recreation and forestry can coexist harmoniously.	ACF Committee	Short Term
NR	4.2	Protect natural communities such as wetlands, streams, native species, soil health, and ecological processes on town-owned land.	Conservation Commission	Short Term
NR	4.3	Engage in ecological forestry and logging practices on town-owned forested lands, including compliance with state guidelines.	ACF Committee, Conservation Commission, Selectboard	Mid Term
NR	4.4	Inventory improvements and update trail maps on town-owned parcels open to the public. Manage trails to protect neighboring property owner rights and avoid sensitive natural areas.	Trails Committee, Andrews Community Forest Committee, Conservation Commission	Mid Term
NR	4.5	Create a Municipal Properties Management Policy including rights of way, access, safety, and maintenance in order to ensure both natural resource protection and proper land stewardship. Consider anticipated costs while drafting town budgets and fund allocations.	Conservation Commission, Selectboard	Mid Term
NR	4.6	Utilize the conservation reserve fund to protect important natural resources and public access to them where appropriate.	Conservation Commission, Selectboard	Ongoing
NR	5.1	Encourage creative development that minimizes visual impacts on the natural landscape.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, Townwide	Short Term
NR	5.2	Support land use regulations that mitigate noise pollution and light pollution.	Planning Commission	Ongoing

NR	5.3	Continue to support land use regulations that include “smart growth” principles.	Planning Commission	Ongoing
NR	5.4	Through research and community input, identify and implement land use regulations which serve to protect neighboring parcels from potential adverse effects of development	Planning Department, Planning Commission	Long Term
Transportation (T)	1.1	Add sidewalks, crosswalks and other pedestrian safety measures in the Village Center, where feasible, to improve safety and promote walkability.	Planning Commission, Selectboard, Highway Dept.	Long Term
T	1.2	Request bike/ped improvements from the Vermont Department of Transportation (VTrans) when state highway and bridge projects are undertaken within Richmond.	Planning Dept. Selectboard	Long Term
T	1.3	Continue working with partner agencies and organizations to identify and test best practices in bike and pedestrian safety and implement low-cost improvements that have been identified such as better signage and road markings	Highway Dept. Selectboard	Ongoing
T	1.4	Consider connectivity of on-road bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure with off-road trail systems where there will be minimal impacts on natural lands with conservation values	Trails Committee, Parking Advisory Committee, Highway Dept., Committee to Explore Path Funding	Ongoing
T	1.5	Support local efforts to encourage active transportation such as Walk to School, Go! Vermont, bike safety programs through Local Motion, and Vermont Health Department programs	Richmond Climate Action Committee	Long Term
T	2.1	Enforce speed limits on roads with high pedestrian and bicycle use. This may include additional policing or other strategies.	Selectboard, Police Dept.	Ongoing
T	2.2	Enforce parking bans with fines or other strategies on the traveled portion of roads near recreation areas to ensure the safe passage of emergency and other vehicles.	Selectboard, Police Dept.	Ongoing
T	2.3	Develop parking for recreational activities in areas where needed, when possible.	Parking Advisory Committee, Highway Dept., Selectboard	Ongoing
T	2.4	Continue to maintain roads and roadsides on a regular schedule	Highway Dept.	Ongoing
T	3.1	Continue to identify and upgrade undersized culverts.	Highway Dept.	Ongoing
T	3.2	Use best management practices to manage erosion and run-off during road construction and maintenance.	Highway Dept. Planning Dept.	Ongoing

T	3.3	Establish a driveway ordinance that will direct stormwater flows into town storm drainage systems and prevent run-off onto neighboring properties or roadways.	Planning Commission, Planning Dept, Highway Dept. Selectboard	Mid Term
T	3.4	Prioritize upgrades to portions of the transportation infrastructure most likely to be damaged in flooding or fluvial erosion events.	Highway Dept.	Ongoing
T	3.5	Consider potential for hillside land clearing, development or trail building to increase fluvial erosion on downstream sections of hill roads.	Planning Dept., DRB, Highway Dept.	
T	4.1	Promote modes of transport such as the Montpelier-Burlington bus link, Amtrak train to New York, or other partially public transport options in conjunction with car travel	Richmond Climate Action Committee	Long Term
Utilities, Facilities and Public Safety (U)	1.1	Ensure proper maintenance and public accessibility of Volunteers Green for both residents and visitors. Consider altering the park layout to reduce damage from flooding.	Highway Dept., 3 Parks Committee, Selectboard	Ongoing
U	1.2	Adhere to the objectives outlined in the Town Forest management plans. (see more in Natural Resources)	ACF Committee, Trails Committee, Conservation Commission, Townwide	Short Term
U	1.3	Support the Historical Society's initiatives to preserve the Round Church and its surrounding parcel.	Selectboard, Historical Society	Ongoing
U	1.4	Create alternative plans to maintain the Town Center building and parking areas to meet the operational needs of town officials and staff, reduce fossil fuel consumption, and maintain its historic features.	Town Center Committee, Selectboard	Mid Term
U	1.5	Continue to lease or rent municipal spaces and grounds to businesses and organizations to maximize space utilization and sustain revenue.	Town Administration	Ongoing
U	1.6	Maintain the Richmond Fire Department and Richmond Highway Department buildings and equipment.	Highway Dept. Selectboard	Ongoing
U	1.7	Implement building improvement projects for the library to maintain the historical structure's functionality and preserve historic features.	Library Trustees, Selectboard	Long Term
U	1.8	Utilize diverse funding sources, including tax revenues, to implement facility maintenance in a fiscally responsible manner.	Selectboard	Ongoing

U	2.1	Utilize findings from the 20-year water study completed in 2025 to inform wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure maintenance and improvements and guide planning for future environmental and usage changes	Water Resources Dept. Highway Dept. Selectboard	Mid Term
U	2.2	Maintain water and wastewater infrastructure with a focus on reliability. Continue to discuss the limitations on housing creation that our water and wastewater policies hold us to.	Water Resources Dept., Housing Committee, Planning Commission, Selectboard	Ongoing
U	2.3	Improve stormwater infrastructure. Upgrade stormwater drainage systems to comply with state regulations and develop plans to address flash flooding issues in vulnerable areas	Highway Dept. Water Resources Dept., Selectboard	Ongoing
U	2.4	Maintain asset management practices and update them based on changing climate and usage conditions, with an emphasis on cost distribution and planning for equipment replacement. Employ various funding sources, including potential tax resources, to support these.	Town Administration, Town Treasurer, Selectboard	Ongoing
U	2.5	Revise the capital plan to reflect evolving climate and building maintenance requirements, considering residents' concerns about tax levels.	Selectboard, Town Administration, Town Depts.	Ongoing
U	2.6	Review inventory of potential lead pipe supplies and identify opportunities for stormwater connection upgrades at that time.	Highway Dept. Water Resources Dept	Ongoing
U	2.7	Continue applying impact fees to help offset operational costs.	Planning Dept. ZAO, Town Treasurer, Selectboard	Short Term, Long Term
U	3.1	Assess options for collaborating with service providers to enhance internet speed, availability, and cell service coverage within the town.	Town Administration, Selectboard	Short Term, Ongoing
U	3.2	Continue participation in Chittenden Solid Waste District initiatives and work with the operators of the town waste facility.	Selectboard	Long Term, Ongoing
U	3.3	Coordinate with Vermont Electric Cooperative and Green Mountain Power to maintain reliable electricity access for all residents.	Selectboard	Ongoing

APPENDIX: DATA AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Richmond Defined

Richmond is a small, rural town located in the eastern uplands of Chittenden County. The town's 34.41 square miles are characterized by the forested foothills of the Green Mountains and the open agricultural land of the Winooski River valley. Our significant natural resources provide essential ecological services, habitats for countless animal, bird and plant species, outdoor educational classrooms, and a wide range of economic, scenic and recreational benefits as they enrich the lives of the estimated 4,167 residents and the many visitors to the town. Agriculture and trading were Richmond's earliest economic activities, yet today most residents find employment elsewhere. Many travel daily to Burlington, Vermont's largest city and urban center, 15 miles to the west; to Montpelier, the small state capital, 25 miles to the east; or to neighboring Essex Junction or Williston.

The village center, located at the crossroads of Main Street (US Route 2) and Bridge Street, functions as the community hub and is host to a handful of small retail and commercial businesses, the library, post office, municipal offices, residential side streets, the elementary and middle schools, Volunteers Green and the iconic Round Church. It is served by a municipal water and wastewater system. The village is bisected by the Winooski River and a functioning railway. There are many homes within the village, but most residents now live outside this historic settlement area

Located 3 miles to the east of the village along Route 2 is Jonesville. A small post office and a cluster of commercial businesses define a once-thriving small village center. One additional area known locally for its historic settlement significance is Fays Corner. Located approximately 2 miles west of the village up Hinesburg Road at the intersection with Kenyon Road and East Hill Road, Fays Corner was once a small hamlet defined by its one room school house, store, mill and tannery operation and clustering of farm houses at a crossroad location. One of the largest mobile home parks in the state, Riverview Commons, is located in the northern part of the Town and is a source of affordable housing.

2. Demographics

According to the US Census Bureau's 2023 American Communities Survey:

- Richmond has 4,148 residents across 32.4 sq mi (about 128 people/sq mi).

- The population was overwhelmingly white at approximately 92%, with small minorities of multiracial (2%), Hispanic or Latino of any race (3%), Asian (1%), Black or African American (1%), and Other (1%), reflecting a community with limited but gradually increasing diversity.
- The median age is 45.3, noticeably older than Chittenden County (37) and a bit older than
  Vermont overall (43).
- Affluence is high: per-capita income $58,181 and median household income $117,260,
  both well above county and state levels. Poverty is low at 4.1%.
- Commuting: average 24.7 minutes to work—slightly longer than county and state averages.
- Households: about 1,807 with 2.3 people per household (in line with county and state).
- Housing: roughly 1,888 units; median owner-occupied value $410,300 (similar to county,
  higher than state). About 11% of residents moved in the past year.
- Education: very high attainment—98% have a HS diploma or higher and ~63% hold a bachelor's or higher, exceeding county and state rates.
- Population mix: foreign-born share ~3.3% (below county/state), and veterans ~9.8% (above
  county/state).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2023). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Richmond town, Chittenden County, VT <http://censusreporter.org/profiles/06000US5000759275-richmond-town-chittenden-county-vt/>

3. Developed Lands

With the completion of the interstate in the 1960s Richmond became more readily accessible from Burlington, Montpelier and other major centers of employment. This coincided with the development of the IBM facility in Essex Junction. Together, these two factors translated into a significant increase in residential development in Richmond in the 1970s and 1980s. Some of these newer developments have followed the typical linear pattern along rural roadsides. However, several subdivisions of 20 lots or more have also been constructed in the last two decades. Generally, these subdivisions offer a more compact pattern of development, in some cases incorporating open space to be protected for the future.

Many land parcels in Richmond have been broken up into tracts of 5 acres and less. Large parcels still exist in town, principally in floodplain areas, where most of the land is devoted to agriculture or recreation, and in steep upland areas which are not suited to

development. The upland parcels are most commonly managed for timber production. Land suitable for development has become scarce in Richmond and surrounding towns because of growth and topography, resulting in more pressure to subdivide large parcels. Looking to the future, the commercial and residential growth that has taken place in neighboring towns is likely to put further pressure on land values in Richmond.

Due to the presence of excellent river valley soils and a relatively moderate climate, agriculture has always been an important land use in Richmond. Despite the development pressures of the last several decades and the decline of small family farms, Richmond still has an active agricultural community, with 21 parcels classified as "Farm" in the 2005 Grand List. These include dairy farms, beef farms, vegetable and fruit farms, and other agricultural operations. Several farm properties have more than one product. In addition, several landowners in Richmond harvest timber periodically from their land

The Town of Richmond Recreation Path Committee and the Richmond Land Trust have developed approximately 7 miles of recreation paths along the Winooski River, Old Jericho Road and upland parcels. These trails are used year round and have become an important recreational asset for the Town. Even though the Town and the Land Trust have made significant gains as noted above, there is still a shortage in the amount of land available for more developed facilities and programs, such as those needed for school sports and adult and youth league sports.

4. Energy

The data in this guide provides an overview of current energy use and set targets for advancing the State's 2050 goals for energy use from heating, transportation, electricity, as well as the State's 2050 goals for renewable energy generation. Intermediate targets for 2025 and 2035 provide each municipality with checkpoints towards meeting these goals. This document includes all data required to plan for these goals at a municipal level. Consistency with the goals above is measured through the Vermont Department of Public Service's "Energy Planning Standards for Municipal Plans." For the full standards, visit the Department of Public Service's website: http://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/act-174-recommendations-and-determination-standards.
The data in this document meets the Analysis and Targets section of the Standard. The projections in this guide are consistent with the draft 2026 Chittenden County ECOS Regional Plan Enhanced Energy Plan. The guide is meant to be only a starting point for discussions on how towns and the regions can begin to plan to meet the Act 174 standards. It is a representation of possible conditions and should be used for planning purposes only. This data will not be used to assess whether energy generation projects, utilities or municipalities are meeting energy goals. Also note that some figures may be subject to a margin of error, and decimal rounding may result in figures that don't align perfectly with similar figures (for example, total number vs. percent of homes weatherized).

Current Energy Use and Generation

The data below are from various sources and represent actual current consumption and generation in the transportation, electricity and heating/building sectors. Data in this section meets the requirements of energy planning standard 4A.

Table A1. Current Household Transportation Energy Use in Metric Million British Thermal Units (MMBTU)		
1	Total Energy Consumption for Light Duty Vehicles (LDVs) (2022)	144,397 MMBTU
2	Total Energy Consumption for Fossil Fuel LDVs (2022)	141,675 MMBTU
3	Total Energy Consumption for Electric LDVs (2022)	2,722 MMBTU
4	Fossil Fuel Burning LDVs Registered to Households (2022)	2,616
5	All-Electric (Battery) LDVs (2023)	108
6	Plug-in Hybrid LDVs (2023)	62
7	Total Electric Light Duty Vehicles (2023)	170
8	Total Electric LDVs as % of Municipality's Total Vehicles	6.1%
Sources: Transportation Research Center, Drive Electric Vermont		

Table A2. Home Heating by Fuel Type, 2022

Heat Source		**# of Homes**	**Margin of Error**	**% of Homes**	**% Margin of Error**
1	Utility gas	138	+/-86	8%	+/- 4.6%
2	Fuel oil, Kerosene	731	+/-235	40%	+/- 12.3%
3	Propane	594	+/-130	32%	+/-6.4%
4	*Subtotal Oil, Kerosene, Propane*	*1,335*	*+/-269*	72%	*+/-13.0 %*
5	Wood	239	+/-79	13%	+/- 4.1%
6	Electricity	92	+/-60	5%	+/- 3.2%
7	Non-PV solar energy	15	+/-18	1%	+/- 1.0%
Sources: American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimate, Table B25040. Data are associated with a margin of error.					

Table A3. Recent Residential Energy Efficiency Projects	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**Total**
Total Residential Projects (includes projects below)	193	179	149	**521**
Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® Projects	7	6	6	**19**
Other Weatherization Projects	1	1	3	**5**
Residential New Construction Projects	3	6	0	**9**
Other Selected Measure and Engagement Counts				
Home Energy Visits	1	6	9	**16**
Heat Pump Water Heater Installations	17	21	12	**50**
Cold Climate Heat Pump Installations	95	89	77	**261**
Wood Heating Installations	14	1	4	**19**
Source: Efficiency Vermont, RPC Report Produced 6/2024				

Heat Pump Hot Water Heater Installations - This is a subset of all hot water measures listed in the Measure Category tables, the number of heat pump domestic hot water installations processed through Efficiency Vermont's upstream and midstream programs.

Home Energy Visits - A home walk through provided by Efficiency Vermont staff to help residential
homeowners prioritize efficiency improvements and answer energy-related questions. Staff spend
approximately an hour and a half in the home and at the end deliver a personalized set of recommendations to meet customer energy goals and make their homes more efficient, comfortable, and healthy

Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® - Sponsored by the Department of Energy, this program connects homeowners with experienced and trusted contractors that can help them understand their home's energy use and identify home improvements that increase energy performance, improve comfort and health, and lower utility bills. The program is cosponsored with Vermont Gas Systems and Burlington Electric Department for homes in their service territories.

Measure - A purchased and installed item or an action that has electrical and/or thermal and/or water savings associated with it.

Other Weatherization Projects - Launched in 2018, Efficiency Vermont offers several programs that help customers install weatherization measures smaller in scope than a comprehensive Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® project. Programs include attic, basement, and do-it-yourself weatherization
installations.

Project - A collection of one or more energy efficient measures that have been implemented at a
customer's premise (physical location). A customer can be associated with one or more projects and in some cases, a project may be associated with multiple customers.

Residential New Construction Projects - Comprehensive energy efficiency services to customers building new or gut-rehabbing single-family homes. This program maximizes energy efficiency, durability, and comfort through direct technical assistance, third party certification, incentives, and code compliance support. The RNC program is cosponsored with Vermont Gas Systems and Burlington Electric Department for homes in their service territories.

Table A4. Annual Electricity Use (KWH)

Sector	2021	2022	2023
Commercial & Industrial	5,372,011	5,250,284	5,594,347
Residential	14,327,378	14,429,435	15,063,078
Total	19,699,389	19,679,719	20,657,425
Count of Residential Premises	1,810	1,825	1,831
Average Residential Usage	7,916	7,907	8,227
Source: Efficiency Vermont, 2024 RPC Report Produced 6/2024			

Table A5. Existing Renewable Electricity Generation	Sites	Power (MW)	Energy (MWh)
Solar	235	4.09	5,376.81
Wind	1	.0025	4.93
Hydro	0	0	0
Biomass for Electric Generation	0	0	0
Total	236	4.0925	5,381.74
Source: Vermont Department of Public Service, Generation Scenarios Tool, Distributed Generation Survey + data as of 1/31/2023			

Table A6. Thermal Energy Use from Natural Gas in Metric Million British Thermal Units (MMBTU), 2019-2024

	Residential	Non-Residential	Industrial	Total
2019	19,257.89	20,278.32	0.00	39,536.21
2020	16,137.66	18,436.60	0.00	34,574.26
2021	17,270.65	18,250.82	0.00	35,521.47
2022	18,337.60	18,939.73	0.00	37,277.33
2023	17,719.14	17,677.03	0.00	35,396.17
2024	18,854.59	17,151.82	0.00	36,006.41

Projected Energy Use

Projected future energy use targets are drawn from the Vermont Public Service Department's energy analysis. PSD worked with the Stokholm Environment Institute (SEI) to employ the Low Emissions Analysis

Platform (LEAP). The LEAP analysis is not prescriptive but is instead an indicative analysis designed to show the estimated magnitude and timing of needed changes and the relative importance of major economic sectors to meet Vermont's energy and climate goals.

Using LEAP, SEI modeled sector specific approaches that would enable Vermont to meet its energy and climate goals. The sectors that were modeled include but are not limited to electricity generation, transportation, and buildings. The model accounts for the replacement or stock turnover of technologies through 2050 and identifies the pace of technology adoption needed to reach Vermont's emission reduction requirements. Within

each sector, specific technologies are identified to reduce emissions from end uses, but the list of technologies is not exhaustive. For example, throughout the modeled years air- and ground-source heat pumps have been increasingly deployed to replace heating and cooling needs previously met by fossil fuel-fired heating and cooling systems. Wherever possible, the model incorporates Vermont-specific sectoral data to better evaluate more granular impacts of policy interventions in the state.

Per the PSD's Energy Planning Standards, if a municipality chooses to update or create an enhanced energy plan they must include targets for future energy use. The data in this section is designed to satisfy the analysis and targets standards. It is important to remember these targets represent only one way to achieve each municipality's energy goals. Other strategies may allow the municipality to meet its goals (for example, switching some wood heating systems to heat pump systems). If desired, CCRPC will provide the spreadsheets and source materials used to calculate these data, and a municipality can revise their targets. Many of these targets are associated with concrete implementation actions discussed in the enhanced energy plan.

For more information on the LEAP model, including its underlying assumptions, please refer to Vermont's 2022 Comprehensive Energy Plan found here: https://publicservice.vermont.gov/about-us/plans-and-reports/department-state-plans/2022-plan.

Data in this section meets the requirements of energy planning standard 4B-4D.

	Table B1. Projected Light Duty Vehicle (LDV) Transportation Energy Demand	2025	2035	2050
1	Estimate of total light-duty vehicles*	3,647	4,016	4,642
2	Estimate for number of area battery electric and plug-in hybrid LDV (passenger cars and light trucks)	200	2,103	4,559
3	Light Duty Electric and Hybrid Electric Vehicles (% of Vehicle Fleet)	5.5%	52.4%	98%
4	Non-Electric Light Duty Energy Demand (gas, diesel, ethanol, CNG, biodiesel) (MMBtu)	216,676	102,783	13,722
5	Electricity Demand for Light Duty (passenger cars and light trucks) Transportation (MMBtu)	3,401	35,650	67,337
6	Biofuel share of biofuel-blended LDV transportation energy consumed	8%	10%	10%

Source: LEAP Model, UVM Transportation Research Center
**Growth rate for LDV is based on the municipality's 10-year average annual change of new homes built between 2012-2022, annual rate is 0.73%*

Table B2. Projected Commercial Thermal Energy Use, 2025-2050		2025	2035	2050
1	Projected Number of future commercial establishments*	211	230	262
2	Percent of Commercial Establishments Weatherized	23%	45%	66%
3	Energy Saved by Weatherization (MMBtu)	14,240	31,178	51,434
4	Number of Heat Pumps installed in Commercial Buildings**	394	1,192	1,524
5	Commercial Establishments Using Wood Heating (%)	8%	10%	12%
6	Commercial Thermal Energy Use Attributable to Wood Heating (MMBtu)	19,996	24,481	30,324

Sources: VT Department of Labor, ECOS Plan Forecasts, CCRPC Bottom-Up Approach for Commercial Sector
**Growth rate for future commercial establishments is based on the ECOS Plan employment forecast rate of .86%*
** Contemplates multiple mini split heat pumps per commercial establishment. However, larger commercial establishments would likely use a centrally ducted system.

Table B3. Projected Residential Thermal Energy Use, 2025-2050		2025	2035	2050
1	Projected number of future residences*	1,755	1,888	2,107
2	Residential thermal energy use (MMBtu)	169,364	98,447	60,614
3	Energy saved by weatherization or other thermal efficiency improvements (MMBtu)	20,345	52,062	69,229
4	Estimated number of Homes weatherized	395	854	1,382
5	Percent of residences weatherized	23%	45%	66%
6	Heat pump energy consumed by residences (MMBtu)	18,546	23,457	28,368
7	Estimated number of heat pumps in homes	534	1,398	1,965
8	Percent of residences using heat pumps	30%	74%	93%
9	Wood heat (cord wood + wood pellets) consumed by residences (MMBTU)	21,653	15,453	9,252
10	Estimated number of residences using wood heat	209	158	101
11	Residences using wood heat (%)	11.9%	8.4%	4.8%
12	Biogas Heat Energy consumed by residences (MMBtu)	12,250	8,417	4,585
13	Estimated number of residences using natural/biogas**	118	86	50
14	Percent of residences using natural gas/biogas**	7%	5%	2%

Sources: LEAP Model, Department of Public Service
**Growth rate for future residences is based on municipal 10-year average annual change of new homes built between 2012-2022, annual rate is .73%. This may not align with growth rates anticipated for housing targets required under 24 V.S.A. § 4382(a)(10).*
***Biogas is a combination of natural gas and renewable natural gas. In 2025, the heat energy is traditional natural gas then decreases as homes transition to heat pumps and then the fuel type is mostly renewable natural gas in future years.*

Table B4. Electric Efficiency Targets, kilo-watt hours (kWh)		2025	2035	2050
1	Total cumulative electric energy saved from improvements in area residential equipment efficiency, in kWh	337,750	1,878,238	3,395,912
2	Residences that have increased their Electric Efficiency	115	639	1,155
3	Total cumulative electric energy saved from improvements in area commercial equipment efficiency, in kWh	177,376	866,037	715,387
4	Commercial and Industrial Establishments that have Increased Their Electric Efficiency	20	97	97

Source: Energy Efficiency Utility Potential Study, CCRPC, and the Department of Public Service

Projected Renewable Energy Generation Potential
Section C reports how much wind and solar generation potential exists in the municipality and sets targets for additional renewable energy generation within each municipality. The generation targets are technology neutral, meaning a municipality can use any form of renewable generation (wind, solar, biomass, hydroelectric, etc.) to meet its goals.

Prime solar or wind areas are areas where models show the appropriate conditions for electricity
generation, and where there are no constraints. Base solar or wind areas are areas where models show the appropriate conditions for electricity generation, but where there are possible constraints, which must be considered during development and may reduce the development potential of a site. The 2018 ECOS Plan indicates that "development should be located to avoid state and local known constraints that have been field verified, and to minimize impacts to state and local possible constraints that have been field verified." Please see Table C4 for the list of constraints.

A municipality's reported land available for wind and solar generation and generation potential are based on models of the elevation, slope, and aspect of land, or the modeled wind speed, in a municipality. These models do not remove existing impervious surfaces. Therefore, land-based generation potential may be over-estimated for municipalities with a high percentage of impervious surface.

Table C1. Land Available for Wind and Solar Generation

	Acres with Prime Potential	Acres with Base Potential	Total Energy Potential (MWh)
Solar	268	2,035	101,321
Wind	366	4,334	231,533
Solar Rooftop	30		17,307
Source: CCRPC and the Department of Public Service, Vermont Center for Geographic Information			

To better understand how the region can achieve its 2050 renewable energy generation targets, CCRPC used a tool provided by the PSD to determine generation targets for each municipality in its region as a portion of the region's overall target. The total municipal electric generation targets were calculated by multiplying the regional target the municipality's share of the county total of three equally weighted factors: population, current electricity consumption, and land area available for renewable energy production. The incremental municipal targets are obtained by subtracting existing generation facilities located within a municipality's borders.

Table C2. New Renewable Electricity Generation Targets in Megawatt hour (MWh)	2032	2040	2050
Total Target (MWh)	6,064	8,646	9,841
Incremental Generation Target – Any Technology (MWh)	682	3,265	4,459
Grid Distribution Headroom (MW)	10.2	4.9	2.4
Sources: CCRPC and the Department of Public Service			

For some municipalities, existing renewable generation capacity exceeds the total municipal target. This excess generation was redistributed among other municipalities based on the weighting factors noted previously to further reduce municipal incremental generation targets. Therefore, some municipalities will have an incremental generation target of 0. Tables C1 and C2 demonstrate that there are sufficient land area absent constraints and of high energy potential to meet the municipality's renewable energy generation targets.

Based on PSD data and tools, CCRPC also estimated the capacity of the electric distribution grid based on the growth in renewable energy generation. A negative number in a milestone year indicates that grid infrastructure (typically transformers) will need to be upgraded to accommodate projected generation.

Table C3. State/Local Known and Possible Constraints

State Known Constraints	State Possible Constraints	Local Known Constraints	Local Possible Constraints
FEMA Floodways DEC River Corridors National Wilderness Areas State-significant Natural Communities Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species Class 1 and 2 wetlands (VSWI and advisory layers) Vernal Pools (confirmed)	Agricultural Soils Hydric Soils Vernal Pools (unconfirmed) Act 250 Ag. Soil Mitigation Areas FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas VT Conservation Design Highest Priority Forest Blocks (Forest Blocks – Connectivity, Forest Blocks – Interior, Forest Blocks - Physical Land Division), Highest Priority Surface Water and Riparian Area Protected Lands (State fee lands and private conservation lands) Deer Wintering Areas	Slopes Equal to or Greater than 35%	Slopes 20% – 35% Science to Action Contiguous Habitat Units & Wildlife Travel Corridors Ridgelines over 900 feet Conserved Lands

Mapping

The maps in this section meet the Act 174 Mapping standards for your municipality. Municipal plans must include the maps contained within this section. These maps identify potential areas for development and siting of solar and wind generation, which account for areas that are unsuitable for siting renewable energy generation because of the presence of state/local known and possible constraints, identified in table C3. Maps showing preferred sites/existing renewable generation facilities, hydro and biomass generation are also included.

These maps should be used in conjunction with complementary policies in the town plan. The map
identifying constrained areas is a visual representation of the constraints listed above. A certified
Enhanced Energy Plan means that a municipality's "land conservation measures and specific policies" might be given substantial deference during project review under 30 V.S.A. § 248. However, for these measures and policies to be given substantial deference, they must be clearly included in the text, as a map may lack sufficient clarity or granularity regarding the area in which a project is proposed.

Preferred Sites for Net Metering & Existing Renewable Energy Generation
Richmond, Vermont
Act 174 - The Energy Development Improvement Act of 2016
Preferred Sites (VT Net-Metering Rule) *not all sites are shown
Closed Landfill
Sand or Gravel Pit
Brownfield
Parking Lots
Existing Generation
McNeil Biomass-Electricity
Wind Site
Methane
Wood Chip or Pellet Heat
Solar Site
Hydro Electric
0
0.5
1
2 Miles
Chittenden County, VT
N
Sources:
Existing Sites-EAN,2018
Disclaimer:
The accuracy of information presented is determined by its sources. Errors and omissions may exist. The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission is not responsible for these. Questions of on-the-ground location can be resolved by site inspections and/or surveys by registered surveyor. This map is not sufficient for delineation of features on-the-ground. This map identifies the presence of features, and may indicate relationships between features, but is not a replacement for surveyed information or engineering studies.
Date: 11/11/2024
Document Path: D:\Projects24\ECOS\EnergyMaps\Solar_WindMaps_Municipality.aprx
89
2
Richmond

Local Known Constraints
Richmond, Vermont
Act 174 - The Energy Development Improvement Act of 2016
The presence of local known constraints signals unsuitability for renewable energy generation development.
Richmond Local Known Constraints
Slopes equal to or greater than 35%
0 0.5 1 2 Miles
Chittenden County, VT
N
Disclaimer:
The accuracy of information presented is determined by its sources. Errors and omissions may exist. The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission is not responsible for these. Questions of on-the-ground location can be resolved by site inspections and/or surveys by registered surveyor. This map is not sufficient for delineation of features on-the-ground. This map identifies the presence of features, and may indicate relationships between features, but is not a replacement for surveyed information or engineering studies.
Date: 5/5/2025
Document Path: D:\Projects24\ECOS\EnergyMaps\LocalKnown_PossibleConstraints.aprx
Mountain View Rd
N Williston Rd
117
Nashville Rd
Jericho
Brown Tree
Governor Peck Hwy
Governor Peck Rd
2A
89
Williston
Oak Hill Rd
Old Cemetery Rd
Bridge Rd
Hinesburg Rd
Bridge St
Cochran Rd
Huntington Rd
Bolton
St. George
2
Duxbury Rd
Pond Rd
Richmond Rd
Cyu Rd
Hinesburg
North Rd
Main Rd
Huntington
Silver St

Local Possible Constraints
Richmond, Vermont
Act 174 - The Energy Development Improvement Act of 2016
Possible constraints are the presence of natural resources that likely signal the need for on-site mitigation to avoid encroachment on these resources.
Richmond Local Possible Constraints
Conserved Areas
Contiguous Habitat Units (STA)
Ridgeline over 900 ft
Slopes 20% or more, Less than 35%
Wildlife Connectors
0
0.5
1
2 Miles
Chittenden County, VT
N
Disclaimer:
The accuracy of information presented is determined by its sources. Errors and omissions may exist. The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission is not responsible for these. Questions of on-the-ground location can be resolved by site inspections and/or surveys by registered surveyor. This map is not sufficient for delineation of features on-the-ground. This map identifies the presence of features, and may indicate relationships between features, but is not a replacement for surveyed information or engineering studies.
Date: 4/30/2025
Document Path: D:\Projects24\ECOS\EnergyMaps\LocalKnown_PossibleConstraints.aprx
Jericho
Williston
St. George
Hinesburg
Huntington
Bolton
Oak Hill Rd
Hinesburg Rd
Richmond Rd
North Rd
Huntington Rd
Main Rd
Jericho Rd
Cochran Rd
Burlington Rd
Governor Peck Rd
Browns Trace
Burbury Rd
89
117
2

State Known Constraints
Richmond, Vermont
Act 174 - The Energy Development Improvement Act of 2016
Known Constraints are the presence of conditions, based on statewide resources that likely signal unsuitability for renewable energy development.
Stream or River Centerline
DFIRM Floodway
Lake or Pond
Confirmed Vernal Pool
VSWI Significant +Advisory Wetlands
River Corridor
Significant Natural Communities
Rare Threatened and Endangered Species
0
0.42
0.85
1.7 Miles
Chittenden County, VT
N
Sources:
Vernal Pools; VCGI, 2022
DEC River Corridors; VCGI, 2019
FEMA DFIRM Floodways;VCGI,2022
RTE + Sig. Natural Comm;VCGI,2022
Wetlands: VSWI Wetlands Class Layer, VSWI Advisory Layer, 2022
Disclaimer:
The accuracy of information presented is determined by its sources. Errors and omissions may exist. The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission is not responsible for these. Questions of on-the-ground location can be resolved by site inspections and/or surveys by registered surveyor. This map is not sufficient for delineation of features on-the-ground. This map identifies the presence of features, and may indicate relationships between features, but is not a replacement for surveyed information or engineering studies.
Date: 11/11/2024
Document Path: D:\Projects24\ECOS\EnergyMaps\KnownConstraints_Municipality\KnownConstraints_Municipality.aprx
Richmond
Cochran Rd
Bridge St
Governor Peck Hwy
Jericho Rd
Browns Trace
Oak Hill Rd
Huntington Rd
Hinesburg Rd
Richmond Rd
North Rd
Main Rd
Duxbury Rd
89
117
2

State Possible Constraints
Richmond, Vermont
Act 174 - The Energy Development Improvement Act of 2016
Possible constraints are the presence of conditions, based on statewide resources that likely signal the need for on-site mitigation to avoid encroachment on these resources.
Stream or River Centerline
Lake or Pond
DFIRM Special FloodHazard Areas
Unconfirmed Vernal Pool
Protected Lands
Agriculturally Important Soil
Act 250 Agricultural Onsite Soil Mitigation
Hydric Soils
VT Conservation Design Highest Priority Elements
Deer Wintering Areas
0 0.45 0.9 1.8 Miles
Chittenden County, VT
N
Sources:
Vernal Pools; VCGI, 2022
Protected Lands;VCGI, 2022
SFHA,VCGI,2022
VT Conservation Design, ANR,2022
Hydric Soils, VCGI 2022
Disclaimer:
The accuracy of information presented is determined by its sources. Errors and omissions may exist. The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission is not responsible for these. Questions of on-the-ground location can be resolved by site inspections and/or surveys by registered surveyor. This map is not sufficient for delineation of features on-the-ground. This map identifies the presence of features, and may indicate relationships between features, but is not a replacement for surveyed information or engineering studies.
Date: 11/11/2024
Document Path: D:\Projects24\ECOS\EnergyMaps\StatePossibleConstraints\StatePossibleConstraints.aprx
Jericho
Williston
Hinesburg
Huntington
Bolton
Oak Hill Rd
Governor Peck Hwy
Brown Tree
Jericho Rd
Bridge St
Cochran Rd
Huntington Rd
Hinesburg Rd
Richmond Rd
North Rd
Main Rd
Duxbury Rd
89
117
2

Solar Energy Resources
Richmond, Vermont
Act 174 - The Energy Development Improvement Act of 2016
Stream or River Centerline
Lake or Pond
Municipal Boundary
VT 3-Phase-Power (Generalized) for Planning
Prime Solar: Areas with high solar potential and no state/local known + possible constraints
Base Solar: Areas with high solar potential + a presence of state/ local possible constraints
VELCO Transmission
0
0.47
0.95
1.9 Miles
Chittenden County, VT
N
Sources:
Solar Energy-VCGI,CCRPC 2023
Disclaimer:
The accuracy of information presented is determined by its sources. Errors and omissions may exist. The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission is not responsible for these. Questions of on-the-ground location can be resolved by site inspections and/or surveys by registered surveyor. This map is not sufficient for delineation of features on-the-ground. This map identifies the presence of features, and may indicate relationships between features, but is not a replacement for surveyed information or engineering studies.
Date: 5/1/2025
Document Path: D:\Projects24\ECOS\EnergyMaps\Solar_WindMaps_Municipality.aprx
Jericho
Williston
Bolton
Hinesburg
Huntington
89
2

Wind Energy Resources
Richmond, Vermont
Act 174 - The Energy Development Improvement Act of 2016
Stream or River Centerline
Lake or Pond
VT 3-Phase-Power (Generalized) for Planning
Transmission Lines
Municipal Boundary
VELCO Transmission
Base Wind: Areas with high wind potential and a presence of state/ local possible constraints
Prime Wind: Areas with high wind potential and no state/local known or possible constraints
0
0.45
0.9
1.8 Miles
Chittenden County, VT
N
Sources:
Solar Energy-VCGI,CCRPC 2023
Disclaimer:
The accuracy of information presented is determined by its sources. Errors and omissions may exist. The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission is not responsible for these. Questions of on-the-ground location can be resolved by site inspections and/or surveys by registered surveyor. This map is not sufficient for delineation of features on-the-ground. This map identifies the presence of features, and may indicate relationships between features, but is not a replacement for surveyed information or engineering studies.
Date: 5/1/2025
Document Path: D:\Projects24\ECOS\EnergyMaps\Solar_WindMaps_Municipality.aprx
89
2

5. Government

Richmond operates under a town manager form of government. Richmond's town administration currently consists of the Selectboard (elected), town clerk, town manager, deputy town manager, financial director, zoning administrator, director of planning and zoning, highway department, water and wastewater department, police department, and fire department. There is a conservation commission, a planning commission, a development review board and a number of other committees whose members are appointed. The elected and appointed officials who serve the Town of Richmond are a dedicated group who are committed to serving the public.

The Selectboard is a panel of 5 Richmond citizens, elected at Town Meeting Day on a rotating schedule so as not to lose all experienced board members at once. The Selectboard serves as the town's chief elected legislative body.

The Town Manager is hired by the Selectboard. The town manager acts as the municipality's chief administrative officer. Under this system, the Selectboard sets policy, while the manager implements policy, oversees the day-to-day operations of town government, hires and fires employees and has many other statutory duties. Departments under the town manager's responsibility include administration, finance, planning and zoning, fire, highway, police, water and wastewater resources.

The Town Clerk is elected at Town Meeting Day. The Town Clerk is responsible for recording land records, filing and indexing birth, death and marriage certificates, dog licensing and notarial services. The multiple boards and commissions that are appointed by the Selectboard aid in Richmond government functions.

The Town has an ongoing planning and budgeting process. Previous planning documents, such as Town Plan 2018, can be found on the Town website under "Ordinances and Policies." Annual Town Reports from 2010 until 2024 can be found on the Town website under the "Town Clerk Department" heading; and financial reports such as the Capital Budget can be found under the "Finances Department" heading.

6. History

The first inhabitants of Richmond were indigenous people, who utilized the natural resources and topographic features important for travel, hunting, and food. Paleo-Indians are believed to be the first Vermonters and undoubtedly traveled through and hunted in Richmond. They were hunters and gatherers and lived in the Champlain Lowlands between 12,000 and 9,500 years ago. Archaic Indians lived here from 9,500 to 3,000 years ago. The Winooski River was also a common highway for the Abenaki Indians after 1,000 A.D. between Lake Champlain and the Connecticut River.

An important archaeological site was discovered in 1809 in Jonesville, with arrowheads and stone utensils discovered in an area off Wes White Hill Road. In 1995, a nearby site was excavated as part of the engineering project to replace the bridge over the Huntington River. At that site, new findings showed the site was used on a seasonal basis by Abenaki Indians beginning around 1400 A.D., who developed a small camp or residential base for gathering food and hunting for a wide variety of fur-bearing mammals. Excavation showed that at least 11 different species of mammals were brought back to the site, including bear, deer, beaver, cottontail rabbit, chipmunk, red squirrel, muskrat, porcupine, fisher, mink, and skunk. The seasonal residents hunted within the Winooski River Valley and more upland areas, particularly the Green Mountains and area around Gillett Pond and its surrounding wetlands. Artifacts at the site also showed evidence that the Abenaki Indians had some contact with St. Lawrence Iroquois and perhaps with areas of New York near the Hudson River.

Throughout the 17th and well into the 18th century, Vermont served as a passageway for the French and Indian raiding parties harassing English settlers to the south and east and also served as a slave corridor where captured whites were driven north to Canada. European settlement of Vermont did not begin until the Treaty of Paris ended the French and Indian War in 1763. In 1793, Governor Wentworth of NH granted a significant area of southern Williston to Solomon Bates. This became part of Richmond when Richmond was granted township status in 1794. The Bates farm remained in the Bates family until 1986. The farmhouse remains today and the barn is now Birds Eye Building Co., which was restored to modern use. In 1775, Amos Brownson and John Chamberlain established homesteads in the area known as "the flats" which was at that time a part of the Williston Township. This early settlement coincided with the advent of the American Revolution when Vermont settlements on the borders of civilization were vulnerable to Indian attack. A man and a child were killed at the Chamberlain homestead before Richmond's settlers, along with nearly all the other families in Chittenden County, abandoned their new homes and fled to the south for safety.

After the Revolutionary War in 1784, Brownson and Chamberlain returned, other settlers arrived, and settlements were built in areas which were then portions of Huntington, Bolton, Jericho and Williston. Portions of these settlements formed what became Richmond. After petitioning the State, Richmond was granted township status in 1794, and has the distinction of being the first town chartered by the newly formed State of Vermont. By the time the census was taken in 1800, Richmond had grown to a population of 718. Formal community responsibility began with the first Town Meeting in March 1795.

Two forms of commerce were visible in early Richmond: agriculture and trading. The latter was secondary to farming, dependent primarily upon the produce raised by local farmers. Wool and grain, the chief commodities in the early years gave way to milk and dairy products in the mid- 1800's. Cheese and butter were made in local factories and shipped to market. Business activity was enhanced by Richmond's proximity to the Turnpike Road (US Route 2). Travelers on the difficult 60-mile trip between Burlington and Montpelier found Richmond a natural over-night stop.

The farmer, needing the cash to pay for the products and services offered in town, found his woodland could bring him some revenue. Lumber was in demand, and ships sailed daily from Burlington carrying away much of the wealth of Vermont's forests. Hardwood not sold as lumber was burned to make potash. Smoke spiraling upward behind many farm homes told of the stripping of forestland. Within 100 years after the first settlers arrived, the valleys and hillsides were denuded of their ancient cover. The loss of this resource paved the way for the devastating floods of the twentieth century. As the community grew to a population of 1,453 in 1850 transportation and communication became important. The turnpike was improved in 1849, the same year that the railroad was completed. Richmond's business district began to shift to the north of the river to be nearer to the turnpike and the railroad. Telegraph service linked Richmond with the rest of the country also in 1849.

With new and expanded markets available, it became profitable to operate factories and businesses in Richmond. H.C. Gleason opened a creamery in 1885, the Borden Company established a milk processing plant, and a cooperative creamery began to operate. At that time, Richmond was the second largest shipper of butter and cheese in the State of Vermont. The Creamery was eventually abandoned, and the property remained a brownfield for many years. Other industries in this thriving community of the 1800's were: a carriage manufacturing steam sawmill, furniture factory, paper mill, spool factory, woolen mill, spoke factory, cider mill, several grist mills, and a steam mechanics shop. Businesses dealing in drugs, furniture, dry goods, groceries, hardware, tin ware, harness making, jewelry, millinery, blacksmithing, confections, boots and shoes, marble and woodenware were available to the Richmond resident.

One of the items of business transacted at Town Meeting on December 6, 1796 was the decision to obtain a site for a meetinghouse. Isaac Gleason and Thomas Whitcomb donated land on which to erect a structure that could serve as a combined meeting house and house of worship. Construction was begun in 1812 on what was to become Richmond's most famous building, the Round Church. Money to pay for the building was raised by selling pews, with no preference given to anyone because of religious creed. Because of the several religious denominations contributing time and money toward building the church, and holding services there, it has been referred to as the first "community church."

The Round Church ceased to be used for religious services in 1879 but continued to serve the town as a meetinghouse until 1973 when State regulations declared the church unsafe for public use. In 1976 the town deeded the church to the Richmond Historical Society for forty years so that restoration could proceed with federal assistance. The Round Church reverted to Town ownership in 2016 but continues to be managed by the Richmond Historical Society under a lease agreement. In addition to supervising routine maintenance, the RHS has installed a fire safety sprinkler system and done substantial belfry repair work in recent years.

Education has deep roots in Richmond. One of the first examples of community responsibility occurring at the June 5, 1795 Town Meeting was the division of Richmond into

six school districts. Each of the six schools was then supported by voluntary taxation until 1826 when taxes were levied to cover school expenditures. In 1903, three young women formed the first class to graduate from the newly built Richmond High School.

At the turn of the century, Richmond began to acquire some of the hallmarks of twentieth century living. In the early 1900's R. J. Robinson opened the first electric light plant on Dugway Road at Huntington Gorge, which was subsequently purchased by Green Mountain Power. Western Telephone and Telegraph offered their service from an office in the old Jonesville Hotel. Later, a movie theater on Bridge Street advertised "good clean pictures for young and old" on Wednesday and Saturday evenings. This theater building was later converted to a shirt factory, and then to a bakery/café. It is now the home of the Big Spruce Restaurant and four upstairs apartments.

Several companies in the early 1900's provided jobs for those seeking employment off the numerous farms in Richmond. The Layfield Underwear Factory employed 150 women in the building, which later became the Cellucord Factory and is now the Goodwin Baker Building. Borden Milk Products Company bought and expanded the Vermont Condensed Milk Company and provided work for 125 men. Other employers were the Richmond Cooperative Creamery, Harrington's smokehouse, Plant & Griffith Lumber Company and Lane's Woodturning Plant.

A catastrophic fire blazed in the Incorporated Village of Richmond on the night of April 23, 1908. Flames destroyed much of the business section of the town including: two hotels, a drug store, a meat market, fruit store, hardware store, town offices, library, dentist's office and several residences. In just a few hours the whole Masonic block and more was blackened and useless. Showing a true spirit of resiliency, the people soon began rebuilding, but much of what was lost could not be replaced.

Another disaster, a devastating flood, overwhelmed Richmond in November 1927. Damage in Richmond alone was set at $239,000. Losses included two large bridges and eight small ones (including two covered bridges), long stretches of highway and railroad tracks, Lane's Wood Turning Plant in Jonesville, and many houses, barns and livestock. Many businesses and the school suffered heavy damage but were able to reopen. In September 2011, tropical storm Irene struck the region causing devastating damage to the Winooski River basin and much of Richmond.

As was the case with many small Vermont towns, Richmond's population began a steady decline during the Great Depression. This trend was reversed in the 1960s as a result of new regional employers coming into Chittenden County. In 1989, voters in the Incorporated Village of Richmond and the Town of Richmond voted to merge the two municipalities.

Modest growth has continued into the 21st century, with the population rising from 4,090 as of the 2000 census to4167 in 2020. A three-story office and apartment building - called "The Creamery" - now occupies the Bridge St property that once hosted the Richmond Cooperative Creamery, and at least one further multi-family building is planned. The Richmond Market now stands on the corner of Bridge and Railroad Streets near the site of

the old railway depot. Other historic downtown structures – such as the Town Center (formerly Richmond High School) – have been renovated and repurposed many times to help retain the Town's historic character while serving contemporary needs. Several non-profits, including the Richmond Historical Society, Radiate Art, the Community Senior Center and Our Community Cares Camp, rent space in the Town Center for a modest fee. Store fronts along Bridge St. have changed over time with most recently the additions of a bakery and specialty foods market, a paper store and a bookstore.

Away from the village center, one of Richmond's most noteworthy recent projects has been the construction of a new dam at Gillett Pond. More than 10 years of planning, fundraising, and labor went into this project to replace the failing early-20th-century dam, thereby preserving one of Richmond's notable wildlife habitats and outdoor recreation sites. Spearheaded by the Richmond Land Trust, this project was completed in 2024. In 2018, the Town established the Andrews Community Forest, conserving a biodiverse tract of forestland along the Winooski River east of the downtown area. The Andrews Community Forest is notable for its "landscape connectivity and natural resource, recreational and aesthetic values" (*https://www.richmondvt.gov/boards-meetings/andrews-community-forest*).

Richmond endured two more "Hundred Year" flood events in July 2023 and July 2024. Again, overflowing streams and rivers inundated roads, farmland, recreation areas and homes in low-lying areas throughout the community. The 2024 storm also impacted hillside residents, as runoff from the heavy rainfall destroyed culverts and undermined roadways, leaving some residents trapped until roadbeds could be rebuilt and temporary bridges erected.

Currently Richmond boasts a number of fine traditions as evidence of its community spirit. Examples include the annual July 4th Parade and the annual Pilgrimage at the Round Church. Additional community activities are centered on Volunteers' Green, home to a very active Little League, a growing youth soccer program, a summer concert series, and Richmond's Farmers Market. In 1999, the Town hosted the first State Veteran's Day Parade. In 2013, Richmond celebrated the Old Round Church's 200th anniversary. The historic village pattern, essential to the quality of life in Richmond, is threatened by suburbanization and auto dependence.

While our population has grown slowly in the last 45 years (3,481 in 1980 to 4,167 in 2020, from 2023 Census Bureau data), changes in development patterns and demographics may threaten traditions that encourage small town neighborliness and civic involvement. The cost to maintain historic structures and landscapes makes new construction a tempting alternative for landowners and taxpayers alike. Local non-profit organizations such as the Richmond Historical Society and Richmond Land Trust put great time and energy into preserving historic sites and structures within this community. Such efforts rely on the goodwill of private landowners, and the generosity of local volunteers and donors. The whole community benefits from historic buildings, bridges, open lands, farms and forest

areas. But it remains a challenge to manage these resources in ways that are both cost-effective and sensitive to the current needs of residents and business owners – a challenge that will require ongoing collaboration among Town leaders, community volunteers, and local, regional and state organizations committed to historic preservation

7. Housing

Strategic Housing Plan Recommendations

Richmond Housing Committee
September 2025

This Strategic Housing Plan, created by the Richmond Housing Committee, aims to provide comprehensive strategies to foster housing development across a spectrum of affordability in Richmond. The Richmond Housing Committee recognizes the critical need to address housing affordability and availability issues, which are becoming increasingly prevalent. Through collaborative efforts and innovative approaches, this plan seeks to create sustainable and inclusive housing solutions that cater to the community's diverse needs. This initiative aligns with Richmond's 2050 housing target, set by the 2023 HOME Act passed by the Vermont state legislature and by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, to add between 207 and 539 housing units by the year 2050.

The proposed strategies include a range of initiatives, from partnership development and advocacy to revising existing water and sewer regulations. By leveraging the town's existing resources and addressing systemic challenges, the Richmond Housing Committee aims to facilitate the creation of new housing opportunities. In alignment with the Richmond Town Plan, these efforts will enhance the quality of life for current residents, provide opportunities for older residents to 'age in place' and attract new families and individuals to Richmond, contributing to the town's overall growth and prosperity.

Momentum is already building in Richmond, with the Selectboard's approval in 2025 to sign on for the Tier 1B exemption. Supported by the Richmond Housing Committee, the Tier 1B status exempts projects meeting specific criteria from needing Act 250 approval, a significant barrier to the approval of affordable housing projects.

Housing - Zoning Recommendations

To address the pressing need for affordable housing and housing in general in Richmond, the Richmond Housing Committee proposes a series of zoning recommendations. These recommendations aim to create a more inclusive and accessible housing environment by leveraging strategic zoning adjustments. Richmond can foster a more diverse and affordable housing market by allowing for housing in commercial districts, developing a town-wide density bonus, increasing building height limits, and making the development review process more user-friendly. These measures support public policy goals, such as

affordable and senior housing, by improving applicants' experience with the approval process for new development projects.
The following are recommendations:

1. Revise the zoning and subdivision regulations to allow housing in the Commercial and Village Commercial districts close to the village center: This recommendation aims to integrate residential units within commercial areas, fostering mixed-use developments that enhance community vibrancy. Richmond can leverage existing infrastructure and amenities by allowing housing in these districts, creating a seamless blend of commercial and residential spaces. This approach supports local businesses and provides residents with convenient access to services and employment opportunities.

2. Expand the current density bonus program to all zoning districts: This program incentivizes developers to contribute to public policy goals, such as affordable or senior housing, in exchange for exceeding maximum development limits. This strategy aims to encourage the creation of more affordable housing units, addressing the significant housing gap in Richmond.

3. Investigate increasing the maximum allowable height of buildings in Richmond by one story beyond those instances that are mandated by state statute (i.e., qualifying affordable housing developments): Adding an additional story will align with the strategy to concentrate housing in areas where housing, services, and water/sewer access currently exist and away from undeveloped hillsides. It will also allow for housing that could be more affordable. With modern construction techniques and code requirements, buildings are built with more stringent fire safety protocols in mind, thus reducing the need for a larger fire truck.

4. Work with the Planning and Zoning Office to revise zoning and subdivision application forms, procedures, and regulations, as needed, to emphasize transparency and clarity, and to manage applicant expectations. Examples of changes that may be considered include:

a. Revising the "conditional use" regulations to allow for broader use of administrative approval
b. Allowing for "minor" and "major" subdivision categories
c. Incorporating clear development standards for infill development into the zoning regulations (such as 3-4 unit multi-family projects) that would allow for administrative approval
d. Incorporating "internal planning policies" into the initial instructions given to applicants to reduce the number of follow-up conferences with planning and zoning staff that are needed
e. Providing the applicant with a comprehensive list of the state permits that will be required for their particular project, and indicating when, in the municipal review process, the permits will be required

f. Educating town residents that "character of the neighborhood" may not be used to appeal affordable housing projects

These recommendations aim to create a more inclusive and accessible housing environment in Richmond, supporting community growth and preservation.

Housing - Successfully Funding Affordable Housing Projects

Typically, new housing construction to be sold or rented below market rate necessitates a combination of the following:

- **Town support from the Selectboard and relevant governing bodies.** This effort includes letters of support for a specific project, policies aligned with affordable housing development, and established master plans outlining targeted growth areas.
- **Financial assistance or subsidies to support moderate- and lower-income residents via below-market rent or sale prices.** Most housing subsidies are applied for by the project sponsor and awarded by state agencies such as the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and the Vermont Housing Finance Agency. The Town can also apply for grants to support housing projects such as pedestrian/rec path, tree grant, and other funding opportunities.
- **Town-designated smart growth areas.** Including approved state-designated areas that allow for a reduction in state permitting fees or applications for state/federal grants/subsidies, reduction or elimination of town permitting fees, and direct contributions from an established housing fund.
- **In-kind support that could help reduce costs and incentivize the project.** This includes utilizing highway department capacity to build sidewalks or other infrastructure, leveraging town resources for permitting or legal support, and donating land.

Below-market rate projects are costly, at $534K per affordable housing unit (2025), and they continue to rise due to increases in labor, material, and financing costs. Thus, they require strong partnerships with the town where the project will be built. The developer takes on a lot of risk and expense upfront with these projects and needs to know that the town supports them.

The Richmond Housing Committee conducted several stakeholder interviews, which revealed opportunities for improvement that the Housing Committee, Planning Commission, and Selectboard could utilize to increase the availability of below-market housing in Richmond.

The following are the recommendations of the Richmond Housing Committee:

1. Empower the Town Manager to write letters of support for a project when requested. Provide a pre-approved template and clear guidelines to expedite the process. These

letters are often required for state or federal funding applications. Typically, developers need to submit these letters in their funding application packets.

2. Create a housing trust fund to support eligible projects or land acquisitions. The housing fund could reduce permitting or infrastructure costs. It is a long-term plan that can be funded over time from donations, registration fees, small budget allocations, or other mechanisms to be determined. The goal would be to create the mechanism first and then determine the funding sources.

3. Develop a Master Plan for the gateway, which will provide a future-focused, 20–30-year plan for how the town envisions future development in the Gateway. This would include the outlook of future development for infrastructure, land use, transportation, economic development strategies, and community facilities. There is the potential for grants to help fund the plan's creation. The goal of developing a master plan is to signal to town officials, committees, community members, and developers the proposed use of the area and the town's support for it. Why the gateway? This segment of the community abuts the community water/sewer district, which currently has several mixed-use structures, easy access, and low density. It is also one of the few areas adjacent to the village that is not in a floodplain or otherwise constrained, so it can support many housing units.

4. Partner with housing organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Champlain Housing Trust Fund, and/or Cathedral Square to support the development of future community projects. These organizations have the expertise to navigate the complexities of funding below-market-rate housing and would be able to create a project that could maximize the desired housing.

5. Utilize the recently passed Community and Housing Infrastructure Program[2] (CHIP) to unlock financial support for improvements such as water, sewer, roads, and stormwater systems to support the growth of all housing types. Identify the most critical infrastructure needs that would result in the most housing benefit for Richmond.

Housing - Development of Community Support and Outreach

Community Support & Outreach Plan

To build an informed and supportive community for the advancement of housing policy in Richmond, implement a grassroots outreach strategy that engages residents, businesses, and community leaders through direct conversations, education, and public dialogue. We recognize the importance of maintaining ongoing engagement with all stakeholders throughout the project development process.

Goals & Action Steps

1. Community Education & Expert Insights

a. Identify and invite local housing experts to speak at meetings and public forums, providing guidance on making housing development more feasible in Richmond.

b. Experts may include representatives from Champlain Housing Trust, Cathedral Square, Evernorth, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, local realtors, developers (e.g., John Lynn, Buttermilk spokesperson), and bankers (e.g., Northfield Savings Bank).

c. Summarize expert insights and share them via town bulletins, social media, and local newspapers to ensure broad public access.

d. Goal: Host 1-2 events per year.

2. Neighborhood Conversations & Small-Scale Engagement

a. Organize neighborhood-specific "living room meetings" where small groups of residents can discuss housing needs and plans in an informal setting.

b. Use these gatherings to address concerns, share information, and build grassroots support.

c. Record key takeaways and create a FAQ document to address recurring questions.

d. Goal: 2-3 conversations per year

3. Public Awareness & Media Outreach

a. Write guest columns for the local newspaper/Front Porch Forum and participate in community radio discussions.

b. Maintain a consistent social media presence with updates, Q&A sessions, and myth-busting posts about affordable housing.

c. Encourage local businesses and organizations to visibly show support through window decals or endorsement statements.

d. Goal: 1-2 articles/media pieces per year

4. Community Film & Discussion Night

a. Host contemporary film screenings with free pizza (funded by the Planning Commission).

b. Use the event as an opportunity to facilitate a discussion with local spokespeople (e.g., Denise Barnard, Jay Furr, and committee members), leading the conversation.

c. Record key insights and create a short video recap for MMCTV and online sharing.

5. Public Commitment & Petition Drive

a. Create a simple statement of support for the housing plan and invite residents, businesses, and organizations to sign up.

b. Distribute materials (yard signs, stickers, or flyers) to reinforce public support.

c. Highlight community endorsements in media outreach efforts.

5. Ongoing Communication & Transparency

a. Continually summarize updates, changes, and next steps through local websites, social media, and town bulletins.

b. Maintain a clear and accessible process for community members to stay informed and provide feedback as the Town Plan evolves.

Housing - Water and Sewer Regulation/Policy revisions

More affordable housing and multiple housing unit projects require access to public water and sewer infrastructure. This development requirement is supported by conversations with affordable housing developers like Champlain Housing Trust. From the 2023 review of potential affordable housing sites in Richmond, prepared by the Richmond Housing Committee, many viable opportunities are located just outside the existing municipal district. Utilization of Richmond's current sewer system is estimated at 30-40%, leaving generous capacity for expansion of the infrastructure into new territory (Due to 'free-board' requirements, usage is capped at 80% of capacity). In 2023, there was an effort to expand the existing water and sewer system along the Town's Gateway District towards I-89. The water and Sewer District was successfully expanded, but financing for the extension of the lines was not feasible due to the unique water and sewer funding policy.

The bylaws state that district expansion is to be voted on and approved by existing properties connected to the district and that the new members are to fully bear the expansion cost. In essence, this statute gives power over this public good to a small number of town residents and shifts the burden and expense of creating the infrastructure to a select number of beneficiaries.
While there is capacity, the existing water infrastructure is prone to continuous flooding and will need funding for continued maintenance. New housing infill and expansion of the water and sewer infrastructure will create a larger customer base that will share the cost among more customers.

The Richmond Housing Committee recommends the following:

- Work with the Water and Sewer Commission to review and update the existing water and sewer bylaws to increase the likelihood of district expansion.
- Update the funding model to support the infrastructure improvements across a broader base.
- Add language regarding infrastructure expansion into the Town Plan to address the Gateway District.
- Seek state and federal funding sources for district expansion, such as the USDA Rural Development Water Loan and Grant Program or recently passed CHIP legislation.

- Seek community support for the expansion from residents in the Riverview Commons Mobile-Home Park and those along Governor Peck Road.
- Apply for a planning grant to complete a feasibility study to evaluate infrastructure expansion.

Housing - Conclusion

In closing, the recommendations outlined in the Strategic Housing Plan reflect a comprehensive approach to strengthening Richmond's housing infrastructure and supporting responsible growth. Achieving these goals will require partnership, vision, and a commitment to the long-term vitality of our town. We respectfully ask for the Richmond Select Board's assistance in championing these initiatives, helping to secure necessary resources, and fostering collaboration among community members, stakeholders, and governmental agencies. Together, we can build a more resilient and inclusive future for Richmond, ensuring that the benefits of progress are shared widely and sustainably.

<u>Housing - Data Sets</u> All information in the following Housing data and graphics section was taken from Housingingdata.com.

Snapshot of Richmond	
	Richmond
Population (2023)	4,148
Median age (2023)	45
Occupied homes (2023)	1,807
Total homes (2023)	2,017
Owner occupied (% 2023)	70%
Renter occupied (% 2023)	19%
Seasonal homes (% 2023)	3%
Vacant homes (% 2023)	7%
Median year homes built (2023)	1983
Growth rate of the housing stock (avg annual, 2010 to 2020)	0.1%
Median gross monthly rent (2023)	$1,078
Median primary home sale price (2023)	$551,000
Primary home sales (2023)	32
Jobs (2023)	1,605
Median wages (2023)	$65,071
Workers living & working in different towns (% 2023)	75%
Median household income (2023)	$117,260
Ratio of local to county median household income (% 2023)	120%
Severe cost burden (>50% income towards housing) (% 2023)	10%
Individuals experiencing homelessness* (County only - 2024)	

Median Home Sale Prices in Richmond by Month (2020-2025)

287
Total Sales

265
Primary Residence

22
Secondary Residence

$247.5k
25th Percentile

$410k
Median

$596k
75th Percentile

In February 2020, the median home sale price in Richmond was $205,000. In May 2025, the median home sale price in Richmond was $395,000, which is a 92% increase in just over 5 years.

Annual Household Income in Richmond in 2018 and 2023

Percentage of Richmond Households Who Were "Cost-Burdened" in 2023

Cost Burden: Generally, housing is considered unaffordable when a household spends 30% or more of their income on housing costs. A household who spends 30% or more of their income on housing is called "cost burdened." A household who spends more than 50% of their income on housing costs is called "severely cost burdened."

In 2023, 29% of Richmond renters were cost burdened or severely cost burdened. In that same year, 15% of homeowners were cost burdened or severely cost burdened.

Richmond Residents' Struggles to Secure Adequate Housing in Richmond
It took us a year and a half of active looking to find our home.
The only home we could find was very expensive and now we pay more for housing than feels comfortable
If our home wasn't purchased from family there's no way we would have been able to buy a house in the current market!
We had to buy a home in unsuitable condition because we couldn't afford something in good condition that met our location preferences.
We may need to move to simpler housing as we are both over 77 years old. There is little in the way of housing for elderly in Richmond.
I've been looking for a different apartment as the present one is lacking the needed amenities as I age. Bathroom with shower on first floor & bedroom on second. Unit has not been well maintained. Mice infestation, mold, windows don't open & very drafty etc.

Source: Richmond Housing Report, 2022.

Residential Building Type in Richmond

In 2023, Richmond's housing stock consisted of:

- 1,216 single-family detached homes
- 55 single-family attached homes
- 387 units of housing within a multifamily dwelling (2–9-unit buildings)
- 140 mobile home units.

Only 32 of Richmond's homes are "permanently affordable" apartments.

Smaller, more affordable homes are necessary for young families looking to put down roots and older residents hoping to downsize.

Building type
- Single-family, detached
- Single-family, attached
- Multifamily (2-9 units)
- Multifamily (10-50+ units)
- Manufactured home

Richmond Housing Construction Growth by Decade: 1970-2020

- 1970-80: 6.3% growth rate; average of 41.2 new homes are built annually
- 1980-90: 3% growth rate; average of 32 new homes are built annually
- 1990-00, 1% growth rate; average of 13 new homes are built annually
- 2010-present: growth rate below 1%; average of 9.6 new homes are built annually.

8. Natural Resources, Geography and Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor Recreational Areas
The Town recognizes that conservation, outdoor recreation and open space lands are increasingly important to the wellbeing of Town residents. In order to facilitate preservation of these lands while respecting the property rights of their owners, the Planning Commission will explore creative development techniques which may include building envelopes, planned unit and planned residential development, clustering, fixed area and sliding scale zoning, overlay districts, conservation subdivision design, and transfer of development rights.

Recreational activities and facilities within the Town of Richmond are organized by the Trails Committee, Volunteers Green and Browns Court Project Committee, Andrews Community Forest Committee, and the Recreation Committee. The Trails Committee, as its name implies, focuses its efforts on trails and related amenities within Richmond. These include the trails at Volunteers' Green, the Rivershore Path, the Safford Preserve Trail, and the Old Jericho Road trail.

In addition to the variety of publicly owned areas, there are many privately owned amenities available to Richmond residents. The Richmond Land Trust (RLT), a nonprofit group, allows for public access to many of its owned parcels including areas along the Winooski River (Warren and Ruth Beeken Rivershore Preserve), the Safford Preserve, and the Rochford-del Bianco Preserve. Other private facilities require fees for their usage or have established easements related to certain uses (e.g. Vermont Association of Snow Travelers. [VAST] trails). Richmond also exhibits an active hunting and fishing community that enjoys the quality of publicly accessible forests and streams, as well as the generosity of private landowners allowing use of their lands. Hunting and fishing are traditions for many residents and can serve as an integral part of wildlife management. These activities also attract a number of visitors to the town.

Publicly Owned Outdoor Recreational Areas	
Richmond Elementary School	Ballfield, playgrounds, gym
Camels Hump Middle School	Ballfield, outdoor basketball court, multi-use trail around ballfield, gym
Mount Mansfield Union High School (Jericho)	Ballfield, track, nature trail
Volunteers Green	Bandstand, benches, picnic tables, ballfields, recreation paths, public beach and boat access, restrooms, concession stand

Brown's Court	Ballfield, benches, picnic tables, pickleball courts
Old Round Church Green	Benches, sledding hill
Old Jericho Road Path	Hiking, biking
Lake Iroquois	Swimming, boating, fishing
Robbins Mountain Wildlife Area	Hiking
Andrews Community Forest	Hiking, biking, picnicking, hunting
Stage Road Community Forest	Hiking, hunting

Privately Owned Outdoor Recreational Areas	
Gillett Pond	Canoeing, skating, picnicking, bird watching, fishing
Chamberlain Hill	Biking and hiking
Safford Reserve	Hiking
Rochford-del Bianco Preserve	Hiking, cross-country skiing, photography, picnicking, horseback riding, biking on trails
Huntington River Lower Gorge	Canoeing, hiking, nature study, mountain biking, snowshoeing, fishing
Huntington River Upper Gorge	Swimming, picnicking, photography
Warren and Ruth Beeken Rivershore Preserve	Canoe access
Twin Hills Girl Scout Camp	Camping, hiking

Long Trail	Hiking
Vast Trails	Snowmobiling
Trail under power lines to Pinnacle	Hiking
Sunshine Jordan Forest Legacy: Sip of Sunshine Trails	Hiking, biking
Chittenden County Fish and Game Club	Fishing, camping, picnicking, archery, snowshoeing, hiking, shooting
Cochran Ski Area	Skiing, mountain biking
VYCC Monitor Barn Property	Outdoor education, hiking
Prelco Property	Hiking
Preston Forest Legacy Preserve	Hiking, biking

Access and allowed uses vary from property to property. Use of some properties may be restricted based on organizational membership or fees. Inclusion in this table does not necessarily signify public access.

Natural and Working Lands

The Richmond Conservation Commission developed a revised inventory of Richmond's Natural and Working Lands in 2015, details of which can be found at the Richmond Town Website. Our natural areas were also comprehensively inventoried in 2014 by the document "Science to Action: Four Towns Natural Resources Inventory", a document that can be found on the Town website under "Departments", "Planning and Zoning," "Reports." Another tool which can be used to review Richmond's natural features is the Biofinder online mapping system developed by the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR). This mapping tool shows the physical and biological features of the landscape in high resolution and indicates which ones the Vermont Conservation Design program (also from ANR) has assigned high priority for conserving in order to maintain Vermont's ecological integrity.

Richmond's natural resources include large forest blocks, diverse wildlife habitats, important habitat connectors, working farms and forests, unique shoreline environments

and outstanding natural beauty. Part of the 72,000-acre Mt. Mansfield Forest Block, one of the state's largest, Richmond's notable landscape features include the Andrews Community Forest, Bryant Hill, the Chittenden County Uplands, the Huntington River and Gorge, the Snipe Island Cliffs and the Winooski floodplain.

Our town is framed on all sides by prominent, largely undeveloped and locally iconic ridgelines that are important to the rural character of our town. They provide recreational and aesthetic enjoyment; educational and research opportunities; protection for immediate and surrounding natural resources; and a foundation for local farming, forestry and tourism businesses.
The Winooski River and its wide, fertile floodplain provide many ecological, economic and aesthetic benefits of their own, supporting Richmond's agricultural community and the complementary ecological habitat.

Geology
Richmond lies astride the boundary of two of Vermont's physiographic regions: the Northern Green Mountains and the Champlain Lowlands. Its 22,022 acres (34.41 sq. miles) are dominated by foothills bisected by the Winooski River, which flows through the lowlands into Jericho.

Our landscape came into being through erosion of the underlying metamorphic bedrock, consisting of metawackes and schists created some 500 million years ago as a result of plate tectonics. Although the bedrock can be seen outcropping in certain locations, the town is largely mantled by sediments left behind as the Laurentide ice sheet retreated from the landscape 10,000 years ago. Glacial till, a mix of particles ranging in size from clay to boulders, is the dominant surface material at higher altitudes, with gravels, sands and silts dominating in the valleys where ancient river terraces and deltas are exposed. Clay deposits can also be found in the lowlands, evidence that a precursor to Lake Champlain, Lake Vermont, once inundated the major river valleys with glacial meltwater for a period about 12,000 years ago.

The roughly 74 different types of soil found in Richmond are a manifestation of the underlying geological diversity. The youngest and most fertile of these are found in the Winooski River floodplain, where frequent high-water events deposit fresh alluvial material on a regular basis. These provide prime agricultural soils suited economically to produce sustained high yields in the production of food, feed, fiber, forage and other crops. The soils in the higher elevations formed in glacial till are rocky and of moderate fertility and have been abandoned for agricultural use.

Sand and gravel deposits are important resources for the construction of roads and driveways and other types of construction. Identification of the highest quality of these for use together with appropriate erosion and runoff controls combined with restoration of

sites after operations can minimize adverse effects on other resources and adjoining land use.

Hydrology

The Richmond landscape is contained within the Winooski River Watershed and its contributory Huntington River, except for the extreme southwest corner of the town, which drains into the LaPlatte River. Included are several ponds, streams, brooks, wetlands, unnamed tributaries and vernal pools. Surface waters with a designated shoreline as identified by the State of Vermont include:

- Gillett Pond
- Richmond Pond
- Winooski River
- Huntington River
- The Oxbows
- Lake Iroquois

Other prominent surface waters include: Donohue Brook, Johnnie Brook, Snipe Island Brook and Mill Brook. As our rivers and streams eventually drain into Lake Champlain, we are part of that watershed as well.

The quality of these waters is essential as they serve as sources of drinking water and recreation and provide visual amenities that enhance the rural character of the town. Further, they support a wide variety of fish, wildlife and plant species, greatly contributing to the natural diversity in Richmond. Ongoing water quality testing of the Huntington River in Huntington, carried out by the Huntington and Richmond Conservation Commissions, monitors potential threats to the watershed and has undertaken steps to address these threats through public outreach.

Floodplains, such as those found in the Winooski River valley, not only protect property and life by reducing the severity of flooding but also provide wildlife habitat and serve as corridors for animal movement among habitats. They also represent some of the richest and most viable agricultural land in Richmond due to alluvial deposits left by periodic inundation.

Riparian areas, strips of land on either side of streams, ponds or wetlands, serve many important functions in maintaining water quality, protecting soils and providing wildlife habitat. Acting as buffers, riparian areas effectively treat silt, fertilizers, pesticides and animal wastes before these pollutants reach surface waters. Roots in the banks bind the soil and reduce erosion and protect human property. Riparian areas also give water from heavy rain and snowmelt room to spread out, slowing down their flow and further reducing erosion and property damage. The quality of Lake Champlain's water ultimately depends upon hundreds of vegetated riparian areas.

Shade provided by a forested canopy keeps stream water temperatures cool during the hot summer months. This is particularly important because as water temperature rises, the oxygen it can hold declines. Leaf litter and insects falling from overhead vegetation are major sources of food and form the base of the food chain in many stream systems. Trees and branches that enter the water are important habitat components for fish and aquatic organisms, as are undercut banks maintained by root systems.

Naturally vegetated riparian areas provide important habitat and travel corridors for a wide variety of birds, mammals, amphibians and other terrestrial flora and fauna. To serve these functions, riparian zones should be vegetated for an adequate width, which varies depending on the physical and biological nature of the surface water and the surrounding land. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) has published recommendations for riparian vegetation zones.

Wetlands are areas that are inundated by surface or ground water with a frequency sufficient to support vegetation or aquatic life that depend on at least seasonally saturated soil conditions. They perform important ecological functions including contributing to protection of surface and ground water, recharging aquifers, controlling erosion by binding and stabilizing soil and providing necessary fish and wildlife habitat. Wetlands occur throughout the Town, particularly in the northern half. The Science to Action report shows 1044 acres of wetland communities and six significant wetland complexes in Richmond are discussed in detail.

Vernal pools are small, open-water wetlands that are filled with rain or snowmelt in the spring or fall and are typically dry during the summer. They are usually contained within a small, forested basin with no permanent outlet or inlet and support no fish that prey on other species. Years of filling and drying result in a unique set of conditions that support a variety of wildlife species specialized to take advantage of these conditions. Vernal pools are known as important breeding habitats for amphibians such as species of salamanders and frogs. Two of the 9 vernal pools reported in Richmond are within the Andrews Community Forest.
Clean and plentiful groundwater is a critical resource for the health and wellbeing of Richmond's residents. The most significant quantities of groundwater are found in aquifers, geologic formations that have the capability to store, transmit and yield useful quantities of water to a well or spring. Statewide, some two thirds of Vermonters depend on groundwater for their primary water supply. This number is significantly higher in Richmond, as nearly all residents obtain their water from public and private wells and springs. The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Groundwater Protection Handbook and Groundwater Protection Ordinance provide excellent sources regarding groundwater resources, threats, and tools local governments can use to protect. In 1996, the Town adopted its own Water Supply Source Protection Ordinance, setting forth protective regulations for the municipal water supply.

Ecology

Richmond offers some of the richest wildlife habitat diversity in Vermont, due to the largely intact Mt. Mansfield Forest Block of which much of our landscape is part. Locally, forests cover some 80% of the local landscape and patterns of human use. Richmond's landscape supports a rich diversity of natural communities and wildlife habitat. Critical in their own right, these contribute to Richmond's sense of place, also providing opportunities for outdoor recreation, research and education.

Natural communities are composed of combinations of native plants and animals that associate in supportive ecological niches. The 2013 Science to Action (STA) Report identified and mapped the number of locations in Richmond of State and local significance. Key wetland natural communities include Gillett Pond, Gillett Pond Seeps, Richmond Pond, the Richmond Riparian Corridor along the Winooski River, Snipe Island Alder, and Swamp Road Wetland Complex.

Key upland natural communities include Chamberlin Hill, Cochran Block (Bryant Hill), Gillett Pond Hemlock, Huckleberry Hill South, Huntington River Hemlock, and Lake Iroquois Northeast. Northern hardwoods, with major components of sugar maple, red oak, white pine, and hemlock, dominate the uplands. The lowland areas that are not developed or in active agriculture are composed primarily of silver maple-dominated floodplain forests. Along with riparian corridors, ridgelines and their steep slopes serve as additional links, providing wildlife with habitats, refuge from human activities below.

Within this landscape there are some rare or uncommon plant species, among them the 200-year-old hemlocks near Gillett Pond, locally rare pitch pines on Chamberlain Hill, the rare broad beech fern by the Snipe Island Cliffs, and the slender cliff brake, growing along the East Cliffs near Dugway Road. Of particular note and State-wide significance is the silver maple / ostrich fern floodplain forest along the Winooski River close by Richmond. The State has also mapped known habitat for certain rare, threatened, and endangered animal species, the protection of which is required by state law. Richmond is home to at least one rare insect and one rare reptile. Essential to the integrity of these wildlife habitats in Richmond is the integrity and survival of Contiguous Habitat Units (CHUs), defined and mapped in Richmond's Science to Action Report and described in the Natural Resources section of this Plan.

CHUs provide critical food, refuge and breeding areas for a variety of animal species, including black bear, bobcat, gray fox, northern river otter and others identified in the State of Vermont's 2015 Wildlife Action Plan as "species of greatest conservation need." CHUs also provide many benefits to Richmond's human residents, such as pest control, seed dispersal, pollination and nutrient cycling – all critical for proper ecosystem functioning and sustainable delivery of ecosystem services from our forests and other natural areas.

High-priority examples include Camels Hump, Cochran, Huckleberry Hill, Mayo Mountain, Preston Pond, Sherman Hollow, Snipe Ireland and Yantz Hill.

Certain "critical habitats" have been identified in Richmond as required for the continued presence of several important, iconic species, including some of the "greatest conservation need" species. Deer wintering habitat consists of areas with pure softwood or mixed softwood and hardwood cover at low or middle elevations with south or west facing slopes and lacking human disturbance. These areas are critical to deer during the winter months because they provide relief from harsh winter conditions and receive State protection accordingly. Black bear production and seasonal habitat consist of extensive, remote forestland with special areas, such as mast production areas, wetlands and travel corridors. Certain Richmond streams support populations of native trout, which are excellent indicators of a healthy aquatic environment. Native trout are extremely sensitive to increases in sedimentation and temperature that may result from incompatible land use activities, as they require cool water with high oxygen content. Some local streams are also home to stocked fish.

Richmond also provides vital links between rugged upland habitats of the Green Mountains and the rich lowlands of the Winooski River Valley. These allow flora and fauna to exist, interact and move among forest blocks and CHUs. The Science to Action Report and other sources identify and map numerous habitat connectors in Richmond. Protecting these is critical to enabling the wildlife we value to feed, breed, and find safe, specialized shelters across the landscape, and mitigate the effects of forest fragmentation, climate change and other pressures.

Working Lands

Agriculture

The Winooski River Valley provides the prime agricultural soils that historically have made agriculture an important industry and contributor to Richmond's sense of place, supporting dairy, beef, vegetable and fruit production. Unfortunately, continuing trends in transportation costs, tax burden and milk-pricing has led to significant decline in small family dairy farms, causing farmers to sell off parts of their land to development. Even so, 8 parcels remain classified as "Farm" in the 2023 Reappraisal List, down from 14 in 2017.

Fortunately, opportunities are being provided and must be supported to support alternative agricultural enterprises such as Richmond's growing local food industry. Success there will take not only innovative public initiatives but also the conscious effort of residents to buy locally produced food whenever possible. Every effort must be made to support a viable agricultural community.

Forestry

Other agricultural operations include timber harvest either to provide building materials or to support use of wood products for heating. Intelligent harvesting that preserves the integrity of our Natural Resource community remains an important goal. Our forested lands also support our maple sugaring industry, as well as the year-round tourism and outdoor recreation industries.

Scenic Views

Much of Richmond's rural character and appeal results from the scenic vistas that can be observed in many parts of the town and that include an interplay of villages, mountains, forested hills, unbroken ridgelines, farms, fields, rivers, streams, ponds and woodlands. Representative viewsheds include the Exit 11- Route 2 Gateway, Bryant Hill and Gillett Pond.

Climate Change

Our climate is changing, bringing many challenges. These include the increasing frequency and severity of weather events, resulting in not only the movement but also the creation of new ecological systems. Consequences have been demonstrated to economic development, food security, and human health, culture and livelihood, and will require upgraded resiliency. A local threat of note is the future of our maple industry, and our vulnerability to the spread of invasive species that favor warmer climates.

Related to climate, there are several significant sources of air pollution in Vermont, the largest being the automobile; another is trash burning. The US Environmental Protection Agency has required each state to measure its ambient air for six “criteria” pollutants since 1970. Vermont Air Pollution Control Division monitors the ambient air for several hundred pollutants, but the six “criteria” pollutants are considered the most common.

9. Public Health Resources

(From Vermont Public Health Department - by topic)

Accessibility

Accessibility to town matters. This is a crucial part of transparent governance as it ensures that residents of all ages, abilities, and circumstances can equitably participate in government processes and access information. Nearly a quarter of Chittenden County residents have a disability, indicating the need for greater community accessibility (VDH, 2024). In addition to ensuring that the town website is user-friendly, Richmond could consider ways to improve digital accessibility (e.g., website, published town reports, social media posts, etc.). The Vermont League of Cities and Town provides guidance for municipalities that may be of interest. Communities like Hartford, VT have surpassed what is required by the federal government. They recently passed a disability-friendly town resolution with a specific aim to conduct accessibility audits and improvement plans on

websites, facilities, and employment and retention practices. Similarly, Lebanon, NH passed a resolution affirming its commitment to becoming a disability-friendly community. The provisions in the resolution may be of interest: City of Lebanon Takes Historic First Step Toward Becoming a Certified Disability-Friendly City - Special Needs Support Center.

Currently, 7 in 10 Vermont adults meet their aerobic physical activity recommendations; however, rates are much lower among individuals with disabilities and individuals with lower incomes (VDH, 2024). The Town of Richmond might consider how to improve both the physical and social accessibility of natural areas, parks, and trails. The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission developed an Inclusive Trails Access Toolkit that includes examples of attributes that can better support equitable access to outdoor activities. Examples include trail accessibility audits (which can be conducted by the Vermont Trail Accessibility Hub or by community members), inclusive trail signage, and programming. AARP's Creating Parks and Public Spaces for People of All Ages has excellent resources for communities interested in assessing accessibility and inclusivity of public spaces and parks, as well as examples of how other communities have successfully created more inclusive public spaces.

Childcare

The National League of Cities' Supporting Early Childhood Success Action Kit for Municipal Leaders contains a few examples on how municipalities can support child health and well-being, with an emphasis on improving access to childcare and early education experiences. The Colorado Department of Local Affairs' Best Practices to Support Child Care provides a number of planning and zoning supports that may be of interest (e.g., density bonuses for childcare co-location, modifying zoning regulations to give weight to child care as a public good, develop a child care needs assessment when creating large-scale community plans).

Housing

Safe, stable, and affordable housing is central to health and well-being. According to VHFA, 1 in 10 Richmond residents are severely cost-burdened, meaning they spend over 50% of their household income on housing. This leaves little left over each month to spend on necessities like health care, food, and utilities, and inhibits those impacted from saving for emergencies or retirement. Cost-burdened families are more likely to live in overcrowded and/or substandard housing, exposing them to health and safety risks (e.g., mold, pests, inadequate heating or cooling) and increasing the risk of infectious and chronic diseases and injuries (HHS, 2025). This connection between housing quality and health has been observed in Vermont: nearly 1 in 10 Vermont adults had an illness that was made worse by their home environment. Higher rates were observed among females, adults with some college education or greater, adults with lower incomes, LGBTQ+ adults, and adults with a disability (VDH, 2024). Limited affordable housing options may force families to relocate to areas farther away from essential services and resources, forcing them to endure longer commutes or spend more money on transportation costs and fracturing social networks (ChangeLab Solutions, 2015).

Beyond eliminating barriers to new construction of non-traditional housing types, the Town of Richmond could consider how to preserve existing affordable housing and reduce displacement. ChangeLab Solutions' Preserving, Protecting, and Expanding Affordable Housing Policy Toolkit has a few examples of municipal actions. The Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission compiled examples of Town Plan language related to healthy homes: Health-Chapter-Template-revised-2025.pdf (starting on page 40). Of interest might be working with local housing authorities to create diverse housing types, promoting home share programs, prioritizing multi-modal infrastructure near senior and affordable housing to support transportation independence, and consider conducting Health Impact Assessments for proposed projects when appropriate.

Inclusivity

The Local Solutions and Community Action Team of the Vermont Governor's Economic Mitigation and Recovery Task Force created the Municipal Engagement for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion toolkit. It contains a number of actions that municipalities can adopt with local examples from Vermont. Another example of how you might uphold Richmond's inclusivity policy is through an equity assessment tool, which is used to create policy that aligns with Richmond's commitment to advance equity and inclusivity. Barre's Equity Assessment Tool for Policy & Budgets is a great example!

Isolation and "third places" (informal public spaces)

One in 14 Vermonters experience social isolation, with much higher rates among certain groups (VDH, 2023). Adults ages 18-44 are nearly 2x as likely to report social isolation than adults 65+, LGBTQ+ adults are nearly 3x as likely as non-LGBTQ+, and adults with a disability are 5x as likely to report social isolation than those without a disability. Social isolation increases the risk of premature death, chronic disease, mental health challenges, and may heighten susceptibility to viruses and respiratory illness (HHS, 2023). Municipalities can counter this by creating or enhancing "third places" (spaces for connection outside home and work). Ensuring zoning encourages the creation of spaces like community centers is an excellent way to improve social connection!

Two guides may be helpful as you consider how to improve access to third places in Richmond: Capitol Region Council of Government's Third Places report and Healthy Places by Design's Socially Connected Communities: Solutions for Social Isolation. Sample actions include: inventorying existing third places, auditing zoning regulations to identify barriers to building or accessing third places, co-locate services that support 2+ generations (e.g., childcare and elder care), increase access to public space (e.g., offer free passes to outdoor recreation centers/arts and leisure events through library loans, offer movable furniture in public parks/town greens/etc., to encourage socialization), supporting the installation of StoryWalks on public trails.

Planning for Health

Enhanced public health infrastructure can be achieved through a Health in All Policies approach. The American Public Health Association's Health in All Policies guide contains examples of how local governments can support health (page 25). Some practices have already been mentioned in this chapter! These can include collecting data on health barriers in Richmond, incorporating messages about physical activity in promotional materials for a park, incorporating strategies that promote community health into comprehensive land use and transportation plans, streamlining permitting processes for projects that support health (e.g., affordable housing, healthcare offices, community gardens or farmers markets), establishing policies that support contracting with local businesses, BIPOC, veteran or woman-owned businesses, developing regulations to apply a health or equity analyses to budget or legislative decisions, or educating non-health staff, boards, and commissions on how their work relates to health outcomes.

The Vermont Department of Health supports towns in conducting health impact assessments, which are used to determine the potential effects of a proposed policy, plan, program or project on the health of a population and the distribution of those effects within the population. Health impact assessment provides recommendations on monitoring and managing those effects. This could be another strategy to enhance health and well-being of Richmond residents.

Sample actions for **fresh, healthy foods** could include conducting a community food audit to assess access to healthy foods, making public facilities and spaces available for community gardens, and providing operational support to markets and gardens.

People with disabilities, access, and functional needs are those whose physical, social, or economic limitations interfere with their ability to access or receive medical care before, during, or after a disaster or public health emergency. The Vermont Department of Health can support this aspect of **emergency planning**. You can learn more about DAFN here: Supporting At-Risk Individuals with Access & Functional Needs in Emergencies

The Vermont Department of Health's Vermont Healthy Community Design Resource: Active Living & Healthy Eating also contains examples for municipalities. The resource is separated into 4 different strategies: concentrated mixed-use development, bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly communities, parks, recreational facilities, and open spaces, and fresh and healthy foods. Sample actions of **concentrated mixed-use development** could include focusing growth in the existing town center, allowing small businesses, housing, and services to coexist in village centers, creating "missing middle housing" districts and encouraging growth near existing infrastructure. Sample actions for **bicycle and pedestrian-friendly communities** could include conducting walk or bike audits (something that VDH can help with), adopting pedestrian- and bike-friendly provisions, and establishing design guidelines for rights-of-way, driveways, curbs and sidewalks, signs, landscaping and lighting to improve safety for walking and biking. Sample actions for **parks and open space** could include conducting accessibility audits of existing

parks and recreation areas to ensure they accommodate people of all abilities and preserving open space for conservation, wildlife protection, public access and recreation.

Substance Abuse

Establishing and maintaining relationships with prevention groups is a great way to support substance misuse prevention. There are also a number of community strategies that towns can implement to increase awareness, reduce exposure and improve response. These could include providing information (e.g., brochures or forums on substance use), providing workshops or trainings (e.g., mental health first aid, naloxone training), creating pro-social activities, reducing barriers to treatment (e.g., supporting multi-modal transportation, improving telehealth access), celebrating businesses that alter their alcohol and tobacco advertising, etc.

Below are a few guides that contain examples community prevention strategies: Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network's 7 Strategies for Community Change, CADCA's National Coalition Institute's The Coalition Impact: Environmental Prevention Strategies, USDA's Rural Community Action Guide: Building Stronger, Healthy, Drug-Free Rural Communities The Department of Health created the Sample Language for Town Plans: Preventing Substance Abuse, which contains additional examples of strategies.

10. Public Input for Town Plan 2026

During the spring and summer of 2025, the Town Plan Steering Committee conducted extensive public outreach to gather input on the draft 2026 Town Plan. This included stakeholder consultation with municipal departments, schools, community organizations, and local businesses, as well as direct outreach through the Farmers Market, Fourth of July celebration, and two public forums at the Richmond Free Library.

Community Events & Direct Outreach:

- Two Farmers Market sessions - on-site engagement and information distribution
- Fourth of July celebration presence - community outreach and information sharing
- Two public forums at Richmond Free Library – 10 hours total open community input sessions
- Regular Front Porch Forum posts - meeting announcements and requests for input

Stakeholder Consultation: Direct outreach and input from:

- Municipal departments: Town Manager, Highway/Public Works, Health Department
- Education: Mount Mansfield Union Middle School, Richmond Elementary School, School Board, Superintendent
- Community organizations: Historical Society, Conservation Commission, Andrews Community Forest Committee
- Business community: Multiple local business contacts and selected interviews
- Regional partners: Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC)

Online Surveys Results and Analysis
As part of this engagement strategy, the Steering Committee conducted 11 online surveys covering each major section of the draft plan. A total of **217 surveys were collected**, with response rates varying by topic:

Section	Responses
Community Development	41
Historic Resources	31
Transportation	34
Economic Development	25
Emergency Resilience	20
Education	17
Housing	13
Utilities & Facilities	13
Future Land Use	10
Natural Resources	7
Energy	6

Important Context: These response rates represent a small sample of engaged residents who took the time to complete online surveys. The findings below reflect the perspectives and priorities of these specific respondents, not statistically significant trends or views representative of Richmond as a whole. This summary documents what we heard from those who participated, recognizing that many residents did not respond and may hold different views.

What Residents Value: Richmond's Strong Foundation: While survey respondents identified important areas for improvement, they also expressed deep appreciation for Richmond's existing strengths and asked the town to protect and build upon them. Across all surveys, residents made clear that Richmond has a strong foundation worth preserving.

Downtown Character & Local Business: Respondents consistently valued Richmond's compact, walkable downtown and wanted to see it strengthened. The village was

described as having charm, character, and the potential to serve as a true community gathering place.

> *"Our downtown has so much potential as a walkable commercial center."*

> *"Without a strong town center, Richmond would lose much of its charm and fewer reasons for people to congregate in a central location where chance encounters are apt to happen."*

> *"I really value the downtown as a walkable center with places to shop, eat, and recreate - a rarity in much of the US."*

Several respondents noted **vibrant Bridge Street activity** and expressed support for maintaining locally-owned businesses that reflect Richmond's values and character. Residents want the downtown to thrive as a place where they can meet daily needs, support local entrepreneurs, and connect with neighbors, distinguishing Richmond from suburban commercial centers.

> *"A vibrant downtown that is pedestrian friendly, filled with locally owned businesses is a top priority. Having a sense of character, culture and values is an important part of living in Richmond."*

Community Programs & Social Support: Respondents praised existing community programs and expressed gratitude for organizations that strengthen Richmond's social fabric:

> *"We love the functions Richmond supports, especially the baseball program."*

> *"Richmond Senior Center does fabulous work and the library hosts many events."*

> *"Community Cares Camp, Richmond Food Shelf are good examples of support."*

The **Conservation Fund** and **Parking Committee** were also specifically called out as **examples of success**.

Historic Assets & Community Identity: Historic resources, particularly the **Round Church**, were repeatedly identified as sources of pride and key to Richmond's identity, contributing to village character and Richmond's appeal as an authentic Vermont community.

> "*Protecting Richmond's buildings of historic significance such as the Round Church. Seeing this each day makes my day better and proud to live in Richmond."*

Outdoor Recreation Resources: Richmond's trail network, Cochran's Ski Area, and recreation spaces at Volunteers' Green were noted as valuable community assets that support both residents and visitors.

> *"We have some great resources in place with riding and hiking and skiing. We are so lucky to have resources in our town along with people to support them."*

> *"Great ice rink and the ski trails in the park in the winter... We have great trails for walking and hiking in Richmond."*

Safety & Quality of Life: Multiple respondents expressed feeling safe in Richmond.

> *"Always feel safe on the sidewalks, in town, in the parks."*

> *"Re: crime, I don't hear much on this, so 'no news is good news'."*

Communication & Engagement Tools: While communication was also identified as needing improvement, respondents acknowledged effective tools:

> *"Posting in FPF [Front Porch Forum] gets the word out to the community."*

Moving Forward: Building on Strengths

These responses reveal that Richmond has significant assets to protect and leverage as it addresses future challenges. Residents want the town to:

- **Strengthen** the downtown as a walkable, locally oriented village center
- **Support** community programs that create connection and mutual aid
- **Preserve** historic character while allowing appropriate adaptation
- **Protect and expand** the trail network while managing increased use
- **Build upon** successful governance examples like the Conservation Fund

The themes that follow in this report should be understood in this context: Richmond residents are not asking for wholesale change, but rather for **focused improvements that build on existing strengths** while addressing barriers to the town's stated goals.

Key Survey Findings: General Support with Call for Focus

Across nearly every section, survey respondents generally felt that the goals and actions were in line with what they hoped to achieve for Richmond. Very few respondents called for wholesale changes or suggested that the plan was headed in the wrong direction.

At the same time, respondents emphasized the need for more concrete, measurable steps and realistic funding strategies. Common themes in the feedback included requests for better focus and prioritization, improved coordination across sections, regulatory alignment to enable stated goals, and fiscal realism about what Richmond can afford to implement.

Seven Cross-Cutting Themes

Seven themes emerged across multiple surveys, even though the surveys were tailored to address specific sections of the 2018 town plan. The themes described here appeared in 5 or more of the 11 surveys. These themes reflect concerns and priorities raised by survey respondents about Richmond's capacity to achieve its stated goals:

1. Infrastructure Resilience, Flooding, and Climate Risk (7 sections)

Survey respondents referenced recent flooding in 2023 and 2024 and emphasized the need to protect core infrastructure like water, sewer, roads, and bridges while addressing specific drainage and stormwater hot spots. Some respondents noted tension between hardening infrastructure and cost sensitivity, with a few stating they "can't afford another tax increase" while others argued that public assets should receive attention first rather than private ones. Several respondents expressed preference for avoiding one-off fixes that fail to account for upstream and downstream effects. Respondents described flooding as "ridiculous" and cited climate change as motivation for shifting from reactive repairs to proactive planning.

> *"I live in the flood zone and am constantly threatened with flooding from the Winooski River."*
>
> *"The drainage issue in Richmond needs to be prioritized and tackled so that the village can stop being so impacted by increasingly more common natural events."*
>
> *"We know more storms and emergencies are coming. A sit back and wait or whack-a-mole approach is not sustainable."*

2. Zoning, Permitting, and Regulatory Friction (9 sections)

This was the most frequently mentioned concern across survey sections, with respondents expressing frustration about regulations that block the Town Plan's own stated goals. Current one-acre zoning was cited as "poor and inconsistent with smart growth goals," and multiple respondents noted that zoning needed updating to enable infill, ADUs, mixed-use, and missing-middle housing near the village core. One respondent pointed to storage units built on Route 2 instead of housing as an example of regulatory barriers, describing it as "the absolute failure of our community to support a business to build much needed

housing." Some respondents attributed obstacles to what they called NIMBYism and resistance from a "vocal few," noting conflict between development needs and arguments used to preserve "historic character." Several respondents suggested that regulations based on subjective standards like "rural character" or "scenic beauty" needed to be made clear and predictable rather than acting as vague vetoes.

> *"The new storage units on rt 2 demonstrate the absolute failure of our community to support a business to build… much needed housing. There is a sense that it only takes a vocal few to block any development project…"*

> *"NIMBY regulations; a slow DRB and selectboard process"*

> *"The town should make it easier for residents to implement renewables on their own property."*

3. Cost Sensitivity and Tax Burden (7 sections)

Multiple respondents cited Richmond's property tax rate as a constraint on what they were willing to support. Taxes were repeatedly described as "way too high," and respondents emphasized the need to keep budgets focused on high-use, high-impact basics rather than big-ticket facilities. Some respondents referenced the failed Town Center building bond as reflecting concerns about large capital projects, while others noted that high up-front costs for energy improvements like weatherization and heat pumps remained a barrier despite their long-term savings. Survey responses suggested tension between those who prioritized tax prudence and those who wanted faster action on amenities, with disagreement over whether taxpayers should fund open-ended capital projects for historic items or whether grants and private fundraising should be prioritized. Multiple respondents stated that "fiscal realities" should be the primary driver of facility design and maintenance.

> *"Town government spending. Taxes are way too high."*

> *"I didn't give anything a high rating. I can't afford another tax increase."*

> *"I'd like to see fiscal realities be the primary driver of our facility design and maintenance. Maintain not upgrade to address affordability."*

4. Walkability, Sidewalks, and Bike/Pedestrian Safety (8 sections)

This theme received strong support in survey responses as the highest-rated transportation goal. Respondents identified specific routes needing safer accommodation: Cochran Road, Huntington Road, and Hinesburg Road, with some describing traffic as "hostile to pedestrians." Multiple respondents noted that crosswalks were "almost invisible" and needed frequent repainting, while others identified gaps in sidewalks and crosswalks connecting the village to schools, parks, and the Park-and-Ride. Some survey responses

suggested tension between pedestrian needs and parking concerns downtown, with a few respondents noting that safety improvements were stalled by opposition. One example mentioned was a proposed sidewalk along the cemetery on Bridge Street. Survey respondents connected walkability to village vitality and noted that concentrated housing growth worked best when paired with safe, walkable infrastructure.

> *"Huntington Road seems really dangerous for pedestrians/biking due to speed and blind spots."*

> *"Why does it take so long for the crosswalks to be painted? They are almost invisible..."*

> *"Arguments against the additional sidewalk that would run along the cemetery on Bridge St"*

5. Village Center Vitality and Concentrated Growth (6 sections)

Multiple survey respondents supported directing growth to the village core as a strategy to protect rural character elsewhere, though responses also revealed disagreement about implementation. Some respondents described the goal as creating a walkable, everyday downtown focused on resident-serving retail, food, and services, with historic structures like the Round Church and Town Center recognized as important to village character. Several respondents noted visible signs of struggling vitality including empty restaurants and the perpetually empty creamery downtown. A few respondents firmly opposed additional development, stating "NO GROWTH as an option," while others supported dense downtown development to make the town "semi-walkable." One respondent suggested that low-activation office uses (lawyers, accountants) should be moved out of prime storefronts, though this was an individual perspective rather than a common theme. Multiple respondents connected concentrated growth to relieving pressure on working lands and forest blocks while providing density to support local businesses.

> *"Really don't want to become another Williston"*

> *"Our downtown has so much potential as a walkable commercial center."*

> *"We need dense downtown development... for this community to thrive as a livable and semi-walkable town."*

6. Housing Supply and Affordability (7 sections)

Survey respondents expressed urgency about housing, with one stating costs were "sky-high and availability is near zero" and others noting that locals who grew up in Richmond were finding it too expensive to stay. The highest-rated action among respondents was updating zoning to enable infill, ADUs, and mixed-use development, with several noting

priorities including supporting the mobile home park and adding units at a variety of price points to foster social-class diversity. Multiple respondents connected the workforce shortage to the housing shortage, noting that employees often could not afford to live locally. Survey responses reflected conflict between the need for units and what some described as NIMBYism and opposition, with disagreements over prioritizing density and infill versus neighborhood character. One respondent warned against letting historic "character" arguments block the creation of needed units. Respondents connected housing to workforce support, civic participation, volunteer retention, and whether families could stay in Richmond.

> *"Housing costs are sky-high and availability is near zero."*
>
> *"Locals who grew up here… are finding it too expensive :("*
>
> *"I don't want to live in a town full of doctors and tech millionaires."*

7. Public Communication, Transparency, and Engagement (7 sections)

Survey respondents called for better communication and more welcoming civic processes. Recommendations included improving communication via Front Porch Forum (FPF), the town website, and leveraging MMCTV recordings for accessibility, along with publishing short "you said / we did" updates after decisions. Respondents noted that while FPF effectively reached community members, it also fostered negativity and "public shaming." Some respondents expressed frustration about what they perceived as insular governance, with one stating "same individuals control key committees for decades" and another noting that government meetings were "not welcoming to new voices" despite following open meeting laws. Several respondents suggested that lack of transparency about tax impacts or capital projects created distrust. Survey respondents connected communication themes to emergency information needs, reducing volunteer burnout, making decision-making more representative, and coordinating between town and school district.

> *"Government meetings follow open meeting laws but they are not welcoming to new voices"*

Conclusion

The Steering Committee appreciates the time residents took to review the draft plan and share their priorities. This input, while representing a small sample of engaged community members, helped inform discussions about regulatory alignment, infrastructure priorities, and implementation strategies. The 2026 Town Plan reflects both Richmond's established community values and the need to adapt to emerging challenges.

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11. Town Committees and Interest Groups consulted for Town Plan 2026

Town committees

Andrews Community Forest Committee
Richmond Conservation Commission
Richmond Historical Society
Richmond Housing Committee
Town Center Building and Campus Committee
Trails Committee

Town interest groups

Richmond Land Trust
Richmond Climate Action Committee
Richmond Racial Equity

12. Transportation Studies

These documents can also be found on the Town website under "Departments," "Planning and Zoning," "Reports."

Bike and Pedestrian Needs May of 2019
https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Archive/2018/11/3c-Richmond-Survey-Report.pdf

Bridge Street sidewalk Project June of 2022
https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2022/06/3o3-2022-Richmond-Bridge-St-East-Sidewalk-Criteria-Questions-6-3-22-Clean.pdf

Sidewalk Scoping Study September of 2022
https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Departments/Planning_Zoning/Richmond_Scoping_Report_FINAL_09232022.pdf

Richmond Bike Walk and Trails Plan of September of 2022
https://www.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/20220914_RichmondBikeWalkTrailsFINAL.pdf

Richmond Gateway Scoping Study of June of 2023
https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Richmond_Western_Gateway_Scoping_Study/General/2023/04/RichmondWesternGatewayScopingStudy_LC_Presentation_4-10-2023.pdf

Cochran Rd. Scoping Study May of 2025
https://www.richmondvt.gov/fileadmin/files/Selectboard/Meetings/2025/05/3f1_CCRPC_Richmond_Cochran_Rd-Scoping_Study_May_2025.pdf

13. Vermont State Statutes relevant to Town Plan 2026

From the 2023 – 24 sessions:

Act 47, the HOME ("Housing Opportunities Made for Everyone") Act, contains multiple changes that are to be made to municipal planning and zoning, in order to promote housing. Many of these changes have already been made in our Richmond Zoning Regulations, allowing greater residential density in areas served by municipal water and sewer services. This Act also requires additional details in the Housing element of our plan (See "Housing" section), and changes some of the Act 250 requirements. There are numerous other changes that the Planning Commission is still studying.

Act 181, "An act relating to community resilience and biodiversity protection through land use", clarifies and expands upon some of the features of Act 47 as well as reorganizing Act 250. This Act is the first major revision of Act 250 in its history, and it develops new categories of land use and mapping systems that will be used by all the regional planning commissions across the state. This, in turn, has caused us to recreate our own Future Land Use map (see "Future Land Use" section) to align with the new statewide system. Act 250 oversight is reduced in higher density areas and strengthened in areas that need to be conserved for biodiversity and carbon sequestration purposes. Certain programs and boards are renamed, and environmental justice work is undertaken. Act 69, the "CHIP" Act, makes multiple changes that will allow municipalities to more easily enable housing development. The Act creates the Community and Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP) which authorizes sponsors, including municipalities, to finance the costs of housing development infrastructure with loans against future property tax revenues (a TIF strategy). It also implements several rental incentive programs and funds.

Act 59, the "30 X 30" Act, or "An act relating to community resilience and biodiversity protection" establishes the state goals of conserving 30% of Vermont land by 2030 and 50% by 2050. It emphasizes protecting biodiversity, maintaining working lands (farms and forests), ensuring habitat connectivity, promoting climate resilience, supporting outdoor recreation, and involving a diverse set of stakeholders in the process. The Act defines three categories of conserved land: Ecological Reserve Area, Biodiversity Conservation Area, and Natural Resource Management Area. It requires the Agency of Natural Resources and the

Housing and Conservation Board to develop a plan as to how this is accomplished. Municipalities can contribute to this effort by developing their own plans for land conservation.

Act 121, the "Flood Safety Act," directs the Department of Environmental Conservation to amend the State River Corridor Base Map by 2026, and to adopt rules addressing development in mapped river corridors. A state permit will be required for such development starting in 2028. The Agency of Natural Resources is tasked with reviewing flood hazard regulations and the flood insurance program (NFIP), as well as updating the wetlands inventory, and developing a strategy to achieve the net gain of wetlands in Vermont. This will require us to develop river corridor regulations and perhaps amend our wetlands rules. The purpose of this Act is to mitigate flooding and fluvial erosion due to increasingly severe rainfall.

Act 151, "An act related to building energy codes," is designed to increase compliance with the building codes (Residential Building Energy Standards and Commercial Building Energy Standards) which require builders to incorporate features which promote resilience and the conservation of energy, such as weatherization, into their construction. This will require, at a minimum, the responsibility of the town to educate builders and promote compliance with the energy standards.

From 2015-16 (updated in 2023):

Act 171, an Act relating to Timber Harvesting and Forest Management. The goal of Act 171 is to maximize the significant benefits that intact blocks of forested land provide by reducing fragmentation. "Development," which includes most activities that significantly alter the natural state of the areas, is not prohibited, but is to be done carefully, respecting the work that has been done to understand how the economic and ecological functions of forests "can be best preserved". Employment opportunities in the timber and biomass industries; recreation and tourism, and natural resource management and study, will be protected by this law, as will the natural resources contained within these areas.

Act 174, "the Energy Development Improvement" Act "seeks to improve the integration of planning for energy and land use" in order to facilitate the process by which new renewable facilities (such as solar arrays and wind towers) can be sited. These infrastructure projects are essential if Vermont is to achieve its climate change goal of meeting 90% of our energy needs from renewable sources by 2050. The energy section of this plan was developed with assistance from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) such that it meets the criteria for "enhanced energy planning" and thus will be given greater weight in hearings before the state Public Utilities Commission (PUC). In 2023 Act 174 was enhanced by new data analysis methods created for the Public Service Department and the Agency of Natural Resources, that have allowed regional planning commissions to develop better digital tools to assist municipalities in improving

their energy and land use planning. The energy usage data in this 2026 Plan was supplied in 2025 by CCRPC.

And here is a brief list of legislative changes that may have an indirect effect on us:

Act 18, the "Clean Heat Standard" Act, requires that importers of fossil fuel for heating into Vermont be required to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions every year through efficiency, weatherization, electrification or decarbonization. (2023-24)
Act 179 updates the "Renewable Energy Standard," and requires electric utilities to purchase 100% of their power from renewable sources by 2035. Other changes to net metering and the Public Utilities Commission are also made. (2023-24)
Act 170 makes miscellaneous natural resources and development rules changes relating to water quality, solid waste, brownfields and permitting. (2021-22)
Act 172 is an act related to municipal energy resilience initiatives which establishes programs to conduct comprehensive energy resilience assessments of municipal buildings and establishes grant programs to receive technical assistance and make improvements to reduce fossil fuel usage in these buildings. It establishes the Municipal Energy Loan Program and requires collaboration between the state Buildings and General Services and Energy Efficiency. (2021-22)
Act 146 relates to the eligibility of "reserve forestland" for enrollment in the Use Value Appraisal Program. It confirms that areas of forestland can be managed for conservation purposes and not required to be managed for timber and still remain in the Use Value Appraisal Program. The standards for this subcategory of reserve forestland will be established by the Commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation. (2021-22)
Act 154 establishes an environmental justice policy for the state of Vermont and requires the creation of an environmental justice mapping tool. (2021-22)

14. Zoning changes from 2022-25

2022 – Nonconforming structures and uses; Vehicle fueling stations; wetlands
2023 - Village Residential/Commercial and Gateway Residential/Commercial Districts; Multiple uses and principal structures on a lot; multi-family housing Development Standards
2024 – Industrial/Commercial District; Planned Unit Development and Residential PUD
2025 – Village Residential Neighborhoods North; Village Residential Neighborhoods South; Residential Density; Parking Standards; Jolina Court District; Residential Density Bonus Program; Affordable Housing