

**Conditional Use Review Application
Richmond Development Review Board
Application for Conditional Use for Outdoor Recreation Facility or Park, and
associated parking area.**

Parcels:

- **Beeken Preserve 1901 Cochran Road**
- **Bombardier Preserve 3359 Cochran Road**

Applicant: Richmond Land Trust

July 15, 2022

This narrative will serve as support documentation for two applications:

- 1) parking at the Beeken Preserve, 1901 Cochran Road
- 2) parking at the Bombardier Preserve, 3359 Cochran Road

Background: The Richmond Land Trust (RLT) is the owner of two conserved parcels on Cochran Road. In addition to protecting ecological areas and open space, these parcels provide recreational access to the Winooski River and to an accompanying network of trails. Until 2020, there was a small parking lot at the canoe access on the Beeken Preserve, but no parking at the Bombardier Preserve (although a five-lot parking area was envisioned in the management plan).

Current situation: In 2020-21 the Richmond Parking Advisory Committee (RPAC) was attempting to solve the problem of unmanaged roadside parking at both areas, and in particular at Bombardier. The RPAC along with several neighbors approached the RLT requesting that we create a seasonal parking lot at each location for up to 20 cars each. In our desire to be a good neighbor and to support Town recreation, we agreed. In 2021 we applied for and received zoning permits for each lot. In 2022 the Town Zoning Administrator determined that parking requires conditional use approval by the Development Review Board. That is the genesis of this application. The application is submitted for parking associated with the Conditional Use of "Outdoor Recreation Park," however, there may be consideration for these parking areas to be considered under the standards for Off-Site Parking Commuter lots.

General and Specific Standards

The areas in question are zoned Ag/Residential and are also in the Special Flood Hazard Area. There appears to be no provision for standalone parking in the Zoning regulations. Outdoor Recreational Facility or Parking is a Conditional Use, and the parking would be associated with that use. There is also a provision for Off-Site Commuter Parking Lots.

- There are no structures on either parcel.
- The parcels each meet the Dimensional Requirements for lots in the A/R district.

Parking/Traffic:

- All of the proposed parking spaces meet the minimum 9 foot width and 18 foot length per space requirements.
- There is no provision in the zoning regulations for required parking spaces for Outdoor Recreation Parks.
- The proposed surface area is natural grass with the possibility of permeable gravel.
- Driveways are designed to meet the minimum outlined requirements.
- There is no proposed change in the pre-existing vehicle trip ends. That notwithstanding, Traffic is not expected to exceed 10 vehicle trip ends during peak evening hours.

General Standards:

The proposed use shall not result in an undue adverse effect upon existing or planned community facilities, the character of the area, traffic, or bylaws and ordinances. **The proposed use is designed to mitigate the pre-existing adverse effects of unmanaged roadside parking in the area.**

Specific Standards:

The proposed conditional use shall comply with the specific standards of

- a) No excessive noise, smoke, vibration, dust, glare, odors, etc.
- b) There will be no outdoor displays
- c) There will be outdoor storage
- d) No State permits are required
- e) No fire, explosive or safety hazard
- f) No Undue Adverse Effect on state or community-owned facilities.
- g) Ground and surface water resources will not be adversely affected.
- h) No undue adverse effect on an Historic Site or rare or irreplaceable natural areas.
The proposed use is designed to mitigate the undue adverse effects of unmanaged parking and use.
- i) No undue adverse effect on natural landscape and “character of the neighborhood” standards

Character of the Neighborhood

The proposed use meets the vision and guidelines for the area as outlined on the Richmond Town Plan. Specifically (**emphasis added**)

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Wisely steward our natural and working lands, ensuring the beauty and health of our landscapes, waterways, open spaces, wildlife, and agricultural resources

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Social, Cultural + Recreational Offerings: Free time opportunities are important not only for the enjoyment of residents but can also draw in visitors

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GOAL 3: Support and create outdoor recreation opportunities that are available to the public

ACTIONS:

- 1. Work with landowners who are willing to allow public access to privately accessed natural and open space areas**
- 2. Support the Richmond and Vermont Land Trusts in their endeavors to protect natural resources that will have public access for recreational purposes**
3. Encourage collaboration between the trails committee, conservation commission, planning commission, and regional organizations
4. Create and distribute materials that foster responsible use and enjoyment of Richmond's natural areas, including trail maps, kiosks, improved parking and access, and signage
5. Support long-standing outdoor recreation opportunities such as Cochran's Ski Area and Chittenden County Fish & Game
- 6. Support outdoor recreation opportunities and programs that include canoe access on the Winooski River, swimming, cross country skiing, skating, mountain biking, etc.**

GOAL 4: Continue to support and maintain various social and community recreation opportunities

ACTIONS:

1. Support arts and cultural programming and opportunities for residents and visitors
2. Explore the creation of a town community outreach and recreation staff position
3. Identify possible methods of funding further recreation and community engagement opportunities
- 4. Support public and private recreational businesses or endeavors by ensuring that zoning regulations allow for sustainable recreational uses of public and private lands including, but not limited to, the potential development of community centers, outdoor seating or gathering, performance spaces, etc.**
5. Educate the community and visitors of Richmond's recreational opportunities through the town website and social media
6. Continue to support and allow community use of the library and Community Room
7. Create a management plan for municipal public spaces, facilities, and lands that includes capital improvements and budget as well as opportunities for expanded or new uses
8. Continue to allow for public events such as festivals, parades, and vendor fairs and create a streamlined approval process for such uses.