

To: Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC)**Cc:** Keith Osborne, Richmond; Richmond Selectboard; Richmond Planning Commission**From:** Maya Balassa, Planner, Kate McCarthy, Senior Planner**Date:** July 3, 2025**Re:** Richmond Future Land Use Map Draft Recommendation

1. Overview of Engagement Activities

Provide a brief overview of the public engagement activities conducted, including dates, formats (e.g., public meetings, surveys, workshops), and the number of participants.

Date	Activity	Attendees	Engagement Methods	Staff Present
9/16/2024	Selectboard meeting	34	Municipal selectboard	C. Baker, M. Balassa
12/19/2024	Initial Meeting with Staff and PC Chair	2	Municipal staff	M. Balassa, T. Newton, K. McCarthy
2/19/2025	Planning Commission meeting	7	Municipal planning commission	M. Balassa, K. McCarthy
3/26/2025	Housing Committee meeting	5	Municipal committee	M. Balassa, M. Needle
4/30/2025	Informant Interview with MJ Patchett	1	Community meeting	M. Balassa
5/19/2025	Selectboard meeting	35	Municipal selectboard	C. Baker
6/2/2025	Selectboard meeting	28	Municipal selectboard	M. Balassa
6/16/2025	Selectboard meeting	10	Municipal selectboard	C. Baker

2. Community Context and Public Engagement Assessment

The following themes and information about community context emerged from initial engagement and informed FLU Map development in Richmond:

- Richmond adopted an updated zoning bylaw, including a new zoning district map, effective January 29, 2025, with two new districts: Village Residential Neighborhoods South (VRNS) and Village Residential Neighborhoods North (VRNN) to support a more walkable downtown, aligning with state smart growth goals and municipal plan policies.
- Richmond adopted a Town Plan on November 11, 2018 which in 2026. Richmond began the process of updating their Town Plan this year. The Planning Commission formed a steering committee to work on an update to the Town Plan in early 2025.

- A draft report of the Richmond Gateway Feasibility Study was presented to the Selectboard in June 2024. The project studied the corridor linking Richmond’s Village Center with the Park and Ride located at Exit 12 and assessed alternatives for walk and bike connectivity to increase safety and comfort for all users.
- The Town received a Northern Border Regional Commission grant to extend sewer to the Gateway Zoning District in 2021. However, this grant award was returned after the Town was unable to complete permitting requirements required for the sewer extension and was unable to secure sufficient local funding to construct the system.

3. Key Findings from Public Engagement

Common Themes

- Throughout the process, residents asked for greater clarity about how decisions were made, what the categories mean, and how the Regional Future Land Use Map intersects with zoning, Act 250 exemptions, and local planning authority. A local working group emphasized the value of incorporating more granular conservation data and continuing to ground regional designations in local planning conversations.
- A large number of comments on the draft Regional Future Land Use (FLU) Map focused on ensuring that permanently conserved lands were accurately mapped as “Rural Conservation.” These included properties held under easement by the Richmond Land Trust and the Vermont Land Trust.
- While most comments from municipal boards about the draft Regional FLU Map reflected a cautious stance toward development, there was also interest in identifying appropriate sites for growth. The Housing Committee recommended that 360 Governor Peck Road and parts of Farr Farm property (located southwest of the village) be considered for Transition or Planned Growth. One parcel with a shared community septic system serving a mobile home park was also identified as a potential Planned Growth Area.
- Some residents expressed interest in making the Future Land Use Map more aspirational, arguing that it would be better to map areas with long-term growth potential now rather than risk their exclusion from state-level designations in the future. Others were more skeptical, emphasizing the importance of aligning mapped areas with actual infrastructure availability, environmental protections, and current use.

Points of Tension

- Community members expressed tension between the regional housing targets and Richmond’s limited amount of land that can be developed due to topographic constraints including steep slopes, floodplains, and conservation status. While some emphasized a need to identify realistic areas for housing, others were concerned that Richmond could not, and should not, be expected to absorb additional growth without infrastructure investments.

- There was discussion from the Planning Commission and Housing Committee about including Farr Farm in the Planned Growth Area or as Transition. A portion of the Farr Farm is within the water and wastewater service area. Part of the property is in the “Richmond Village” land use area on the Town Plan Future Land Use Map, yet the map includes disclaimer stating, “This is a conceptual rendering of the future land use map areas described in the future land use technical plan. Boundaries of these areas are not definitive. Not a zoning map. Zoning districts to be determined.” The entire property is in Agriculture Residential district on the zoning map. There isn’t complete streets infrastructure serving the property from the village (e.g. no sidewalk or road shoulder sufficient for safe biking and walking). Due to these factors, CCRPC have proposed to leave Farr Farm in the Rural Agriculture & Forestry category until there is consensus across Town policies to support the inclusion in another category.
- There was a recommendation from the Housing Committee to include 360 Governor Peck Road in Transition. The property is outside of the water and wastewater service area and in the High-Density Residential zoning district. Staff have decided to leave the parcel in the Rural Agriculture & Forestry category with the other parcels outside the water and wastewater service area in High Density Residential zoning district until the Town has established a clearer direction of how the area is envisioned to change.
- The Richmond Selectboard received a recommendation from the Planning Commission to not opt in to Tier 1B and a recommendation from the Housing Committee to opt in to Tier 1B. The opposite recommendations centered primarily on differing views about the value of Act 250 regulation within the village center.
- There was skepticism among some municipal boards about how the regional map might be interpreted or used in state-level decisions in the future.
- Public commenters and committee members alike raised concerns about the pace of the Regional Future Land Use map update, noting that the timeline made authentic and comprehensive public engagement around Richmond’s future land use more difficult.

4. CCRPC Staff Discussion and Map Notes

The attached map is the proposed Future Land Use Map for Richmond. This map reflects a number of considerations that incorporate local context and feedback:

The Village Center on the FLU Map closely aligns with the state-designated Village Center designation and the Richmond’s Village Center zoning district boundaries.

- The State designated Village Center and the Village Center zoning district closely align. The zoning district has one additional parcel and follows parcel lines, while the State Village Center designation boundary does not follow parcel lines for a few parcels. The FLU Village Center matches the zoning district boundaries to align with parcel lines and because the Village Center FLU category allows more flexibility than the Village Center State designation, allowing more land to be included in the designated area.

Planned Growth Areas generally align with the water and wastewater service areas which includes Village Residential Neighborhood South, Village Residential Commercial, Commercial, Village Residential Neighborhoods North, Village Commercial, and High-Density Residential zoning districts.

Transition zone aligns with the Gateway Residential Commercial zoning district.

5. Tier 1B Status

The Richmond Selectboard received a recommendation from the Planning Commission to not opt in to Tier 1B and a recommendation from the Housing Committee to opt in to Tier 1B. The Selectboard discussed the map and the Tier 1B status opportunity over three meetings. On June 16, 2025, the Selectboard unanimously voted to opt in to Tier 1B for all eligible areas.

For further reading and review:

- Meeting notes for municipal meetings can be found on CCRPC's Engagement Page.
- Staff notes for specific events are available upon request.
- LRPC has received a link to CCRPC's internal map viewer, which includes public comments received.

CHITTENDEN COUNTY DRAFT FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) is working with cities and towns to create a regional Future Land Use map. This map, once adopted, will generally guide how land in the region will be used in the future. For more information, visit ccrpcvt.org/ecos-engagement.

The land use categories on the map are defined in state law and CCRPC is tasked with determining how the land use categories apply in the region.

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.

Legend

- Municipal Boundary
- Property Boundary
- River or Stream
- Lake or Pond
- Special Flood
- Hazard Area or River Corridor

Future Land Use Area

- Downtown Center
- Village Center
- Planned Growth Area
- Village Area

- Enterprise Area
- Transition / Infill Area
- Resource-Based Recreation Area
- Rural General
- Rural Ag and Forestry
- Rural Conservation
- Hamlet
- Airport & Camp
- Johnson & Ethan Allen Firing Range

