



**TOWN OF RICHMOND**  
**RICHMOND TOWN CENTER**  
203 Bridge Street, P.O. Box 285  
Richmond, Vermont 05477



Date: 12.29.25

To: Town of Richmond Selectboard

From: Virginia Clarke, Planning Commission Chair

Re: Town Plan 2026, Version 3 Memo for 1.5.26 SB public hearing

The meeting materials for the public hearing on the proposed 2026 Town Plan include two documents which we hope will be approved – the **SECOND DRAFT** of the Plan, and a list of **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS** to the draft. In addition, we have provided you with a document entitled **THIRD DRAFT** which incorporates the amendments into the second draft, in order to make it easier to see the amendments in their context. If this is approved, the **THIRD DRAFT** will become the **FINAL DRAFT** for the SB public hearing on 1.21.26. This memo explains the history of this strategy.

Understanding that people often get interested and wish to comment on proposals at the last minute, the Town Plan Steering Committee (TPSC) opted to leave the public comment window open just as long as we possibly could. If we had not been aiming for a town-wide vote on Town Meeting Day, the amendments we are proposing would have already been incorporated into the draft plan. Due to the timeline for warning the draft Plan, these comments could not be inserted ahead of time directly into the **SECOND DRAFT** that you have in front of you, and so we are asking you to approve them separately tonight and permit them to be incorporated into the **FINAL DRAFT**. They have been thoroughly reviewed by the Planning Commission (PC) and the TPSC.

The PC and TPSC felt that the public comments we received over the last 6 weeks were insightful and added detail, specificity and clarity to points already mentioned in the draft plan. They were made by groups or individuals with some knowledge of the subject areas, so definitely worthy of consideration. The PC and the TPSC have found these amendments to be appropriate and enriching, and found that they did not alter the meaning, concept or extent of the draft plan.

The amendments fall mostly into two categories, each category having revisions recommended by several individuals. The first category is **EQUITY**; the second is **NATURAL RESOURCES** and **FUTURE LAND USE**.

The amendments related to EQUITY provide essential details to back up our stated endorsement of “Policies of Inclusion” (see p. 5), and to help us to carry out the recommendation from CCRPC to include equity considerations in our new Plan (see *“Initial Plan Review/ M. Balassa/ 12.31.24”*). These amendments can be found in the Community Development, Education, Transportation, and Utilities, Facilities and Public Safety sections, and provide concrete philosophies and actions that will help us implement our stated “Policies of Inclusion”.

The amendments related to NATURAL RESOURCES and FUTURE LAND USE are somewhat more complex, with amendments providing additional background information; clarifying ambiguities; correcting factual errors; adding emphasis to key points; and trying to provide a greater understanding of evolving state, regional and local efforts to ensure a physically sustainable future for our rural state. The basic concepts are contained within the draft, but apparently not presented well enough to avoid some revisions. The TPSC worked extensively to understand the issues presented and craft amendments acceptable to the commenters but also true to the concepts in the existing Plan. These amendments are found in the Natural Resources and Future Land Use (FLU) sections, with one entry in the Appendix.

The natural resources portions of the FLU section had particular scrutiny, with a lot of discussion about our new FLU map as we worked towards consensus. We have stated in the Plan that our FLU map can be updated at any time and will be revisited by the PC frequently to see if changes are needed. We understand that this is all new territory for CCRPC and the new Land Use Review Board (LURB), and that they will need time - months to years - to work out the details of the new Act 181 mapping system and its relationship to Act 250. This may require changes to our map over the life of Richmond’s Town Plan 2026.

The document containing the amendments may seem lengthy, but most of it is existing language from the draft Plan that provides context for the revisions. As you can see from the THIRD DRAFT of the Plan (with the proposed amendments *redlined in situ*), there will be only a few pages (or none) added to the total length of the Plan. We hope to answer any questions that might arise at the public hearing.

Virginia Clarke  
Chair, Richmond Planning Commission