

Richmond Planning Commission's Proposed 2018 Town Plan Report

Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §4384(c)

Approved by the Planning Commission: 11/8/2017

Amended following the Planning Commission Public Hearing: 12/15/2017

Submitted to the Selectboard: 12/15/2017

Section 4302 Consistency Statement

This plan is fully consistent with the goals established in 24 VSA §4302, below.

4302(c)(1) Maintain the historic settlement pattern	12-17, 27-30, 30-37, 37-46
4302(c)(2) Provide a strong and diverse economy	18-22
4302(c)(3) Broaden access to education	37-46
4302(c)(4) Transportation systems	46-50
4302(c)(5) Identify important natural and historic features	30-37, 37-45
4302(c)(6) Quality of air, water, wildlife, and land	30-37
4302(c)(7) Encourage the efficient use of energy	22-25
4302(c)(8) Enhance recreational opportunities	37-45
4302(c)(9) Strengthen agriculture	30-36
4302(c)(10) Wise and efficient use of natural resources	30-36
4302(c)(11) Safe and affordable housing	27-30
4302(c)(12) Efficient system of public facilities	37-46, 46-50
4302(c)(13) Availability of safe and affordable childcare	37-45
4302(c)(14) Encourage flood resilience	30-37, 37-45

Altered Designation of Land Use

1. The probable impact on the surrounding area, including the effect of any resulting increase in traffic, and the probable impact on the overall pattern of land use.

The Future Land Use and Developable Areas maps depict the altered designation of land use and the Future Land Use Technical Plan outlines the specific activities that will be allowed, encouraged, or prohibited on certain land categories.

- i. The pattern of land use is unlikely to change, because the purpose of outlining these future land uses was intended to more specifically designate existing uses and patterns. For example, Jonesville, the Gateway, and other established neighborhoods or developed areas are shown more clearly and lands such as Cochran's Ski Area and the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps are now given the designation of local character area.
- ii. Mixed-Use development has been added to the Gateway and certain neighborhoods in order to promote overall development of these existing areas.

2. The long-term cost or benefit to the municipality, based upon consideration of the probable impact:

- i. The cost of changing zoning regulations and districts
- ii. The cost of expanding the municipal water and sewer system
- iii. Benefit of larger scale development fees
- iv. Benefit of increased volume of developments
- v. Benefit of increased Grand List value
- vi. Benefit of potentially lower tax rate
- vii. Benefit of designating a village center
- viii. Benefit of loss prevention with floodplain zoning

3. The amount of vacant land which is already subject to the proposed new designation; and actually available for that purpose, and the need for additional land for that purpose.

- i. Natural and Working Lands is a new designation, and no land is currently subject to it.
- ii. Rural Agricultural and Residential Areas as a designation has not increased in size.
- iii. The neighborhood designation is new and no land is currently subject to it
- iv. The Local Character Area designation is new, and no land is currently subject to it
- v. The village designation is new for two locations, and current for the village center. Additional land is being designated as village in order to contain and maintain those areas as denser developed areas with a mix of commercial and residential use. There is no vacant land in the existing village designated land.
- vi. The downtown designation will include the land that is currently considered “village commercial” and the village center designation, as well as some parcels from the current residential/commercial, and high density residential districts. There is no vacant land in this designation. The purpose of this is to make the downtown designation more uniform than the current mix of districts in that area.
- vii. The proposed Gateway Mixed Use Area is currently a combination of the existing Gateway Commercial, High Density Residential, and Industrial Commercial Districts. None of those districts allow exclusively for what the proposed Gateway Mixed Use Area proposes to allow,
- viii. The proposed River Road Commercial Area is currently under commercial and industrial commercial use. The new designation would provide for mixed and residential uses in that area. None of the land is currently subject to mixed use.
- ix. The Flood Hazard Overlay Area was established by the National Flood Insurance Program, and there will be no changes in use.

4. The suitability of the area in question for the proposed purpose, after consideration of appropriate alternative locations, alternative uses for the area under consideration, and the probable impact of the proposed change on other areas similarly designated.

- i. The proposed designations are based on the existing pattern and characteristics of the area and neighborhoods. Uses for each designation were generally increased to include more uses and diversify the development of these areas. These designation descriptions help to identify the key differences between similar types of areas and better specify their proposed uses. The impact intended is to mitigate discrepancies between designations and uses.

5. The appropriateness of the size and boundaries of the area proposed for change, with respect to the area required for the proposed use, land capability and existing development in the area.

- i. Boundaries created for the future land use designations take into consideration the inclusion of areas that could suit the designation that were not previously part of the existing district or proposed use. The purpose was to mix uses in most designations in order to more uniformly develop general areas instead of separate uses alternating from parcel to parcel in the same area. All of the designations were based on existing characteristics and development in each area.



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

PURSUANT TO 24 V.S.A. §§4384 (d) AND §4444, THE TOWN OF RICHMOND PLANNING COMMISSION WILL BE HOLDING A PUBLIC HEARING ON **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14TH, 2017, AT 7:00 PM, IN THE RICHMOND TOWN CENTER MEETING ROOM AT 203 BRIDGE STREET TO RECEIVE COMMENT REGARDING THE CURRENT DRAFT OF THE NEW TOWN PLAN.**

TOWN PLAN DRAFT SUMMARY:

PURPOSE: THE TOWN OF RICHMOND IS REQUIRED TO HAVE A NEW/UPDATED TOWN PLAN EVERY FIVE YEARS, AND POSSESS AN ACTIVE TOWN PLAN IN ORDER TO UPDATE OR AMEND CURRENT ZONING REGULATIONS. THE LAST TOWN PLAN EXPIRED IN MARCH OF 2017. THIS NEW TOWN PLAN DRAFT, IF ADOPTED, WOULD FULFILL SAID REQUIREMENTS.

GEOGRAPHIC AREA AFFECTED: THE TOWN OF RICHMOND, VERMONT IN ITS ENTIRETY

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THE FULL TEXT AND MAPS OF THE NEW TOWN PLAN DRAFT ARE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION AT THE RICHMOND TOWN CENTER OFFICES AT 203 BRIDGE STREET BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 8:00 AM AND 4:00PM, MONDAY THROUGH THURSDAY. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE RICHMOND PLANNING/ZONING OFFICE AT 802-434-2430.

POSTED: 11/13/2017



Request for Comments:

The Town of Richmond, VT is officially requesting public comment on the draft town plan. Please submit comment in person, in email to townplanner@gmavt.net , or in hard copy to Town Planner, P.O. Box 285, Richmond, VT 05477.



RICHMOND: OUR TOWN, OUR FUTURE

**RICHMOND, VERMONT
2018 TOWN PLAN**

**APPROVED BY THE RICHMOND
SELECTBOARD:**

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INTRODUCTION

OUR TOWN

Richmond is a small, rural town located in the eastern uplands of Chittenden County. With an estimated 4,129 inhabitants, the forested foothills of the Green Mountains and open agricultural land in the Winooski River valley characterize Richmond's 34.41 square miles. The earliest forms of commerce were agriculture and trading, yet today most residents find employment elsewhere. Burlington, Vermont's largest city and urban center is only 15 miles to the west and Montpelier, the small state capital, is about 25 miles to the east.

The village center, located at the crossroads of Main Street (US Route 2) and Bridge Street, functions as the community center 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. The village area is served by the municipal water and sewer system and is bisected by the Winooski River.



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 once a 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.

Today, the majority of housing development is located outside of these historic settlement areas along Richmond's secondary paved and dirt roads or within contemporary subdivisions, such as Hidden Pines, Southview, Gray stone and Stonefence. Another significant neighborhood includes Riverview Commons Mobile Home Park, one of the largest parks in the state.

Most of the housing was built between 1960 and 1980 reflecting the period of greatest population increase. During the 1960's, Richmond's population grew the fastest, increasing by more than 70% in just a decade. Most likely due to the completion of the Interstate Highway System and the establishment of international computer chip manufacturer, IBM in nearby Essex Junction. Growth then began to slow and Richmond's population then declined in the early 2000's during the economic downturn for the first time in 50 years. Since 2010, the town has experienced very little population growth.

During the *Our Town, Our Future* planning process we heard that Richmond residents love the strong community, the available services and amenities, the small town character, the people, and the rural landscape and environment. We heard people wanted new and improved businesses, safe biking and walking routes, and more recreational offerings. We also learned that Richmond residents are different and the same. Youth and seniors, newcomers and longtime residents have similar values but different needs and priorities.



OUR PLAN

The purpose of this plan is to guide community members and leaders in protecting what we love about Richmond and enhancing the aspects we wish to improve. We have great power and responsibility to bring the community's aspirations and intentions to life, through public investments, incentives, land use regulations and other implementation programs.

A PLAN FOR THE COMMUNITY

First and foremost, this is a plan for and by the Richmond community. Dozens of Richmond community members and groups played a role in developing actions and writing the plan, and they incorporated ideas and suggestions from hundreds more residents. This plan represents the first time in 10 years that Richmond has conducted an extensive community outreach process to reach many diverse community members and developed a common community vision to guide and shape our policies and actions. This plan places a strong emphasis on supporting and enhancing the community vision and values identified by community members. It is meant to be a roadmap for our future, but also offer clear and concrete guidance to the people and groups who live and work in Richmond every day.

We understand that there are inherent conflicts in planning values and priorities that will affect future zoning and development, however, we recognize the responsibility to act on a case-by-case basis and make the best possible decisions as a multifaceted town government.

STATE AND REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

A community, under Vermont State law, is enabled by statute to develop and adopt a municipal plan. Towns can receive significant benefits from creating municipal plans. Communities that draft and approve town plans may levy impact fees or receive state planning funds to implement planning programs, and are more competitive in many other grant and technical assistance programs. In order to achieve those benefits, town plans must be approved by voters, confirmed by the Regional Planning Commission (RPC), and be updated regularly. In order to be confirmed by the RPC, plans must be consistent with the state planning goals as defined within Vermont statute 24 VSA §4302 and contain all the required elements as specified within 24 VSA §4382. Alignment with state and regional planning efforts not only helps us meet requirements, but also ensures that our efforts as a community will align with – and be supported by – projects and policies happening within Chittenden County and Vermont.

POLICY ON INCLUSION

This plan and the 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:

“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.”

USING THIS PLAN

The structure and format of this plan are different than Richmond’s past municipal plans, and different than many community plans in Vermont. This format was chosen based on the feedback that was received in the planning process. The information below will help orient you to the new features and sections included here, and how to easily navigate its sections.

PLAN STRUCTURE AND FEATURES

Community Vision and Values	The vision and values are the highest-level articulation of what Richmond’s community members value and want for the future. All community actions, policies and decisions should be evaluated against the vision and values:
Action Plan	The Action Plan details the specific goals, policies, and actions Richmond will use in order to advance our vision. The section includes three main components: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technical Plans on topics that state statutes require us to address. These plans bring together actions and relevant connections to state and regional plans.• The Goal and Action Tables list goals and actions for each technical plan.• The Implementation Plan is a roadmap for how we plan to accomplish the actions
Richmond Almanac	The Almanac is an innovative companion document to this plan, unique to Richmond. The Almanac includes statistics, inventories and information about many aspects of the community. The information in the Almanac informed the development of this plan, and is intended to be a reference moving forward.
From Vision to Action	This section explores each of the eleven distinct community values in depth and defines how they support Richmond’s vision. Each profile includes a description of what the value means, what we heard from the community, and strategies for moving forward. It also includes the survey results from the planning process.

WHAT THE PLAN DOES

Specifically, this plan will:

- Include **an assessment** of the assets and conditions in Richmond at this moment in time
- Articulate **Richmond's community vision**, and the ways in which community members want to enhance and protect core community values
- Identify **interconnections and relationships** between key values, goals and actions
- Identify **partners for implementation and opportunities for collaboration** among a broad range of community groups and organizations
- Provide **clear guidance on Richmond's goals and policies** to organizations, developers, businesses and property owners, and state agencies or commissions
- Provide community officials and leaders clear **standards for evaluating proposals** by private individuals
- Clearly **identify state and regional connections**, including consistency with state policies and opportunities to coordinate with regional plans
- Provide the **foundation for municipal regulations and programs**, such as zoning and subdivision regulations, an official map, a capital budget and program, and impact fees



PLANNING PROCESS

In late 2014, the Town successfully applied for a Municipal Planning Grant from the State of Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) to help fund the development of this new town plan. Emphasis was placed on defining a new community vision, extensive community engagement, and the creation of a shorter, more accessible and engaging, action-orientated town plan.

In early 2015 the Town contracted with Community Workshop LLC to assist with the town plan project. A Steering Committee was formed to help guide the process. Along with the planning commission, they defined process goals and branding and Planning Commissioner Marc Hughes designed a logo. By late spring the town launched the *Richmond: Our Town, Our Future* planning project.

In order to lay the foundation for this new town plan, *Richmond: Our Town, Our Future* undertook a variety of outreach and engagement activities. Most notably, we received 394 completed surveys, hosted a Community Vision Forum to share the Vision Statement; organized a Resilience Fair to increase awareness of flooding and emergency preparedness; facilitated a series of Rapid Fire Planning Nights to review goals and identify action items; and coordinated a Mapping Workshop to inform the future land use map.

This plan aims to distill the tremendous amount of public comments and ideas and feedback gathered from many voices and perspectives for a unified vision for the future.

Outreach and engagement by the numbers:

- 2,200 postcards mailed
- 394 surveys completed
- 387 action ideas identified
- 370 chalkboard comments
- 300 responses to youth survey
- 250 pencils and lollipops distributed with project info attached
- 180 subscribers to email newsletter
- 65 people attended September Community Vision Forum
- 58 goals generated
- 53 vision cards written
- 50 posters displayed to advertise events
- 55 unique attendees attended series of Rapid Fire Planning Nights
- 45 people participated in Mapping Workshop
- 32 one-on-one interviews conducted
- 25 people attended fall Resilience Fair
- 18 email newsletters developed
- 5 Rapid Fire Planning Nights hosted
- 2 articles in the Times Ink
- 1 mention on Vermont Public Radio's *Public Post*

RESPONSIBILITIES

Planning Commission

The Richmond Planning Commission (PC) is responsible for preparing the plan, holding public hearings on the plan and submitting it to the Selectboard for final approval and adoption. The PC consists of 7 voting members, appointed by the Selectboard to represent a diverse range of skills, interests and areas of town.

Moving forward, the PC will prepare and annually update the capital budget program; conduct studies and make recommendations on land development, urban renewal, transportation, community development, beautification, design, historic and scenic preservation; conservation of energy, and development of renewable energy; participate in regional planning programs; retain staff and consultants; recommend fees to the legislative body; and hold public meetings.

Town Plan Committee

The Town Plan Committee was appointed specifically to guide this planning process, and to help reach many more (and more diverse) community members than planning efforts typically do. The Town Plan Committee included representatives who could reach many distinct community groups. The Committee's responsibilities are complete with the publication of this plan, and the committee will dissolve.

Selectboard

The Selectboard must officially approve or endorse this final plan, and is responsible for setting most of the Town policies and making critical decisions to guide its implementation. In many cases, the board is asked to evaluate and decide on proposals, and will use this plan as a tool in doing so.

Town Staff

Town staff have provided staff 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 in carrying out their responsibilities.

Town Boards + Committees

Richmond's many town boards and committees each oversee particular aspects of the community (such as conservation or development review). Each board provided input into relevant goals or plan sections, and each is responsible for leading or implementing actions related to its area of expertise.

Community Members + Other Groups

This plan goes much further than previous plans in terms of engaging the community and identifying a broadly supported vision. Implementation will in turn require the support and involvement of many more community members and groups. The community was responsible for providing the input that shaped 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 or businesses, schools, or community members, and the plan is aimed to make it easy for people to get involved and take responsibility for making Richmond a better place.

OUR FUTURE COMMUNITY VISION

Richmond aims to be the most livable small town in Vermont.

We value our unique combination of authentic rural character, diverse local services, and accessible location. We want Richmond to be an affordable and enriching place for people to live, work, play, shop and connect. We will take a forward-thinking approach to emerging opportunities and challenges while honoring and strengthening our close-knit community, healthy environment and agricultural economy.

Through the planning process, 11 specific visions for the future emerged. The first and foremost vision being: ensure **transparent and inclusive decision-making**, with a representative and open government, civil discourse, and an active and informed community. The Town of Richmond considers this to be the top priority and the plan shall be implemented with this vision at the forefront. The ten remaining visions are listed below in alphabetical order. In the interest of brevity and readability, the 11 visions are described below in short. A detailed elaboration of these visions is located in the appendix.

In order to fulfill our vision, we will:

- Promote **affordability and a reasonable cost of living**, so that people from a mix of ages, backgrounds, and income levels can afford housing, food, goods and services in Richmond;
- Be a healthy and accessible **community for all ages**, where youth are nurtured and included; teens have opportunities and support; young adults can live and raise families; and seniors can comfortably live and actively contribute;
- Foster **economic opportunity** by supporting local businesses, developing good jobs, nurturing a diverse local economy, and promoting renewable energy;
- Enhance our **history and traditions**, celebrating our agricultural heritage, treasured community events, and unique historic sites and architecture;
- Support safe, sustainable and convenient **mobility and transportation options**, so that people can bike, walk, ride and drive in Richmond and beyond;
- Wisely steward our **natural and working lands**, ensuring the beauty and health of our landscapes, waterways, open spaces, wildlife and agricultural resources;
- Nurture a **safe and resilient community** with strong volunteerism, and public services, caring and self-reliant neighbors, and a proactive approach to preparing for challenges;
- Foster and enhance our **small-town character**, including our quiet pace and rural way of life, friendly and involved community, and scenic beauty;
- Support a wide range of **social, cultural and recreational offerings**, including open space and recreation facilities, arts and cultural activities, and community gathering places
- Have a **vibrant and appealing downtown**, with attractive streets and buildings, convenient services and diverse businesses, where people can connect and meet their daily needs.

ACTION PLAN

With a clear vision in hand, Richmond is set to take action. The following sections include all the goals and actions developed during the Our Town, Our Future process, along with guidance and tools for implementation.

You'll find several key terms used throughout the Action Plan:

- **Goals** are general aims that, if reached, will support or enhance our community vision
- **Objectives** are general categories or approaches to achieving each goal
- **Actions** are specific steps that the Town of Richmond or other partners can take to accomplish the objective
- **Targets** are specific, measurable benchmarks that we can use to evaluate progress
- **Policies** are overarching principles that apply to and guide the actions and objectives

TECHNICAL PLANS

We believe strongly in the community values described in the previous section, and we feel that it's critical to talk about the ways that many factors influence our values and future aspirations, and identify clear strategies for protecting and enhancing those values. State statutes require that municipal plans clearly address many of these specific topics, which span many of Richmond's values. Richmond's boards and commissions tend to be organized around similar themes for planning and implementation.

The following technical plans are designed to organize specific goals and actions around common themes, in order to allow for clear alignment with state and regional plans, and to offer a clear roadmap to the boards and commissions or community organizations charged with advancing these actions. We recognize that many of the goals listed could also apply to other technical plans and serve multiple purposes and visions.

- **Future Land Use**
- **Economic Development**
- **Energy**
- **Housing**
- **Natural and Cultural Resources**
- **Community Resilience and Development**
- **Transportation**
- **Utilities and Facilities**

FUTURE LAND USE

Since the late 1970s, Richmond has recognized the importance of planning and regulating for our land use in protecting our community character and quality of life. But Richmond's zoning map and land use regulations have changed little since they were enacted during that time, and the regulations are not necessarily in line with Richmond's land use goals today.

Today, Richmond is poised to proactively direct future growth, investment and land use, which will help the Town strategically advance the vision and the goals, targets and actions outlined in this plan. Revisiting and adjusting our land use regulations will help us build vibrant village centers, maintain our rural character and working lands, create efficient transportation options, and improve affordability.

LAND USE AND ZONING TODAY

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 or commercial development in village centers and along Richmond's main transportation corridors.

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 far less pressure than towns closer to Burlington, but if Burlington continues to grow and housing prices to 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. Richmond borders three towns that are even more rural (Huntington, Hinesburg and Bolton), so the outlying agricultural areas are unlikely to face growth pressure from adjacent towns.

The Town of Richmond currently has a comprehensive set of zoning regulations. The zoning regulations evolve in conjunction with the town planning process. In order to implement the town plan, zoning regulations must match the intentions and goals provided in this document.

VISION CONNECTION

- **Affordability:**
Concentrating development in village areas means fewer roads to maintain and less auto dependence for residents.
- **All Ages:** Younger and older generations increasingly want to live in downtowns, close to services, social opportunities and more people.
- **Natural + Working Lands:** Directing development to village centers reduces the development pressure on our prime agricultural and natural lands.
- **Vibrant Downtown:** Focusing growth in village centers allows us to focus resources and amenities there, while attracting more people and energy.

CONSTRAINTS AND POSSIBILITIES

Much of Richmond's land is already constrained from certain uses or types of development in one or more ways. Our varied landscape includes many steep slopes, floodplains and wetlands, and other areas that cannot practically be developed or are protected by state or local regulations. Various parcels in Richmond also have legal development constraints, such as conservation easements or purchases by land trusts. The **Developable Areas Map** shows the areas of town that are not constrained and could be potentially developed. These are the areas where we need to identify ideal future land uses, and this map serves as a basemap for future planning efforts. This map is included in the appendix of the plan.

DESIRED FUTURE LAND USE

Richmond's desired future land uses take into account a number of factors: developable areas, Richmond's Vision, data on expected trends and demand, and public input during the town planning process. The **Future Land Use Map** illustrates broad categories of land use that we wish to see and encourage in town. It does not necessarily reflect current land uses, or even what is allowed under current zoning regulations. It does represent our vision for future land use, and a goal toward which we will work. The Map includes twelve distinct land use categories, and defines the boundaries and purposes we wish to see in those areas.

Priority Levels The Future Land Use Map assigns four priority levels to land uses, reflecting the degree to which the Town of Richmond will prioritize action or proactively pursue strategies or investments in specific land use outcomes.

Highly Encouraged – the Town of Richmond shall proactively work with property owners to help achieve these activities. Or the Town may develop new municipal programs to further or sustain these activities. These types of activities will be allowable under future land use regulations and may also be incentivized through density bonuses or other incentive-based regulations.

Encouraged - the Town of Richmond may work with property owners to help achieve these activities. These types of activities will be allowable under future land use regulations and may also be incentivized through bonuses or other incentive-based regulations.

Allowed - the Town of Richmond will not oppose or prohibit this type of use. Uses will be allowable under future zoning regulations.

Prohibited - the Town of Richmond will not allow this type of new development or activity, though pre-existing uses may be allowed. In certain cases, exemptions or waivers may be granted.

Land Use Areas

The following table describes each of the designated land use areas in our Future Land Use Map, along with the specific uses and activities that will be encouraged, allowed or prohibited in each.

<p>Natural and Working Lands <i>What:</i> Areas that protect sensitive natural areas such as critical wildlife habitat, steep slopes and prominent ridgelines, while allowing for sustainable agriculture, forestry businesses, recreation, and limited residential use. <i>Where:</i> Conserved lands, water bodies, floodplain</p>		
Highly Encouraged	Encouraged	Allowed
Forestry management activities and agricultural uses; subdivision development that clusters housing sites close together and sets aside larger areas of undeveloped land	Commercial activities that directly support the economic viability of agricultural and forestry uses, such as agricultural and forest product processing and agro tourism; new conserved lands and new trail systems that connect with existing trails New trail systems that connect with existing trails and new or expanded recreation areas	Future residential development (though limited compared to other areas); on-site farm worker housing
<p>Rural Agricultural and Residential Areas <i>What:</i> Areas that maintain the rural character of the landscape while allowing for existing uses and activities such as low-density residential development and limited, small-scale commercial activities</p>		
Encouraged	Allowed	
Commercial activities that directly support the economic viability of agricultural and forestry uses, such as agricultural and forest product processing and agro tourism; new subdivision development that clusters housing sites close together and sets aside larger areas of rural undeveloped land, development that does not inhibit scenic beauty	New low-density residential development, along with home occupations; existing commercial activities; some new limited, small-scale commercial activities, which are compatible with rural landscapes and residential uses	
<p>Neighborhoods <i>What:</i> Areas designed to enhance existing, and encourage new, residential neighborhood developments in proximity to Village areas. Densities will be similar to, or slightly less dense than those historically found within the Village areas. <i>Where:</i> General geographic areas where homes are already grouped together and social networks exist, or in close proximity to Village areas.</p>		
Highly Encouraged	Encouraged	
Bike and pedestrian transport options and street tree plantings	Single-family homes, with accessory apartments and buildings with two-, three- or four-family housing units that are compatible in scale to adjacent development; shared amenities such as a playground, park, bus shelter, or other community gathering area	
<p>Local Character Areas <i>What:</i> Areas that support and encourage unique local enterprises vital to Richmond’s character, culture and economy; the areas currently host educational, recreational, and agricultural and forestry activities and serve as public gathering areas</p>		
Encouraged		
New buildings that reflect a similar scale, massing, and orientation of historic Vermont farm/agricultural complexes or old mill/manufacturing buildings or new buildings or activities that support existing uses		

Villages

What: Dense centers that reinforce Richmond’s traditional historic settlement pattern. Village areas contain a mix of small-scale commercial and light industrial businesses and residential neighborhoods. Densities will be similar to those historically found within the Village areas (range from less than 0.25 acres to 0.5 acres). The Town will maintain, expand, or seek new Vermont State Village Center Designation for a significant portion of these areas to help direct funding and resources to property owners for economic development and historic preservation. Historically residential side streets will be maintained and enhanced.

Where: The Richmond Village area contains all the land within the existing water and sewer service area. The Jonesville Village area contains the land primarily located within ¼ to ¾ mile of the intersection of US Route 2 and Cochran Road.

Highly Encouraged	Encouraged	Allowed
A mix of housing types; sidewalks, bike facilities and local bus service, in addition to community gathering places, village-scale recreation areas and street tree plantings; new residential and commercial enterprise on undeveloped lands	Private or community water and/or sewer system that helps facilitate future (re)development	Buildings containing a mix of uses and with multiple stories and with minimal setbacks

Downtown

What: A core business district that contains a mix of businesses and services in close proximity and easy walking distance, which is vital to the economic health, character and cultural identity of the town. This area will contain the greatest density of mixed uses and multiple story buildings with minimal setbacks. The Town will consider new Vermont State Downtown Designation for this area to help direct an increased amount of funding, trainings and resources to property owners for economic development and historic preservation

Where: The area in the heart of the Richmond Village Area, including the land currently included within and around Richmond’s current Village Center designation boundary.

Highly Encouraged

A mix of commercial, retail, and residential uses contained within multiple story buildings
Streetscape improvements that enhance a pedestrian-friendly environment balanced with adequate accommodation of parking

Gateway Mixed Use Area

What: A mix of businesses and residences that complement the adjacent Village area and maintain Richmond’s small town character

Where: I-89 to the former village boundary

Highly Encouraged	Encouraged	Allowed
Uses or facilities that are processing or selling local farm or forest products or hosting technology businesses; buffering and landscaping that minimizes the visual impacts of developments; bike and pedestrian transport options and street tree plantings	A municipal water and sewer line extension to support mixed use development; new buildings that reflect a similar scale, massing, and orientation of historic Vermont farm/agricultural complexes (such as the Conant Farm on Route 2) or old mill/manufacturing buildings (such as the Goodwin Baker Building or the Plant & Griffith building in Jonesville)	Mix of commercial, light industrial, and residential uses

<p>River Road Commercial Area <i>What:</i> A commercial and industrial area, allowing for mixed commercial and residential use</p> <p><i>Where:</i> the area in the vicinity of the Route 2 and River Road intersection and contains a portion of the land which may be served by a future extension of the municipal water and sewer system</p>							
Highly Encouraged		Encouraged		Allowed			
Buffering and landscaping that minimizes the visual impacts of developments		Larger-scale industrial and commercial uses; bike and pedestrian transport options		Commercial and residential mixed use			
<p>Flood Hazard Overlay Area <i>What:</i> An overlay district that protects the public's health, safety, and welfare from flood-related damages; improves flood resilience, river corridor equilibrium and water quality; controls stormwater, erosion and sedimentation; and protects biodiversity and habitat.</p> <p><i>Where:</i> The National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) with a 1% chance of flooding, more commonly referred to as the 100-year floodplain.</p>							
Highly Encouraged		Encouraged		Allowed		Prohibited	
Establishment, restoration and preservation of riparian areas		Recreation, transportation, agriculture and forestry uses		Existing uses and activities		New housing units or new principal structures	
<p>Paths and Transit Routes <i>What:</i> A commercial and industrial area, with uses and enterprises similar to those currently in operation</p> <p><i>Where:</i> Priority locations for bike and/or pedestrian paths are 1) between Richmond Village and the Park and Ride 2) Along Cochran Road</p>							
Encouraged							
New bike and pedestrian paths that connect to existing paths and trail systems that link and connect to existing trail networks							
<p>Scenic Viewsheds <i>What:</i> Areas that are necessary for maintaining or improving critical scenic views, typically requiring open space and/or traditional architectural designs</p> <p><i>Where:</i> <i>i.e.</i> The area allowing for the scenic view south eastward from Exit 11, providing an unobstructed view of Camel's Hump</p>							
Highly Encouraged				Encouraged			
Development that does not impact scenic views				Development that minimizes visual impact of scenic viewsheds.			

STATE AND REGIONAL POLICIES

- **VT ECOS Plan**
- **Chittenden County Regional ECOS Plan**
- **Chittenden County Regional Plans (multiple)**
- **Vermont Act 250, Vermont Act 64, State Billboard Act (10 V.S.A. Chapter 21), etc.**

TAKING ACTION

There are numerous strategies Richmond can use to help make our desired future land use a reality, ranging from very proactive approaches such as zoning restrictions or land purchases, to informal and flexible ways of encouraging or discouraging certain uses.

Strategic Investments – Richmond may encourage or discourage growth in certain locations based on investments it makes in municipal infrastructure or improvements. For example, Richmond can extend water and sewer service or build roads to desired locations.

Development Incentives – Richmond may create regulatory incentives or exemptions that encourage certain types of development or development in certain locations.

Technical Assistance – Richmond may offer technical assistance or support to property owners to pursue desired future land uses.

Zoning – Richmond may keep and/or amend its current zoning, which restricts the specific uses allowed in different areas and may also regulate characteristics like lot size, setbacks, parking requirements. Richmond may explore alternative zoning models that regulate for different characteristics.

Overlay zones are areas where additional restrictions or guidelines help achieve specific outcomes or protections, on top of the base zoning regulations

Form-based code regulates the design and architecture of development rather than the uses allowed. Form-based code is useful for encouraging mixed-use development and maintaining architectural character.

Municipal Purchase and/or Development – Richmond may purchase properties outright, or may purchase development or access rights. In cases where a property is extremely valuable the Town may wish to own and permanently protect the property, or develop/restrict growth before selling again.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Richmond has a reputation of being a bedroom community, but it has historically hosted a thriving local and farm economy. Richmond remains an economic and service center for surrounding rural areas. Community members value the businesses and services in town, but they also value the absence of generic and unplanned economic growth. People expressed strong desires for more, *targeted*, economic growth during the *Our Town, Our Future* process. Specifically, community members are interested in attracting new businesses that meet daily needs and cater to locals; that provide high quality and sustainable jobs; that provide new opportunities for recreation, culture and social connections; and that support Richmond's natural resources and working lands. Those interests echo economic growth trends and goals across the state, which focus on high-tech jobs and the creative sector, the farm and food economy, outdoor recreation and entrepreneurship.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TODAY

As in the past, the economic hub of Richmond is primarily centered in the Village. It not only serves as the Town's downtown but also as the unofficial downtown for the surrounding rural towns of Bolton and Huntington. Some of the Town's largest employers are located within the Village and they include the school system (Middle School, Elementary School and the Supervisory Union Offices), Harrington's of Vermont, Richmond Market and the Town Center Building. Limited industrial space is located in the northeast corner of Richmond and commercial growth is centered primarily in the downtown area and along Route 2.

While traditional dairies and large-scale farms are declining in Vermont, working lands are an increasingly important sector. Richmond is still home to several large farms and an increasing number of small producers and value-added agricultural businesses. The Farm to Plate movement in Vermont has spurred interest in local purchasing; the farmers' market, CSAs, Farm to School programs and consumer interest are driving a resurgence in land-based businesses that also play a critical role in protecting Richmond's natural lands and rural character. Recreation, conservation and tourism also have deep historical roots in Richmond, while contributing greatly to modern economic development. Organizations like Cochran's Ski Area, the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, and the

VISION CONNECTION

- **Affordability:** A strong economy can drive up demand and displacement, but can also increase income and earning potential.
- **Community for All Ages:** All ages benefit from increased access to goods and services, and economic development particularly benefits young people who would like to find work locally.
- **Economic Opportunity:** New job opportunities, mobility options and choice in the marketplace.
- **Mobility:** Transportation and mobility are critical for supporting economic development, which can in turn increase demand for new transportation options.
- **Small Town Character:** Without clear direction, economic development can undermine character; well-planned development can reinforce it.

Round Church attract many people to Richmond for recreation or jobs, while providing services to locals and protecting treasured local institutions.

Overall, there are approximately 375 acres in areas designated primarily for commercial and/or industrial uses in Richmond, much of which is already built out or constrained by floodplains. These areas include the Industrial, Commercial, Village Commercial and Gateway Commercial Zoning Districts. The relatively small amount of developable land means that the development of new, large-scale facilities and industries is unlikely. Given the commercial landscape and available sites, we believe that most economic growth is likely to fall into three categories: 1) retail or service sector businesses; 2) small-scale or cottage industries; and 3) food, farm and recreation enterprises. These sectors align strongly with community values and state priorities, and represent important areas to target growth and support.

Several practical considerations strongly influence current economic development and the potential for further growth. Richmond's current business zoning and permitting processes typically cost \$300 and take 2 1/2 - 3 months, even for relatively minor projects, such as converting a retail store to a coffee shop. While nearly all of Richmond now has access to high speed Internet (at least 4 MB/s download and 1 MB/s upload), faster Internet speeds are available elsewhere in Chittenden County and are an important factor for those businesses in the STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields. Cell phone coverage is strong in the Valley and along the I-89 corridor, but it is spotty in more rural locations, which may hamper those looking to develop home-based businesses. Access to available water and wastewater infrastructure is integral, or at least desirable, for many business operations - especially those that use water in a processing facility. The planned water and sewer line extension will open up possibilities for new businesses along Route 2, and encouraging economic development along the line will help reduce costs for all users. Three-phase power is likewise important for commercial and industrial operations, and is currently only available along Route 2, in the Village, and along Cochran Road and Huntington Road.

Economic growth depends on having an adequate workforce, which in turn relies on many services and community resources. High housing costs and the lack of housing designed specifically for workers may hamper businesses trying to attract employees, while a lack of specific job training programs may limit people's ability to secure high quality jobs.

STATE AND REGIONAL POLICIES

- **VT ECOS and Chittenden County Regional ECOS Plan**
- **Chittenden County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)**
 - The Chittenden County CEDS identifies the following 5 target sectors for Chittenden County:
 - Information Technology, Communications and Media
 - High value-added manufacturing
 - Higher education
 - Clean Tech/Green Tech
 - Health care and wellness

TAKING ACTION

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

SUPPORTS	TARGET: 2030	POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Opportunity • Affordability + a Reasonable Cost of Living • Community for All Ages • Small Town Character • Vibrant + Appealing Downtown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 % growth of Richmond residents employed in cottage or home-based businesses • 100% growth in small businesses registered in town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richmond will “buy local” when reasonable for municipal procurement and purchasing

OBJECTIVE A: STUDY NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWING LOCALLY-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES

ACTION 1 Develop baseline data on the number and types of home occupations, cottage industries and small businesses

ACTION 2 Host a conversation of local businesses to identify practices, policies and conditions that would make Richmond more “business-friendly” and conduct an entrepreneurship needs assessment to identify barriers and opportunities for growing small businesses.

ACTION 3 Study the potential of expanding Richmond’s Village Center, the benefits of the Designated Downtown program, and study the feasibility of achieving Village Center designation or other strategies to attract and focus commercial activity in Jonesville

OBJECTIVE B: ADJUST ZONING AND MUNICIPAL POLICIES TO SUPPORT LOCALLY-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES AND EMERGING INDUSTRIES

ACTION 1 Streamline the business permitting processes and reduce permitting costs for small businesses or entrepreneurs and create a permit to support pop-up and experimental businesses, such as special events, temporary markets, food trucks and pop-up stores

ACTION 2 Create clear guides and information resources for permit applicants, clarifying requirements and steps for permitting and approval

OBJECTIVE C: SHARE AND PROVIDE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE GROWTH AND VIABILITY OF LOCAL BUSINESSES

ACTION 1 Create, maintain and distribute a list of resources and incentives for local businesses, such as Local First programs or state designations and cost-share programs, including an inventory of available properties, facilities and spaces for commercial, industrial or cottage business use

ACTION 2 Create a municipal policy for vendors and procurement that gives priority to small, locally-owned businesses

ACTION 3 Audit ongoing municipal purchases and vendors to identify products or services that can be supplied by local businesses

OBJECTIVE D: SUPPORT THE GROWTH OF BUSINESSES IN EMERGING SECTORS AND IN ALIGNMENT WITH RICHMOND’S COMMUNITY GOALS

ACTION 1 Convene a strategy summit to identify ideal locations, potential businesses and rapidly growing and emerging economic sectors that offer opportunities to Richmond residents

ACTION 2 Adjust land use regulations to allow for and encourage new industrial/commercial development and mixed-use development in proximity to 3-phase power, high-speed Internet, and municipal water and sewer. Explore the creation of zones or districts to support and attract businesses in specific sectors (such as a cultural district or green development zone)

OBJECTIVE E: SUPPORT THE GROWTH OF A SKILLED AND ADEQUATE LOCAL WORKFORCE

ACTION 1 Support mentoring, internship, or project-based learning opportunities that build workforce skills in students

ACTION 2 Study and address the need for workforce housing, childcare, training, transportation or other local resources for young professionals and target workers by including local business leaders in the study

GOAL 2: Direct growth and investment to Richmond’s downtown and village centers

SUPPORTS	TARGET: 2030	POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vibrant + Appealing Downtown• Community for All Ages• Economic Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 20% percent more parking spaces in the village• Increase in new businesses located in the village• 10 new jobs created through new business in village	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Richmond will prioritize business growth, beautification, and transportation in the village

OBJECTIVE A: CREATE AN INTEGRATED PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENTS AND INVESTMENTS

ACTION 1 Undertake a Downtown Master Plan that addresses business development, streetscape improvements, infrastructure, zoning and policies and other relevant topics

ACTION 2 Ensure that other municipal plans and policies support goals and actions of the Downtown Master Plan

TECHNICAL PLANS

ENERGY

Vermont's CEP states: "Energy adequacy, reliability, security, and affordability are essential for a vibrant, resilient, and robust economy."

Energy is one of the greatest expenses for the Town of Richmond and most households – as well as the state and the planet. Vermont released a Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP) in 2016 that recognizes the importance of energy to our communities, and the "urgent need to mitigate the global climate change that is resulting from greenhouse gas emissions..."

The CEP includes a statewide goal of ensuring that 90% of Vermont energy will be derived from renewable sources by 2050. Richmond will set goals that will help contribute to the state goal.

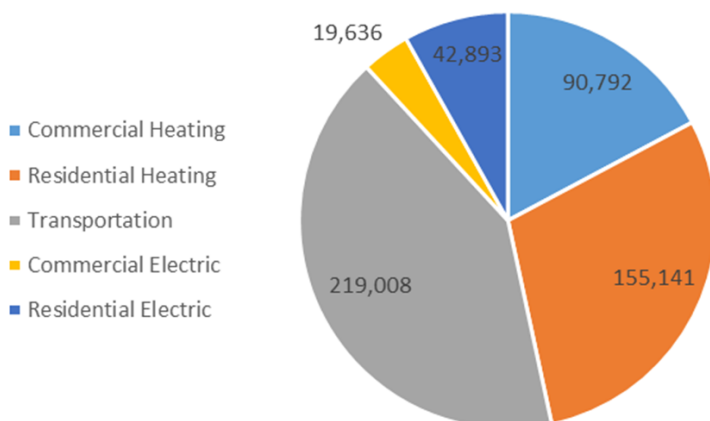
ENERGY TODAY

A majority of Richmond residents utilize traditional electricity sources from VELCO, and Green Mountain Power. They also utilize the Vermont Energy Co-Op (Richmond-Bolton). Energy used in Richmond is obtained from a variety of sources and is used to heat and cool buildings, to operate appliances, equipment, and lighting, and to transport people and products. The total amount of energy used in Richmond is depicted below with the most use seen in the transportation sector, which now consumes nearly as much energy as residential, and commercial uses.

VISION CONNECTION

- **Affordability:** Energy is one of the greatest costs for nearly all Richmond residents. Conservation and renewable energy sources will help reduce costs.
- **Economic Opportunity:** The renewable energy sector is growing rapidly, and represents great potential for Richmond to grow jobs and businesses.
- **Mobility:** Some of the greatest opportunities lie with transportation –creating opportunities for sustainable transportation.
- **Safety + Resilience:** Reliance on fossil fuels is a challenge to our resilience every day, and our use of fossil fuels globally is directly leading to more climate-related hazards.

Richmond 2015 Energy Use MMBTUs



COMMUNITY ENERGY DASHBOARD

The Vermont Community Energy Dashboard is a new tool that helps Vermont communities understand and track their energy use, share stories, set goals, and identify and track actions. The free website is available at vtenergydashboard.org

STATE AND REGIONAL POLICIES

The State of Vermont has adopted a number of energy goals through both statute and as guiding principles of its Comprehensive Energy Plan. The recently adopted Renewable Energy Standard, for example, requires electricity to be derived 55% from renewable sources by 2017, rising steadily to 75% renewable by 2032. That same legislation sets an aggressive goal for the amount of electricity obtained from locally distributed energy generation. State law also calls for major reductions in contributions to greenhouse gas emissions, weatherization of 80,000 housing units by 2020, and an increase in the amount of in-state renewable energy obtained from farms and forests.

This energy plan targets the *90X50* goal, using that objective as a basis for determining the amount of conservation and fuel conversion required in each energy sector as well as the amount of new renewable energy generation required across the state.

The 2016 Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan includes several additional goals that define benchmarks toward attainment of the *90X50* goal:

- Reduce total energy consumption per capita by 15% by 2025 and by more than one-third by 2050.
- Meet 25% of the remaining energy need from renewable sources by 2025, 40% by 2035, and 90% by 2050.
- End use sector goals for 2025 include: 10% of transportation energy demand, 30% of building energy demand, and 67% of electricity energy demand met from renewable sources. Richmond endorses the Vermont energy goals enumerated above, and will pursue policies and actions intended to achieve them.

This energy plan include the following goals to further guide actions related to energy conservation and efficiency in our communities:

- Reduce total energy consumption while maintaining a high quality of life and a vibrant economy.
- Encourage energy conservation in residential, commercial, industrial, public/institutional, natural resource, and transportation sectors.
- Increase opportunities to make energy choices at the local level.

Vermont has also adopted Residential Building Energy Standards Vermont's Residential Building Energy Standards (VT-RBES) require all new residential construction, renovations, alternations and repairs meet specific energy conservation and efficiency measures. State statute requires that builders file a copy of the certificate with the town, as a condition of a local Certificate of Occupancy permit. Richmond's local zoning regulations have not been revised to include this requirement. Local energy professionals advocate for increasing energy codes at the local level, but Richmond does not yet have municipal building codes.

EXISTING RENEWABLE RESOURCES

Currently Richmond is home to the following renewable generation;

Existing Renewable Electricity Generation			
	Sites	Power (kW)	Energy (kWh)
Solar	246	5,660	8,957,796
Wind	2	5	12,001
Total	248	5,665	8,969,797

And has the following potential for additional renewable generation;

Renewable Electricity Generation Potential		
	Power (MW)	Energy (MWh)
Rooftop Solar	6	7,884
Ground-Mounted Solar	20	26,280
Wind	750	2,299,500

TAKING ACTION

There are three primary categories of improvements that Richmond can make to meet the state goals and build a clean energy future in the sectors of heat, electric and transportation:

- **Energy conservation:** reducing the amount of energy used by changing behaviors, such as turning down thermostats or driving less
- **Energy efficiency:** reducing the amount of energy used through physical improvements or new technology, such as building weatherization or energy efficient appliances
- **Renewable energy:** changing our energy sources, from fossil fuels to renewable sources like wood, solar, wind, or biomass

GOAL 1: Improve energy efficiency and conservation in residential, commercial and municipal buildings

SUPPORTS	TARGET: 2030	POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safe + Resilient Community• Affordability + a Reasonable Cost of Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 10% of new construction to exceed state building standards for energy efficiency• 10% reduction in non-renewable energy use for Richmond• 5% reduction in energy use/costs for municipal buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Municipal construction or renovation projects will meet or exceed state building standards energy efficiency

OBJECTIVE A: IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING AND PLANNING FOR LOCAL ENERGY USE AND EFFICIENCY

ACTION 1 Research and identify the best municipal strategies for encouraging energy efficiency improvements in residential, commercial and municipal buildings in small towns

ACTION 2 Appoint a representative to actively participate in the Chittenden County RPC's regional energy planning process and create a town energy committee that will develop and implement a process to measure and track local energy use and progress toward efficiency targets, such as the Community Energy Dashboard

OBJECTIVE B: INCREASE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION IN RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

ACTION 1 Create and distribute educational materials to inform property owners about their energy use, the benefits of energy conservation and efficiency, and resources available to them, such as the Community Energy Dashboard

ACTION 2 Update Richmond's zoning codes to ensure compliance with Vermont Residential Building Energy Standards

ACTION 3 Develop regulatory incentives for energy-efficient construction and site design (such as waivers or density bonuses); explore the adoption of a building code to require stricter energy standards

OBJECTIVE C: IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION IN MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

ACTION 1 Identify major energy efficiency or conservation opportunities from the audit of municipal buildings and facilities and determine priority actions to increase efficiency.

ACTION 2 Draft and implement a policy to ensure that municipal construction and renovations include energy efficiency measures and meet or exceed state targets

GOAL 2: Encourage renewable energy use and community-scale renewable energy projects throughout Richmond

SUPPORTS	TARGET: 2030	POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe + Resilient Community • Affordability + a Reasonable Cost of Living • Natural + Working Lands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% renewable energy use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richmond will aim to achieve 75% of its energy from renewable sources by 2050

OBJECTIVE A: IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS AND PRACTICES FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS

ACTION 1 Identify the most appropriate locations for renewable energy projects of different types and scales, and locations where they should not be allowed (such as wildlife travel corridors or critical habitat)

ACTION 2 Develop guidelines for energy project management and impact mitigation, including visual impact, mitigation steps for habitat or wetlands impacts, long-term impacts on forest or soil health, or adjoining properties and infrastructure

OBJECTIVE B: UPDATE ZONING AND MUNICIPAL POLICIES TO ENCOURAGE DESIRED RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS

ACTION 1 Amend zoning regulations to ensure that renewable energy projects are allowed and encouraged in appropriate locations and to include clear standards for screening and other mitigation actions for renewable energy projects

ACTION 2 Identify appropriate municipal incentives to attract desired renewable energy projects and encourage developers to integrate renewable energy into projects

GOAL 3: Utilize low emission vehicles for municipal vehicles

SUPPORTS	TARGET: 2030	POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe + Resilient Community • Natural + Working Lands • Mobility + Transportation Options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of new municipal vehicles to be low emission, electric, and/or fuel efficient. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richmond will aim to make energy and environmentally friendly vehicle and equipment purchases

OBJECTIVE A: IDENTIFY VEHICLES THAT WILL NEED TO BE REPLACED BY OR BEFORE 2030 THAT COULD BE REPLACED WITH ENERGY EFFICIENT VEHICLES

ACTION 1 Energy audit of current municipal vehicles and equipment

ACTION 2 Gradual replacement of aging vehicles and equipment with energy efficient options

HOUSING

Chittenden County’s 2013 ECOS plan notes that diverse housing is essential for community sustainability, workforce development, vibrancy, and minimizing personal stressors. Housing is most in need of improvements and change, based on both input from community members and an analysis of data and trends.

Richmond is not alone in that challenge – across Vermont, communities are wrestling with strategies to improve and update an aging housing stock, increase the diversity and affordability of housing options, and ensure that new housing is sited and designed to support other goals such as downtown vitality, energy and transportation efficiency, and community connections.

HOUSING TODAY

Housing can last decades or even centuries. That means much of our housing today was designed for a different time and context – for larger families, with less mobile and transitory populations, and using now-outdated techniques and materials. Richmond is not facing high growth pressure overall, but we do have low vacancy rates. We currently seek to have housing stock that meets the needs of our current residents or expected future generations.

The majority of Richmond’s current housing stock consists of scattered, single-family homes. Our current one-acre zoning supports that pattern. While many people value our older, rural housing for its character and historic value, we lack a diversity of housing types and sizes, energy efficient housing, and housing options near transit and amenities. In particular, Richmond lacks rental units and units of smaller sizes (such as apartments or duplexes); housing for specific groups like farmworkers, artists, students or seniors; and housing options in denser village centers and downtown, which are increasingly popular locations.

In addition to housing types and number of units, other characteristics have major impacts on the community. The median cost of housing in Richmond is higher than the medians in both Vermont and Chittenden County, and our most common housing type (single family homes) tends to be the most expensive type of housing. That has major implications for affordability and for ensuring that people can come to – or stay in – town. The current total residential tax rate (2017-2018) is \$2.2005. This is on par with similarly sized towns in Vermont, but the tax burden could be further distributed by the

VISION CONNECTION

- **Affordability:** Most housing in Richmond costs more than the affordable housing benchmark – 30% of household income.
- **Community for All Ages:** Our aging population needs new housing options, as do younger residents with limited income or different priorities.
- **Economic Opportunity:** Adequate housing near job sites and convenient transportation, is one of the top indicators of economic growth and opportunity.
- **Mobility:** The location of housing can dramatically impact people’s mobility and options.
- **Vibrant + Appealing**
Downtown: Many people want to live in walkable, vibrant neighborhoods, close to businesses and services. More downtown housing can help meet other downtown goals.

construction of more residential homes. Other characteristics contribute even more to affordability challenges – older homes tend to be less energy efficient and require more heat; much of our housing is scattered throughout the rural town, which leaves residents dependent on personal cars; and housing built in unsafe locations like floodplains often results in expensive, repetitive losses and damage. Housing costs are in turn affected by many independent factors, such as property tax rates, fuel and transportation costs, energy and utilities.

Housing in Richmond in turn also impacts other values and community characteristics, including affordability and character. We can control municipal costs by incentivizing housing types and locations that require less support or infrastructure from the town. Appropriate siting and design can also help us reduce congestion, spur economic growth, build a vibrant downtown, and more.

STATE AND REGIONAL POLICIES

- **ECOS Plan Housing Goals**
- **HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD) CONSOLIDATED PLAN**

TAKING ACTION

Richmond can pursue a variety of actions to help upgrade and supplement our housing stock to better meet the needs of current residents and prepare for anticipated trends:

- **Housing retrofits:** upgrading current housing stock to better meet current needs (such as energy efficiency retrofits, elevating homes in floodplains, and dividing single family homes into apartments)
- **New housing stock:** incentivizing or directly building new housing stock to meet specific goals, such as affordable units, senior housing, or workforce housing
- **Creative housing models:** allowing for, or directly pursuing, alternative housing models (such as tiny houses, cooperatives, or farm worker housing) that fill unmet needs or areas of demand
- **Planning and zoning:** changing our zoning and future land use map to encourage and allow for housing in ideal locations (such as downtown and village centers) and ensure that development policies support our vision and goals
- **Housing cost reduction:** working to reduce the costs of utilities or fuel, property taxes, insurance, maintenance or transportation

GOAL 1: Ensure that diverse, affordable, and quality housing options are available for residents of all ages + income levels

SUPPORTS	TARGET: 2030	POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordability + a Reasonable Cost of Living • Community for All Ages • Safe + Resilient Community • Vibrant + Appealing Downtown • Natural + Working Lands • Economic Opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% increase in rental housing availability • 10% increase in smaller affordable housing ownership availability • 5% increase in housing availability in and near village center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing incentives will prioritize locations in village centers or near transit

OBJECTIVE A: STUDY HOUSING NEEDS, ALTERNATIVES AND MARKET OPPORTUNITIES IN RICHMOND

ACTION 1 Create a town housing committee to identify the need and market for traditional and alternative types of housing (including accessory apartments, tiny houses, senior housing, etc.), create programs, and propose policies. The committee would analyze the costs and benefits of Richmond’s participation in the Community Rating System (CRS) and create and distribute educational materials to inform property owners about ways to reduce costs associated with property ownership, maintenance, or services

OBJECTIVE B: IDENTIFY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT HOUSING OPTIONS IN RICHMOND

ACTION 1 Identify, contact, and partner with local, regional, or state organizations with a mission of supporting affordable housing options in Chittenden County to access funding for needed affordable or alternative housing, as identified in study

ACTION 2 Explore the feasibility of creating an affordable housing trust fund, similar to Richmond’s Conservation Fund

OBJECTIVE C: PROMOTE HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES THAT HELP RESIDENTS ACCESS APPROPRIATE HOUSING

ACTION 1 Share information about resources that help seniors remain in their own homes, such as HomeShare Vermont, Meals on Wheels, and Neighbor Rides

OBJECTIVE D: REVISE ZONING AND POLICIES TO REMOVE REGULATORY BARRIERS AND PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR DESIRED HOUSING TYPES

ACTION 1 Evaluate zoning and design guidelines to remove barriers to affordable or diverse housing types, such as density limits, setback or parking requirements, prohibitions on accessory apartments or farmworker housing)

ACTION 2 Research incentives for affordable housing or high priority housing needs, such as density bonuses or tax increment financing

NATURAL + CULTURAL RESOURCES

Richmond’s natural and working lands form the landscape of our community, enriching our lives and drawing many visitors to the area. This landscape provides ecological services (e.g., cleaning the air and drinking water, protecting property from flood damage, etc.), habitat for countless plants and animals, outdoor education laboratories for local schools, and a wide range of economic, recreational, and scenic benefits.

Protecting our environment and natural lands is one of the best investments we can make in the future of Richmond, with benefits for our people, our economy and our character.

What are Natural Lands?

“Natural lands” are areas that are undeveloped or minimally developed, which conserve natural resources and functions. They may include forests and fields, rivers and other water bodies or wetlands, which provide benefits like habitat, recreation, groundwater supplies, scenic views, agriculture or forestry and more. The term overlaps with other phrases like open space, or subsets of natural area such as working lands.

NATURAL + CULTURAL RESOURCES TODAY

Richmond is home to some of the richest natural lands in the state, thanks to its location between the high peaks of the northern Green Mountains and the fertile lowlands of the Champlain Valley. Its many acres of working lands are a critical part of our history and our modern economy. 600 plus acres are conserved in the Richmond Land Trust, and over 20 parcels are considered agricultural lands. It is also home to a variety of unique natural communities or ecosystems, from wetlands and vernal pools to upland forests.

While community members widely benefit from and appreciate natural lands, the integrity and quantity of natural lands is declining. Poorly planned development or invasive land uses can have cascading

VISION CONNECTION

- **Affordability + a Reasonable Cost of Living:** A healthy environment saves us money in many ways, from providing clean water to controlling temperatures and absorbing floodwater.
- **Community for All Ages:** Residents of all ages and backgrounds enjoy outdoor recreation and nature in Richmond.
- **Economic Opportunity:** Outdoor recreation and working lands enterprises are big opportunities for economic growth, if we protect the natural resources they rely on.
- **Natural + Working Lands:** Community members value our environment for its own sake – landscapes, water resources, wildlife, and sustainable working lands.
- **Safety + Resilience:** Healthy lands and intact ecosystems can make us safer and more resilient, allowing the environment to adjust for storms and other hazards.
- **Small Town Character:** Natural lands are central to Richmond’s character, from scenic landscapes to remote forests and ponds.

effects on the environment and community, such as increased erosion and flood damage. Our natural lands also face natural threats like climate change, severe storms, and invasive species. Vermont as a whole is facing a forest fragmentation crisis, and with a large natural cover percentage in Richmond, we have the opportunity to mitigate our impact on this statewide issue.

Natural and working areas are broken down into categories for the purposes of this plan; the following tables describe these areas, current protections, and priorities for further conservation efforts.

Terrestrial Areas + Resources		
Category	Current Local Protections	Conservation Priorities
Geology and Landforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal floodplain regulations, state development regulations, Richmond Zoning Regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winooski River floodplain Steep slopes (over 15% grade) Huntington River Gorge East Cliffs along Dugway Road and cliffs west of Snipe Island Brook
Soils and Deposits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richmond zoning regulations for resource extraction activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Agricultural Soils (state mapped) Sand and gravel deposits not yet identified
Working Lands + Resources		
Category	Current Local Protections	Conservation Priorities
Agricultural and forestry lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richmond Zoning Regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soil erosion prevention Flood mitigation Current Use Program
Historic Properties + Resources		
Category	Current Local Protections	Conservation Priorities
Historic buildings and assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richmond Zoning Regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic Buildings Historic records Historic assets
Hydrological Areas + Resources		
Category	Current Local Protections	Conservation Priorities
Groundwater Resources, Source Protection Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richmond Water Supply Protection Ordinance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Source Protection Areas
Wetlands, Riparian Areas, Surface Waters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richmond and federal floodplain regulations Richmond buffer zoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winooski River floodplain Silver Maple-Ostrich Fern Floodplain Forest Gillette Pond, Richmond Pond, Lake Iroquois Six Significant Wetland Natural Communities and eight vernal pools (from Science to Action Report) Additional wetlands and vernal pools Riparian buffers for Huntington and Winooski Rivers

Ecological Areas + Resources		
Category	Current Local Protections	Conservation Priorities
Unique, Rare, Sensitive Ecological Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richmond Zoning Regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thirteen Significant Natural Communities (from Science to Action Report) Silver Maple-Ostrich Fern Floodplain Forest, Dry Oak Forests, and Rich Northern Hardwood Forests Snipe Island Cliffs, including broad beech fern East Cliffs, including slender cliffbrake fern
Habitat and Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richmond Zoning Regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eleven Contiguous Habitat Units (CHUs) and Critical Habitats (from Science to Action Report) Habitat for species identified in Vermont's Wildlife Action Plan Wildlife travel corridors (from Science to Action Report)

STATE AND REGIONAL POLICIES

Regional Efforts

- Chittenden County Regional Plans
- Chittenden County Uplands Conservation Project
- Lake Champlain Basin plans
- Stormwater Master Plan (in progress)

State and Federal Efforts

- Act 250
- Current Use Program
- Vermont Wildlife Action Plan
- Endangered Species Act
- Act 64
- Watershed Tactical Basin Plans

TAKING ACTION

There are many ways to protect Richmond's natural resources and environment, both directly and indirectly. The most important strategies to address Richmond's conservation priorities are:

- Mapping and inventories:** completing more thorough and detailed maps, to better identify our critical natural and historic resources
- Open Space and environmental planning:** completing an Open Space protection plan, and conducting planning efforts for specific areas such as stormwater management or wildlife habitat
- Aligning and strengthening policies:** revising local zoning and other policies to match state or regional efforts, to strengthen protections, and to address recommendations in key reports

- **Land management:** adopting best management, public use ecosystem restoration practices for Town lands, and encouraging landowners to do the same, to ensure landscape sustainability, improve ecosystem function, and minimize impacts
- **Land conservation and access:** protecting land (and public access) permanently through direct purchases, or purchase of development rights

GOAL 1: Protect and enhance the health and functions of Richmond’s natural lands and resources (water bodies, forests, floodplains, wildlife and habitat)

SUPPORTS	TARGET: 2030	POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural + Working Lands • History + Traditions • Safe + Resilient Community • Social, Cultural + Recreational Offerings • Small Town Character 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completion of baseline natural resources inventory, map and stewardship plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rivers and streams, steep slopes, and unique/sensitive habitat shall be uniformly protected • Richmond shall use best management and stewardship practices on all town properties • Richmond shall make management and policy decisions based on best available science, including recognition of climate change

OBJECTIVE A: IMPROVE MAPPING, INVENTORIES AND PRIORITIZATION OF SENSITIVE NATURAL LANDS, RESOURCES, SPECIES AND COMMUNITIES

ACTION 1 Complete remaining stream geomorphic assessments and review state wetland and river corridor maps to ensure that all significant wetlands, floodplains and river corridors are identified, and petition the State to update maps and assign protected status for missing elements

ACTION 2 Seek funding and develop a baseline natural resources inventory, map and stewardship plan for sensitive ecosystems, steep slopes, rare habitat types, and other natural sites. Identify areas that would benefit from special management or protection, also use for evaluation of land use proposals.

ACTION 3 Continue, and expand, water quality monitoring efforts to protect public health and recreational use of waters, and communicate results to the public

OBJECTIVE B: STRENGTHEN TOWN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO ENSURE ADEQUATE PROTECTION OF SENSITIVE NATURAL AREAS

ACTION 1 Create new policies that formalize steps to review and evaluate proposals for impact on natural resources, including the role and requirements for scientific assessment in development review and evaluation of proposals

ACTION 2 Update town zoning regulations and policies: to protect high priority natural resources; to require or encourage best management practices that support the health and functions of natural areas; to ensure that requirements are based on best available science and current models or maps; to meet or exceed state standards

OBJECTIVE C: ENCOURAGE STEWARDSHIP OF NATURAL AND WORKING LANDS TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF THEIR BENEFITS FOR THE COMMUNITY

ACTION 1 Develop an integrated community education and engagement campaign on the diverse benefits (economic, health, environmental, recreational and educational) of Richmond’s natural resources and working lands, and the positive and negative impacts of personal behaviors on those resources.

OBJECTIVE D: ADOPT SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT PLANS AND BEST-PRACTICES FOR TOWN-OWNED PROPERTY

ACTION 1 Regularly update an audit of town roads, properties and policies to identify and prioritize opportunities to improve stewardship, protection of natural resources and public safety

ACTION 2 Implement best practices for protecting natural areas on municipal properties, and improving health of natural areas, including invasive species control, best practices in landscaping and site design, active forest management

OBJECTIVE E: IDENTIFY DEGRADED OR THREATENED NATURAL AREAS AND COMPLETE RESTORATION PROJECTS TO ENHANCE AND STABILIZE THEM

ACTION 1 Implement streambank and water quality restoration projects on public properties, including projects identified by additional assessments, and support the same types of projects on private properties

OBJECTIVE F: SUPPORT REGIONAL COLLABORATION AND ACTION TO IMPROVE ENHANCE AND PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES

ACTION 1 Appoint town representatives to actively participate in State and regional conservation and watershed planning initiatives including the development and implementation of state tactical basin plans

OBJECTIVE G: SUPPORT PERMANENT PROTECTION OF HIGH PRIORITY NATURAL AREAS, OR AREAS THAT OFFER CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

ACTION 1 Continue Conservation Reserve Fund allocations in the municipal budget to purchase or protect priority natural areas and support the efforts of local conservation groups and land trusts to protect and steward natural areas

GOAL 2: Protect working lands, agricultural soils, and a strong farm and forest economy

SUPPORTS	TARGET: 2030	POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural + Working Lands• Economic Opportunity• History + Traditions• Social, Cultural + Recreational Opportunities• Small Town Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All farms implementing erosion reduction• Decrease forest fragmentation rate by 2%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Richmond will assist farmers in implementing conservation measures

OBJECTIVE A: PROTECT RICHMOND'S MOST IMPORTANT WORKING LANDS AREAS AND SOILS

ACTION 1 Conduct Land Evaluation and Site Assessments (LESAs) for farm and forest parcels, to set priorities for farm and forestland conservation

ACTION 2 Research town policies or incentives to support agricultural and forestry enterprises in Richmond, such as incentives for ecosystem services or protection

OBJECTIVE B: SUPPORT BUSINESS VIABILITY AND CREATE MARKET OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL FARM AND FOREST ENTERPRISES

ACTION 1 Support the Farmers' Market through policy and management and study the feasibility of creating or attracting a community kitchen or food processing facility and identify potential properties or sites

ACTION 2 Explore amending zoning regulations to allow for value added enterprises and compatible supporting uses on agricultural and forestry properties such as farm-based restaurants, farm worker housing, distilleries or breweries, etc.

ACTION 3 Explore the feasibility and impact of a “Right to Farm” ordinance to protect working lands enterprises and activities

OBJECTIVE C: ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP OF WORKING LANDS

ACTION 1 Provide outreach and educational materials for property owners about best practices for sustainable management of working lands, and resources available to support stewardship, such as the Current Use Program

GOAL 3: Articulate, protect and enhance Richmond’s character and scenic beauty

SUPPORTS	TARGET: 2020	POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural + Working Lands Small Town Character Economic Opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed viewshed assessment and prioritization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Richmond will use zoning regulations to protect viewsheds, natural characteristics, and limit light pollution

OBJECTIVE A: IDENTIFY AND PRIORITIZE SCENIC SITES, VISTAS AND VIEWSHEDS THAT ARE CRITICAL TO RICHMOND’S CHARACTER

ACTION 1 Conduct a Scenic Viewshed Assessment to identify and map the most important scenic views in Richmond, and update previous studies to gauge community priorities for landscape elements, properties, vistas or other sites that most define Richmond’s character and scenic beauty or have cultural importance

GOAL 4: Protect, maintain and celebrate Richmond’s historical assets

SUPPORTS	TARGET: 2030	POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History + Traditions Social, Cultural + Recreational Opportunities Small Town Character Vibrant + Appealing Downtown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase participation in traditions Preserve more historical buildings and spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update zoning regulations and incentives that will allow for modern uses of historical properties to foster and increase historic preservation of buildings and spaces

OBJECTIVE A: INVENTORY AND TRACK THE STATUS AND CONDITION OF IMPORTANT HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND SITES IN TOWN

ACTION 1 Collaborate with existing entities to create and inventory of historic structures in Richmond and include better metrics to track their condition and needs

OBJECTIVE B: PROMOTE AND SHARE RESOURCES TO HELP PROPERTY OWNERS PRESERVE AND RESTORE HISTORIC BUILDINGS

ACTION 1 Develop a grants and resources page on the town website with funding sources and assistance for historic property owners including an outreach campaign to communicate the importance of preservation

OBJECTIVE C: INCENTIVIZE THE PRESERVATION, RESTORATION AND CONTINUED USE OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND SITES

ACTION 1 Evaluate and update land use regulations to include flexible guidelines for the reuse of a variety of historic structures and farm structures and include regulatory incentives such as parking or setback waivers for historic buildings

ACTION 2 Explore potential financial incentives for restoring and adapting critical historic buildings, such as local tax credits

OBJECTIVE D: INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF RICHMOND'S HISTORY AND HISTORIC ASSETS

ACTION 1 Evaluate the feasibility of installing historic markers or interpretive signage at important historic sites such as archeological sites in Jonesville or the Fay's Corner. Develop a historical walking and/or driving tour that attracts tourists and increases awareness of local history

OBJECTIVE E: PRESERVE AND SHARE RICHMOND'S HISTORIC RECORDS, ARTIFACTS AND ORAL HISTORY

ACTION 1 Evaluate land use regulations and ensure they allow for museums, historic interpretive signage and other uses

ACTION 2 Encourage community members to share copies of historical records and photos through friendly community competition or incentive and recruit volunteers to help scan, digitize and share historic documents or resources online

ACTION 3 Actively share and celebrate historic stories, memories and photos through town communication channels, such as social media and annual reports

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE + DEVELOPMENT

Vermont has experienced 33 federally declared disasters since 1990 alone, 9 of which being major floods causing major erosion and damage. Climate change projections predict more frequent and more intense precipitation in the future. That has big implications for Richmond's safety, affordability, environment and quality of life.

Resilience is defined as the ability of a community to respond to and recover from threats or challenges, whatever they may be. Building resilience means strategically strengthening our infrastructure and environment to mitigate or prepare for expected hazards, like floods. But it also means building the community connections, skills and capacity that will allow us to pull together and respond to any challenge that arises.

RESILIENCE TODAY

Richmond has worked with CCRPC and the statewide organization Community Resilience Organizations (CROs) to assess our risks from flooding and other hazards, to identify resilience strengths and weaknesses, and to identify hazard mitigation and preparedness actions.

Flood resilience is the most important category for Richmond to consider, since it is the most common hazard and the greatest area of risk. Existing inventories in the hazard mitigation plan, CROs assessment and elsewhere show that most municipal infrastructure (roads and critical facilities) are stable and able to withstand normal storms and minor floods, but may be vulnerable to increased storms. A recent culvert assessment showed that 93% of Richmond's culverts may be undersized, relative to severe storms and current conditions. Richmond likewise has many miles of roads that are particularly prone to erosion and flood hazards, due to their location next to streams or rivers, in the floodplain, or their steep grade.

VISION CONNECTION

- **Affordability:** Flooding and other hazards drive up costs for the town and individuals, through property and infrastructure damage. Short-term resilience actions have big impacts for long-term affordability.
- **Mobility + Transportation:** Roadways often follow rivers and intersect streams, leaving them particularly vulnerable to flooding and washouts. At the same time, they contribute to runoff that makes flooding and pollution worse.
- **Natural + Working Lands:** Natural areas including rivers and steep slopes – and farms – are particularly vulnerable to climate change and flood hazards. Strong and healthy ecosystems are also one of the best solutions.
- **Safe + Resilient Community:** Building resilience to floods and other hazards involves physical improvements and community capacity that will help us address any challenge or threat.

Homes and other structures are also of great concern; Richmond has more than 99 buildings in the 100-year floodplain (mostly single-family homes), which makes it one of the top 10 towns in the State. Richmond began participating in the National Flood Insurance Program in 1984 and some structures are insured, but flood insurance costs can be extreme. Many homeowners have no flood insurance and their property is at risk of complete losses. Richmond does not yet participate in the Community Rating System – an incentive program that further reduces flood insurance costs for property owners when communities undertake floodplain management steps. Property owners have participated in buyout programs for flood-prone properties, which allow them to start over in a safe location while the house or structure is removed and the property is protected from further development. Many structures in floodplains or river corridors have been elevated or flood-proofed, to reduce risk.

While Richmond does have regulations preventing new development in the floodplain, the 2013 Vermont State Hazard Mitigation Plan notes that 75% of flood-related damages in Vermont are due to *fluvial erosion* (not inundation flooding), which occurs when rivers naturally change course and re-adjust. River corridors are the areas within which the river may change course and they do not necessarily align with floodplains, so our floodplain regulations do not necessarily prevent development in these critical areas. Development in these areas faces great risks, and also increases risks for others downstream. Vermont has released maps of statewide mapped river corridors, but Richmond has not yet completed detailed assessments on all streams and rivers in town.

Resilience also means meeting basic needs (such as food, water, energy, emergency response, medical attention and other supplies every day, and ensuring that these needs can still be met during disasters. While Richmond is a service center and most residents can meet these needs locally, vulnerable populations such as the elderly or low-income residents face greater risks. Vulnerable populations are more likely to face food insecurity, to require advanced medical care, and to have housing in vulnerable locations like floodplains. When they struggle to meet basic needs every day, they are even more vulnerable in times of disaster. Richmond does have a few notable gaps in services, such as a pharmacy and an adequate public safety facility, hamper resilience. Social capital and community connections are also critical parts of resilience, allowing people to quickly collaborate and respond in times of need. Many Richmond residents expressed a need for increased volunteer recruitment and coordination, and better communication channels, which would meet ongoing needs while providing critical capacity in times of disaster.

STATE AND REGIONAL POLICIES

- **State and regional hazard mitigation plans**
- **Emergency preparedness plans**

TAKING ACTION

Richmond can improve resilience by directly planning for specific hazards or at-risk facilities, as well as more generally increasing community capacity and environmental health.

The CROs resilience assessment identifies four primary categories of resilience action:

- **Basic Needs and Services:** ensuring that adequate emergency response and healthcare systems are in place, and that daily needs (like food, shelter and energy) are available in town and can withstand disasters
- **Environment and Natural Systems:** protecting flood-prone and sensitive areas from development and harm, while increasing ecosystem health and the ability of the environment to mitigate hazards
- **Physical Infrastructure:** protecting and strengthening at-risk infrastructure through flood-proofing, retrofits and upgrades, and insurance, while working to prevent new infrastructure and development in areas prone to flooding and fluvial erosion
- **Community Connections and Capacity:** increasing civic infrastructure including communications channels and transparency, volunteerism and self-reliance

Richmond will not be able to eliminate all risks and damages, but it can also pursue actions to insure at-risk property, put support and recovery systems in place, and secure higher rates of reimbursement for damages and losses.

GOAL 1: Reduce injuries, disruptions and property damage due to emergencies and hazards

SUPPORTS	TARGET: 2030	POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe + Resilient Community • Affordability + a Reasonable Cost of Living • Mobility + Transportation Options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% decline in repetitive losses on private properties due to flooding and natural hazards • 30% decline in hazard-related damages and maintenance costs on town roads and properties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New and replacement town infrastructure or facilities shall be built to accommodate 100-year storms and flood models

OBJECTIVE A: ANTICIPATE, PLAN AND PREPARE FOR HAZARDS

ACTION 1 Maintain and update emergency response and preparedness plans for natural and manmade disasters and hazards, including the Basic Emergency Operations Plan and Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

ACTION 2 Ensure that critical facilities and first responders (Town Center, emergency shelters, and emergency service departments) are equipped with adequate backup power or generators, and adequate equipment and training for the most common or likely hazards and emergencies, such as flooding and Gorge-related rescues

ACTION 3 Support the completion of Phase II stream geomorphic studies on the Winooski River

OBJECTIVE B: REDUCE DAMAGE AND REPETITIVE LOSSES ON PRIVATE PROPERTIES

ACTION 1 Create and distribute educational materials to inform high risk property owners in the floodplain and steep slopes about the benefits of and resources for flood-proofing, stormwater management, and erosion control

ACTION 2 Create a process for assisting homeowners with buyout programs for repetitive loss properties or homes destroyed in major flood events

ACTION 3 Audit and strengthen zoning and development policies to restrict development in unsafe locations

OBJECTIVE C: UPGRADE MUNICIPAL ROADS AND INFRASTRUCTURE TO MITIGATE AND WITHSTAND FUTURE STORMS AND HAZARDS

ACTION 1 Conduct an inventory and vulnerability assessment of town buildings and facilities, town culverts, ditches, and vulnerable road segments and prioritize for needed improvements, upgrades, and flood-proofing.

ACTION 2 Identify funding sources to support road, facility and infrastructure upgrades, including planning for upgrades in future repair and maintenance projects and the capital budget

ACTION 3 Research best practices and opportunities to integrate green infrastructure into municipal road construction, facilities or landscaping projects to reduce stormwater runoff and improve water quality

GOAL 2: Ensure that residents can meet basic needs and access affordable goods and services in Richmond

SUPPORTS	TARGET: 2030	POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Affordability + a Reasonable Cost of LivingCommunity for All AgesSmall Town CharacterVibrant + Appealing DowntownSafety + Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">30% increase in access to affordable local childcarepresence of partnership programs like Safe Routes to School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Municipal policies and decisions shall be made with consideration of public access to goods and services.

OBJECTIVE A: IDENTIFY AND FILL GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN LOCAL GOODS AND SERVICES

ACTION 1 Convene an Essential Services Summit with local providers and leaders (such as the Thrift Store and Richmond Food Shelf) to identify gaps and opportunities in providing housing, nutrition, healthcare, childcare and other critical social services

ACTION 2 Conduct a business gap assessment to identify products or services that are not yet available locally or at affordable price points (such as a local pharmacy or affordable family restaurant) and coordinate with local businesses to fill those gaps

ACTION 3 Review the findings of the Blue-Ribbon Commission and plan for any relevant local actions for improving access to affordable childcare, provide information to childcare centers about access to financial resources

OBJECTIVE B: SUPPORT THE RICHMOND PUBLIC SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY-SCHOOL CONNECTIONS, AND ACCESS TO QUALITY LOCAL EDUCATION

ACTION 1 Work with the Richmond schools to increase the efficiency of the school transportation system

ACTION 2 Increase housing resources, and programs appealing to young families with children, in order to increase the population of school-age children

OBJECTIVE C: SUPPORT AND INCENTIVIZE THE DEVELOPMENT OF HEALTHY, LOCAL AND AFFORDABLE FOOD SOURCES

ACTION 1 Update land use regulations to include provisions for community and neighborhood garden space, particularly within the Village or other residential housing developments

ACTION 2 Initiate exploration of potential sites and models for a community garden

ACTION 3 Explore the feasibility of creating a Community-Support Agriculture (CSA) program or pick-up site for municipal employees and/or in the Village center

GOAL 3: Maintain and improve public access to open space, outdoor recreation and natural areas

SUPPORTS

- Natural + Working Lands
- Social, Cultural + Recreational Opportunities
- Economic Opportunity

TARGET: 2030

- Completion of Open Space and Recreation Plan

POLICIES

- Richmond zoning regulations will consider public access to public spaces
-

OBJECTIVE A: IMPROVE PLANNING AND COORDINATION FOR TOWN-WIDE OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

ACTION 1 Coordinate the completion of a Richmond Open Space and Recreation Plan that identifies and prioritizes future trail construction and connections, areas for more open space protection or recreation, management needs, and educational/outreach opportunities and needs

ACTION 2 Encourage and support a collaboration of the trails committee and conservation commission with regional trails organizations to tap expert knowledge on stewardship, planning, and construction practices

OBJECTIVE B: PROTECT AND IMPROVE PUBLIC ACCESS AND AWARENESS OF OPEN SPACE AND OUTDOOR RECREATION RESOURCES

ACTION 1 Create and distribute materials that foster responsible use and enjoyment of Richmond's natural areas, such as trail maps and info kiosks, improved parking, access, more visible signage or other limitations on high priority public open space and outdoor recreation sites

ACTION 2 Ensure that public access is allowed on important natural and open space areas, and work with landowners to secure or protect public access that is not yet permanently protected

ACTION 3 Identify funding and purchase development rights, access rights, or properties for key outdoor recreational assets

ACTION 4 Audit land use regulations and zoning to ensure that sustainable and appropriate recreational uses are permitted in sensitive natural areas such as floodplains

GOAL 4: Increase the number of social and recreational opportunities for people of all ages and interests

SUPPORTS	TARGET: 2030	POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community for All Ages • Natural + Working Lands • Social, Cultural + Recreational Opportunities • Small Town Character • Vibrant + Appealing Downtown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% increase in community events and programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal policies and decisions shall be made with consideration of social and recreational opportunities

OBJECTIVE A: MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE MUNICIPAL FACILITIES THAT SERVE AS GATHERING SPACES AND RECREATIONAL VENUES

ACTION 1 Audit municipal facilities and identify improvements that would support increased use and community interaction

ACTION 2 Fund library improvements through the capital budget

ACTION 3 Implement an easy and efficient approval process that allows groups to use public spaces (such as parks, sidewalks and roads) or facilities for festivals and special events

ACTION 4 Create a management plan and maintenance plan for municipal public spaces and recreational facilities

OBJECTIVE B: SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION OF PRIVATE COMMUNITY SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND GATHERING PLACES

ACTION 1 Evaluate land use regulations and ensure that they allow for multi-use community centers, outdoor seating and gathering spaces, performance spaces, and the development of private recreational and sports facilities

ACTION 2 Develop tax or other financial incentives for developers to create or include recreation and community facilities in projects

OBJECTIVE C: COORDINATE, PLAN FOR, AND PROMOTE RECREATIONAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE TOWN

ACTION 1 Identify funding sources and develop budgets for the highest priority recreation and open space projects or enhancements

ACTION 2 Create a new page on the Town website to publicize information about municipal parks, facilities, and recreation as well as responsible use

ACTION 3 Evaluate the feasibility of hosting a community-wide event each season, similar to the 4th of July festival (such as Fall Harvest Festival, Winter Carnival, or Spring Fling)

OBJECTIVE D: SUPPORT ARTS AND CULTURAL PROGRAMMING FOR ALL AGES

ACTION 1 Evaluate the feasibility of creating a multi-purpose community, arts and recreation center

GOAL 5: Enhance civility, accessibility and equity in local government and civic affairs

SUPPORTS	TARGET: 2030	POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transparent + Inclusive Decision-Making• History + Traditions• Small Town Character• Community for All Ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of municipal policies on inclusion, civility, and fair and impartial policing• All boards/commissions participating in annual trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All town employees, boards and commissions must meet and enforce town policies on civil discourse and inclusion• All town boards should include seats for youth, students and/or seniors

OBJECTIVE A: ENSURE THAT TOWN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES SUPPORT CIVILITY AND THE INCLUSION OF ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

ACTION 1 Implement and publicize the town policy on inclusion and develop public education materials and sample language to help increase and model respectful civil discourse and civic participation in public meetings

ACTION 2 Develop and adopt civility and respect policies that apply to the municipal workplace, volunteer boards, public meetings and social media

ACTION 3 Conduct an audit of municipal policies and operations to identify areas where inclusion or accessibility could be improved and publicize accommodations or engagement options to help community members with special needs actively participate in community meetings and processes

ACTION 4 Identify changes to meeting procedures or public space design that encourage and model civility and personal interactions

OBJECTIVE B: ENSURE THAT PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES OCCUR IN THOUGHTFUL AND BALANCED WAYS

ACTION 1 Explore opportunities to incorporate deliberative dialogue and non-traditional community engagement strategies into community decision-making processes and ensure that decision-makers and community members have access to complete and balanced information to support sound decisions and actions

OBJECTIVE C: ENSURE FAIR AND EQUITABLE APPLICATION OF REGULATIONS AND BYLAWS AND TREATMENT OF ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

ACTION 1 Identify new funds or allocated funding for zoning compliance and enforcement

ACTION 2 Adopt a town policy on diversity, equity, justice, and fair and impartial policing

OBJECTIVE D: IMPROVE REPRESENTATIVE BALANCE AND ACCESSIBILITY OF ALL BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

ACTION 1 Conduct an audit that compares composition of town boards and committees to the community overall and identifies underrepresented groups, then conduct targeted recruitment efforts to identify and attract board members from underrepresented segments

ACTION 2 Develop a new town policy creating board and commission seats for students, youth and/or seniors and officially create those seats

GOAL 6: Reduce crime and improve public safety

SUPPORTS	TARGET: 2030	POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safe + Resilient Community• Community for All Ages• Small Town Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5% decline in crime categories• 10% decline in drug use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Richmond will continue to support a police force and other emergency services

OBJECTIVE A: SUPPORT STRONG AND WELL-EQUIPPED FIRST RESPONDERS, VOLUNTEERS AND EMERGENCY SERVICE DEPARTMENTS

ACTION 1 Implement trainings for all emergency responders and fund the purchase of modern emergency equipment

GOAL 7: Strengthen transparency, collaboration and communication within the community

SUPPORTS	TARGET: 2030	POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transparent + Inclusive Decision-Making• Small Town Character• Community for All Ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 35% increase in community members on Front Porch Forum• Development of models or policies on town communications and publicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All town employees, boards and commissions must meet state regulations for transparency and abide by Open Meeting Laws

OBJECTIVE A: STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN BOARDS AND COMMITTEES, AND WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL GROUPS AND OTHER TOWNS

ACTION 1 Develop and implement a model for regular board summits (such as an annual all-board meeting, or semi-annual meeting between related boards and committees)

ACTION 2 Create municipal email addresses for all board and committee members and maintain up-to-date contact information for all board and committee members online and in key physical locations

ACTION 3 Create and distribute an “operator’s manual” or basic information about how the community and local government function, town resources, and opportunities to participate

OBJECTIVE B: INCREASE MEDIA COVERAGE AND ORGANIC REACH OF MUNICIPAL ANNOUNCEMENTS AND TOWN INFORMATION

ACTION 1 Develop and implement a standard communications and publicity plan for town announcements, meetings, decisions and initiatives

ACTION 2 Develop a point of contact with local reporters at core news outlets

ACTION 3 Continue use of MMCTV to document and share public meetings via public television

OBJECTIVE C: STRENGTHEN TRUST AND ENSURE TRANSPARENCY BETWEEN THE TOWN GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC

ACTION 1 Enforce a town policy requiring all boards to meet or exceed Open Meeting Law requirements

ACTION 2 Update the town website to clearly feature upcoming meetings and agendas, meeting outcomes and discussions, and information about how to participate

ACTION 3 Train staff to take consistent and clear minutes for board and commission meetings

OBJECTIVE D: INVEST IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TOWN STAFF AND VOLUNTEER BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

ACTION 1 Develop a workshop or training for volunteer leaders and board members in facilitation and principles of civil discourse, Open Meeting Law, decision-making processes, community engagement, transparency and civility, equity and cultural competence

ACTION 2 Review employee policies and procedures annually with all town staff members

OBJECTIVE E: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY-WIDE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS TO SHARE EVERYDAY AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION

ACTION 1 Conduct a public outreach campaign to encourage community members to sign up for or follow critical town communication channels, such as Front Porch Forum, and town Facebook page

ACTION 2 Identify/create and publicize a central community calendar and system for broadly publicizing local events, organizations and opportunities

GOAL8: Increase the amount of community spirit, volunteerism and community service in Richmond

SUPPORTS

- Community for All Ages
- Social, Cultural + Recreational Opportunities
- Small Town Character
- Safe + Resilient Community

TARGET: 2030

- Create volunteer program of more than 50 people

POLICIES

- Municipal policies and decisions shall be made with consideration of community cohesiveness and spirit

OBJECTIVE A: INCREASE COORDINATION AND AWARENESS OF VOLUNTEER AND SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES IN RICHMOND

ACTION 1 Explore the potential of combining volunteer coordinator duties with a recreation director position that could create a volunteer page on the Richmond town website to promote volunteer opportunities for adult and youth residents, and create opportunities for community organizations and town boards to showcase their work and recruits volunteers, such as a volunteer fair or tables at community events like 4th of July, Town Meeting Day and Farmers' Markets

OBJECTIVE B: CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO CELEBRATE AND APPRECIATE VOLUNTEERS AND SERVICE

ACTION 1 Identify and implement programs to honor and reward committed community volunteers, such as profiles in the media, volunteer awards, slideshows at Town Meeting, or small gifts and benefits

ACTION 2 Identify and implement ways to integrate celebrations and volunteer service opportunities, such as a Green Up Day celebration or 4th of July service opportunity

OBJECTIVE C: SUPPORT AND PUBLICIZE RICHMOND'S TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY SPIRIT

ACTION 1 Build social and volunteer opportunities like potluck dinners or social hours into municipal events such as Town Meeting or school meetings

ACTION 2 Create and distribute welcome packets and resources for new residents or other disconnected groups, introducing them to the community culture, resources, and inviting them to become active community members

TRANSPORTATION

Most Richmond residents have and rely on personal vehicles, but demand is increasing for a wide variety of transportation options, from bus and rail service to bikeable and walkable streets and trails and electric vehicles.

Rural communities notoriously struggle to provide public transit and walkable streets, but they are increasingly embracing urban ideas for improving the diversity, affordability and sustainability of transportation methods. A leading philosophy is “Complete Streets” – the notion that we should design streets for many uses and transportation types, rather than just for cars. Complete Streets can result in less car use, which means that we need less parking space, roads and auto-oriented development, which can help increase the vibrancy and attractiveness of the town while reducing impermeable surfaces and municipal costs. We can then focus resources on improving the safety, efficiency and sustainability of our auto infrastructure. All of these changes will help improve quality of life for Richmond residents – whether they drive cars or not.

TRANSPORTATION TODAY

Richmond includes some infrastructure or support for a diverse range of transportation modes, but options are limited for anything other than personal vehicles. Most Richmond residents own at least one car, and we have approximately 85 miles of roadway (including state-owned, town-owned and private). We also maintain extensive road infrastructure to support them, including more than 30 bridges and 712 culverts. Richmond also maintains numerous parking spaces and lots; a 2015 study showed that most public lots are sufficient for parking volumes, but the Depot Street Lot is overburdened. While electric vehicle popularity is growing, there are currently no known public charging stations for electric vehicles in Richmond (or anywhere between Montpelier and Williston).

Changing demographics and regional growth do impact traffic patterns and volumes locally. Traffic counts overall are relatively stable, or even decreasing on many roads. At the same time, increased volumes and congestion are causing problems on certain key community routes and choke points—such as the Route 2 and Bridge Street intersection, which also has the worst safety rating in town. The majority of Richmond residents (82%) commute out of town for work, the largest employment centers are Williston/South Burlington/Burlington, and Waterbury/Montpelier.

VISION CONNECTION

- **Affordability:** Personal vehicles are a major cost for most residents.
- **Economic Opportunity:** Convenient transportation opens many doors, from jobs and schools to business expansion to cultural and social opportunities.
- **Mobility + Transportation Options:** Increasing options for mobility and transportation is one of the best ways to accommodate shifting demographics.
- **Natural + Working Lands:** Roads account for a great deal of impermeable surface, resulting in pollution, while fragmenting habitat and wildlife passages.
- **Safe + Resilient Community:** Roads can be a big public safety hazard (from car accidents to washouts), but can increase safety and resilience, when they are designed and built well.

Richmond has a popular Park N Ride near Interstate 89, which enables carpooling and access to an I-89 commuter bus, but most commuters (88%) still travel in personal vehicles. There is no weekend or evening bus service and no stop or access point in the downtown or villages. A rail line runs through Richmond, carrying freight and the once-daily Amtrak passenger service, but there are no stops in Richmond. The supplemental ride service Neighbor Rides helps fill transportation gaps for seniors or those with disabilities or special needs, but there are no supplemental ride services for most residents.

Active or human-powered transportation (primarily biking and walking) is increasingly popular among many residents, for its many benefits – recreation, health, sustainability, convenience, affordability, energy efficiency and more. Richmond has a sidewalk system in the village area, which helps improve safety and vibrancy downtown, but there is no dedicated infrastructure to support biking or walking outside the village, or to make these options safer. Richmond has long held a goal of improving bikeability and walkability, and it was one of the most common themes during the visioning process. Several studies, including our Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan, detail specific recommendations and locations for bike lanes, signage, sidewalk extensions and other high priority improvements. Richmond conducted a pop-up installation of high priority enhanced crosswalks in the village during this planning process, and found a need for updated and potentially relocated crosswalks in the village.

In addition to its impact on mobility, Richmond should also focus on increasing the sustainability and resilience of transportation systems. With miles of impermeable surfaces, roads are one of the single greatest contributors to non-point source pollution and water quality problems. When storms wash out or erode roadways, they further contribute to sedimentation and pollution problems, while cutting off travel routes and requiring expensive repairs. Culverts are critical to preventing storm damage; a 2015 study showed that only 50 need immediate attention, but 93% may be too small to accommodate flows during heavy storms.

Road maintenance and construction are among the greatest costs to the town; reducing vehicle use and improving road resilience are critical strategies for controlling municipal costs and tax rates and meeting energy goals. Improvements to transportation infrastructure are also expensive, but can be minimized by integrating them into other planned upgrades (such as paving projects or bridge replacements) and by using pop-up design demonstrations to test and refine designs before final installation.

STATE AND REGIONAL POLICIES

- **ECOS Plan Transportation goals**
- **State transportation goals**
- **Better Back roads and state road standards**
- **Vermont General Roads Permit**

TAKING ACTION

Richmond can improve the quality and accessibility of transportation options in Town in a variety of ways, while reducing negative impacts of transportation.

- **Transit + connections:** developing public transportation options, stops and connections to regional transportation systems – that help people access destinations beyond Richmond without a personal vehicle
- **Complete Streets and active transportation:** improving bikeability, walkability and other active transportation methods by designing “complete streets” and increasing awareness of routes and choices
- **Road resilience and sustainability:** protecting infrastructure and preventing damage by designing public and private roads to withstand more severe storms and hazards, while reducing non-point source pollution
- **Road efficiency and safety:** reducing congestion, traffic speeds and safety problems by improving high priority intersections and sites and reducing vehicle miles traveled
- **Planning and pop-up installations:** integrating many above improvements into planned road maintenance or upgrade schedules, and using pop-up design demonstrations to fine-tune designs, in order to reduce costs

GOAL 1: Increase the availability of convenient, multi-modal transportation and mobility options and connections

SUPPORTS	TARGET: 2030	POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility + Transportation Options • Affordability + a Reasonable Cost of Living • Community for All Ages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% increase in bus/transit routes and riders • 5% improvement in traffic efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investments in transportation infrastructure will prioritize locations in Village Centers, or that link critical housing, service or employment centers • Richmond shall adopt “complete streets” guidelines in building and improving roads

OBJECTIVE A: EXPAND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND RIDE-SHARE OPTIONS IN RICHMOND

ACTION 1 Partner with the public transit authority to increase the number of trips on the I-89 bus route and add a Route 2 commuter bus route

ACTION 2 Research non-regulatory programs and incentives such as car-share services, free ride programs for seniors, or transit vouchers for employees

ACTION 3 Research strategies to improve safety and ease of accessing transit options

OBJECTIVE B: INCREASE ACCESS TO — AND AWARENESS OF — PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, RIDE-SHARING AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

ACTION 1 Improve signage and communications about public transportation options, routes and schedules

ACTION 2 Develop regulatory incentives that encourage new development in Village Centers, or within walking distance of public transit

ACTION 3 Study the demand for electric car charging stations and identify funding and locations to install public charging stations in town

OBJECTIVE C: IMPROVE BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND ROUTES BETWEEN KEY LOCATIONS

ACTION 1 Secure funding and implement high-priority actions from Richmond's Bike + Pedestrian Master Plan, such as new sidewalks within the Village along the east side of Bridge Street and four new crosswalks at the Bridge/Railroad/Jolina Court intersection

ACTION 2 Partner with the Vermont Agency of Transportation to build bike and pedestrian accessibility into state construction projects

ACTION 3 Integrate high priority bike and pedestrian improvement projects into the capital budget and coordinate phasing and with other capital projects

ACTION 4 Work with partner organizations and agencies to identify best practices in bike and pedestrian safety and implement better signage, road markings or other low-cost improvements and test temporary (pop-up) demonstrations of proposed bike/pedestrian improvements for functionality, locations and designs

GOAL 2: Improve the safety and efficiency of public roadways

SUPPORTS	TARGET: 2030	POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mobility + Transportation Options• Safe + Resilient Community• Small Town Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5% decline in accidents• 10% decline in congestion (generally, or at specific priority locations like Bridge St/Rte. 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The town of Richmond shall provide input on state speed limits and road construction as well as oversight for town road speed limits and maintenance

OBJECTIVE A: IDENTIFY AND IMPLEMENT HIGH PRIORITY ROAD IMPROVEMENTS TO ADDRESS IDENTIFIED SAFETY OR CONGESTION PROBLEMS

ACTION 1 Work with VTTrans to adjust the signal timing and phasing at the Route 2 / Bridge Street intersection to improve traffic flow and safety rating

ACTION 2 Identify road segments where noise, speed or congestion is a problem

ACTION 3 Research and test design solutions to encourage lower speeds and improve driver attentiveness

OBJECTIVE B: ENCOURAGE TRANSPORTATION POLICIES AND PROGRAMS THAT REDUCE PERSONAL VEHICLE TRIPS ON TOWN ROADS

ACTION 1 Evaluate the effectiveness of school transportation systems and identify strategies for increasing ridership

ACTION 2 Promote the benefits of flexible work schedules, telecommuting, and transit or carpooling incentives to local employers

UTILITIES + FACILITIES

The Richmond Town utilities have been discussed across multiple components of this action plan. Richmond has two major electrical providers: Green Mountain Power and VELCO. Richmond also has its own municipal village water and sewer system. The town owns multiple properties and facilities including the town office building, library, water and sewer plant, Volunteers Green, Richmond Fire Department, Richmond Highway Department, and others. The town intends to purchase forest land for municipal ownership, conservation, and public recreation. The majority of utility and facility future needs are enumerated in the Future Land Use section of the Action Plan. The capital budget is created and updated annually by the selectboard with input from the planning commission, development review board, and other town boards and commissions. All upgrades or constructions are financed through the town fund or grants. This funding comes from the tax base, non-government organizations, state programs, or federal programs. Facilities and utilities that are constructed under the control or influence of the town shall take into account the eleven community visions as well as the listed goals for each section of the action plan. Goal related costs are listed below, and other projected costs are listed in the appended Town Capital Plan.

PUBLIC FACILITY AND SERVICE UPGRADE COSTS (based on Action Plan Goals):

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE + DEVELOPMENT

HIGHER PRIORITY:

Cost of generators

- \$300-\$2000 per generator

Cost of flotation devices:

- \$1500-\$2000 per rescue boat
- \$20 per flotation vest

LOWER PRIORITY:

Cost of signage improvements, Cost of parking upgrades

- \$100-\$300 per sign
- \$3.75-\$5.00 per square foot of gravel parking area

Cost of library improvements

- \$8000 per year

TRANSPORTATION

HIGHER PRIORITY:

Cost of sidewalk construction

- \$650,000 for completion

LOWER PRIORITY:

Cost of signage improvements

- \$100-\$300 per sign

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

THE TOWN SHALL:

1. PRIORITIZE GOALS FROM EACH MAJOR SECTION OF THE ACTION PLAN AND IDENTIFY ANY OTHER PARTNERS WHO CAN BE INCLUDED IN IMPLEMENTATION
2. WORK WITH PARTNERS TO CREATE A TIMELINE OF WHEN ACTIONS FOR EACH GOAL COULD BE COMPLETED AND WHEN EXACTLY WE WANT OBJECTIVES TO BE ACHIEVED
3. CREATE A LIST OF PRELIMINARY TASKS THAT WILL BE REQUIRED OF EACH ACTION AND WHO IS RESPONSIBLE (TOWN OR PARTNER ORGANIZATION) FOR THE COMPLETION OF THOSE TASKS
4. COMPLETE A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION OF PROGRESS ON THE GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS OF THE TOWN PLAN TWICE PER YEAR TO ENSURE PROGRESS IS BEING MADE TOWARD ACHIEVING GOALS AND COMPLETING ACTIONS
5. MEET WITH PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS TWICE PER YEAR PER ORGANIZATION TO ENSURE CLEAR COMMUNICATION AND PROGRESS IS BEING MADE COHESIVELY
6. UTILIZE AND IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE TOWN CAPITAL PLAN
7. UTILIZE THIS PLAN TO MAKE NECESSARY UPDATES TO ZONING REGULATIONS

TOOLS, RESOURCES+REFERENCES

- State of Vermont Municipal Planning Grant
- 2012 Richmond Town Plan
- Richmond Community Members
- Richmond Community Resilience Organization
- Vermont Planning Information Center
- Richmond Town Capital Plan FY2018-FY2023
- Richmond Town Budget FY2017, FY2018
- State and regional policies
 - Title 10 V.S.A. Chapter 21, Section 481-506
 - Title 24 V.S.A. Chapter 118
 - Title 1 V.S.A. Chapter 5, Sections 310-314
 - Title 10 VSA Chapter 151
 - Title 24 VSA Chapter 76A
 - Title 24 VSA Chapter 59
 - Title 24 VSA Chapter 131
 - Title 24 VSA Chapter 117, Section 4302,
 - Title 24 VSA Chapter 117

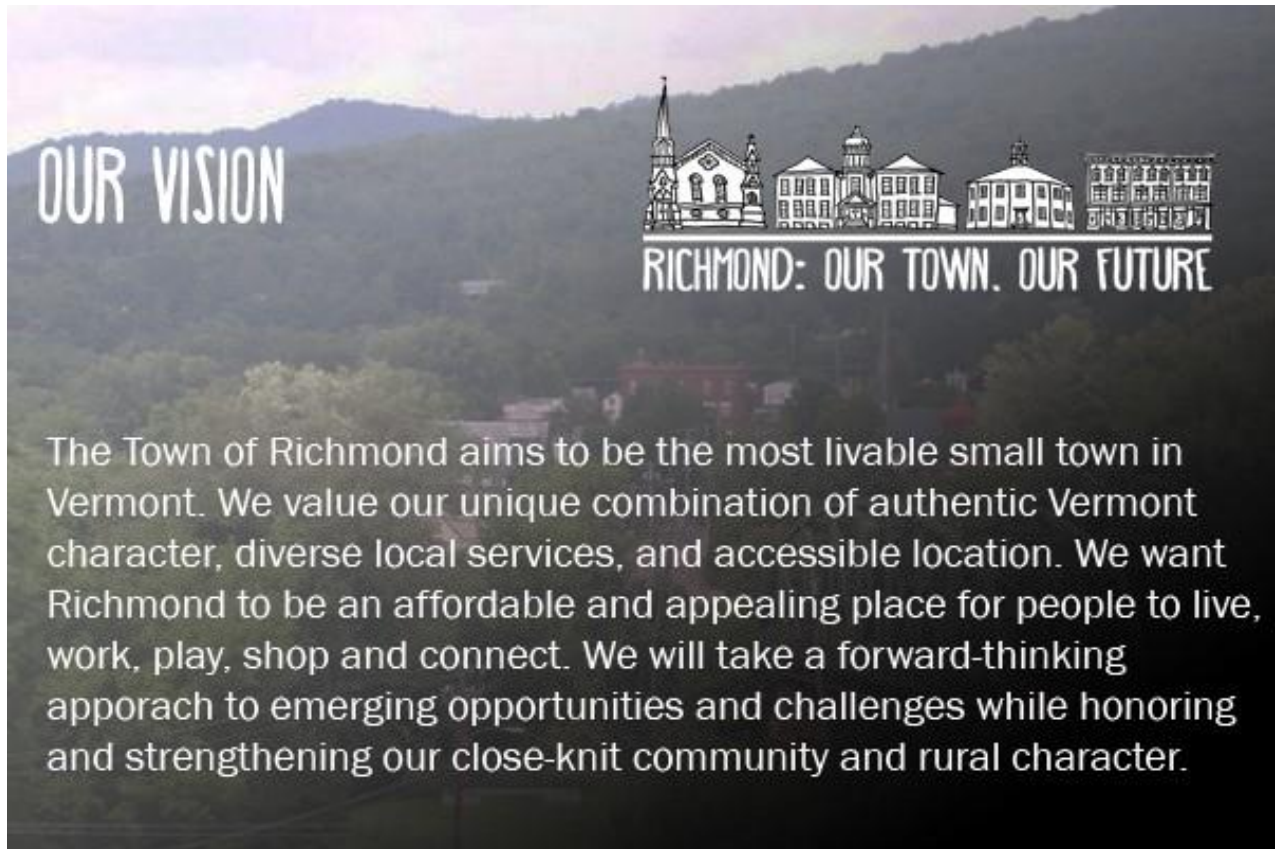
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- *Community Workshop, LLC*
- *Clare Rock, former Town Planner*
- *Richmond Town Personnel*
- *Richmond Town Planning Commission*
- *Richmond Town Residents*
- *Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission*
- *Various Vermont state agencies and departments*

APPENDIX

- A: From Vision to Action
- B: Richmond Almanac
- C: Maps

FROM VISION TO ACTION: AN ELABORATION OF COMMUNITY VISIONS



This document was created to encompass the journey the town has taken to create the town plan. The participation of Richmond residents was particularly important to creating a plan the entire community could put their name on. In this document you will find a list of the steering committee members, planning commission members, community survey results, and elaborations on the 11 community visions that came to be throughout the process of which the town plan was based on.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Alison Anand

Brad Elliot

Chris Granda

Gary Bressor

Grace Biggio

Guy Roberts

Heidi Boreman

Ian Bender

Jack Linn

Jeff Forward

Joy Reap

Katie Loesel

Kristin Novotny

Kyle Youngberg

Marshall Paulston

Matt Holland

PLANNING COMMISSION

Alison Anand

Brian Tellstone

Joy Reap

Lauck Parke

Mark Fausel

Scott Nickerson

Sean Foley

TRANSPARENT + INCLUSIVE DECISION-MAKING

*Richmond's Vision is to ensure **transparent and inclusive decision-making**, with a representative and open government, civil discourse, and an active and informed community.*

Vermont has a strong and valued history of local control and participatory democracy. Richmond was granted township status in 1794, and has the distinction of being the first town chartered by the newly formed State of Vermont. From the first Town Meeting in March 1795, Richmond has continued the long tradition of civic involvement and local democracy.

Like most Vermont towns, Richmond is governed by a Selectboard and other municipal boards and commissions. Selectboard members are voted in at Town Meeting, and its members make most decisions about town operations, spending, and policies. Members of most other boards are appointed by the Selectboard and serve in an advisory capacity, with the exception of the quasi-judicial development review board. Additional public officers are voted or appointed, and town staff members are hired by the Selectboard. All residents over the age of 18 are eligible to serve.

Vermont statutes require that all government officers are accountable to the public, and the Open Meeting Law requires that municipal boards and committees publicly announce all meetings and agendas, conduct business in open meetings, and post minutes afterward. Residents vote on the municipal and school budgets at annual meetings each March, along with other ballot items. Announcements of upcoming meetings, town policies, minutes and decisions are posted on the Town website and typically shared on Front Porch Forum, local access TV and in the Town Center building.

While all of these measures satisfy the Open Meeting Law and ensure a level of transparency, the changing culture and demographics in Richmond (and Vermont overall) mean that fewer residents are attending public meetings and engaging through these traditional channels. Many residents work during the day and are unable to attend Town Meeting Day, and others find it difficult to attend evening meetings in the midst of family and other commitments. While the meetings are theoretically open and inclusive, many demographics (such as the elderly or housebound, single parents, commuters, or English language learners) are likely to be left out. These same trends are factors likely drive the decline in volunteerism overall.

A Municipal Planning Grant allowed Richmond to experiment with a variety of non-traditional engagement techniques during the Our Town, Our Future process, and showed that the most successful activities allowed people to engage in a variety of ways and locations. People are more likely to engage in fun and informal settings, in places they already frequent, and when they have options including online input. People also receive information in new ways, so true inclusion hinges on sharing announcements and information on new channels (such as social media) and increasing education about local democracy and opportunities to engage.

WHAT RICHMOND WANTED	WHAT WE CAN DO
Increase civic participation in government, community meetings and organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness and coordination of opportunities to serve on town boards and commissions and in officer positions and other local volunteer positions • Increase public engagement opportunities outside of traditional meetings and hearings • Create a guide or online resource educating people about local government and ways to get involved
Build a culture of civil, thoughtful and balanced planning and decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train board members and volunteer leaders in facilitation and principles of civil discourse • Adopt civility and respect policies for the municipal workplace and volunteer boards • Strengthen collaboration and communication between municipal boards and committees and local organizations • Create policies that ensure fair and unbiased application of regulations and bylaws • Experiment with deliberative dialogue in community meetings and hearings • Adopt a civility policy for community meetings and online forums such as town social media channels • Identify ways to improve public education and deliberation on important community decisions • Create opportunities for communication and collaboration with neighboring towns
Strengthen online and offline communication channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase regional media coverage of meetings, initiatives, community resources and decisions • Expand use of Front Porch Forum, MMCTV and other informal communications channels • Create a public awareness campaign to increase use of Front Porch Forum, social media channels and other communication systems
Ensure that local government is accessible, trustworthy and representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop municipal email addresses and post contact information for all staff, board and committee members • Educate all boards on Open Meeting Laws and ensure compliance • Proactively work to recruit people from underrepresented groups to serve on boards and commissions

AFFORDABILITY + A REASONABLE COST OF LIVING

*Our vision is to promote **affordability and a reasonable cost of living**, so that people from a mix of ages, backgrounds and income levels can afford housing, food, goods and services in Richmond.*

Affordability is a factor of the **cost of living** (paying for housing, food, transportation, clothing, healthcare), and the **income or resources** available to pay for it.

Across the nation, critical shifts are happening in both of these areas. Since 1979, wage growth has stagnated for Americans overall, while the cost of living is rapidly increasing. According to a 2014 Pew Research Center study, more than half of Americans said their family income is falling behind cost of living. That's true in Vermont too, where high energy, housing and food costs make the cost of living 16% higher than the national average.

Richmond has little control over some costs like health insurance premiums or gas prices, or even the regional housing market. We can provide options that help people **reduce consumption and spending**, we can **control municipal costs**, and we can provide **affordable goods and services** that meet people's needs.

WHAT RICHMOND WANTED	WHAT WE CAN DO
Diverse, affordable housing options for all ages and income levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase amount of affordable housing • Explore new housing types and models, especially for seniors and young adults • Help homeowners reduce other housing expenses, such as flood insurance and energy costs
Affordable transportation options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the availability of public transportation and commuter options • Explore car-share and carpooling services or other models to reduce dependence on cars • Improve bike and pedestrian safety and access • Focus new growth near public transit or walkable village centers
Lower utility and public service rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist homeowners with taking action to improve energy efficiency or conservation • Develop local, renewable energy sources • Increase the Town water and sewer customer base, to spread out costs
Affordable goods and services available in town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and recruit affordable businesses that cater to residents and meet every day needs • Fill gaps in local services, such as a pharmacy or affordable family restaurant
Manageable municipal tax rates and town spending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibly manage the town budget and local spending • Continue and expand the capital budget, to reduce long-term expenses • Audit town spending and identify ways to reduce costs • Increase community involvement in town budget decisions
Social services and resources to assist people in need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host a summit of service providers to identify gaps and improve collaboration • Improve awareness and publicity of existing services • Improve volunteer coordination to assist people in need

COMMUNITY FOR ALL AGES

*We will be a healthy and accessible **community for all ages**, where youth are nurtured and included; teens have opportunities and support; young adults can live and raise families; and seniors can comfortably live and actively contribute.*

Many communities specifically plan improvements “for 7-year-olds and 70-year olds.” When we create a community that works for our youngest residents and oldest residents, it is typically a strong and supportive community for all the ages in between.

Creating a community for all ages requires far more than strong schools and senior centers. It means thoughtful investments and policies in a wide range of areas – from safe streets and alternative transportation modes to affordable housing and employment opportunities, strong education systems to vibrant social offerings. Many elements like school funding and healthcare costs are beyond Richmond’s control, but Richmond can ensure that plans and investments throughout the community work to support all ages.

It also means specifically targeting programs or policies that do support critical age groups and address demographic trends. Like much of rural America, Vermont is facing shifting demographics. Richmond and other rural areas are aging rapidly, while many younger residents are leaving small towns for urban environments.

Richmond must address the needs of an aging population — not only helping older adults to age in place, but finding ways to celebrate and benefit from their talents and helping them to retain vital roles in the community. Richmond community members also expressed a desire to retain and attract more young adults. That means ensuring that they can afford to live in Richmond and can find viable employment, but also providing some of the vibrancy and amenities that are drawing many younger people to cities.

Looking to the future, Richmond must also focus on providing supports to its youngest residents. Across the nation and throughout Vermont, leaders are recognizing the strategic importance of improving early childhood education and services. Investing in young children at this critical stage can improve outcomes and reduce the need for later support and services.

WHAT RICHMOND WANTED	WHAT WE CAN DO
Affordable, attractive housing options for all ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase amount of affordable housing • Increase diversity of housing, specifically for seniors and young adults (such as senior housing, cooperatives, tiny houses, and rental units)
Quality nutrition, health care and active lifestyles for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase farm to school and farm to plate programs that help residents access healthy local food • Create community gardens and local food processing facilities • Develop gleaning programs to share surplus farm produce with residents in need
Vibrant social opportunities for all ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and diversify community gathering spaces • Improve publicity and communication about events and social opportunities • Improve and enhance recreation areas and facilities • Attract and support more “third places” like coffee shops and affordable restaurants
High quality, affordable childcare and early childhood education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit and support registered daycare and early childhood education providers • Increase awareness of existing childcare and early education programs and resources
Strong schools and educational opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen community connections with Richmond’s public schools • Continue support for local schools and school budgets • Improve access to adult education, enrichment and job training programs
Support for seniors to remain independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase services that support seniors at home, such as Meals on Wheels and visiting nurses • Increase the amount of senior housing available in walkable village centers • Create a community center or gathering space to support and connect seniors
Diverse transportation options for people without cars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the availability of public transportation and commuter options • Explore car-share and carpooling services or other models to reduce dependence on cars • Improve bike and pedestrian safety and access, particularly between village centers, schools, and important community centers
Opportunities for youth and seniors to meaningfully contribute to the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve volunteer coordination and information about volunteer opportunities for seniors and youth • Increase opportunities to involve youth in town leadership and government • Connect school community service programs with community organizations needing volunteers
Competitive and flexible job opportunities for young adults and diverse residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase convenient public transit options, connecting people to employment centers around Chittenden County

-
- Improve access to high-speed Internet and cell service, to support telecommuters and small businesses
 - Create creative work spaces and shared facilities to support makers, entrepreneurs and independent workers

Accessible public facilities and public spaces

- Ensure that public facilities, streets and sidewalks meet ADA requirements
 - Create adequate handicapped accessible parking and access points in village centers and community facilities
 - Ensure that buildings and public spaces have accessible and family-friendly restrooms
-

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

*We will foster **economic opportunity** by supporting local businesses, developing good jobs, nurturing a diverse local economy, and promoting renewable energy.*

Economic opportunity is shifting across the nation, as traditional models of local employment are impacted by rapid changes in technology and telecommunications, changing demographics, globalization and outsourcing. Creating economic opportunity involves strengthening and diversifying business and employment opportunities in Richmond, as well as access to jobs and resources beyond town borders.

As manufacturing and economic centers are increasingly centered in urban areas (such as Burlington), Vermont's small towns must support and shift their economies to different types of businesses and jobs. The market for local foods and locally made, handcrafted products is increasing, which supports traditional agricultural operations as well as new farms and food processors.

Employees are also increasingly telecommuting and working remotely, working out of homes and shared office spaces, combining multiple part-time or contract jobs as part of the "gig economy," and developing experimental small side businesses. Richmond can support these flexible and shifting new economic models by ensuring that town policies and zoning regulations allow for flexible uses and rapid permitting, by helping to highlight and market local entrepreneurs and small businesses, and by developing incentives that encourage people to experiment with new business ideas — particularly when they enhance or support other community values.

WHAT RICHMOND WANTED	WHAT WE CAN DO
Quality jobs and employment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved commuter transportation to regional employment centers • Vibrant downtown with small local businesses • Support for entrepreneurs and independent workers • Infrastructure to support telecommuters and remote employees
Job and workforce training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job training programs offering in-demand skills for young adults • Diverse mentoring and on-the-job training opportunities • Service learning and project-based school programs to connect students with local employers
Strong agriculture and forest economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local food processing facility or shared food incubator space • Farm stays and farm tours • Local food purchasing or incentive programs, such as prescription CSAs • Indoor or winter farmer’s markets to expand year-round market
Recreation and tourism opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved marketing of outdoor recreation opportunities • Restoration and maintenance of historic buildings and interpretive sites • Protection of scenic and agricultural landscapes and rural character • Tour packages or special events supporting multiple Richmond businesses and assets (such as bike/B&B/beer-tasting weekend)
Vibrant downtown and village centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentives for businesses that meet critical needs or redevelop downtown facilities • Amenities to draw residents and visitors downtown, such as beautification, events, walkable streets and public spaces
Business-friendly climate and policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamlined and flexible permitting and regulations for new businesses, temporary markets, pop-up shops, mixed-use and other new business models • Strong local business association and resources for local businesses • Priority for local businesses in municipal purchasing • Local branding to market and support Richmond businesses and region
Support and infrastructure for entrepreneurs and small businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in telecommunications and broadband accessibility • Innovative work spaces, incubators and facilities to support experimental businesses • Local financing or community loans for start-up or growing businesses • Economic gardening program to support and nurture small local businesses • Resilient infrastructure and power systems that minimize interruptions
Amenities and attractions for employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and affordable childcare options • Strong schools, social events and recreational offerings • Jobs located near transit and housing centers • Diverse and affordable housing options

HISTORY + TRADITIONS

*We will enhance our **history and traditions**, celebrating our agricultural heritage, treasured community events, and unique historic sites and architecture.*

Richmond is indeed rich — in history and community traditions, all of which contribute to our community identity and sense of place. A wide array of historic sites and buildings have been carefully protected and restored — particularly agricultural sites and historic buildings from the past 200 years. Historic barns and iconic structures like the Round Church help preserve stories and lessons from the past, but they are also critical components of Richmond's small town character and physical beauty. Other aspects of history, such as pre-colonial Native American settlements or significant land use changes, are not as visible or as well known. As buildings age and memories fade away, Richmond must proactively work to protect, restore and capture our treasured elements of history and to shine a light on lesser known sites and events.

State assistance and designation programs can assist with costly maintenance and tax credits for historic buildings, and local land use regulations or incentives can further safeguard these resources. Private organizations like the Richmond Historical Society play a critical role in funding and caring for public sites, while many community members contribute time and resources to support private buildings and historic assets. Finding opportunities to showcase and share Richmond's history — through stories or events, building tours or museum exhibits — can help current generations learn from the past and develop a historic preservation ethic.

Richmond's strong traditions have developed and evolved more organically since the community was established. Beloved community traditions include general themes like Richmond's working landscape and agricultural economy; shared Vermont traditions such as Town Meeting Day and strong local democracy; and standalone events like the 4th of July parade, Friday Night Food Affair, and Holiday Market. Some of these events have lasted for generations, while others (like the three-year-old Floatapalooza) are just starting and growing now.

Today, the Town struggles to recruit volunteers for a variety of positions and it's difficult for community groups to maintain events and traditions when more residents work outside of town and live in dispersed patterns across town. Stronger community education, outreach and communications are our best strategies for safeguarding and enhancing history and traditions.

WHAT RICHMOND WANTED	WHAT WE CAN DO
Growth and continuation of community celebrations and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicize major events to attract more (and new) participants • Recruit new volunteers to help run and plan events • Create an easy approval process for events in public spaces • Help community organizations collaborate and coordinate efforts • Use town communication channels to publicize events and volunteer opportunities
Preservation of historic buildings and architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help more property owners take advantage of funding and resources for historic preservation • Support local organizations like the Richmond Historical Society • Ensure land use regulations support historic preservation and reuse • Create incentives for owners to preserve and restore historic buildings • Inventory historic sites and buildings and evaluate their condition • Formally protect Richmond's most critical historic sites and landmarks
Strong public awareness and support of historic resources and Richmond history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create historic signage and interpretive displays at important sites • Share historic photos and stories with the community • Ensure that land use regulations allow or historic museums and interpretive signs
Preservation of oral history and historic records or artifacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather more historic photos, assets and memories from the community
Protection of agricultural character and support for working lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve existing farms and prime agricultural soils • Allow adaptive and flexible use of farm structures and creative business models • Grow and support new working lands enterprises • Celebrate and raise the profile of Richmond's farmers and agricultural history

MOBILITY + TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

*We will support safe, sustainable, and convenient **mobility and transportation options**, so that people can bike, walk, ride and drive in Richmond and beyond.*

Transportation is a challenge in most rural communities, and Richmond is no exception. Richmond is naturally an auto-oriented community, given its relatively low and dispersed population. But providing adequate transportation and mobility options means far more than maintaining roads for cars – especially given changing demographics, economic pressures, and a need to reduce our use of fossil fuels. Many Richmond residents have voiced a desire for more public transportation options, safer and more accessible streets for walkers and bicyclists, and better access or parking for important destinations like the Village or schools.

One of the most common requests in the visioning process was better sidewalks, bike lanes and safer streets for bikeability and walkability. Improving “active transportation” options allows people to save money, reduces parking and road congestion problems, decreases vehicle emissions, and helps people live healthier lifestyles. While there are many hiking trails throughout town and sidewalks within the Village, there are few sidewalks and no designated bike or shared use lanes for people walking along important routes.

Richmond residents can access several alternative transportation modes, but all require a car or other transportation options to reach the stops. The most popular is the commuter bus, which offers convenient access to Burlington, Waterbury and Montpelier from the Richmond Park N Ride. Passenger rail and long distance bus services are available in Waterbury and Essex Junction. Two local non-profits fill critical gaps by offering rides or specialized transportation to elders, those with disabilities, or others in need of rides.

Most residents in Richmond do rely on personal cars, and maintenance of Richmond’s 85 miles of roadway is critically important for linking residents to services, jobs, shopping and the community at large. Residents would like to see improved parking options and reduced congestion at critical sites, as well as slower and calmer traffic in residential and Village areas. While improving roads for users, Richmond also needs to manage road maintenance costs and adopt practices that reduce pollution and stormwater runoff, and that protect roads and culverts from increased flooding and storm damage.

Several studies and plans already address many of these needs, from regional transportation plans to local studies of village parking and bike/pedestrian feasibility. Most emphasize “Complete Streets” – streets built to accommodate all users, while making it safer and more convenient to get around. Our strategies must align with these plans and with guidance and regulations from the Vermont Agency of Transportation on road standards and maintenance.

**WHAT RICHMOND
WANTED****WHAT WE CAN DO**

Build “Complete Streets” that are safe and accessible for all users

- Develop a Complete Streets policy for road repair and building projects
- Identify and implement high priority sidewalks or crosswalk safety improvements
- Plan and budget to integrate Complete Streets improvements into upcoming road maintenance projects (such as Route 2 re-paving)
- Study the feasibility of bicycle lanes or shared use paths on high priority roads
- Pilot test potential improvements using pop-up or longer-term demonstrations
- Partner with regional transportation organizations to implement actions from other transportation plans

Encourage “active transportation” including biking and walking

- Partner with the Richmond schools to promote Safe Routes to Schools programs
- Install bike racks at critical locations such as the Village center, schools, Park N Ride, and or shopping areas
- Explore a public education campaign to promote walking and biking in Richmond
- Promote bike and pedestrian safety through education and road signage
- Explore wayfinding signage that encourages walking to key destinations

Improve traffic safety and road conditions on town roads

- Increase the safety rating and efficiency of the Route 2 / Bridge Street intersection
- Identify key locations in need of traffic calming and experiment with calming measures

Reduce traffic congestion and alleviate parking problems

- Evaluate the efficiency of school transportation systems and increase bus ridership
- Promote the benefits of flexible work schedules and telecommuting
- Study downtown parking and evaluate the need for more or improved parking

Implement stormwater management and hazard mitigation steps to reduce runoff and protect road condition

- Identify and upgrade undersized culverts to prevent washouts
- Adopt best management practices for managing runoff during road construction
- Work to site new roads away from rivers and streams, and reroute or stabilize roads that are susceptible to flooding
- Train road crews in best practices for resilient road maintenance

Increase access to, and use of, mass transit options

- Partner with local transit organizations to advocate for new transit options, including Route 2 commuter bus, evening/weekend bus service to Burlington, and a passenger rail stop in Richmond
- Explore the potential of bus and ride sharing options in the Village center
- Increase education and publicity of existing mass transit routes and schedules

Support sustainable transportation options and methods

- Explore ways to coordinate and increase carpooling or ride sharing
 - Install electric vehicle chargers in central locations
 - Determine opportunities for cycling
 - Determine placement of a second potential park and ride
-

NATURAL + WORKING LANDS

*Richmond's Vision is to wisely steward our **natural and working lands**, ensuring the beauty and health of our landscapes, waterways, open spaces, wildlife and agricultural resources.*

Beginning with the region's first Native American inhabitants – and continuing after Richmond's colonial settlement - Richmond residents have benefited and relied upon our natural and working lands. Around the time of Richmond's founding, agriculture dominated the Town's economy and character, with many settlers producing wool and grain, milk and lumber. In the mid-1800s, Richmond's hills were primarily cleared and converted to pasture and the landscape would have looked starkly different. Today the pattern is reversed and Richmond's land is heavily forested – but natural and working lands are no less important to our identity.

Richmond's natural lands and ecosystems are diverse and important to the community in many ways. Large tracts of forest help to moderate the climate, absorb stormwater and prevent erosion, host unique plant communities, and provide critical habitat and corridors for Richmond's plentiful wildlife. Water resources including rivers, lakes and streams serve as critical habitat for many species, and a majority of Richmond residents rely on aquifers and other groundwater for drinking water. Floodplains, riparian areas and wetlands provide other critical benefits: these unique areas absorb large amounts of stormwater and prevent flooding, filter runoff and groundwater, stabilize river banks and provide particularly rich habitats for wildlife. Resident and visitors treasure all of these resources for their scenic beauty and recreation opportunities as well, and many residents identify them as critical components of Richmond's character.

Agriculture and working forests are still common throughout Richmond, though farms throughout Vermont struggle to survive and many look different today than 100 years ago. Richmond residents identified agriculture as an essential component of our Small Town Character – both scenic agricultural landscapes and viable working lands enterprises. While large, traditional farms are fading away statewide, a growing regional appetite for local foods and value-added products is giving new life to small farms and producers.

All of these natural assets are vital to Richmond's culture, economy and future, but most face significant threats. Some are protected by local or statewide regulations such as floodplain development restrictions, while several critical parcels have been permanently conserved in Richmond. In order to ensure their health now and for future generations, Richmond must focus on identifying our most critical natural areas and resources and finding ways to prevent forest fragmentation, improve water quality, encourage land stewardship, support our working lands, and increase opportunities for people to enjoy and connect with the land.

**WHAT RICHMOND
WANTED****WHAT WE CAN DO**

Protect and restore surface water bodies and groundwater

- Update mapping and inventories to identify all critical water resources
- Update and maintain regulations to uniformly protect river and stream buffers and floodplains from development
- Partner with state and local organizations to restore and re-vegetate river and stream banks
- Increase public awareness of water resources, water quality, and sustainable land management techniques
- Prohibit development on steep slopes (over 25% grade) and require best management practices on slopes over 15% grade
- Implement best management practices to reduce runoff from road maintenance and construction
- Implement stormwater management or green infrastructure projects to address major sources of runoff and pollution
- Develop a policy for integrating green infrastructure and stormwater management into municipal building and construction projects
- Explore new zoning regulations to protect river corridors from development, based on geomorphology studies and state guidance
- Identify and work to conserve important water bodies, wetlands or access points through easements or purchase

Protect and restore forests, wildlife and critical habitat

- Direct development to existing village areas and limit development in critical habitat blocks
- Amend zoning and develop incentives to encourage cluster subdivisions and conservation developments
- Complete and maintain thorough inventories of unique natural areas and habitats in Richmond
- Educate property owners about best management practices for forest land management
- Adopt natural and wildlife-friendly landscaping practices on municipal properties

Enhance access to, and stewardship of, open spaces

- Complete an Open Space and Recreation Plan to identify and prioritize improvements and opportunities for green space protection
- Maintain existing municipal open spaces and trail/water access points, and improve and expand Richmond's current trail system and access points in partnership with local organizations
- Improve public awareness of existing trails and open space, activities and events and increase volunteerism for trail maintenance, Green Up Day, and other stewardship programs

Protect and enhance working lands and soils

- Support the viability of working farms and forests by allowing for non-traditional farm enterprises and mixed uses
- Encourage the growth of the local food economy by supporting farmers' markets, food processing facilities and regional food hubs
- Incentivize the development of community-scale renewable energy that is consistent with working farms and forests
- Explore ways to assist or compensate working farms and forests for ecosystem services such as flood protection

Protect and enhance important vistas and scenic landscapes

- Inventory and prioritize scenic vistas, landscapes, and town gateways that are critical to Richmond's character
-

SAFE + RESILIENT COMMUNITY

*Richmond's Vision is to nurture a **safe and resilient community** with strong volunteerism, and public services, caring and self-reliant neighbors, and a proactive approach to preparing for challenges.*

Community resilience is the ability of a community to prepare for, withstand, and respond to adverse situations. Richmond has faced a variety of challenges in the past, from natural disasters and fires to economic downturns and the opioid epidemic. We can't prevent future events from happening, but we can build a safe and resilient community that is prepared for these and other stressors. Doing so will also improve ongoing quality of life and many community values.

Building a resilient community involves numerous factors: Basic Needs and Services; Environment and Natural Systems; Physical Infrastructure; and Community Connections and Capacity. State, regional and local Hazard Mitigation and Emergency Management plans identify the most common risks and provide detailed plans for reducing long-term risks and preparing for or responding to emergencies. Richmond's All-Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies fluvial erosion, flooding and severe winter storms as the most critical natural hazards facing Richmond. Day to day, the greatest safety threats in Richmond are increased drug activity and impaired driving.

Richmond provides adequate daily services and public safety services, but most would be taxed in a major disaster. Vulnerable populations including the elderly and those with disabilities are most at risk, with limited access to Richmond's one emergency shelter and no pharmacy in town. Richmond has a strong police force, fire department and rescue service, with both paid staff and volunteers and mutual aid agreements with other towns. The capital budget does cover police and fire equipment needs, but facilities are inadequate and Richmond has been exploring a new public safety building.

Richmond's infrastructure faces significant threats including floodplain development, roads with undersized culverts, and lack of fire protection in the Village. Richmond participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and has strong flood hazard development regulations, but the State and municipalities increasingly understand the importance of preventing fluvial erosion, and Richmond is actively studying river dynamics and erosion prevention measures.

Strong social capital, community connections and volunteerism are one of the most important ways to build resilience overall. Richmond can address many needs and build community by creating stronger volunteer networks, collaboration between organizations, and communication systems. These steps all build relationships and coordination that improve quality of life and strengthen the community every day, while building an essential network that can mobilize in emergencies.

WHAT RICHMOND WANTED	WHAT WE CAN DO
Foster volunteerism and social capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase support for new and existing that build community connections including neighborhood or block events • Increase volunteerism by publicizing volunteer opportunities and connections • Increase opportunities for respectful civic discourse • Identify and maintain a list of skilled volunteers • Host an annual volunteer day or summit • Recruit and support a local CROs team to coordinate resilience projects and collaboration
Support preparedness, self-sufficiency and basic needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of community gardens and food processing facilities • Host a summit of service providers to identify gaps in local needs and services and improve collaboration • Recruit a Vermont-based pharmacy to operate in town • Identify specific needs and gaps for vulnerable populations, including those in need of emergency assistance • Encourage the development of community-scale renewable energy • Encourage residents and family members to maintain updated emergency plans and kits
Prepare for and mitigate natural and man-made hazards and other emerging threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and implement emergency response, preparedness and hazard mitigation plans • Equip critical facilities with backup power • Educate property owners about hazards, mitigation actions, and preparedness steps • Maintain participation in the National Flood Insurance Program and explore the costs and benefits of participating in the Community Rating System • Educate community members about emergency plans, shelters and other resources • Explore the creation of additional emergency shelters accessible to other parts of town • Encourage businesses and critical facilities to maintain emergency plans and continuity of operations plans
Provide strong public services and public safety infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the safety and resilience of dangerous roads, intersections, bridges and other infrastructure • Upgrade roads and facilities to withstand increasing precipitation and flood events • Develop a new public safety building that provides adequate facilities for police and fire departments • Assist the fire department and rescue with recruiting and training skilled volunteers • Maintain mutual aid agreements with neighboring towns
Proactively reduce ongoing public safety threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a community task-force to identify strategies for addressing drug use • Increase policing and public education to reduce intoxicated driving

SMALL TOWN CHARACTER

Richmond's Vision is to foster and enhance our small town character, including our quiet pace and rural way of life, friendly and involved community, and scenic beauty.

The Richmond community treasures its small town character, which includes both traditional Vermont culture and aspects unique to Richmond. Small town character includes a number of elements ranging from an indistinct “feel” to very specific architectural and economic characteristics, quiet pace, community traditions and an authentic working landscape.

Several participants in the Our Town, Our Future process captured this character in saying that Richmond feels like the last slice of “real Vermont” in Chittenden County. Richmond’s location is critical for jobs and access to resources and opportunities, but community members want Richmond to remain an authentic small town.

The most visible defining characteristics of Richmond’s small town character are its landscapes and architecture. Scenic views and pastoral landscapes are important to the community, along with the authentic working farms and treasured historic buildings like the Round Church. Residents value traditional Vermont architectural styles including compact downtown blocks with multi-story brick buildings, residential areas featuring clapboard homes, and historic barns and farms; many also appreciate the lack of box stores or “cookie cutter” development in town.

Community members also value Richmond’s small size and scale, with compact and walkable village centers, limited traffic and congestion, and development that is “right-sized” for the community. Richmond boasts a traditional Vermont development pattern, with a dense, mixed-use Village Center, compact residential neighborhoods, and surrounding rural landscapes. Residents feel strongly about encouraging business growth that fits with this development pattern and prevents sprawl.

Strong traditions and local culture also contribute to a treasured small town community feel. Residents value a small town where people know and help their neighbors and can easily engage in the community. Many residents commented on a friendly feel and a sense of cooperation, but also note that these traditions are threatened as demographics change and more people work outside of town.

Richmond is unlikely to face rapid growth and sprawl, but strong planning and design guidelines can ensure that future development supports these characteristics and helps to maintain the visual elements of Richmond’s character. It’s harder to plan for social elements like friendliness, but Richmond can support these by maintaining and creating gathering places, supporting volunteerism, and specifically working to engage newcomers, vulnerable populations, and others who may be on the outskirts of the community.

WHAT RICHMOND WANTED	WHAT WE CAN DO
Protect working lands, farms and agricultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and protect the most important farms, agricultural landscapes and prime soils • Support the viability of farm and forest enterprises by allowing for new business models and incubator facilities • Encourage new development in village centers or designated growth areas, and encourage protection of rural landscapes • Consider the adoption of a “Right to Farm” ordinance that protects farm activities
Protect and enhance Richmond’s scenic and architectural beauty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and protect Richmond’s most iconic and scenic vistas, landscapes and historical assets • Articulate and encourage the specific architectural or scenic elements that define Richmond’s character • Design policies and zoning to ensure that new development and restorations enhance Richmond’s character • Educate property owners about resources and credits for restoring and maintaining historic buildings
Build community connections, spirit and involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance local communication channels and publicity of community events, activities and volunteer opportunities • Hire a recreation director to coordinate and increase town facilities and programs • Create opportunities for local organizations to coordinate and maintain important local traditions and programs • Create or enhance “third places” or gathering places for informal community connections • Proactively work to involve and reach vulnerable populations, new residents and others on the outskirts of the community • Continue traditions like Town Meeting, while creating new and different opportunities for engagement and local democracy • Recognize and celebrate volunteers and community success stories
Maintain Richmond’s quiet pace and peaceful lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract and promote businesses that support the quiet pace and Richmond’s community values • Manage and calm traffic to reduce noise levels and ensure bike and pedestrian safety
Support a vibrant downtown where residents can meet daily needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and allow for a wide variety of small, independent businesses and local employment opportunities • Identify and recruit businesses to fill gaps in daily needs, such as a pharmacy

SOCIAL, CULTURAL + RECREATIONAL OFFERINGS

*Richmond's vision is to support a wide range of **social, cultural and recreational offerings**, including open space and recreation facilities, arts and cultural activities, and community gathering places.*

Richmond's prime location in Chittenden County offers residents convenient access to a wide array of cultural activities in Burlington, Montpelier and beyond and top-notch outdoor recreation at Bolton Valley, the VAST trails and more. But residents value the offerings right in town, and many participants in the planning process expressed a desire for more programs and facilities in Richmond, as well as better communication about existing programs.

Existing social, cultural and recreational offerings in Richmond include a wide range of options, from long-standing events and traditions, to public spaces and gathering places that support informal activities, to open-access recreation facilities, trails and parks. Important programs and opportunities include youth sports and school programming, diverse programs at the Richmond Free Library, church activities, the Senior Center and Richmond Community Center, and events like the 4th of July celebration and Friday Night Food Affair. More than ten different groups, including several Town Committees and departments, currently coordinate core activities and facilities and publicize them in a variety of ways. Richmond does not have a staff position responsible for coordinating activities, and there are no central communication channels where events and activities are listed.

Venues and spaces for events and gatherings – both indoor and outdoor – are likewise owned, maintained and coordinated by a wide variety of organizations. Municipal parks including Volunteers' Green offer important spaces for recreation and sports, including fields, a winter ice rink, and cross-country skiing. Residents take advantage of numerous trails available on both public and private land, several access points to the Winooski River, and many informal sledding hills, biking routes and walking paths. Community members also value many private recreation facilities, such as Cochran's Ski Area, where many generations of residents have learned to ski.

While they value the many activities already available, residents – and particularly youth – have expressed a strong desire for additional facilities including a community pool, tennis courts, more basketball courts, safer bike routes, a permanent building for a community/senior center, and informal "third places" where people can gather. Many community members also expressed a desire for stronger coordination and publicity of programs and events, and ways to more formally protect and encourage the most important venues and traditions.

WHAT RICHMOND WANTED	WHAT WE CAN DO
Provide parks, public spaces and recreation facilities for people of all ages and interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and publicize existing town recreation facilities • Explore adding or enhancing high priority facilities like tennis or swimming • Develop a recreation plan and hire a recreation director to coordinate municipal recreation offerings and facilities • Promote the use of municipal facilities to groups and individuals • Identify and maintain a list of skilled volunteers • Host an annual volunteer day or summit • Recruit and support a local CROs team to coordinate resilience projects and collaboration
Maintain a wide variety of accessible trails and open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain, improve and expand Richmond's current trail system, access points and signage • Develop a trails and open space partnership to coordinate with other local organizations • Identify new trail locations, signage and access points • Increase awareness of existing trail locations and responsible use • Improve the safety of roads used commonly for biking
Support arts and cultural programming for all ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the creation of a multi-purpose community center with facilities for creative programming • Promote the use of Town Center and other community facilities for arts and cultural events • Ensure that land use regulations allow for multi-use community centers and arts programming • Increase publicity of existing community events and programs and support collaboration between providers • Develop a creative economy plan that will attract and support creative professionals and organizations
Attract diverse and quality restaurants or cafes, gathering places, and recreation businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract businesses that support recreation and social opportunities • Provide financial incentives or publicity for small businesses that fill social or recreation gaps
Proactively reduce ongoing public safety threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a community task-force to identify strategies for addressing drug use • Increase policing and public education to reduce intoxicated driving

VIBRANT + APPEALING DOWNTOWN

Richmond's Vision is to have a vibrant and appealing downtown, with attractive streets and buildings, convenient services and diverse businesses, where people can connect and meet their daily needs.

Richmond's current Village area hasn't always been the center of town activity. Historically, Jonesville and Fay's Corner also boasted vibrant commercial districts and community activities; residents in those neighborhoods bought and sold farm products and most goods in their neighborhood centers. With the rise of autos and the completion of Interstate 89 in the 1960s, many Chittenden County towns saw the decline of their village centers and the quick growth of strip plazas and auto-centric development. While Jonesville and Fay's Corner are no longer vibrant centers, Richmond's Village area remained intact and Richmond did not experience the same development pressures.

Today, the Village is recognized as the primary "downtown", the hub of Richmond's economic and social activity, serving Richmond residents and those in adjoining towns. The Our Town, Our Future process revealed that a vibrant downtown is a core value and element of Richmond's character, with many residents expressing gratitude for the compact, historic downtown and strong businesses. Today, downtowns are widely appreciated for providing a variety of services in a small, walkable area close to housing; as a hub for social activity and connections; for their aesthetic and historic value; and as economic engines of the community.

Still, there are many actions Richmond can take to ensure that its Village area is protected and enhanced. Richmond received Village Center Designation through the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development. The incentive program gives Richmond priority consideration for state grants and other resources and makes commercial property owners eligible for tax credits and other advantages. The Town can use policies to further attract businesses downtown, help business owners maintain and improve buildings, and encourage the mixed-use development that will keep downtown vibrant. A changing economy means that new business types and models are springing up, and Richmond can ensure that its zoning and policies allow for new economic models and opportunities. Richmond can also support downtown businesses and vibrancy by improving the streetscape. That includes aesthetic improvements like signage, plantings or street trees; amenities like seating and small parks; providing convenient and sufficient parking; and implementing street improvements that calm traffic, increase walkability and pedestrian safety, and ensure accessibility.

Finally, Richmond can look at ways to revitalize past village centers, or to create new centers. Many residents today want to be able to bike and walk to stores and services, and to access a community or social center near their homes. Richmond can also encourage new growth in past village centers like Jonesville or Fay's Corner, which can build new areas of vibrancy while limited environmental impacts in less developed parts of town.

WHAT RICHMOND WANTED	WHAT WE CAN DO
Improve traffic calming, safety and access to downtown and other important locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement “Complete Streets” projects to improve bike/pedestrian safety and slow traffic • Construct new sidewalks within the Village and important locations • Implement the recommendations of the 2010 Bridge Street Bicycle and Pedestrian Feasibility Study • Improve safety and reduce congestion at the Route 2 / Bridge Street intersection
Encourage suitable growth in downtown and village center locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage new mixed use development downtown and on existing water and sewer lines • Update regulations to ensure that new downtown development conforms to Richmond’s character and scale • Expand the boundaries of the Village Center designation and/or consider enrollment in the Designated Downtown program • Explore strategies to revitalize other village centers including Jonesville and Fay’s Corner
Beautify and maintain an attractive and enjoyable downtown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for creative uses and adaptive re-use of historic structures in downtown areas • Increase awareness of state historic preservation resources and designation programs to assist property owners with maintenance • Identify high priority downtown beautification projects and amenities including landscaping, street trees, seating or signage • Develop a coordinated plan for long-term streetscape improvements and traffic safety
Attract a variety of high-quality businesses, restaurants and local attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and attract small businesses to fill gaps in existing needs and services • Decrease start-up and operational costs for emerging small businesses • Support the development of incubator spaces to nurture entrepreneurs and emerging businesses

TOWN OF RICHMOND, VERMONT

Community Vision Survey Results

The Richmond Town Plan Steering Committee offered a community vision survey during the summer of 2015 to find out what community members love about Richmond, what they want to see enhanced and protected in the future, and what they would like to change.

We asked questions like this:

What do you love about Richmond? What makes it unique?

What would make Richmond an even better place to live, work and play?

If you had a magic wand and could change one thing about Richmond, what would it be?

And heard answers like this:



Main Survey Conclusions

You love:

The Richmond community, small town character, village businesses and services, the people, and rural landscape

You wish:

For more businesses, more activities and community gathering places, and safe bike & walking paths

You are:

Different and the same. Youth and seniors, newcomers and longtime residents have similar values but different needs and priorities.

That's just the start. People love this community, and have hundreds of ideas about what can make it even more vibrant and livable for all.

Scroll through to find out who responded and what they said. Learn more about the Our Town, Our Future process at richmondvtfuture.weebly.com.

Who Responded

 **392**

Total survey respondents

 **346**

Full-time Richmond residents responding

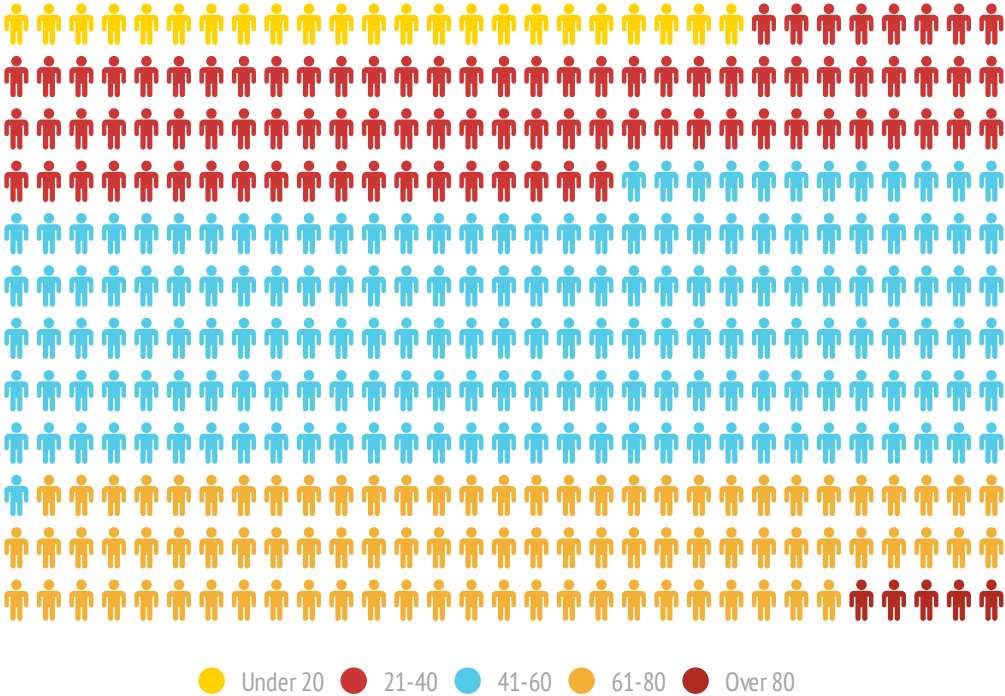
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Part-time/seasonal residents responding

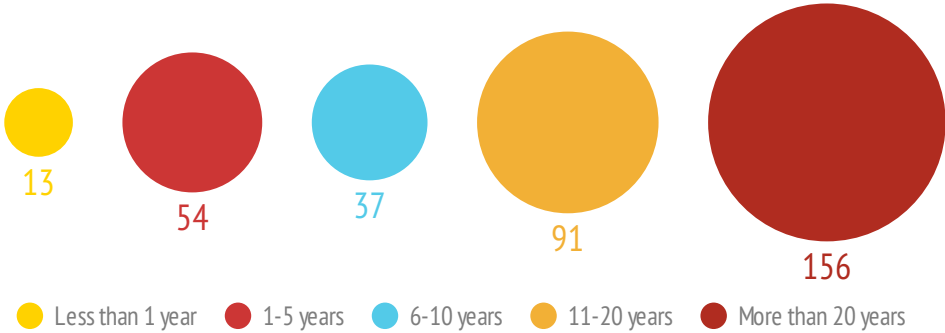
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Non-residents responding

Age of Respondents

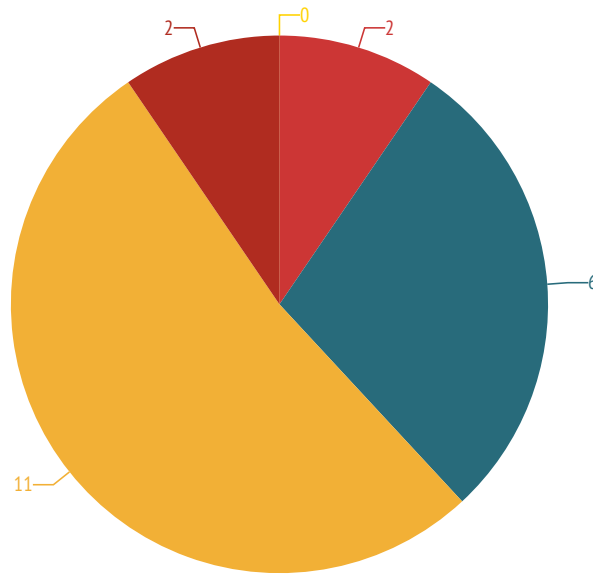


How Long You've Lived in Richmond



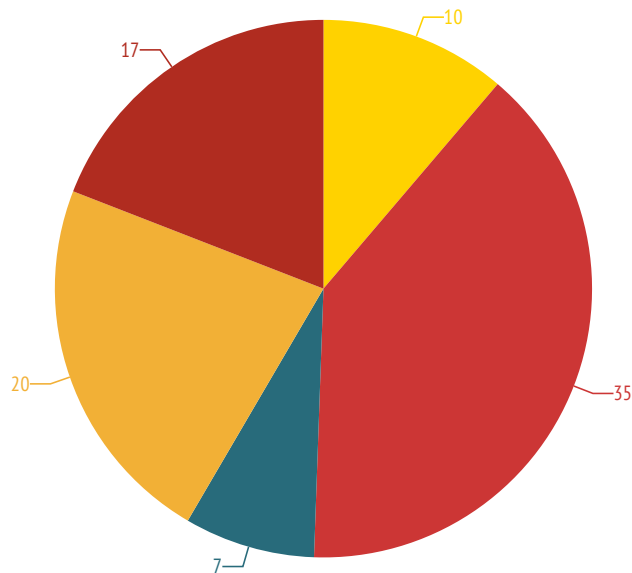
How Long You've Lived in Richmond, vs. Age

Under 20



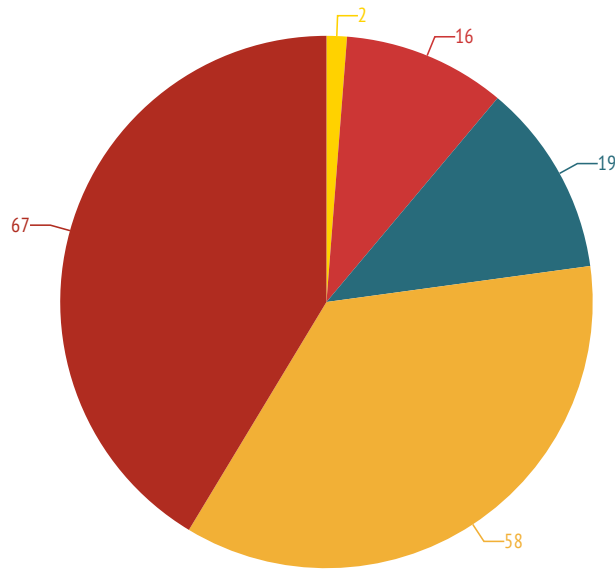
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21-40



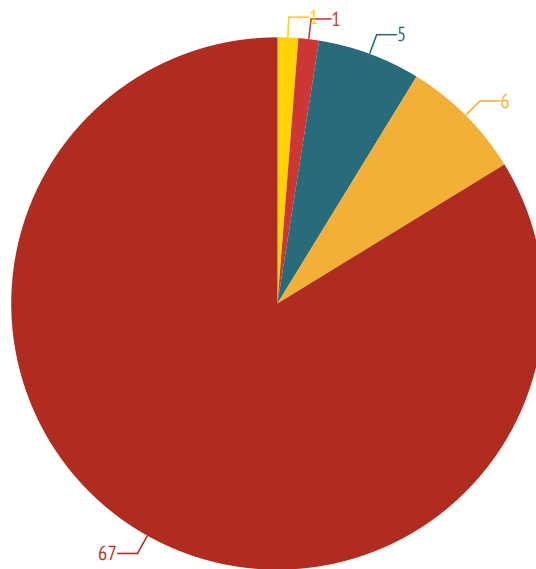
How Long You've Lived in Richmond, vs. Age

41-60



● Less than 1 year ● 1-5 years ● 6-10 years ● 11-20 years ● More than 20 years

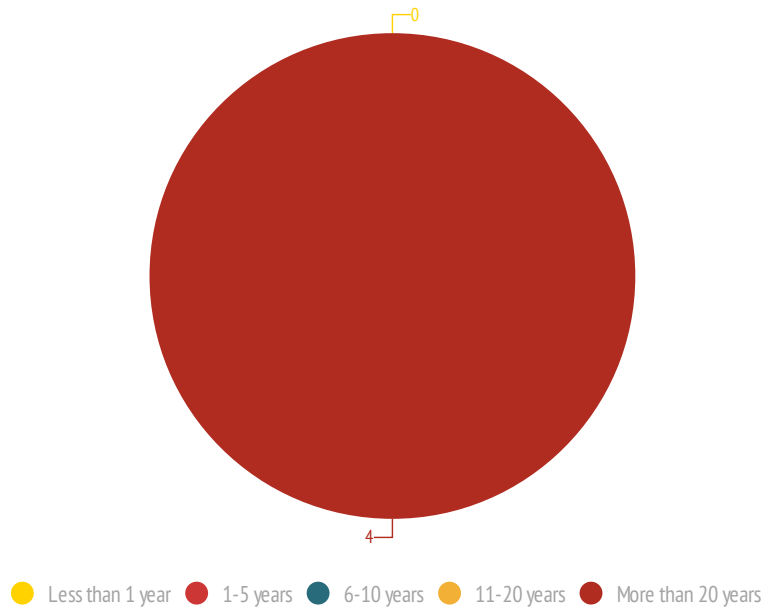
61-80



● Less than 1 year ● 1-5 years ● 6-10 years ● 11-20 years ● More than 20 years

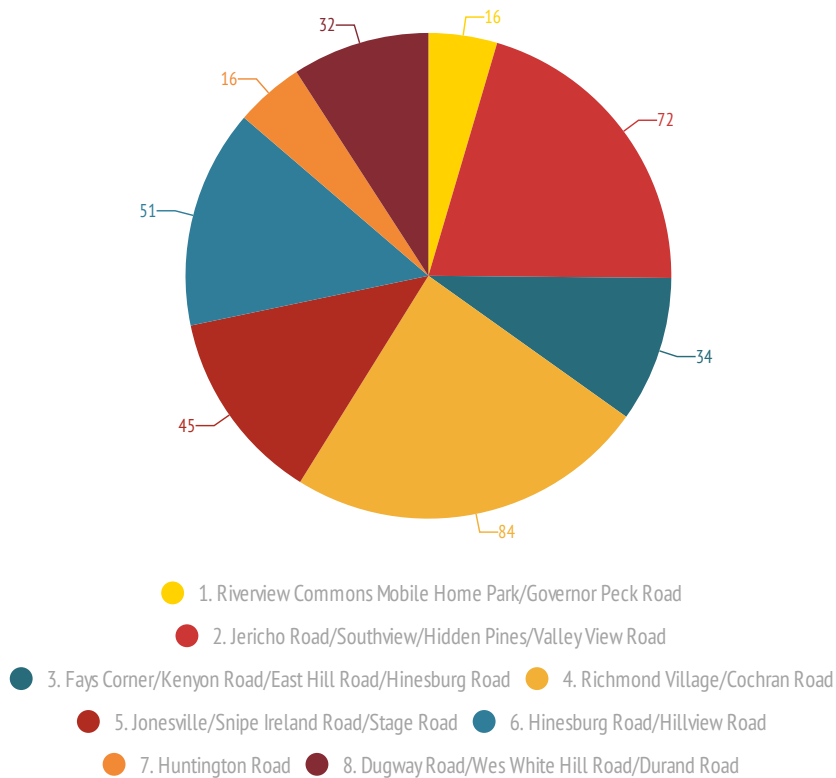
How Long You've Lived in Richmond, vs. Age

Over 80



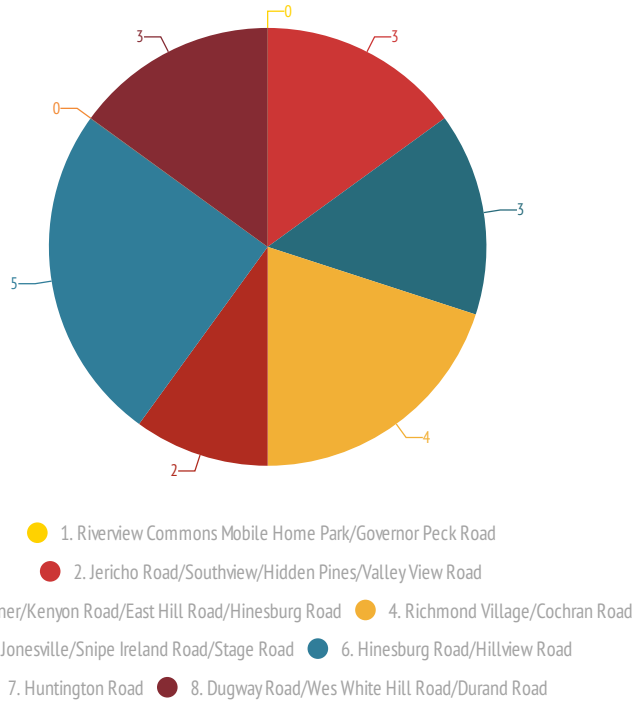
Where You Live

All

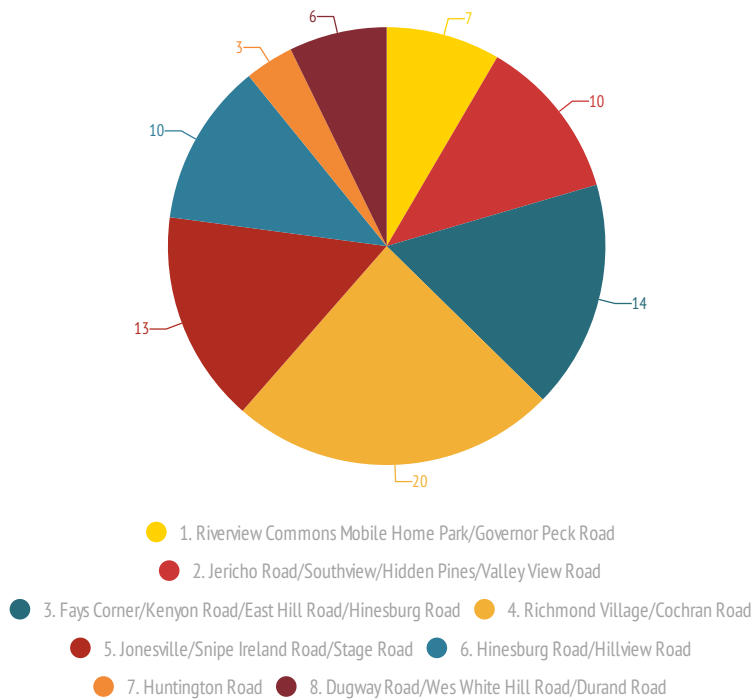


Where You Live

Under 20

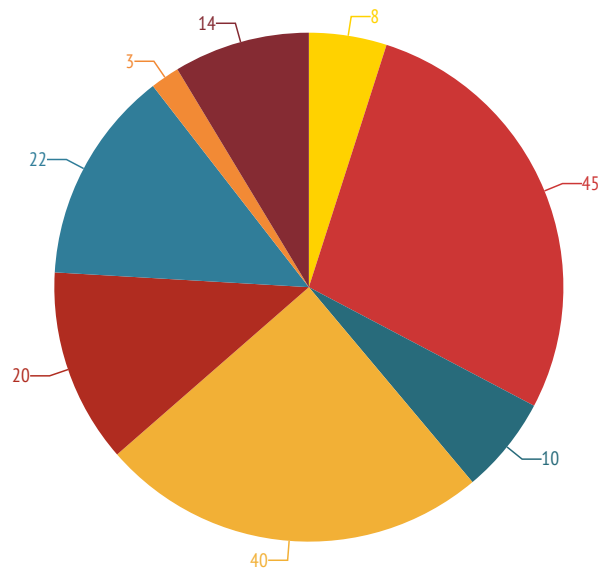


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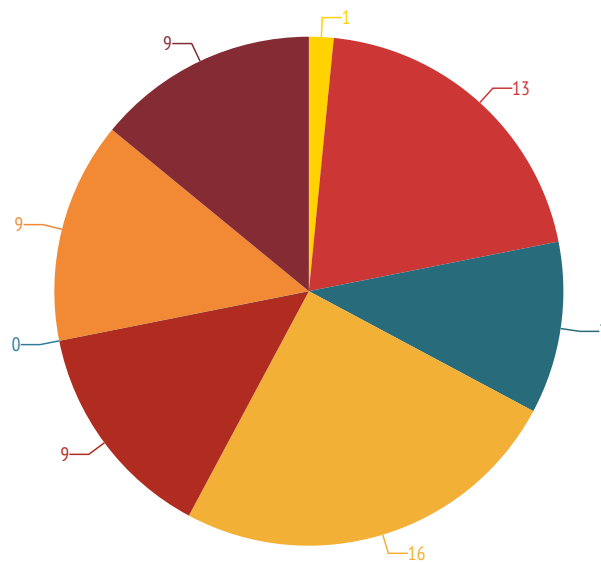
Where You Live

41-60



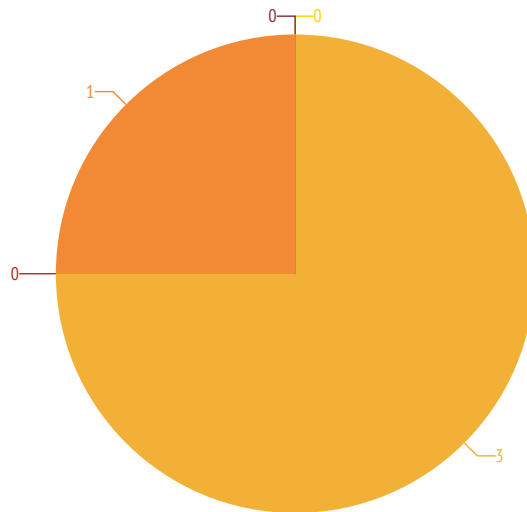
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- 2. Jericho Road/Southview/Hidden Pines/Valley View Road
- 3. Fays Corner/Kenyon Road/East Hill Road/Hinesburg Road
- 4. Richmond Village/Cochran Road
- 5. Jonesville/Snipe Ireland Road/Stage Road
- 6. Hinesburg Road/Hillview Road
- 7. Huntington Road
- 8. Dugway Road/Wes White Hill Road/Durand Road

61-80



Where You Live

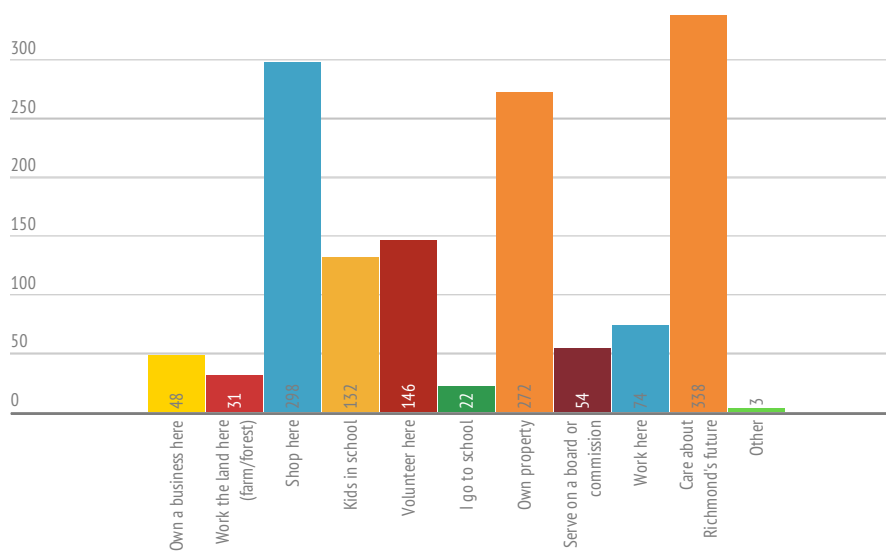
Over 80



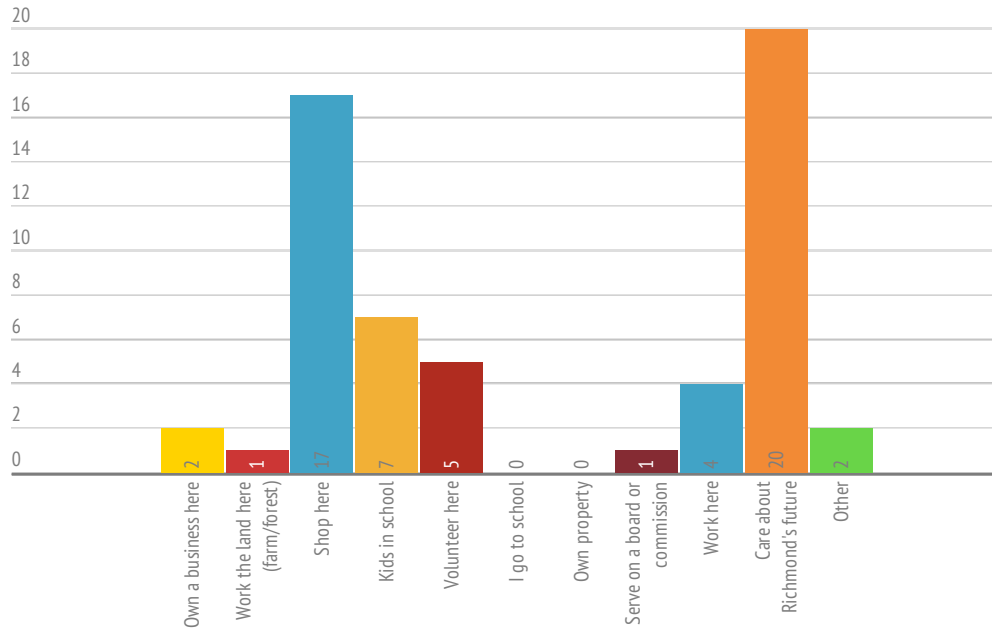
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- 6. Hinesburg Road/Hillview Road
- 7. Huntington Road
- 8. Dugway Road/Wes White Hill Road/Durand Road

Community Involvement

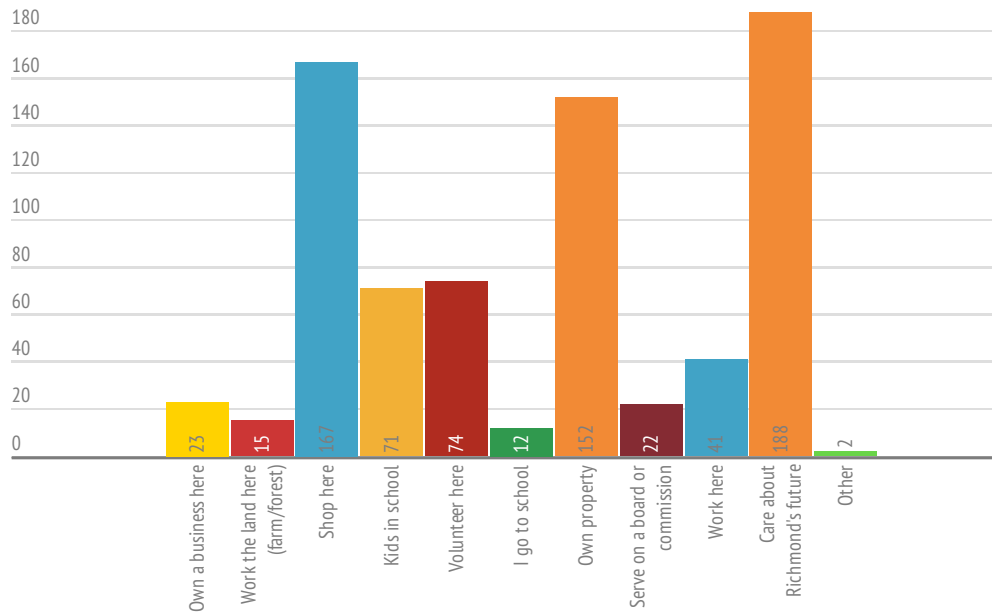
All



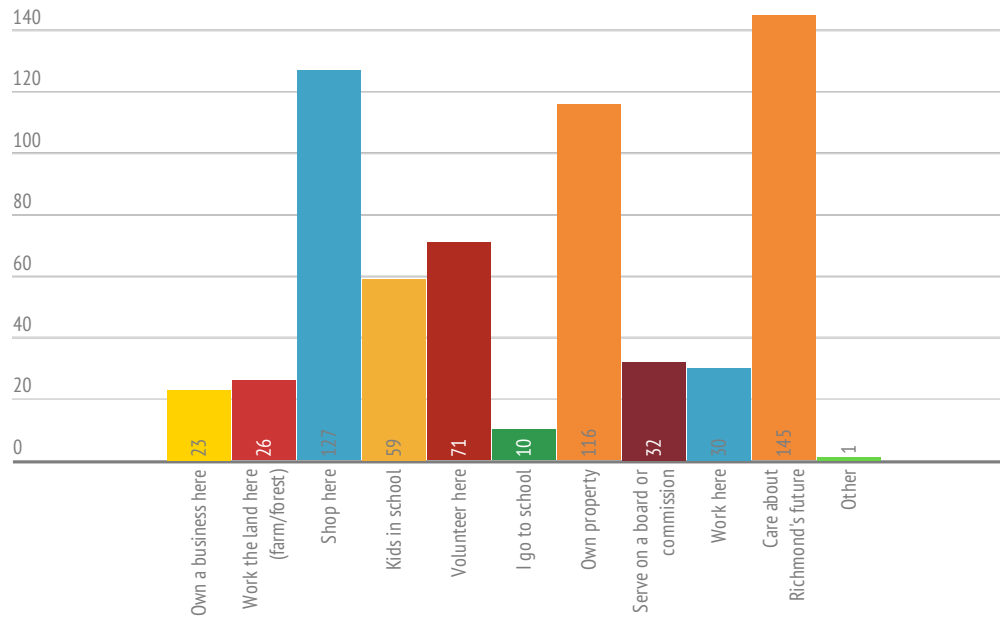
Non-Residents



Female

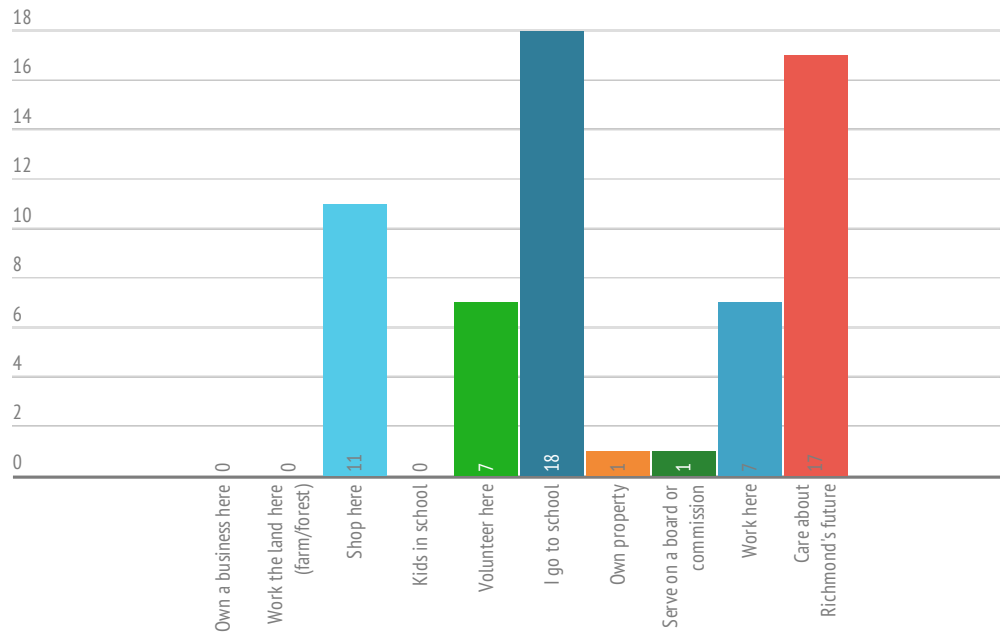


Male

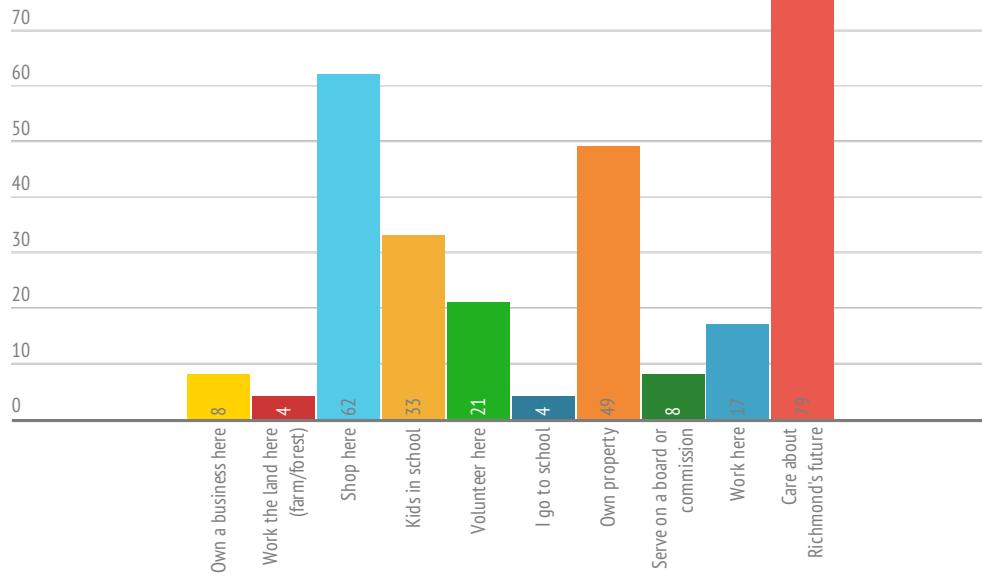


Involvement by Age Group

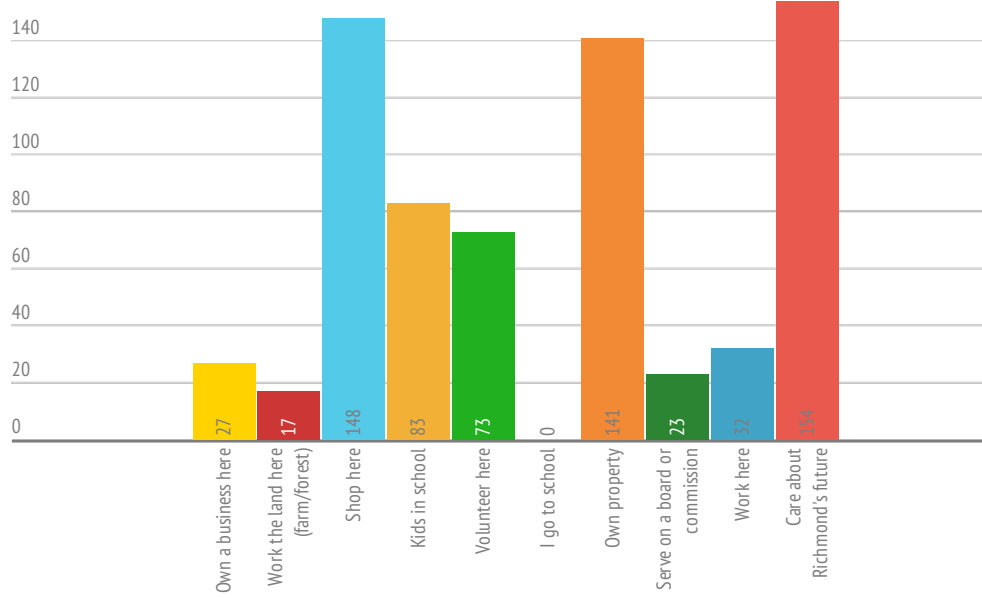
Under 20



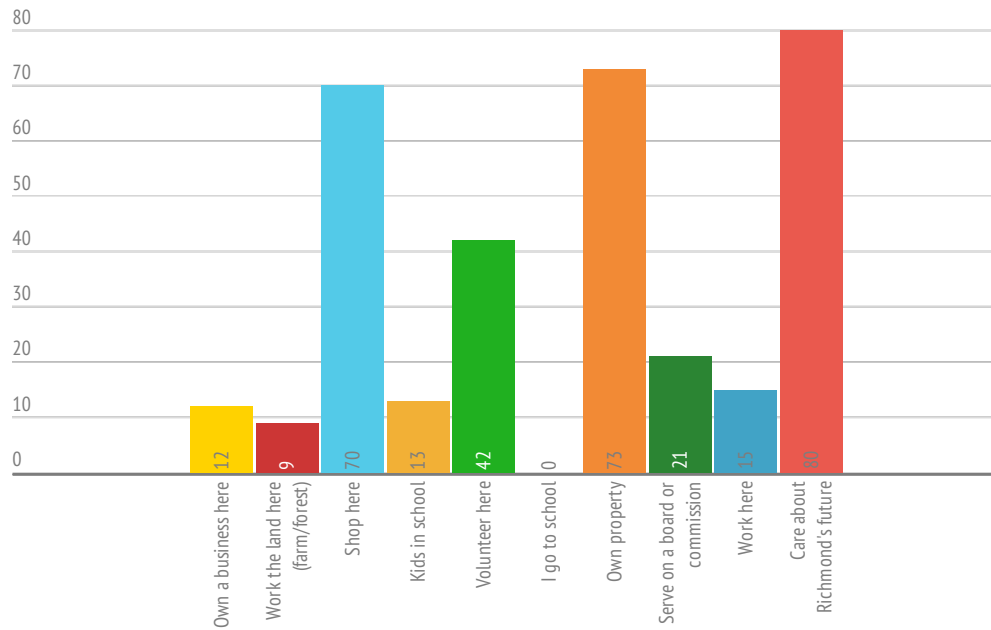
21-40



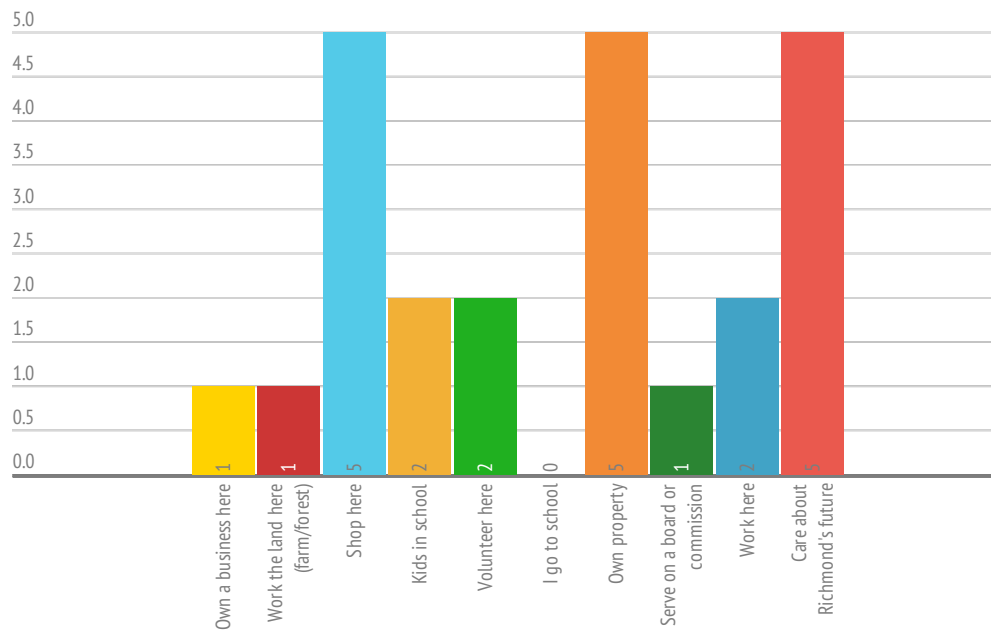
41-60



61-80

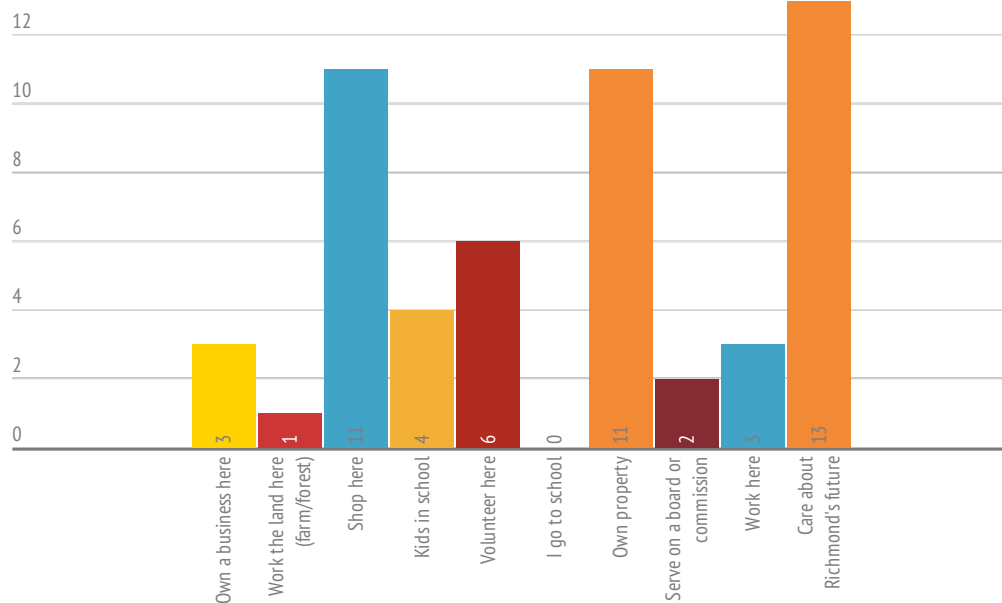


Over 80

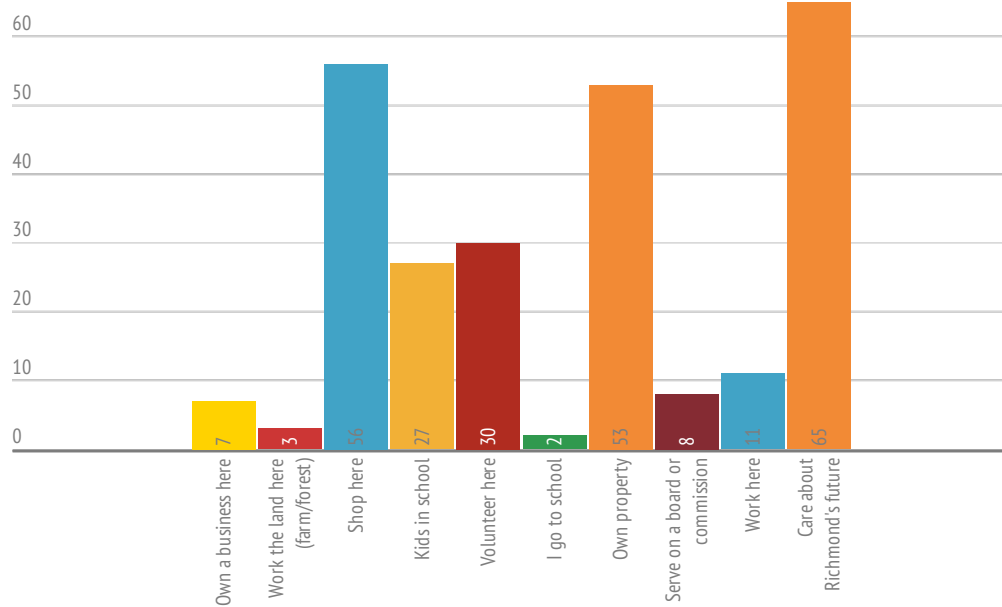


Involvement by Neighborhood

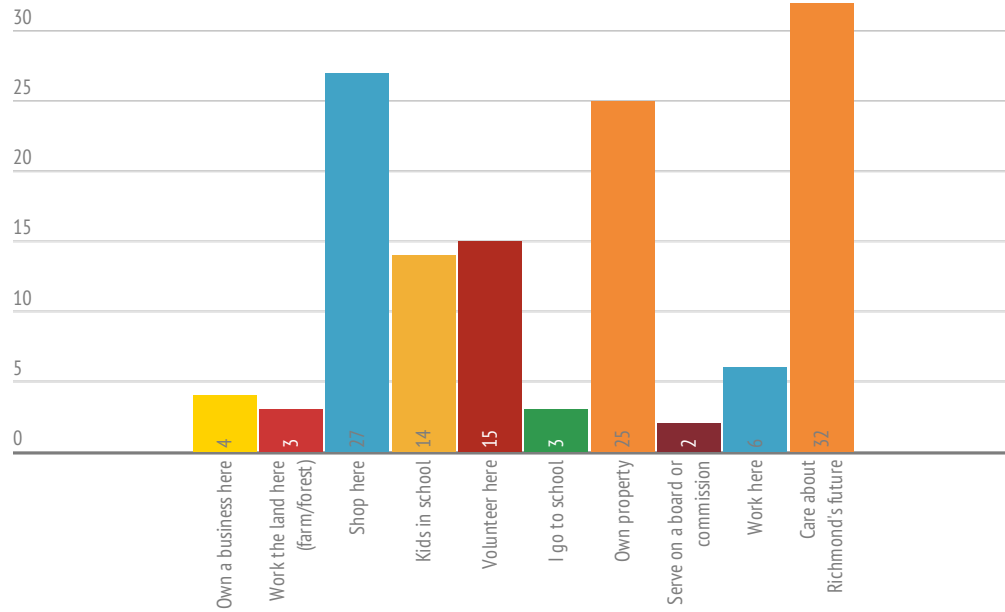
Riverview Commons/Gov Peck



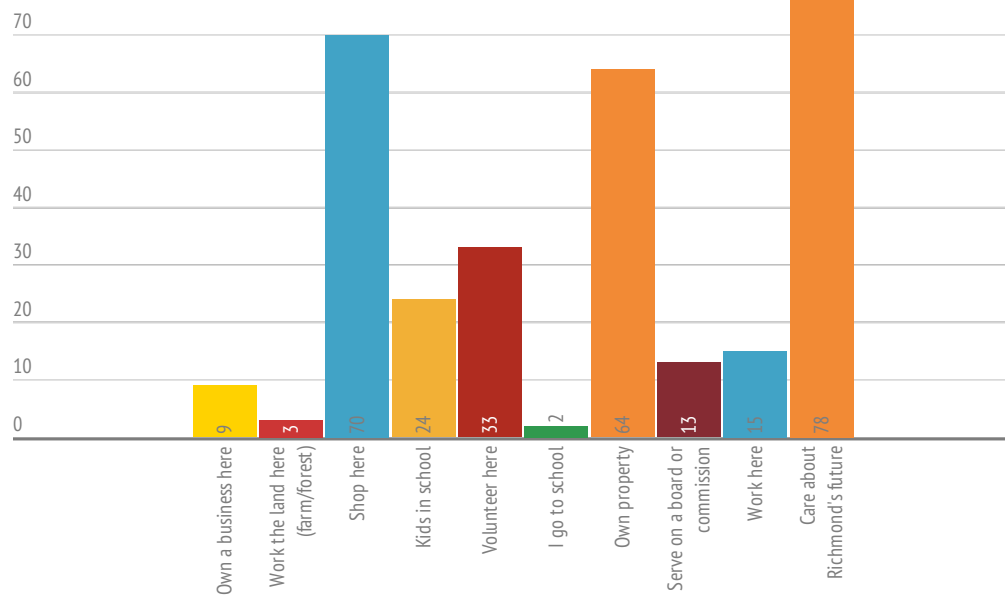
Jericho/Southview/Hidden Pines



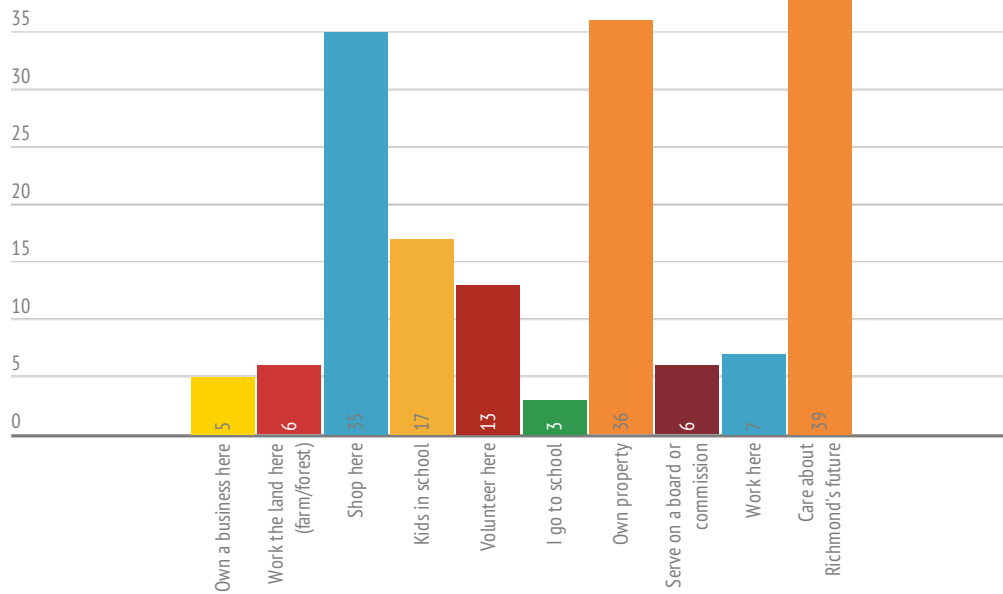
Fays Corner/Kenyon/East Hill



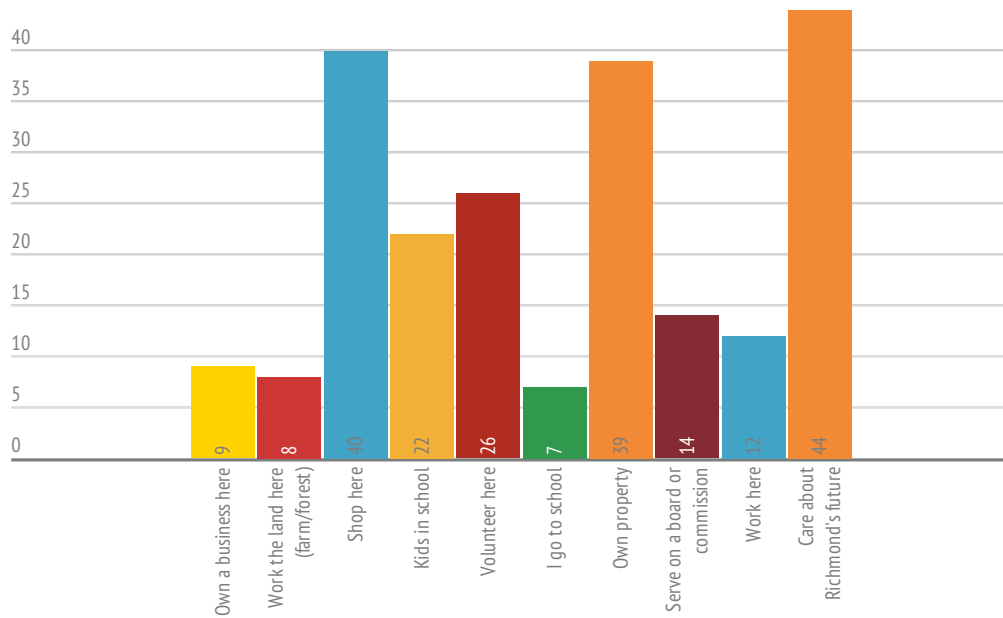
Village/Cochran Rd



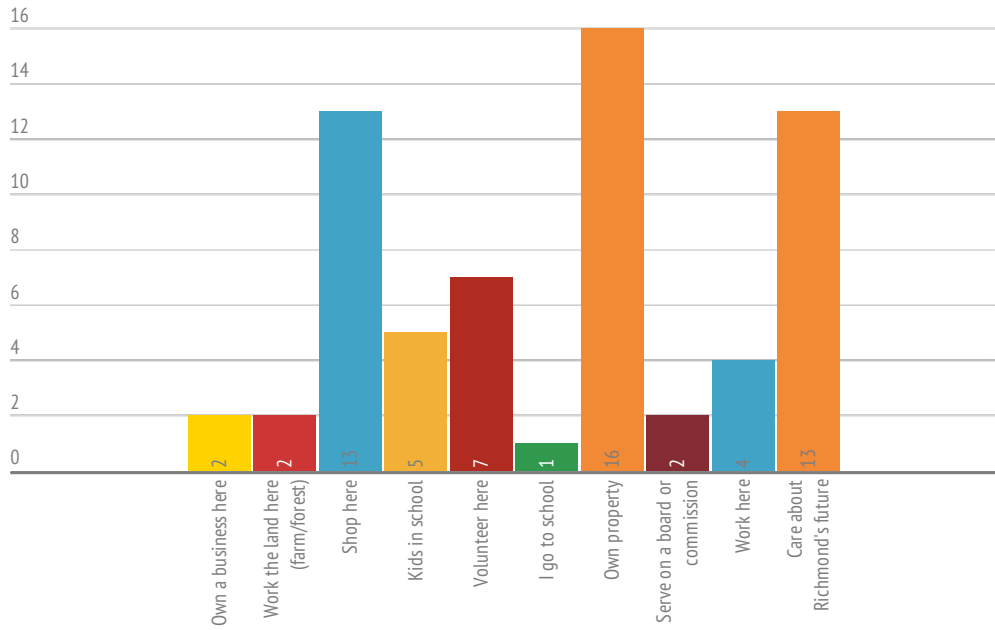
Jonesville/Snipe Ireland/Stage Rd



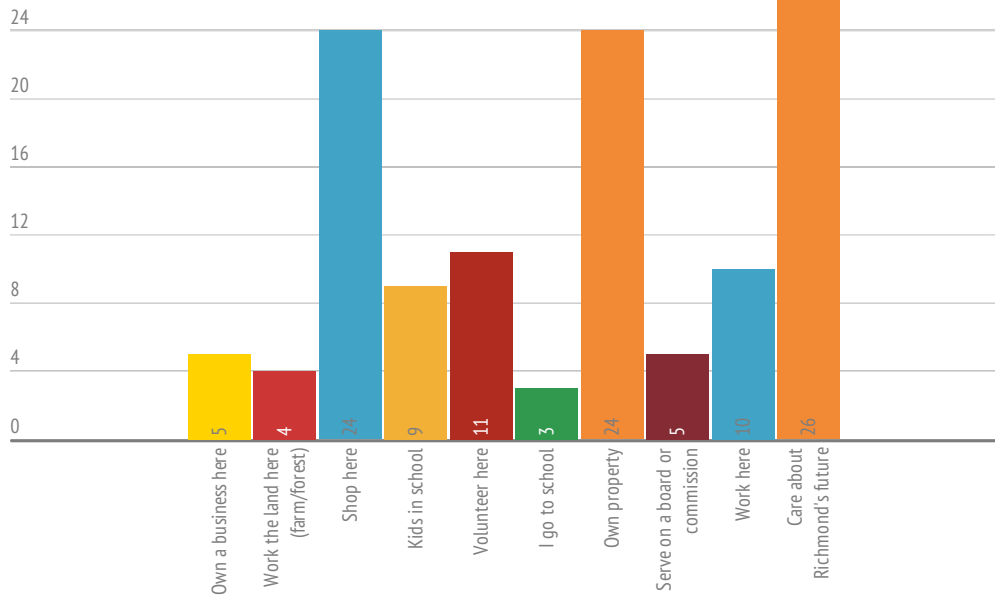
Hinesburg/Hillview Rd



Huntington Rd

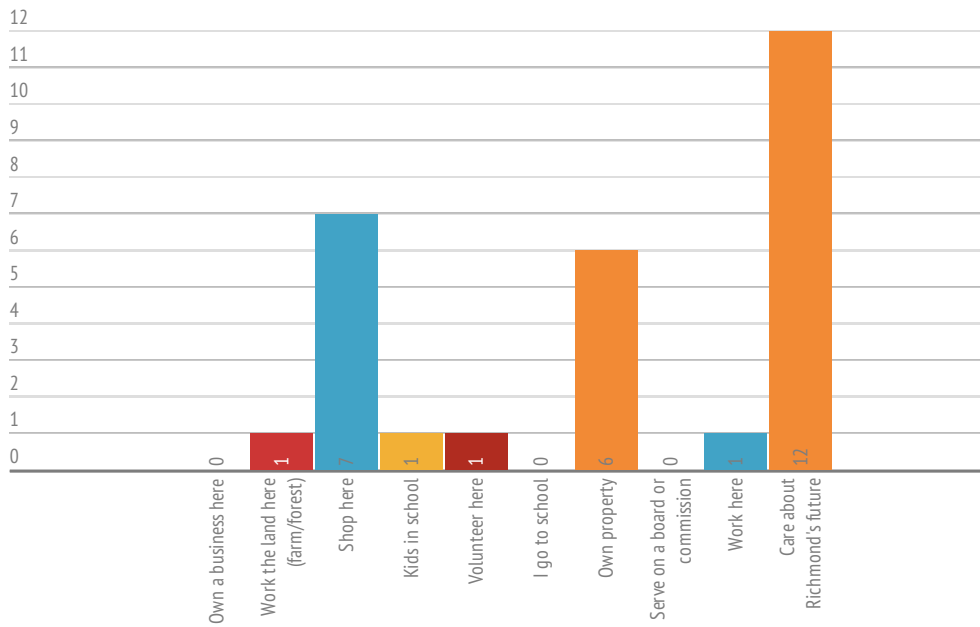


Dugway/Wes White Hill/Gov Peck Rd

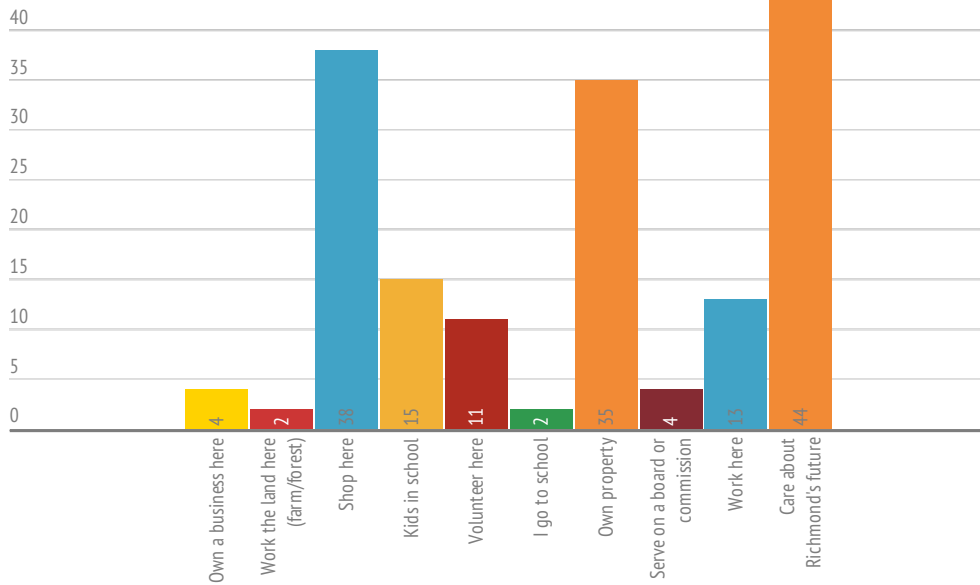


Involvement by Length of Residency

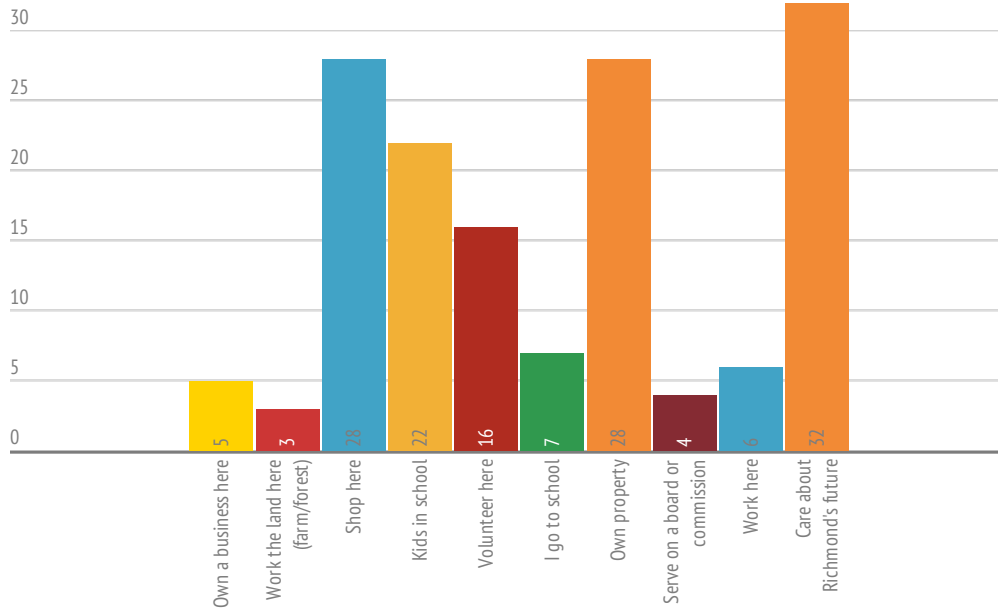
Less Than 1 Year



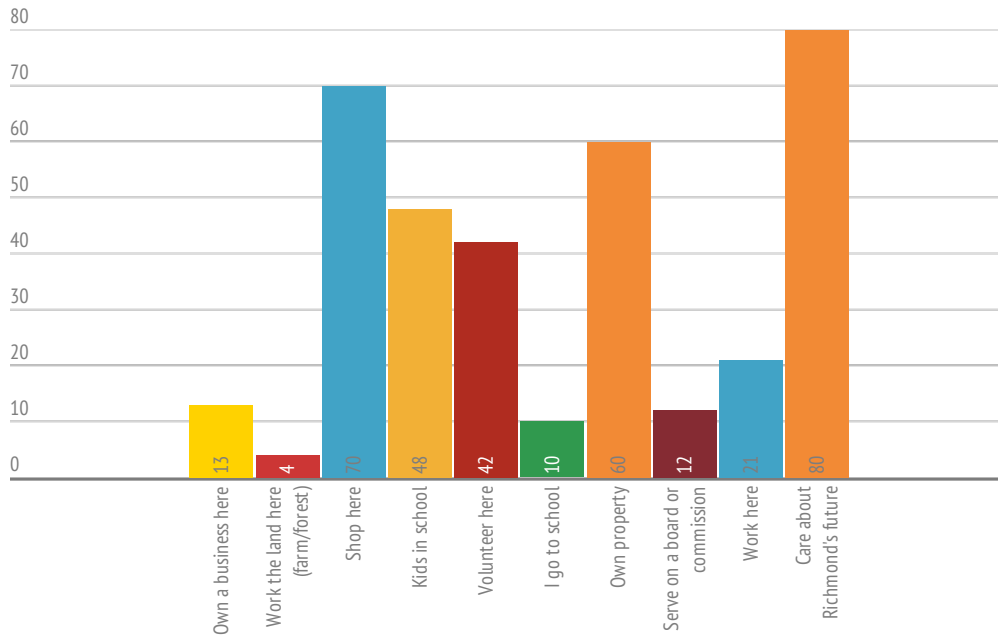
1-5 Years



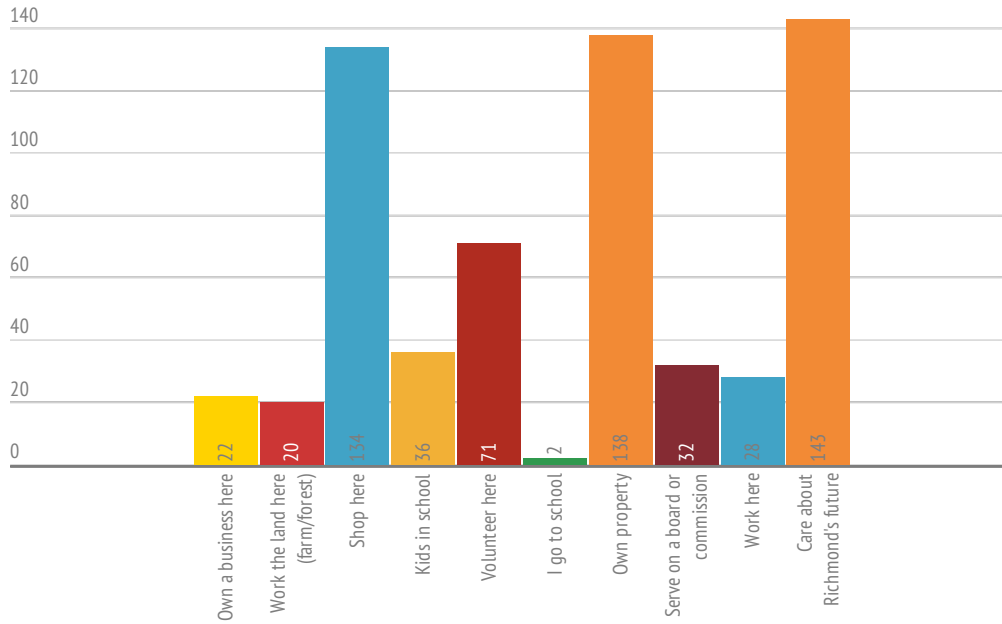
6-10 Years



11-20 Years

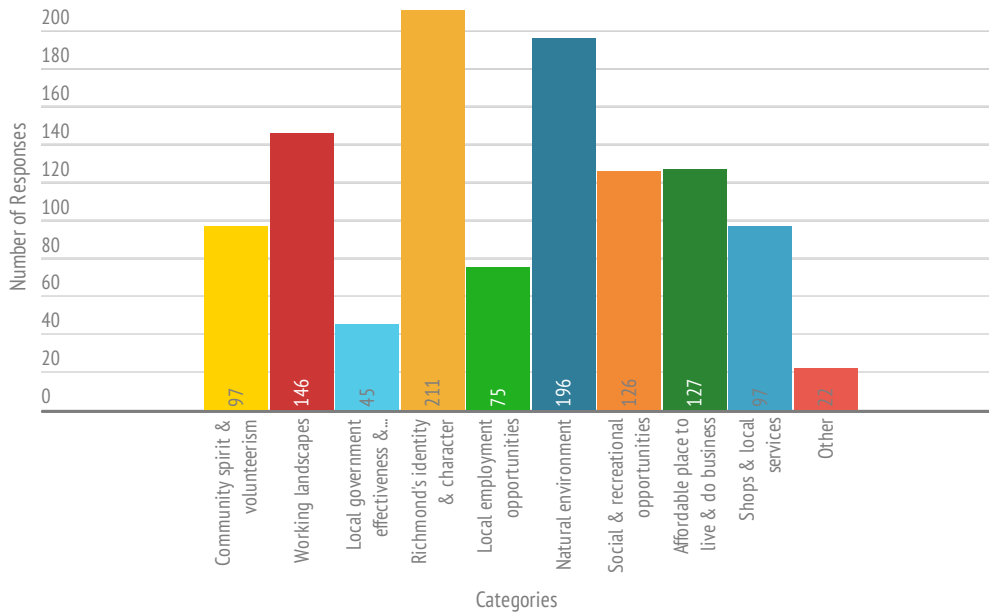


More than 20 Years



Richmond Priorities

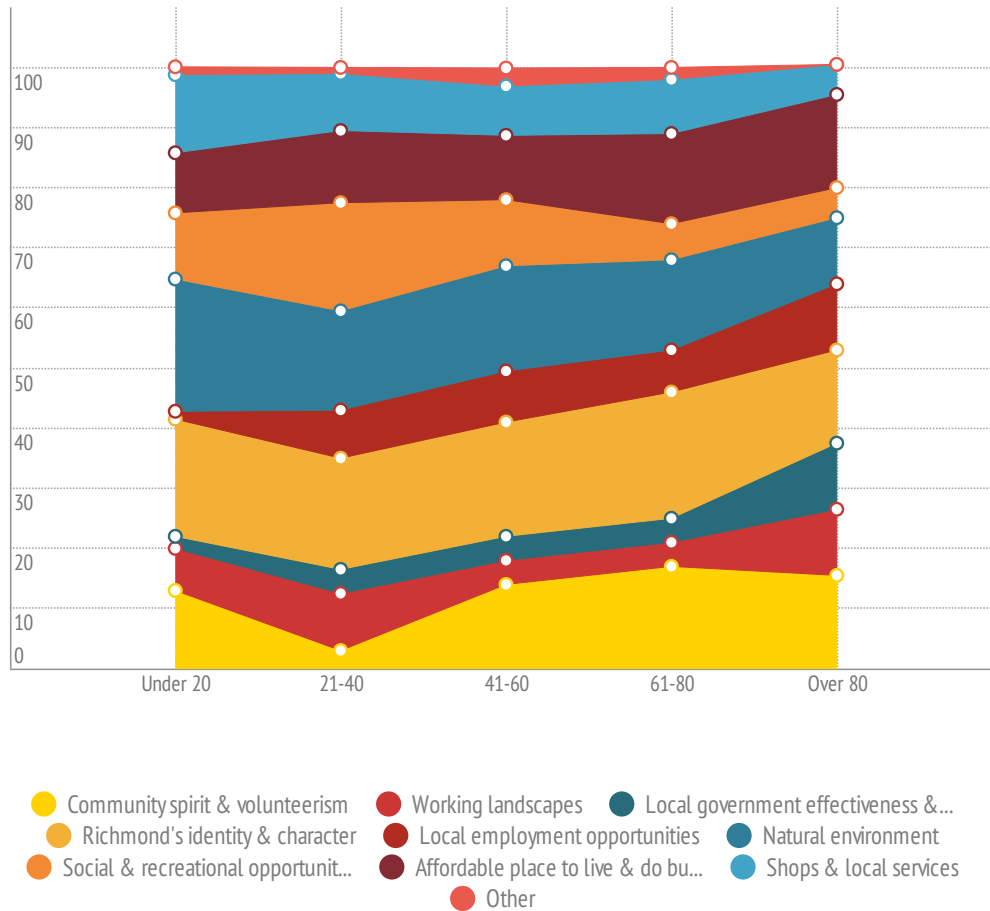
We shared nine big categories that we know are important in Richmond and asked people to choose the three that they thought were most important for Richmond's future. This is how they voted.



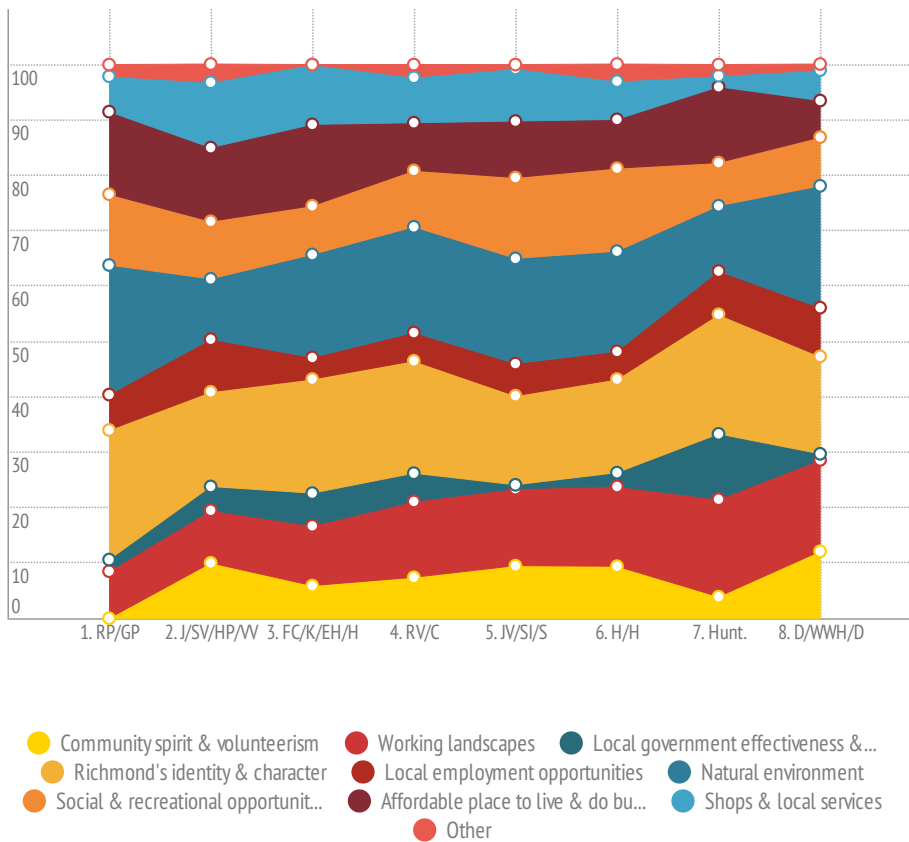
Priorities by Age Group

The three top priorities were important to all age groups, but some small differences are clear. Identity & Character was most important to all age groups except those under 20, who felt most strongly about Natural Environment, and also prioritized Shops & Local Services. Social & Recreational Opportunities were the second highest priority for 21-40 year olds. Working Landscapes and Affordability were equally important to those over 80.

There are also several clear trends with age: Affordability and Working Landscapes are more important as generations get older; Shops & Services and Social & Recreational Opportunities become less important.

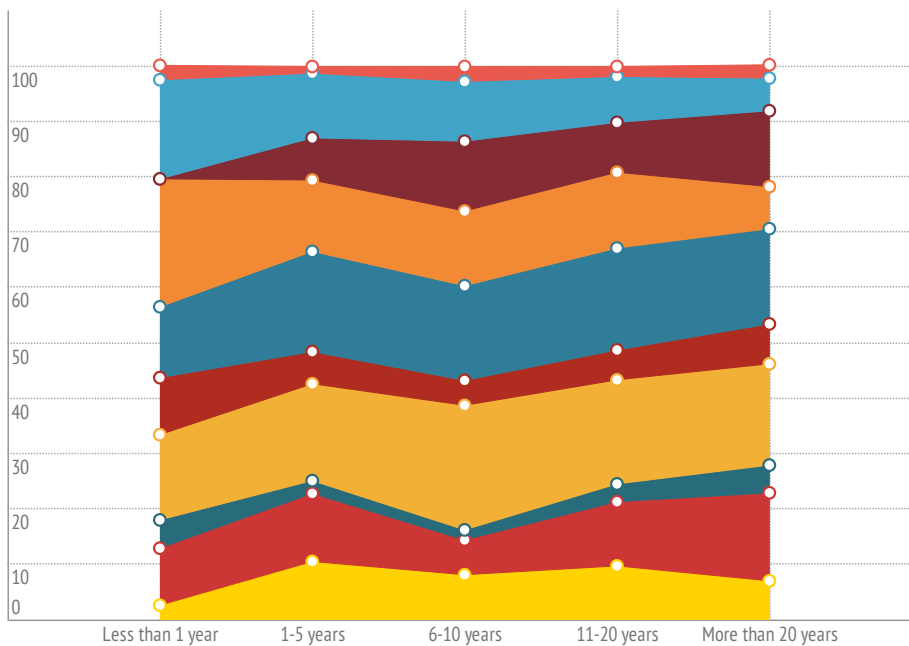


Priorities by Neighborhood



Priorities by Length of Residency

Priorities here mirror trends with age groups. The importance of Community Spirit & Volunteerism and Affordability increase with the length of time people have been in Richmond. Shops & Services and Social & Recreational Opportunities are most important to new residents.



What You Love About Richmond...

We asked people what they loved about Richmond, and gave them a blank space to reply. The answers ranged from one word to short novels, and covered just about every aspect of the community.

To analyze the responses, we first "coded" them - identifying common categories of responses, and recording whether or not each response mentioned that category. Turns out the top five categories are important across the board, for nearly all age groups. Location is also in the running for 21-60 year olds.

1 (tie!): Strong Community

Close community connections, cohesiveness, and support

1 (tie!): Services & Amenities

Everything you need, right in Richmond!

3: Small Town Character

Beautiful, quiet, and convenient village & countryside

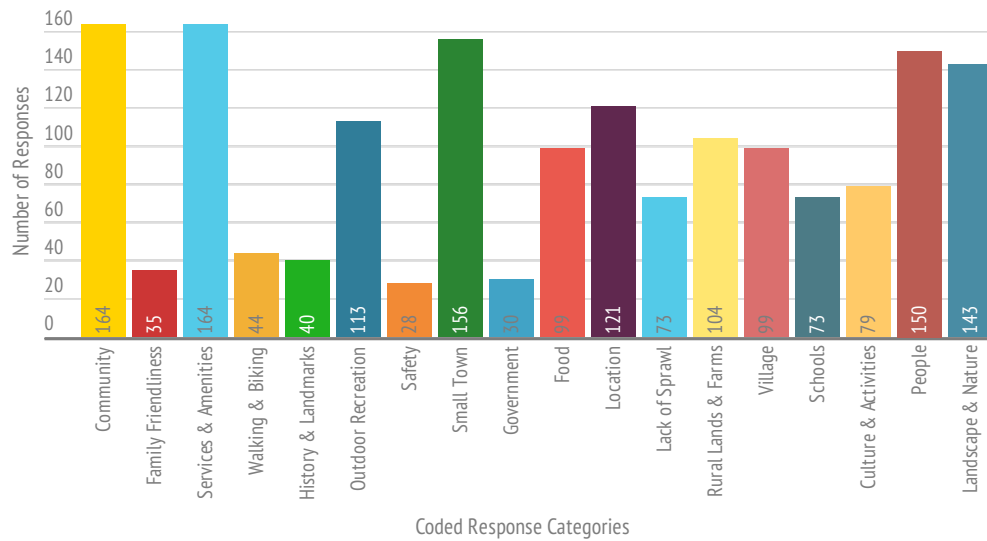
4: People

Great neighbors and friendly, diverse folks

5: Landscape & Environment

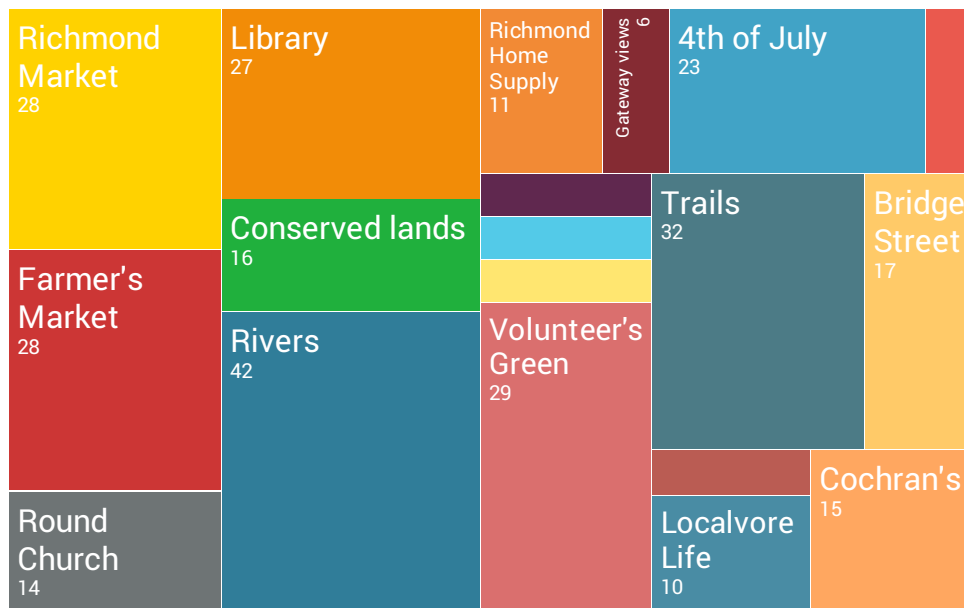
Beautiful views, rural landscape & healthy environment

More of What You Love...



Love... in Detail

Some of you are generalists - you love "food" or "businesses." But many of you go for the details - the unique places, traditions and characteristics that truly set Richmond apart. You shared dozens of things to love, but here are the most common ones.



What Makes Richmond Unique...

We also asked what sets Richmond apart from the crowd. You agreed that Richmond has a few key characteristics that make it different from many other towns nearby... and they are not always the same as what you love most about Richmond.

1 (tie!): Landscape & Environment

Open & green spaces; healthy environment; wildlife, rivers, mountains and fields

1 (tie!): Small Town Character

Friendly and unique small town feel; unique buildings; quiet, rural way of life

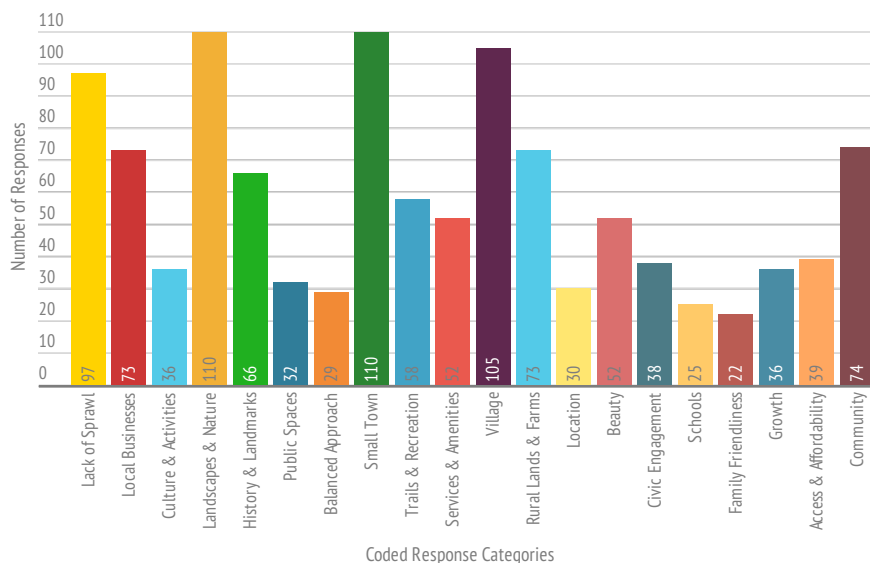
3: Village

Vibrant, compact & walkable village center with diverse services

4: Lack of Sprawl

Rural landscapes and low density development outside of village; no chain stores or cookie-cutter development; little congestion

More of What's Unique...



What Would Make Richmond Better...

Then we asked people what would make Richmond even better. Some folks felt Richmond is already perfect, but most people had an idea or two.

1: New (and improved!) businesses

New businesses and services (restaurants, pharmacy, coffee shop), increased business variety and quality

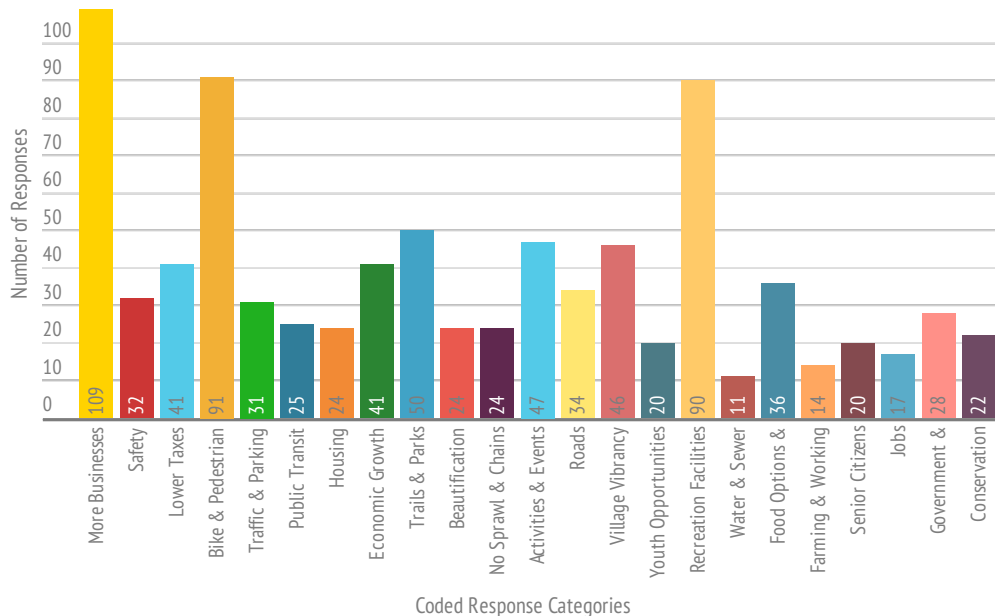
2: Safe Bike & Walking Routes

Sidewalks, bike paths, walking paths, trails and bike/pedestrian safety improvements

3: Recreation Offerings

Recreation facilities (pool, tennis courts, senior center, arts venues) and programs for all ages

More of What Would Make Richmond Better...



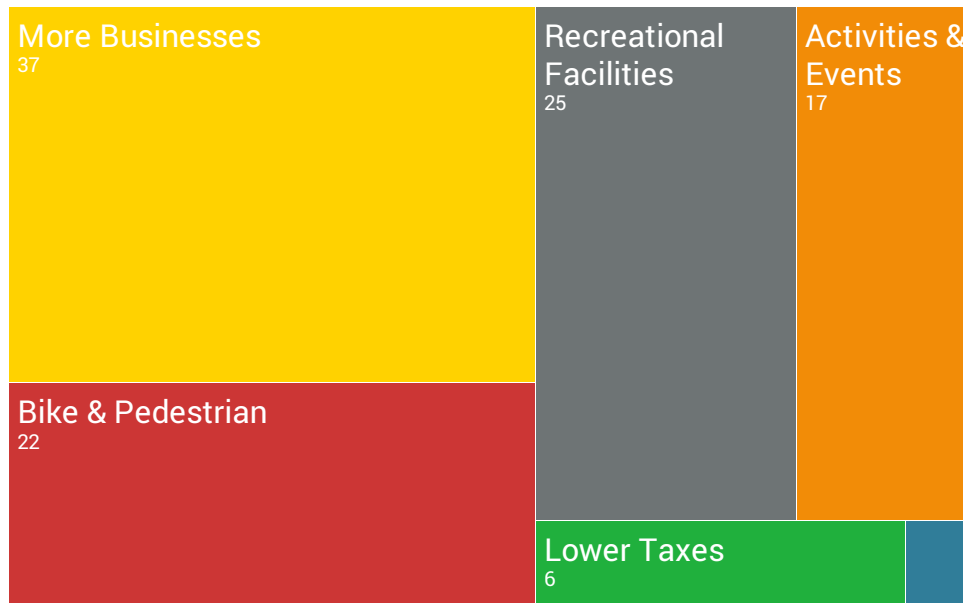
Top Improvements by Age Group

We took the top three ideas from each age group, and compared them across all age groups. The size of each square represents its importance to that age group. Look for important differences for youth & seniors.

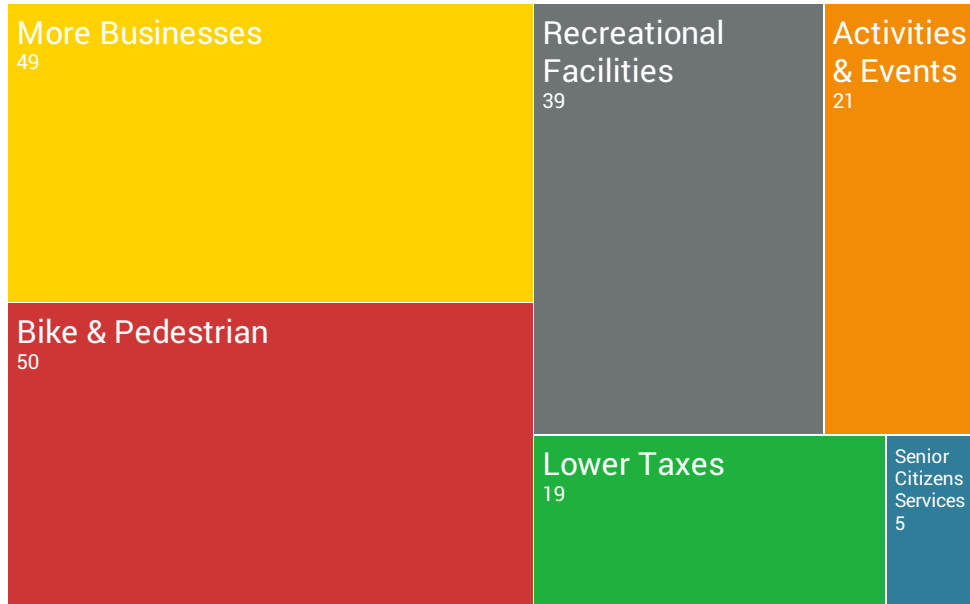
Under 20



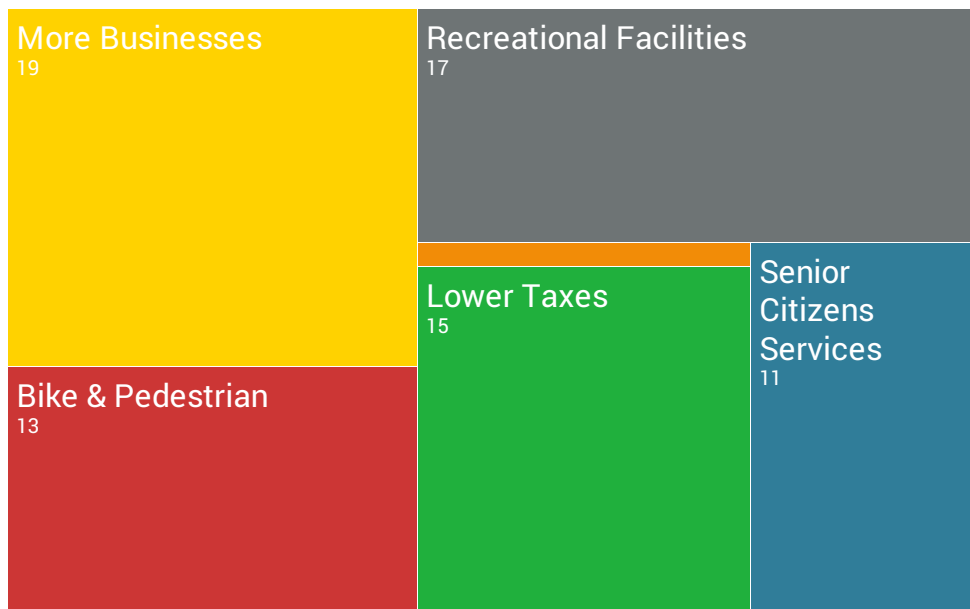
21-40



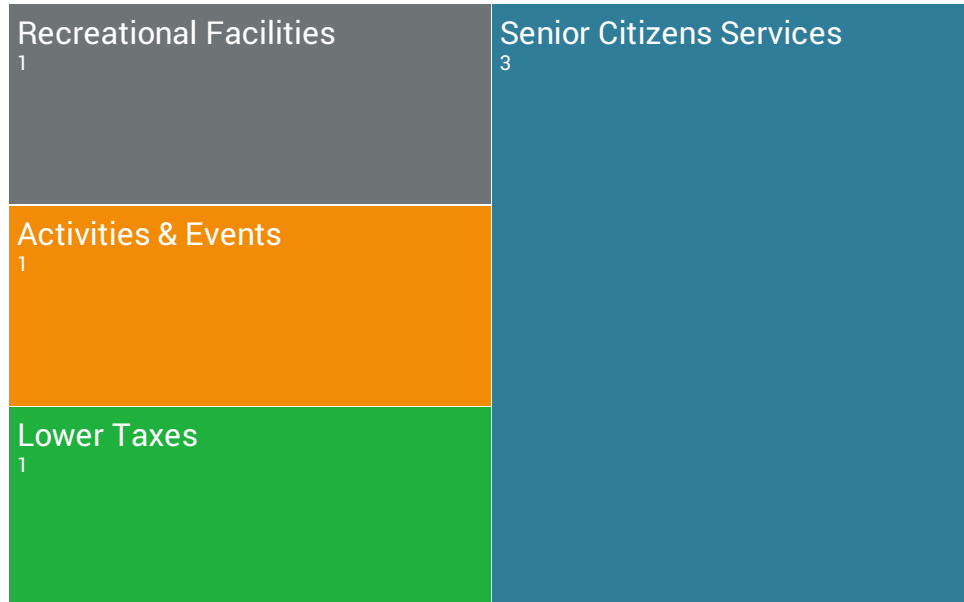
41-60



61-80

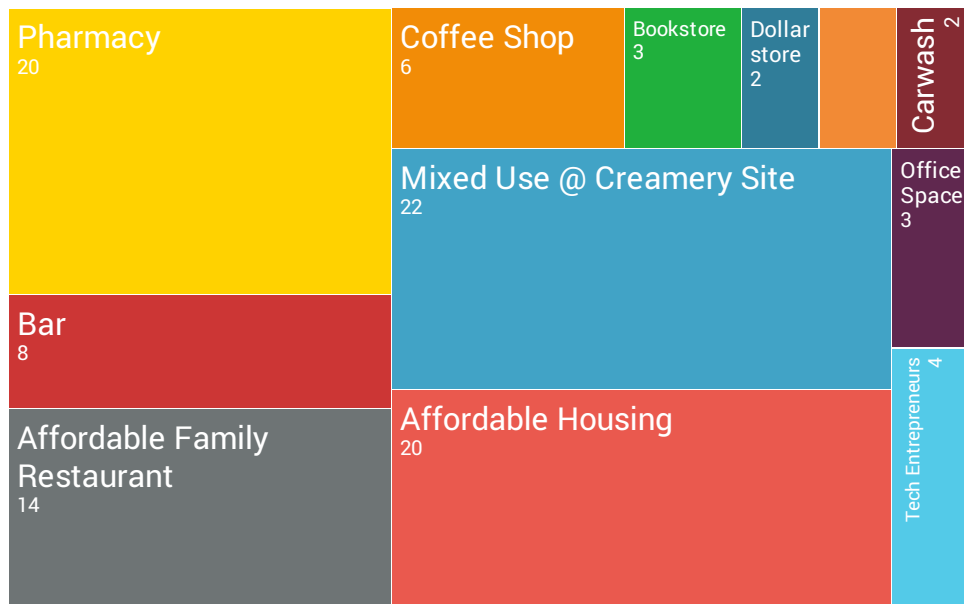


Over 80



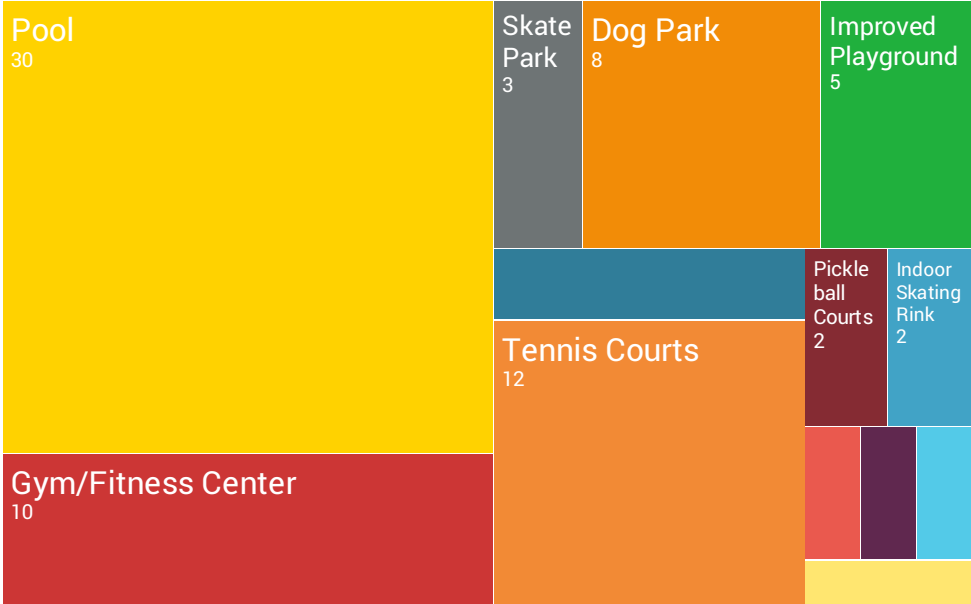
Desired Businesses & Development

We heard nearly 30 distinct ideas for types of businesses that people would like to see in Richmond. Here are the most common suggestions.



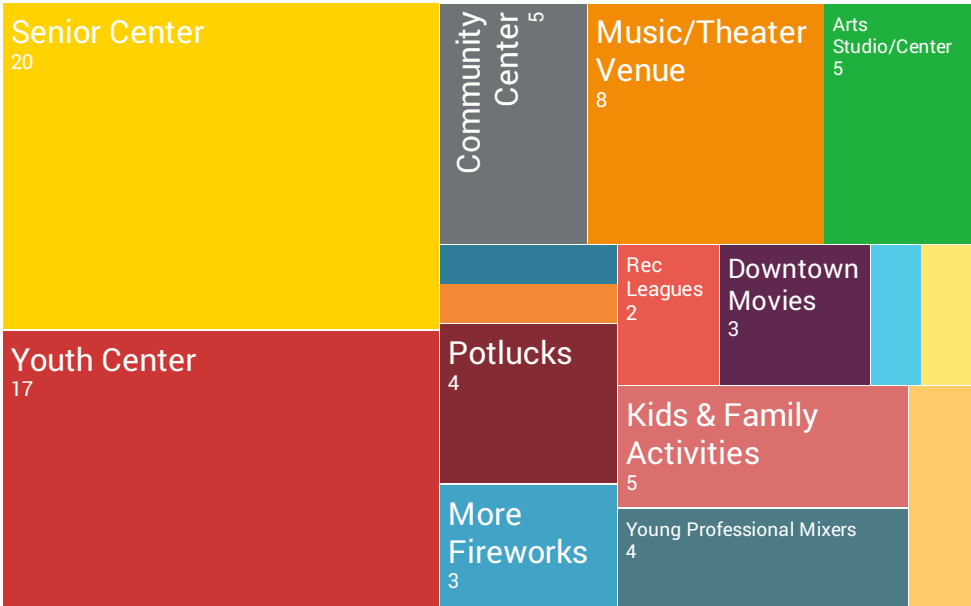
Desired Recreation Facilities

You shared more than a dozen ideas for recreation facilities that would help you get out, be active and healthy in Richmond. Here are the most popular ideas.



Desired Community Events & Facilities

You shared more than a dozen ideas for recreation facilities that would help you get out, be active and healthy in Richmond. Here are the most popular ideas.



If You Had a Magic Wand and Could Change One Thing...



What happens with all of this information? It becomes Richmond's community vision. Richmond's Town Plan Steering Committee took all of these responses, grouped them together, and condensed them into a set of 11 core values and an overarching statement about our vision for the future. That vision will then be used to guide town decision-making, policies, priorities, and our new Town Plan. Learn more at www.richmondvtfuture.weebly.com.

RICHMOND ALMANAC

A companion resource to the Richmond Town Plan

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Demographics

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4 . BASIC NEEDS + SERVICES

Housing

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INTRODUCTION

HOW CAN YOU GET VERY FAR, IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE? HOW CAN YOU DO WHAT YOU OUGHT, IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'VE GOT?

- BENJAMIN HOFF, *THE TAO OF POOH*

In 2016 and 2017, the Town of Richmond launched Our Town, Our Future – a broad community visioning process that engaged hundreds of community members in describing the future they want for Richmond. The new vision serves as the framework for Richmond’s 2018 Town Plan – a guiding document that maps out a path to achieving our vision.

Extensive community input is crucial to charting that path and identifying the needs, opportunities and strategies that lie ahead. Equally important is data – quantitative and qualitative information about conditions in the community today, an inventory of assets and characteristics, historic trends and patterns, and future projections.

The Richmond Community Almanac is a place to pull together all of that data and information. It is essential to informing and underlying our Town Plan and our strategies moving forward. It serves as a snapshot of the community at this moment in time. And we hope it will become an important community resource, of interest and value to a wide variety of community members and leaders.

GEOGRAPHY + LAND USE

The natural diversity of the 22,022 acres (34.41 sq. miles) that comprise Richmond's landscape is a reflection of the town's location astride the boundary of two of Vermont's physiographic regions: the Northern Green Mountains and the Champlain Lowlands. The landscape is dominated by foothills, which reach 1,640 feet at the town's highest elevation, and is bisected by the Winooski River, which carves out the town's lowest point at 250 feet where it flows through the lowlands into Jericho. With the exception of the extreme southwest corner of the town (which eventually drains into the LaPlatte River), the Richmond landscape is contained within the Winooski River Watershed.

The foothills are given their shape by the underlying metamorphic bedrock, which has slowly been eroding since its formation over 500 million years ago. The bedrock is part of the Mansville Complex, and is composed primarily of the Pinnacle Formation (mainly metawackes) and the Underhill Formation (mainly chlorite schist). Although the bedrock can be seen outcropping in numerous locations throughout the town, it 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 surficial material above 600 feet, whereas gravels, sands and silts are common in the valleys where ancient river terraces and deltas are exposed. Clay deposits can also be found in the lowlands, evidence that Lake Vermont (a precursor to Lake Champlain) once inundated the major river valleys with glacial meltwater for a period about 12,000 years ago.

The 74 different types of soil found in Richmond are a manifestation of the underlying geological diversity. The youngest (and most fertile) soils are found in the Winooski River floodplain, where frequent high-water events deposit fresh alluvial material on a regular basis. The soils in the higher elevations that formed in glacial till are rocky and of moderate fertility and most were abandoned agriculturally over 100 years ago. The Richmond landscape, which is approximately 80% forested, supports a diversity of natural communities. 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.

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 this newer development has 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.

Richmond village has typical small town housing density with interspersed business and commercial units. Approximately 275 (or 18%) of the Town's 1,500 dwelling units are located in the central village. This village has seen a revival of its commercial core in recent years, with the renovation of the Goodwin Baker Building for offices, several new businesses and restaurants along Bridge Street, new commercial and residential development in the Railroad Street area, and new residential development at the end of Church Street. Additionally, the old cheese factory lot on Jolina Court is slated for redevelopment. The Jonesville area has small village housing density with approximately 70 houses, two apartment buildings and a small group of commercial buildings. Riverview Commons, the Town's largest mobile home community, has approximately 150 units.

Finally, Richmond has seen a significant increase in the amount of land devoted to recreation in the last 15 years. Volunteers' Green has expanded to include approximately 22 acres of land for baseball, soccer and other recreational sports, as well as a playground and bandshell. The Richmond Land Trust has conserved parcels totaling approximately 660 acres, many of which are available for hiking, cross-country skiing, swimming, nature study and other recreational pursuits. Hunting and fishing continue to be popular both on public and private lands. 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.

DEMOGRAPHICS

As of the census of 2000, there were 4,090 people, 1,504 households, and 1,100 families residing in the town. As of the 2010 census, there were 4,081 people, and 1586 households representing a slight decrease in overall population. The projection for increase from 2000 to 2015 was about 6,000 new people. In the 2010 census the village population was 723. In 2000, racial makeup of the town was 98% Caucasian and less than 1% each: African American, Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander, Other. Hispanic or Latino of any race were less than 1% of the population. There has only been a slight change in these statistics: 97% Caucasian, and remaining races still all less than 1%.

In 2010, there were 1,586 households out of which 35.1% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 59.7% were married couples living together, 9.3% had a female householder with no husband present, and

27.2% were non-families. 4.7% households had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.56 and the average family size was 2.94.

In the town, the population was spread out with 27.3% up to the age of 19, 3.2% from 20 to 24, 25% from 25 to 44, 34.9% from 45 to 64, and 9.5% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 41.7 years. For every 100 females there were 95.7 males. For every 100 females, there were 96.0 males.

As of 2015, the median income for a household in the town was \$57,499. Males had an average income of \$66,270 versus \$48,729 for females. About 10% of the population were below the poverty line.

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 West 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 site is now being rehabilitated. 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.

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 the 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 now stands empty.

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 and Harrington's smokehouse, and 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. Since then, Richmond's population has continued to grow. (See Figure 3.1, Demographics

and Housing) In 1989, voters in the Incorporated Village of Richmond and the Town of Richmond voted to merge the two municipalities. 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. The historic village pattern, essential to the quality of life in Richmond, is threatened by suburbanization and auto dependence.

With a growing population and changes in development patterns, traditions that encourage small town neighborliness and civic involvement are threatened. Although the community benefits from the aesthetic value of historic buildings in Richmond, the expense of maintaining them falls to private landowners. Richmond's residents enjoy the benefits of open lands, farms and forests, but the financial burden to maintain these lands rests almost solely with the individual landowner. Richmond's historic truss bridges add to the aesthetic and historic character of the town and provide traffic calming benefits. It is expensive for the town to maintain these bridges. Richmond's archeological sites are important cultural resources that are threatened by increased development.

GOVERNMENT

Richmond's town government currently consists of a selectboard, town clerk, town manager, town manager assistant, financial director, zoning administrator, town planner, highway department, water and sewer department, police department, and fire department. There is a conservation commission, a planning commission, and a development review board. The elected and appointed officials who serve the Town of Richmond are a dedicated group who are committed to serving the public.

Richmond operates under a town manager form of government, whereby the Selectboard serves as the town's chief elected legislative body and 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, and has many other statutory duties. Departments under the town manager's responsibility include administration, fire, highway, police, wastewater, and solid waste.

Much of the public safety in Richmond relies on the Richmond Police, Fire Department, and Highway Department, with support from the Chittenden County Sheriff, and Vermont State Police. Crime rates are low in Richmond compared to other Chittenden County towns, but Chittenden County overall has a higher crime rate than most other counties due to its more urban nature than others.

EDUCATION

Richmond belongs to the Chittenden East Supervisory Union. Over the years, the Richmond Elementary School, Camels Hump Middle School and Mount Mansfield Union High School have gained the reputation for providing a quality education. This is reflected in both State and National Awards. The excellent reputation of

our schools continues to be due to the dedication and hard work of the teachers and support staff, the members of the School Boards, the school administrative staffs, the willingness of the residents of the Town to support their efforts, parent volunteers, and the students. Every effort must be made to maintain an excellent educational experience for all students. The mission of the Chittenden East Supervisory Union is to provide learning opportunities that are relevant and meet high standards.

The Richmond Elementary School (RES) was constructed in 1987, with an addition in 1995. There are 23 classrooms. The gym holds 144 individuals and the cafeteria 100. There is no auditorium. The Camels Hump Middle School (CHMS) was built in 1972, with an addition in 1994. It is one of two middle schools in the district, along with Brown's River Middle School. There are 25 classrooms, and a gym/auditorium that holds up to 175 individuals. Mount Mansfield Union High School (MMU) was constructed in 1967, with an addition in 1997. There are 56 classrooms, a gym that holds 780 and an auditorium that holds 450. A relatively small number of Richmond Students are in Home Study Programs.

Richmond faces a difficult problem in transporting students to their respective schools. In order to be accomplished efficiently, elementary, middle and high school students all need to share buses from their neighborhoods. This creates a system of bus runs that are planned by numbers of students, length of route and time spent picking up and discharging students guided by a strict schedule. The School District covers a large, elongated area and the logistics of transporting students are challenging. Though it is not mandated by the State, District School Boards always have supported the provision of transportation, especially given the spread-out nature of our District.

Community volunteerism also continues to be a vital part of our school system. This involves the extensive activities of Richmond residents individually and through the PTO, active community involvement in the several fund-raisers that take place annually, and the involvement and support of many local businesses. The Chittenden East Community Partnership sponsors many school-based and community events in the five towns with business, government, faith, parental and youth involvement, and funding through grants and volunteer efforts.

The Schools provide a number of non-educational services to the Town. These include a location for Town meetings, rooms in which various local government and non-government groups meet, both indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, and emergency evacuation sites (CHMS and RES).

Camels Hump Middle School is typical of many school buildings within the state in terms of resources available during times of emergency, having a generator, an auditorium, parking, bathroom and shower facilities, a kitchen and smaller areas such as classrooms, which can be used for overnight accommodations. Richmond Elementary School has all of these with the exception of showers, auditorium, and generator capacity. A recent inspection of the generator capacity at CHMS, however, indicated that although it provides sufficient power for emergency lighting it does not have sufficient capacity to run a heating system, water supply or lighting for emergency use.

In addition to education for school-aged children, child care is an important element of Richmond's educational infrastructure. Child care is especially important for families in which both parents work and single-

parent headed households, particularly during the summer months and after school hours. In addition to their social benefits, childcare facilities provide local employment opportunities and can help to build the Town's grand list.

As required by State law, Small Day Care Homes serving no more than six children are permitted wherever single family homes are permitted, and require no additional permit if occurring within an existing single family home. Larger Day Care Centers are allowed as permitted uses with DRB site plan review in the Village Commercial and Commercial Zoning Districts and as a conditional use in all other zoning districts except the Industrial/Commercial Zoning District. This additional review for larger facilities is necessary to address issues such as screening, parking and traffic that may have an impact on surrounding properties.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES + RECREATION

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 Recreation Path Committee and the Recreation Committee. The Recreation Path 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 sites

Richmond Elementary School	Ballfield, playground, gym
Camels Hump Middle	Ballfield, gym, presentation center, outdoor basketball court
Mt. Mansfield Union High (Jericho)	Ballfield, track, nature trail
Volunteers Green	Ballfields, playground, picnic area, canoe access, bandshell, primitive paths, restrooms, snowshoeing

Brown's Court	Ballfield
Old Round Church Green	Benches
Old Jericho Road Path	Recreation path
Lake Iroquois	Public beach, fishing, bathhouse and concession stand
Robbins Mountain Wildlife Area	Hiking
Privately owned sites	
Gillett Pond	Canoeing, skating, picnicking, bird watching, fishing
Safford Preserve,	
Rochford-delBianco Preserve,	
Huntington River Lower Gorge	Canoeing, hiking, nature study, swimming, picnicking, hiking, mountain biking, snowshoeing, fishing
Warren and Ruth Beeken	
Rivershore Preserve	Canoe Access
Huntington River, Upper Gorge	Swimming, picnicking, photography
Twin Hills Girl Scout Camp	Camping, hiking
Long Trail	Hiking
VAST Trails	Snowmobiling
Trail under power lines to Pinnacle	Hiking
Chittenden County Fish and Game Club	Fishing, camping, picnicking, archery, snowshoeing, hiking, shooting range
Cochran Ski Area	Skiing, Mountain Biking
VYCC Monitor Barn Property	Outdoor Education
Prelco Property	Hiking only

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.

The Richmond Free Library was established in 1888 and is currently housed in the renovated Universalist Church, now owned by the Town. Since 1979, the library has met Vermont Public Library standards. Music rooms on the third floor can be used for music lessons, tutoring, and small group meetings, while the

community room on the second floor is available for larger meetings and assemblies. The library continues to need additional floor space for new shelving, computers and multi-media storage.

ECONOMY

In order to develop its economy, protect its environment, and preserve its sense of place, Richmond will continue to develop as dynamic village areas, including the village, an additional village center in Jonesville as well as smaller residential hamlets in other areas of town, and several outlying areas that have been designated “commercial” and/or “industrial” through the planning process, surrounded by a rural landscape. Development will be encouraged in existing village areas to maximize the efficiency of town services, to promote accessibility to existing services and resources, and to minimize the fragmentation of our rural areas. The Richmond village will serve as the social and economic hub of our community and efforts will be made to maintain the historical integrity of our growth center.

Trends in transportation costs and fuel prices could make Richmond’s farms and forests even more valuable, as more people turn to local sources for food, and more homes and businesses switch to burning wood to save on heating costs. However, other trends in our global economy make it more difficult than ever for small farms and forestry operations to make a profit. Reversing these trends will take not only innovative public initiatives but also the conscious effort of residents to buy locally produced foods whenever possible.

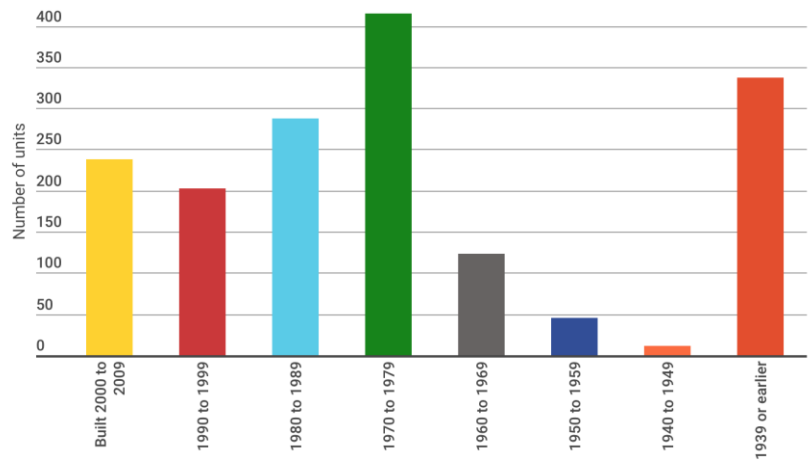
Most Richmond businesses continue to thrive and several new businesses have cropped up in the last five years. Local small business is crucial to the success of Richmond as a community and as an economy. Employment within Richmond itself is scarcer than in the surrounding communities. More employment opportunities lie in the greater Burlington and Montpelier areas.

HOUSING

Trends in housing construction and stock in Richmond closely track changes in demographics and the economy. The amount, type and location of housing in Richmond has changed significantly over time, as the population has shifted and the economy has changed. What’s available today primarily reflects the needs during Richmond’s greatest period of growth – the 1960s. Our challenge moving forward is to ensure that Richmond’s housing stock meets the needs of today and tomorrow.

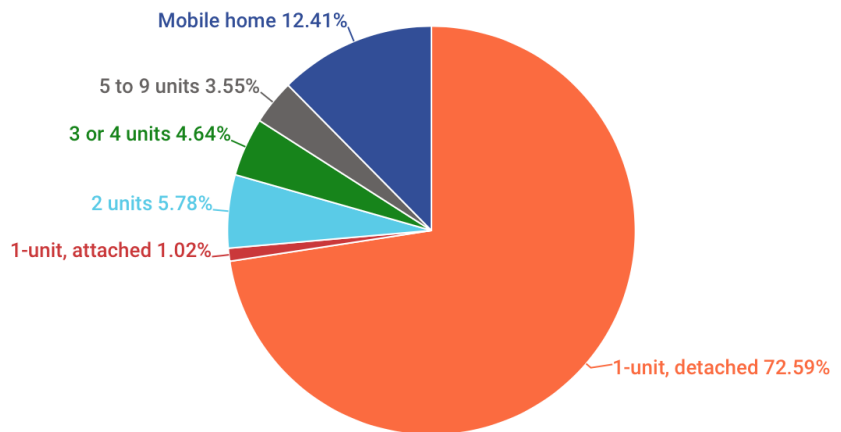
From the founding of Richmond to the 1950s, most housing consisted of single-family homes and farms. Homes were clustered in village centers (such as Jonesville and Fay’s Corner), and farms were distributed across the rural landscape.

The 1960s-1980s marked a period of rapid growth in Richmond, with the population growing from 1,303 to 3,159 (including an increase of more than 70% in the 1960s alone). Housing stock likewise grew rapidly to accommodate the increase in residents. More than 400 housing units were constructed during the 1970s, and this mid-century housing still forms a large percentage of Richmond’s housing stock today.



Growth slowed in the early 2000s for the first time in 50 years, in conjunction with the economic downturn. Since 2010, the town has experienced very little population growth (an increase of about 50 people from 2000 to 2014), and housing units have only increased 8% in that time.

The majority of the housing stock today consists of low-density single-family homes that were built in the latter half of the 1900s. The majority is located throughout the large geographic area defined as the Agriculture/Residential Zoning District, where the minimum lot size is 1 acre. Richmond is more rural than most of Chittenden County, with housing more spread out across the landscape, but housing density is greater than in adjacent towns like Bolton and Huntington. Most homes in Richmond are owner-occupied housing, and that number increased slightly from 80% in 2000 to 82% in 2010. This is significantly higher than Chittenden County overall at 65%, where many more homes are occupied by renters.



That corresponds with demographics: younger residents (25-34 years of age) are more likely to live in renter-occupied units. Richmond’s vacancy rate is lower than that (4%), meaning that options are limited for people seeking housing.

A “healthy” housing vacancy rate is 5%.

Aside from single-family homes, mobile homes are the most common alternative. Most (75%) are concentrated in the Riverview Commons Mobile Home Park, which has 150 lots.

Richmond's population predictions show a relatively stable population over the next 10-15 years (ranging from a decline of about 180 people to an increase of about 35 people). That means that there will not be a significant demand for new housing based on population alone. Richmond's demographics will change significantly, however, which will create demand for different types of housing. The number of older residents is increasing, while the number of children and young adults is shrinking.

Housing costs are a major component of affordability overall. They generally include mortgage or rent, property taxes and insurance. Additional costs related to housing include heating and cooling, power and electric, and other utilities such as water and sewer. Based upon Vermont State Statute, "affordable housing" means "Housing that is owned by its inhabitants whose gross annual household income does not exceed 80 percent of the county median income."

Housing is considered affordable when less than 30% of household income goes toward housing costs.

Richmond home values and rental costs are higher than in other Chittenden County towns. "Affordable housing" in Richmond is very limited in part due to the types of housing stock. But even housing that is traditionally considered affordable costs more than average in Richmond.

Rental costs for Richmond specific apartments is not available, but in 2015, the average fair market rent for a 2-bedroom apartment in the greater Burlington area was \$1,328 a month. A renter would need to earn \$25.54 per hour to afford that rent, or \$53,120 per year. In Richmond, the median household income for renters is only \$34,444, which is particularly challenging for low-income families, single-earner households, seniors, or young adults entering the workforce.

"Workforce housing" is another way of evaluating affordability. Workforce housing is generally considered to be housing that is affordable for people who fill core community jobs, such as police officers, teachers, cashiers, trades people and highway maintenance workers. The Richmond Annual Report (FY 2014/2015) shows that highway personnel earn \$10 - \$17 an hour and police officers earn \$14 - \$23 an hour, which is far below the income needed to afford most Richmond housing.

The median income of renter households in Richmond is \$34,444, which is \$18,676 less than what is needed to afford that average fair market rent. Additionally, based upon census data 49% of Richmond renters do pay 35% or more of monthly income for rent.

Mobile homes tend to be an affordable option in Vermont, but Riverview Commons is one of the largest – and most expensive – mobile home parks. The average lot rent at Riverview Commons increased by 8.9% from 2010-2014, and is now \$420 per month – 31% more expensive than the state average (according to data from the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development).

The Vermont Directory of Affordable Rental Housing shows a total of 32 affordable units in Richmond, representing less than 2% of Richmond's housing stock; half are reserved for elderly and/or disabled residents.

Most homeowners have home insurance that covers the structure and the owner's possessions; basic insurance is typically required in order to get a mortgage. Renters may choose to purchase Renters' Insurance, which covers personal property kept within the rented unit. Homeowners living in floodplains and flood-prone areas may choose (or be required to) take out flood insurance as well.

Flood insurance costs are typically high, but Richmond is a participating member of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which means that homeowners can purchase NFIP flood insurance. As of September 30, 2015 there were 56 residential properties that carried flood insurance in Richmond. Richmond is one of the top 10 towns in the State with the highest number of structures in the floodplain. Based upon information from the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), two inches of floodwater in the living area of an average 2,000 square foot home would result in over \$20,000 of damages.

Flood insurance costs are getting even higher due to changes in the NFIP and increasing losses and claims across the country. The long-term rates and costs are still uncertain, but it's clear that living in a floodplain is a costly business. In order to participate in the NFIP, Richmond is required to administer specific floodplain zoning regulations. Currently, the Richmond flood hazard regulations exceed the NFIP's threshold requirements and do not allow for any new housing units to be built in the floodplain. Furthermore if a home has sustained substantial damage or is planning a substantial improvement the home must seek zoning approval and incorporate flood-proofing measures to reduce risk, which also reduces insurance premiums.

FEMA Flood Mitigation Funding at Work

In 2014 Richmond bought out a home on Cochran Road with this funding, and removed the structure from the floodplain. In 2014, the Town applied for funds to help elevate a handful of homes above the floodplain.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides funding to NFIP municipalities to purchase and remove structures in the floodplain and provides funding to help elevate houses above the base flood elevation, which eliminates or reduces the potential for future flood damages.

TRANSPORTATION

Most Richmond residents have and rely on standard cars, but demand is increasing for a wide variety of transportation options, from bus and rail service to bikeable and walkable streets and trails and electric vehicles.

Richmond includes some infrastructure or support for a diverse range of transportation modes, but options are limited for anything other than personal vehicles. Most Richmond residents own at least one car, and we have approximately 85 miles of roadway (including state-owned, town-owned and private). We also maintain extensive road infrastructure to support them, including more than 30 bridges and 712 culverts. Richmond also maintains numerous parking spaces and lots; a 2015 study showed that most public lots are sufficient for parking volumes, but the Depot Street Lot is overburdened. While electric vehicle popularity is growing, there

are currently no known public charging stations for electric vehicles in Richmond (or anywhere between Montpelier and Williston).

Changing demographics and regional growth do impact traffic patterns and volumes locally. Traffic counts overall are relatively stable, or even decreasing on many roads. At the same time, increased volumes and congestion are causing problems on certain key community routes and choke points— such as the Route 2 and Bridge Street intersection, which also has the worst safety rating in town. The majority of Richmond residents (82%) commute out of town for work, the largest employment centers are Williston/South Burlington/Burlington, and Waterbury/Montpelier.

Richmond has a popular Park N Ride near Interstate 89, which enables carpooling and access to an I-89 commuter bus, but most commuters (88%) still travel in personal vehicles. There is no weekend or evening bus service and no stop or access point in the downtown or villages. A rail line runs through Richmond, carrying freight and the once-daily Amtrak passenger service, but there are no stops in Richmond. The supplemental ride service Neighbor Rides helps fill transportation gaps for seniors or those with disabilities or special needs, but there are no supplemental ride services for most residents.

Active or human-powered transportation (primarily biking and walking) is increasingly popular among many residents, for its many benefits – recreation, health, sustainability, convenience, affordability, energy efficiency and more. Richmond has a sidewalk system in the village area, which helps improve safety and vibrancy downtown, but there is no dedicated infrastructure to support biking or walking outside the village, or to make these options safer. Richmond has long held a goal of improving bikeability and walkability, and it was one of the most common themes during the visioning process. Several studies, including our Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan, detail specific recommendations and locations for bike lanes, signage, sidewalk extensions and other high priority improvements. Richmond conducted a pop-up installation of high priority enhanced crosswalks in the village during this planning process, and found a need for updated and potentially relocated crosswalks in the village.

Road maintenance and construction are among the greatest costs to the town; reducing vehicle use and improving road resilience are critical strategies for controlling municipal costs and tax rates and meeting energy goals. Improvements to transportation infrastructure are also expensive, but can be minimized by integrating them into other planned upgrades (such as paving projects or bridge replacements) and by using pop-up design demonstrations to test and refine designs before final installation.

ENERGY AND UTILITIES

Richmond has two major electrical providers: Green Mountain Power and VELCO. Richmond also has its own municipal village water and sewer system. Energy is one of the greatest expenses for the Town of Richmond and most households – as well as the state and the planet. Vermont released a Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP) in 2016 that recognizes the importance of energy to our communities, and the “urgent need to mitigate

the global climate change that is resulting from greenhouse gas emissions..." The CEP includes a statewide goal of ensuring that 90% of Vermont energy will be derived from renewable sources by 2050.

THE TABLES BELOW SHOW THE TRANSITION IN THE AMOUNT OF ENERGY OBTAINED FROM VARIOUS FUEL SOURCE NEEDED TO MEET THE GOAL OF THE VERMONT ENERGY POLICIES:

	2015	2025	2035	2050
Total Commercial and Industrial Thermal Energy Use (MMBtu)				
Base Use	90,792	90,347	90,357	90,372
Reduction in Use Target		22,587	29,368	36,149
Reduced Total Energy	90,792	67,760	60,989	54,223
Renewable Goal		16,940	24,396	48,801
Heat Pumps	167	6,170	9,570	20,697
Wood Heat	6,764	10,770	14,826	21,704
Biogas		160	1,600	6,400
Renewable Total	6,931	17,100	25,996	48,801

	2015	2025	2035	2050
Total Residential Thermal Energy Use (MMBtu)				
Base Use	155,141	152,038	148,997	146,017
Reduction in Use Target		22,806	35,715	48,624
Reduced Total Energy	90,792	76,795	68,534	60,278
Renewable Goal		19,199	27,414	54,250
Heat Pumps	1,531	1,531	466	22,703
Wood Heat	24,255	24,498	26,947	30,989
Biogas		186	279	558
Renewable Total	25,786	26,215	27,693	54,250

	2015	2025	2035	2050
Transportation Energy Use (MMBtu)				
Base Use	219,008	208,058	197,655	187,772
Reduction in Use Target		31,209	95,051	63,842
Reduced Total Energy	219,008	176,849	102,604	123,930
Renewable Goal		17,685	41,041	111,537
Electric Vehicles	1,531	14,148	32,833	78,076
Renewable Biofuel		3,537	8,208	33,461
Renewable Total	1,531	17,685	41,041	111,537

	2015	2025	2035	2050
Electrical Energy Load (kWh)				
Residential Base	12,570,707	11,313,636	10,182,273	9,164,045
Commercial and Industrial Base	5,754,611	5,697,065	5,640,094	5,583,693
Total Base	18,325,318	17,010,701	15,822,367	14,747,739
Reduction in Use Target		2,551,605	2,373,355	2,212,161
Electric Load	18,325,318	14,459,096	13,449,012	12,535,578
Renewable Goal		3,614,774	5,379,605	11,282,020
From Electric Conversion		2,510,587	4,678,101	13,986,805
Renewable Target		6,125,361	10,057,706	25,268,825

Areas within the former boundaries of Incorporated Village of Richmond are served by municipal water and sewer. The village is served by a municipal water system. It is a treated, gravel-packed well and tanks with a 250,000-gallon storage capacity which serves approximately 300 structures comprising 720 individual units. Waterhouse upgrades were completed in 1999 adding an aeration system to reduce lead and copper levels for improved water quality. Approximately 70,000 gallons are consumed daily, equaling less than 30% of the total capacity.

The village is also served by a municipal wastewater treatment facility located on Esplanade. The wastewater collection system was expanded in 1999 along Cochran road to cover the remainder of the homes in the service area. The plant was upgraded in 2005, when a \$3.9 million project to reduce phosphorous discharged to 0.8 mg/l was completed.

An ordinance governing the water/sewer district of the Incorporated Village of Richmond went into effect in 1972 and is on file in Town Clerk's office. It specifies required uses in the service area, the requirements for hookups, states that all expenses are the responsibility of the users and states the power and authority vested in the inspectors. In 1993 an ordinance was adopted for the allocation of future hookups depending on use, consumption and other criteria.

Transfer of the ownership and management of the Incorporated Village of Richmond sewer/water system to the Town of Richmond accompanied the merger of the Town and Village in 1989. Transfer was subjected to all indebtedness and liabilities and placed the District under control of the Selectboard. The Selectboard has the authority to appoint three to five water and sewer commissioners or to constitute themselves as the board of commissioners. In either case, they have the responsibility of overseeing the operation of the system and of establishing rates and charges.

At present, the Selectboard has chosen to serve as board of commissioners. The 2006 Town Charter change allows up to two customers to serve on the board of commissioners. Day to day operation is the responsibility of the full-time paid superintendent and his two full-time staff. The Selectboard also has the authority to designate areas of the Town as special water and sewer system districts if approved by a majority of all voters residing in the proposed district at a special meeting. The Water and Sewer Commission has the authority to specify an annual service tax to cover all expenses related to the system. These moneys cannot be used for any

other purpose. The municipal water and sewer systems are an asset to the village not available in many surrounding communities.

In addition to the municipal water supply, there are five public water supply wells in Richmond, each serving at least fifteen full-time hookups or 25 individuals. These five public water systems are maintained privately by either a homeowners association or by individual owners of wells. The State of Vermont Water Supply Division requires routine inspection of existing community systems. These systems are listed in the Natural Resources Section of the Town Plan under "Groundwater."

All development outside of the municipal sewer system relies on sub-surface waste disposal systems: i.e. septic systems. In 2001, Richmond updated its ordinance, which sets local standards for septic system design, construction and maintenance. A failed septic system is a health hazard, as untreated sewage may flow onto the ground and pollute surface water or wells. Many replacements occur when properties are being sold, as many buyers are more aware of potential problems or are advised by their Realtors to have a septic system inspection prior to purchase. As a rule, a properly designed and installed disposal system generally lasts about 15 to 20 years. However, a properly maintained system in a well-drained soil could last decades.

In 2002, Vermont amended the laws governing the regulation of on-site septic systems. These laws no longer always allow development on a parcel that exceeds 10 acres in area, regardless of the suitability of its soils for a septic system. To offset the elimination of this exception, the State revised the rules related to the construction of septic systems on "marginally suited" soils and instituted rules that would allow property owners to propose innovative approaches for on-site wastewater treatment. The allowance of innovative and alternative approaches and the construction of systems on "marginally suited soils" may allow additional development in certain areas of town. However, new treatment techniques may also allow clustering of units to preserve more sensitive surrounding areas

Richmond is a member of the Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD), which operates a drop off site located on Rogers Lane in Richmond. The major issue facing the District at this time involves siting of a new regional landfill. In addition to individual trash removal and recycling by local residents, many of Richmond's residents employ private haulers to remove household refuse and recyclables.

HEALTHCARE

A majority of healthcare for Richmond residents is found elsewhere, especially with the University of Vermont Health Center hospital in nearby Burlington. Within Richmond, there is a pediatrician, assisted living facility, physical therapy, and Richmond Rescue. Currently the cost of healthcare is the largest burden versus the access to it. The federal Affordable Care Act was passed under the tenure of President Barack Obama, but is currently under scrutiny and possible repeal by the Republican-Majority congress. Right now, the future of that coverage program is up in the air. Richmond has a strong desire for a pharmacy to be built or placed somewhere in town, as this need can only be filled by traveling to neighboring towns. Richmond is an overall healthy but

aging community. Access to facilities and prescriptions for residents will be a crucial component of Richmond's progress moving forward.

ENVIRONMENT + CONSERVATION

Since the late 1970s, Richmond has recognized the importance of regulating and planning for our land use in protecting our community character and quality of life. But Richmond's zoning map and land use regulations have changed little since they were enacted during that time, and the regulations are not necessarily in line with Richmond's land use goals today.

Today, Richmond is poised to proactively direct future growth, investment and land use, which will help the Town strategically advance the vision and the goals, targets and actions contained within this plan. Revisiting and adjusting our land use regulations will help us build vibrant village centers, maintain our rural character and working lands, create efficient transportation options, and improve affordability.

Richmond's land use is primarily a combination of undeveloped and agricultural land, scattered homes and compact neighborhoods, and areas of denser mixed-use or commercial development in village centers and along Richmond's main transportation corridors.

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 far less pressure than towns closer to Burlington, but if Burlington continues to grow and housing prices to 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. Richmond borders three towns that are even more rural (Huntington, Hinesburg and Bolton), so the outlying agricultural areas are unlikely to face growth pressure from adjacent towns.

The Town of Richmond currently has a comprehensive set of zoning regulations. The zoning regulations evolve in conjunction with the town planning process. In order to implement the town plan, zoning regulations must match the intentions and goals provided in this document.

Richmond is a town with many and varied natural resources, among them diverse wildlife habitats, working farms and forests, unique shoreline environments and outstanding natural beauty. Our town's location in the eastern uplands of Chittenden County places us in an area noted for some of the richest habitat diversity in all of Vermont. The Winooski River and its wide, fertile floodplain provide many ecological, economic and aesthetic benefits of their own.

All told, the quality of life Richmond residents enjoy and have stated they want to protect is closely tied to the quality of the town's rural character and natural resources. In 2005, Richmond voters approved the creation of a conservation reserve fund to be funded by town taxpayers for five years.

Richmond is located within three watersheds, the Winooski River watershed, the Huntington River watershed and the LaPlatte River watershed. The Winooski watershed (excluding the Huntington River portion)

encompasses roughly two-thirds of the town and receives drainage from those areas of town generally north of Bryant Hill (above Cochran's Ski Area) and Owls Head. The Huntington River watershed collects water from uplands surrounding the Huntington River, and the LaPlatte River watershed contains a small portion of Richmond in the vicinity of Lake Iroquois.

Two of Vermont's major rivers flow through Richmond, a portion of Lake Iroquois is located in Richmond, and there are also a number of ponds, streams, brooks and unnamed tributaries. The quality of these waters is essential to Richmond in many ways. They serve as a source of recreation, provide visual amenities that enhance the rural character of the town, and support a wide variety of fish, wildlife and plant species, greatly contributing to the natural diversity in Richmond.

Surface waters with a designated shoreline as identified by the State of Vermont include:

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

Other prominent surface waters include Donohue Brook, Johnnie Brook, Snipe Island Brook and Mill Brook.

Since 2002, the Huntington Conservation Commission has coordinated regular water quality testing at approximately 20 sites along the Huntington River in Huntington, with funding from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. In winter of 2005, Richmond and Huntington began a collaborative public outreach effort to educate residents in the Huntington River Watershed of potential threats to the watershed and positive steps they could take to address these threats. To better understand and monitor the condition of the Huntington River, the Richmond Conservation Commission began coordinating regular water quality testing along the Richmond portion of the river in the summer of 2006.

A floodplain is the area bordering a lake or river that is subject to flooding. In 2006, Richmond began identifying waterways susceptible to erosion through a Fluvial Geomorphology study conducted by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission. Floodplains not only protect property and life by reducing the severity of flooding but also provide wildlife habitat and serve as corridors for animal movement. They also represent some of the richest and most viable agricultural land in Richmond because of a concentration of alluvial deposits left by past floods.

Clean and plentiful groundwater is a critical resource for the health and wellbeing of Richmond's residents. Statewide, 66% of Vermonters depend on groundwater for their primary water supply. This number is significantly higher in Richmond, where nearly all residents obtain their water from public and private wells and springs. The most significant quantities of groundwater are found in aquifers, which are geologic formations that have the capability to store, transmit and yield useful quantities of water to a well or spring.

In Richmond, the importance of groundwater to the health of Town residents, present and future, makes protection of groundwater resources a top priority. Higher quality water is also less expensive to treat. The VERMONT Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has published a groundwater protection handbook , which is an excellent source of information about groundwater resources, threats to groundwater and tools local governments can use to protect groundwater. The DEC also has a model Groundwater Protection Ordinance that can be used as a guide for regulations protecting groundwater. In 1996, the Town adopted a Water Supply Source Protection Ordinance setting forth protective regulations for the municipal water supply.

Richmond's geological features, including hills and ridgelines, are an important part of the town's heritage that provide recreational and aesthetic enjoyment, educational and research opportunities, and protection of immediate and surrounding natural resources. Some of these hills and ridgelines are characterized by steep slopes, which are generally defined as slopes in excess of 15 percent. Disturbance of steep slopes can result in soil instability, slumping and erosion, conditions that can degrade surface waters and threaten human life and property.

Richmond offers a diverse array of wildlife habitats. Many parts of Richmond still see relatively little human use, allowing flora and fauna to exist and interact in naturally functioning, complex communities. In particular, the town is home to black bear, bobcat, otter, fisher, mink, and moose – animals high on the food chain that require large and varied areas to survive and which therefore are indicators of the overall health of the local ecosystem. Black bear production and seasonal habitat consists of extensive, remote forestland with special areas, such as mast production areas (stands of nut-producing trees), wetlands and travel corridors. Perhaps more than any other species known to occur in Richmond, the black bear stands as a symbol of wilderness. Large, unbroken tracts of forest connected by forested travel corridors are favored to accommodate this wide-ranging 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. 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. Some local streams are also home to stocked fish.

Rare or uncommon species found in Richmond include certain plant species associated with rich northern hardwood forests or floodplain forests. Among them are 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 another rare fern, the slender cliffbrake, growing along the East Cliffs near Dugway Road. In addition, Richmond is home to at least one rare insect and one rare reptile.

Through the State's voluntary Current Use Program, owners of farm and forest land can reduce their property taxes as long as they keep their land in production. Despite the opportunities, though, economic pressures and other reasons continue to cause farmers to sell off parts of their land to development. Economically healthy, environmentally responsible farms and forests have benefited Richmond residents since our town was founded. They remain a vital resource for our community, helping us become more self-sufficient in producing food, fuel

and construction materials, providing customers for local businesses and protecting many critical natural resources, including prime agricultural soils and wildlife habitat that are disappearing elsewhere.

Trends in transportation costs and fuel prices could make Richmond's farms and forests even more valuable, as more people turn to local sources for food, and more homes and businesses switch to burning wood to save on heating costs. However, other trends in our global economy make it more difficult than ever for small farms and forestry operations to make a profit. Reversing these trends will take not only innovative public initiatives but also the conscious effort of residents to buy locally produced foods whenever possible.

Sand and gravel deposits are important natural resources. Utilization of these resources is often hindered by land use regulations and by public attitudes toward sand and gravel extraction. Identification of the highest quality sand and gravel deposits as part of the town planning process should help to avoid conflicts in the utilization of these resources in the future. Extraction of sand and gravel can pollute surface and groundwater resources while also having adverse effects on other resources and adjoining land use. Erosion and runoff controls combined with restoration of sites after operations can minimize the damage that is caused.

Two major features dominate Richmond's landscape: the foothills of the Green Mountains and the Winooski River Valley. 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. Richmond is also fortunate to have many tree-lined streets in its village and along its outlying roads. Trees provide shade, beauty and habitat; can serve as food sources, and reduce air and noise pollution. Properly sited street trees can also have important traffic calming effects and improve pedestrian safety. In addition to these benefits, street trees can improve neighborhood property values. Species in Richmond include the stately sugar maple and at least one rare American elm.

Air pollution can cause a number of serious illnesses such as chronic bronchitis, asthma, emphysema, cancer or damage to the kidneys, liver and central nervous system. There are a number of significant sources of air pollution in Vermont, the largest being the automobile. Another source of air pollution once common in Vermont 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.