



JERICHO COMMERCIAL DISTRICT MASTER PLAN

A Vision for the Future

August 20, 2019



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Community Development

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I. The Master Plan: Origin and Use

Vermont has a long history of supporting planning at the municipal level. State statute enables communities to adopt a Municipal Plan, and in the case of communities that have zoning regulation, a Plan is required. A Municipal Plan presents a community's vision for the future, creates policy to support the vision, and includes an implementation plan to actually bring the vision to fruition. The Municipal Plan is, in essence, a guide for what a community wants to become and how it will get there. The Plan provides the basis for zoning regulations, capital planning and other policy and regulation in that community.

As part of the Municipal Plan, communities can develop "supporting plans" (see sidebar) that provide greater detail or guidance with regard to a specific topic. Many communities, for example, have adopted Stormwater Master Plans as a way of identifying stormwater-related issues, developing policies relating to maintenance and prioritizing future investments. On their own, supporting plans are merely informational. But, communities can opt to incorporate (either by reference or by bringing them into the Municipal Plan) them into their Municipal Plans, adding their information, policies and implementation items into the document. In doing so, a community is making the supporting plan a part of its overall vision for the future.

A master plan is a type of Supporting Plan. Typically, it is a planning document that provides a conceptual layout to guide future growth and development. Master planning focuses on the connections between buildings, social settings, and their surrounding environments. A master plan often includes analysis, recommendations, and proposals for a site's population, economy, housing, transportation, community facilities, and land use. It should be based on public input, surveys, planning initiatives, existing development, physical characteristics, and social and economic conditions.

In the context of this project, a the Commercial District Master Plan is a visionary and strategic document that will, if adopted by the Planning Commission after town-wide consideration, be incorporated into the Municipal Plan. It outlines the goals and objectives for the future and be used by the community as a guide suggesting land use policy, infrastructure investment and decision-making.

Supporting Plans

Municipalities are authorized by Statute (V.S.A. Title 24, §4432) to utilize "supporting plans" as a non-regulatory tool for implementing the duly adopted Plan for the Municipality.

A Master Plan is not a regulatory document in itself, but it can be incorporated into the municipality's policy and planning documents. In doing so, the community is formalizing its intent to implement some or all of the Plan in some capacity.

II. Commercial District Master Planning Process

A. Background

The Jericho Commercial District is a zoning district located between Jericho Corners and Riverside Village. The district is roughly 131 acres and is split by Route 15. Existing development is mixed use, with more residential than commercial on a per parcel basis. Commercial development is mostly community service-based, offering a variety of options including auto repair, veterinary, and chiropractic service. There are three businesses that are primarily retail in nature (See Appendix B. Map #1: Current Land Use by Type).

The regulations which guide development in the Commercial District have not been revised in some time and were identified by the planning commission as a priority. In 2016 Jericho hired a consultant to assist with a revision of these regulations. When a draft of proposed revisions to the Commercial District regulations was developed, there was a significant amount of resistance. In particular, residents and landowners in the district felt that they had not been adequately consulted with regard to their vision for the district. The Planning Commission hired Dubois and King in 2018 to develop a Master Plan for the district. This process would include significant, direct engagement with residents and landowners in the Commercial District.

B. Existing Conditions Analysis

Dubois & King conducted an analysis of existing conditions that included the following:

- **Existing Development** – Existing development was reviewed to determine potential for infill and or redevelopment.
- **Existing Infrastructure** – Locations of existing infrastructure were reviewed to identify opportunities later in the process.
- **Infrastructure Capacity** – A basic assessment of existing capacity, including locations of infrastructure was conducted. Additionally utility providers were contacted for more detailed system information and to identify the feasibility of connecting to or expanding those systems. Potential costs of infrastructure improvements were considered as part of this analysis.
- **Existing Land Capacity** – Constraints such as wetlands, rivers, soils and slopes were identified and a GIS analysis was conducted to determine development potential by parcel based on site limitations and regulatory policy. In addition, of potential shared wastewater opportunities including rough estimate of costs to develop.
- **Preferences of Landowners** – In order to better understand the goals of landowners within the district two rounds of face-to-face interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in the Commercial District. Additionally, several public meetings were held in the district for the purpose of collecting additional input from those most likely to be impacted by any future planning or development.

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- **Existing Regulations** – Existing regulations were reviewed to assess impacts on current and future development patterns.
- **Existing Plans & Studies** – Existing Plans, studies and previous project reports were reviewed to assess impacts on current and future development patterns and to inform other analyses. Documents reviewed included:
 - Town of Jericho Build Out and Common Impacts Analysis (CCRPC 2012)
 - Jericho Town Plan - Community Survey 2015
 - Transportation Study (RSG 2015)
 - Bike Pedestrian Plan (RSG 2015)
 - Commercial District Development Standards Project (2016)
 - Comprehensive Town Plan (2016)
 - Jericho Land Use and Development (2018 & 2018)

Summary of Findings

Below is a brief summary of findings related to the existing conditions and capacity analysis. A complete Existing Conditions Analysis report can be found in Appendix A.

Commercial District Today

The CD, from a land area standpoint, is well positioned to support future development. There is adequate available land for new development and the topography is reasonably flat. Natural resource constraints are limited to several small wetlands and river corridor areas (See Map #2, Appendix B, Natural Resource Constraints – Water Related). Soils are largely good for development or agriculture and are good for on-site wastewater systems.

Jericho's Land Use Regulations allow for a wide range of uses in the district, many of which require site planning and conditional use review. Allowable density is reasonably dense (1 acre minimum lot size) and aesthetic controls are not extremely restrictive. Maximum square footage for a single lot is 60,000 square feet, with a 60% allowed total lot coverage.

Relationship to Other Areas

The CD is located between the villages of Riverside and Jericho Corners. One of Jericho's primary goals is to encourage most future develop to occur in its Village Center Areas, which is consistent with Vermont's land use goal which seeks to plan development to maintain the historic settlement pattern of "compact villages and urban centers separated by rural countryside." This project found support in the community for allowing growth in the Commercial District in addition to Jericho's Village Centers, provided that certain characteristics of development were followed.

Barriers to New Development

The growth of development in the Commercial District is largely limited by the lack of water and sewer. These utilities would be needed if the community were to allow for larger-scale and/or higher density development patterns, particularly those that are commercial in nature and require significant amounts of water.

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There is no consolidated wastewater in Jericho, which also limits how much more density could be increased beyond the current allowable density (1 lot per acre). The extension of utilities will represent significant costs. Business owners in the district have indicated that the lack of water and wastewater service limits the development potential of their property (see Appendix B, Map #3: Existing Utilities).

Commercial District Stakeholder Vision

Commercial District Stakeholders (landowners, residents and businesses located in the Commercial District) indicate a preference for a mixed use pattern of development with residential and some forms of commercial development in the same areas and/or in the same buildings. New streets within the Commercial District are supported, particularly if they reduce traffic and additional access points on Route 15. Most interviewees felt that aesthetic considerations could be managed through good site planning and sensible site development. The Commercial District should provide a location for mixed use development that complements Jericho's villages. Stakeholders largely agree that improved connectivity for walkers and bikers between the Villages would bring value to the Commercial District.

C. Informing the Draft Master Plan

The data collected during the existing conditions analysis and capacity study (Appendix A) has been utilized to inform the vision of this draft Master Plan. By identifying constraints and existing land use patterns, a clear picture of where development might be possible has been developed.

This plan has been informed by significant public engagement, including direct outreach and communication with property and business owners in the Commercial District, and with the greater community through online interactions and public workshops. While there is not total agreement on all details of a vision for the CD, the general pattern of development preferred by all stakeholders has been identified. This pattern is described in Section III. Communication with local utility providers has provided sufficient information to identify logical approaches to investing in new infrastructure.

III. Commercial District Draft Vision

A. Phase One Vision Development

A vision is essential to guiding master planning for any area. Vision statements are developed through public engagement and input involving all stakeholders. For the first phase of this project (which has developed this draft Master Plan), the stakeholder group was limited to:

- Local landowners in the Commercial District
- Residents of the Commercial District
- Business owners in the Commercial District

The choice to develop a vision for the Commercial District in phases was driven by the desire to ensure that stakeholders within the district who would be most significantly impacted by any future land use decisions or policy were consulted and provided the opportunity to be heard.

Commercial District Stakeholder Draft Vision Statement

Interviews and public input from Commercial District Stakeholders provided a rough framework for the development of a draft vision statement that reflects their vision for the future, it is:

“A Commercial District that provides a valuable connection between Jericho Corners and Riverside Village, acting as a location for mixed-use development and expanded commerce at an appropriate scale for the community.”

Stakeholders believe that the Commercial District has a role to play in the Jericho economy which can be possible if properly implemented. In addition, they largely felt that the manner in which land is developed should be compatible with other areas of the community.

B. Phase 2 Vision Development

To develop the final vision for this Master Plan, input from a broader segment of the community was required. The Jericho Planning Commission and DuBois & King staff developed a six-month engagement program that included:

- Regular online polls and opportunities to comment via Join in Jericho

Town Plan Vision

The 2016 Jericho Town Plan indicates the following purpose for the Commercial District:

“The primary purpose of the Commercial District is to provide a location for minimum impact commercial enterprises that cannot or should not be located in the Village Center District. Generally, this refers to light industrial or commercial uses that rely on trucks and/or heavy equipment that would come into conflict with pedestrians and/or residential uses in the Village Center District.”

In addition, the Plan specifically prohibits the pattern of development commonly referred to as “Strip Development.”

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- Hands on Workshop, March 26, 2019
- Commercial District Open House Discussion, June 1, 2019

The results of the phase 2 public engagement process found a community largely supportive of the concepts developed during phase 1. The community-at-large was strongly supportive of connectivity between Jericho's villages via the Commercial District. Additionally, there was a clear belief that preservation of the community's rural character was essential.

Revised Vision Statement

Based on input from the community, the vision statement developed with Commercial District Stakeholders was amended. This final "unified" vision statement will guide planning policy and land use regulations, it says:

"A Commercial District that creates a valuable connection between Jericho Corners and Riverside Village; providing a location for mixed-use development and expanded commerce at an appropriate scale for the community which preserves rural character, the natural beauty of the landscape and distant views."

C. Unified Vision in Detail

With community input this Master Plan presents the key details that are essential to implementing the draft vision developed in phase one of this project. How these details are implemented is discussed in the Implementation section of this Master Plan. Maps and renderings that demonstrate these concepts can be found in Appendix B.

Relationship to other Areas

The Commercial District's location is an opportunity to develop a new approach to land use that balances the vision of village centers surrounded by rural countryside with the needs of the community. The Commercial District purpose should complement, the mixed use activities of Jericho's Villages, rather than draw that activity away from those areas. The district can serve as a bridge between Riverside and Jericho Corners, with businesses that provide residents with opportunities for work and play that they might not otherwise get in a traditional village center (such as indoor recreation facilities or light manufacturing and offices). In addition to businesses, the CD should include housing and access to public transit.

Important Note

The maps and images developed as part of this draft Master Plan are intended to demonstrate the possibilities of how development could proceed in Commercial District in the Future. They are not intended to present an explicit outcome or pattern of development.

It is important to recognize that these maps and images are not intended to be replicated exactly. Instead, it is the principles that they demonstrate that should be considered and, once the draft Master Plan has been finalized after sufficient public input, incorporated into the Jericho Town Plan.

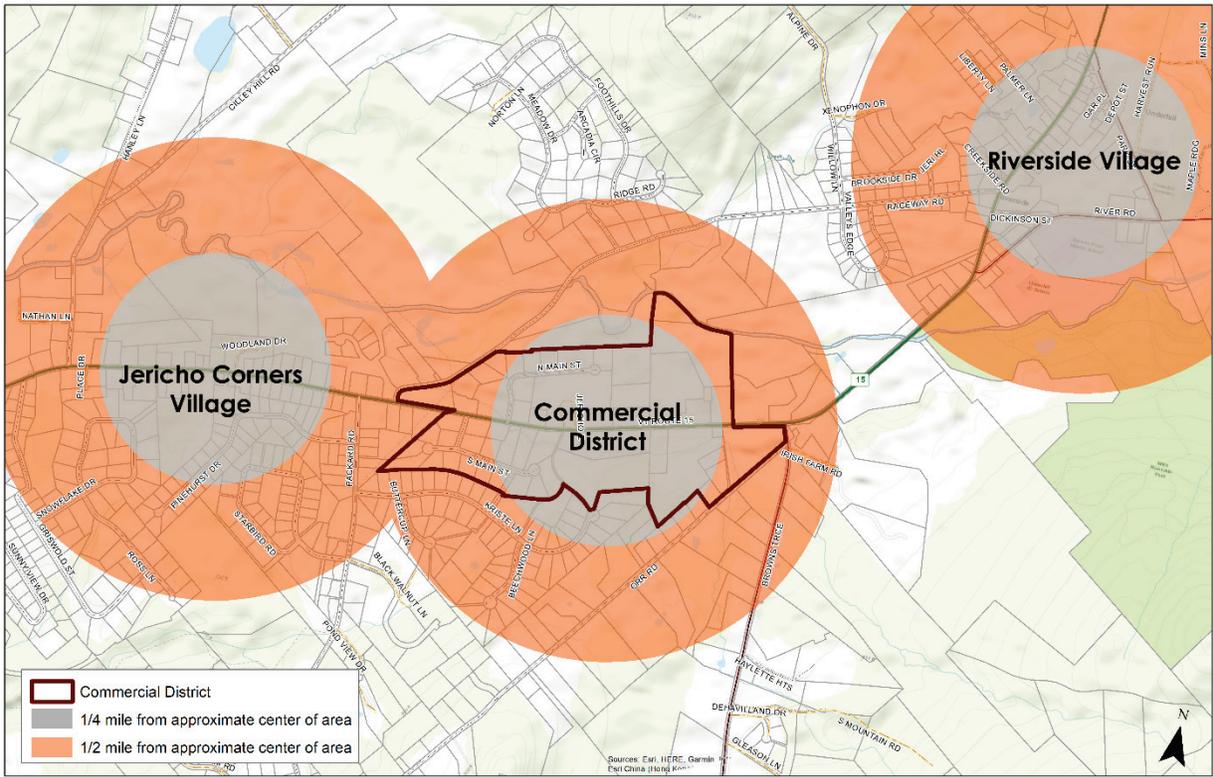
Connectivity

The geographic location of the Commercial District provides opportunities to connect Jericho's Villages through new streets or roads and through recreational paths. Common planning practice identifies a distance of a quarter to half of a mile as "walkable," meaning that the average person is willing to walk that distance rather than use a car. As indicated in figure from the center of the Commercial District, a 1/2 mile walk will bring a pedestrian to Jericho Corners. To Riverside from the same location it would be slightly farther.

Opportunities to connect walkers and bikers to Jericho Corners and Riverside Village for via the Commercial District should be sought. In particular, extending a multi-use path along Browns River could provide a benefit to the community as well as to people who live and work in the Commercial District. Internal roads should include sidewalks or walking paths to allow for pedestrians and bicyclists to move within and around the area.

Further, the expansion of trails or shared use paths that would connect the villages has strong support and represents a significant value to the community. The Jericho Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Master Plan has identified the Route 15 corridor as a priority location for a shared use path that connects Jericho Corners and Riverside. In addition, the Master Plan proposes a shared path along the former Central Vermont Railway

FIGURE 1: WALKABILITY BY DISTANCE, COMMERCIAL DISTRICT AND VILLAGE CENTERS



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bed, this is an optimal location because much of the area along Browns River cannot be developed due to natural resource constraints.

Development within the CD should take a "Complete Streets" approach, whereby future streets are planned, designed and operated to allow safe, convenient and comfortable access by all modes of transport including walking, cycling or driving. Access to public transit is encouraged as well.

New streets connecting to roads outside of the CD other than Route 15 will help reduce traffic and improve circulation. New development should be served by new or existing internal streets rather than allowing every new development to access Route 15 (See Appendix B, Map #5: Potential Roads and Trails Map).

Higher density

Jericho's 2017 Zoning regulations set a minimum lot size for development in the Commercial District of 1 acre. This is a common level of density in an area that is not served by water and sewer infrastructure. The vision for this area is higher density, allowing lots as small as $\frac{1}{4}$ acre allowed provided that there is adequate access to water and wastewater and that density does not negatively impact the rural character of the area.

Higher density development offers two benefits to the community. First, it encourages clustering and allows for more open-space in areas that should remain undeveloped (such as river corridors or other natural areas). Second, if properly designed, it can create a more walkable pattern of development. Walkability and connectivity is of paramount importance to the community.

FIGURE 2: CONCEPTUAL DENSITY DESIGN



Improved Infrastructure

Infill, redevelopment and new development could be served by water from the Jericho Village Water District via a line extension (see Appendix B, Map #7: Preferred Water Line

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Extension Alternative) and utilize a shared onsite wastewater treatment system (see Appendix B, Map #8: Promising Shared Onsite WW Locations) to accommodate a broader mix of uses including commercial and residential.

The availability of water and wastewater was repeatedly cited as major priorities for existing business owners or future developers as essential to bringing new businesses to the area. This is, in part, because the fire suppression systems that are required for larger scale commercial developments need a volume of water that is more easily supplied through a public water supply. Water and wastewater make higher density and mixed-use development more practical.

Multi-Story

Buildings of all types could be multi-story (Jericho's zoning bylaw allows for a 35ft, or roughly 3 story building), with the potential for different uses within one building. For example, a building might have commercial uses on the first floor and office or residential on the second or third floor. Multi-story buildings provide greater density with a smaller footprint which allows for more opportunities to preserve open space. Large single story buildings, such as "big box" stores are not appropriate in Jericho.

Multi-story buildings should be located so as to be sensitive to the viewshed, particularly from the Route 15 corridors. This means utilizing topography to minimize visual impacts and/or varying height requirements in areas where a three-story building would have an impact on the viewshed.

FIGURE 3: CONCEPTUAL BUILDING HEIGHTS



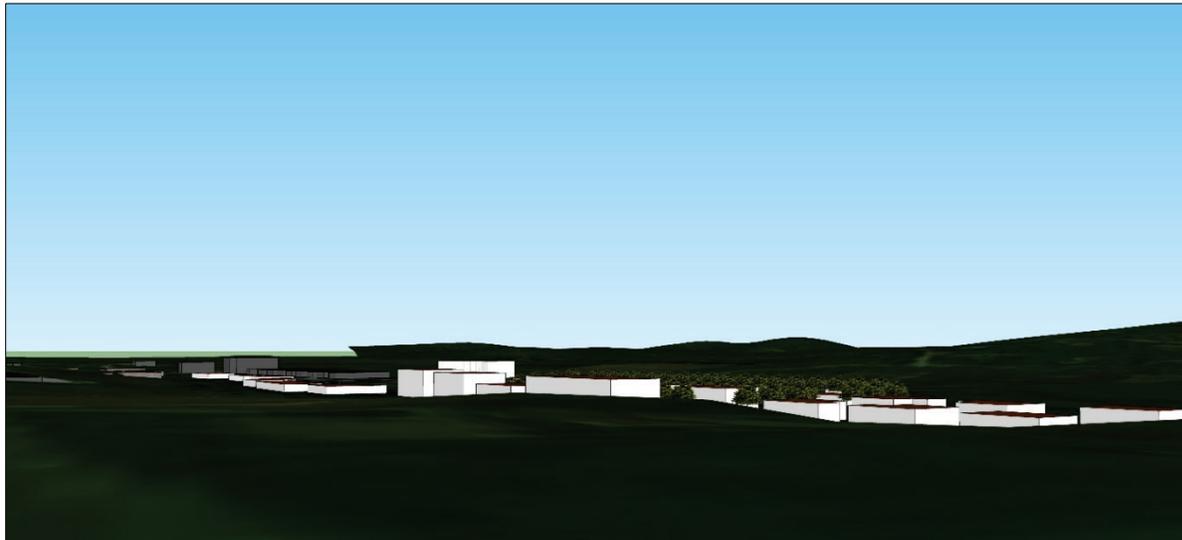
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Mixed-Use Development

The types of uses in the Commercial District are envisioned to be mixed use, with services, light industrial, small-scale retail and residential integrated together at an appropriately rural scale that works in harmony with Jericho's nearby villages.

Mixed use development offers several advantages to the community. Using the traditional pattern of commercial development on the first floor, offices and/or residential on the second and third floors, it can put residents in immediate proximity to places to work and the services they need on a day to day basis. By reducing the need to drive, communities are able to lower Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and reduces greenhouse gas emissions, an important goal of state and regional energy planning policy. Further, mixed-use properties can be more cost-effective to develop, as they offer multiple tenants to help cover costs.

FIGURE 4: TOPOGRAPHY AND VEGETATION CAN MINIMIZE VISUAL IMPACTS, VIEW NORTHWEST FROM ROUTE 15 (TOP), VIEW SOUTH FROM RACEWAY ROAD (BOTTOM)



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Respectful of the Landscape

Development should be integrated into the landscape. This would include screening buildings and parking from the Route 15 corridor as appropriate, and limiting taller buildings to lower lying areas so as to minimize visual impacts. The visual impact of development in the CD on Raceway and Foothills neighborhoods should also be considered.

The topography of developable land in the Commercial District presents an excellent opportunity to encourage higher density, multi-story, mixed-use development while at the same time striving to protect the beauty of the surrounding area and quality of life for existing neighborhoods, including the Foothills, Raceway Road and Jericho East. Route 15 is a key travel corridor, as such, efforts can be made to minimize visual impacts through good site planning and design. Further, in several locations within the Commercial District, the topography slopes downward and away from Route 15. The change in elevation would allow for taller buildings farther away from Route 15 without impacting distant views.

Outdoor Recreation and Renewable Energy Generation

With ample area in the CD dedicated to flood storage and river corridor protection, green spaces can be integrated into future development in the Commercial District. These areas can include shared use paths as well as pocket parks and other outdoor recreation facilities. In addition, some of the area within the Commercial District may be suitable for solar development (including roof or ground mounted systems), which could reduce the overall energy use of new development in the commercial district.

IV. Implementation

A vision for the future is only as good as the steps that are taken to implement it. To achieve the Stakeholders vision for the future of the Commercial District, Jericho will need to consider a number of possible paths to implementation.

A. Planning Policy & Regulation

Municipal policy should reflect the vision that is developed through all phases of the Master Planning Project. Policy updates to the Jericho Town Plan and possibly Jericho's Capital Budget and Program would be considered.

Municipal Plan

The final draft of this Master Plan should be incorporated into the Municipal Plan either by reference or by bringing the concepts and suggested policy changes into the Plan itself. Regardless of the approach used when incorporating the Master Plan into the Town Plan, it is essential to make sure that narrative, goals, policies and implementation items remain consistent. Below are suggested changes that should be considered to the 2016 Town Plan in order to accommodate the concepts in this Master Plan.

Economic Development

The Economic Development chapter of the 2016 Town Plan focuses on “light industrial, warehousing and commercial uses that rely on trucks and/or heavy equipment that would be well served to direct access to VT Route 15.” This planning narrative should be modified to reflect the envisioned pattern of rural-scale, high-density, mixed use development. Policies should reflect a desire to encourage mixed use in the Commercial District as well as within Village Centers. The Plan should support efforts to manage business development and marketing of Village Center Areas and the Commercial district in an integrated manner.

Policies that suggest focusing public resources primarily on the Village Centers should consider incorporating the Commercial District as well.

Utilities/Facilities

The extension of water service to the Commercial District and the development of a wastewater disposal system is an essential part of implementing the vision of this Master Plan. The Utilities & Facilities chapter of the 2016 Plan should be revised to include a discussion about the need for water infrastructure in the Commercial District, recognizing its value to future compact residential neighborhoods and businesses as well as for fire safety purposes. Additionally, the Plan should reflect some of the information collected in the Existing Conditions and Capacity Analysis (Appendix A). Specifically, the plan should acknowledge that based on analysis the most viable solution to extending water service to the Commercial District is by connecting to the Jericho Village Water District's system. Policies relating to extension of water should, at the very least, suggest further investigation into the feasibility of this extension, potential costs and potential funding options.

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The Utilities & Facilities chapter should recognize the potential for a shared wastewater system in the Commercial District (in addition to Jericho Center) and suggest further investigation into its feasibility, potential costs and funding mechanisms. This chapter should also acknowledge the value of gas service to commercial users and identify where new lines should be extended in the future should VT Gas choose to expand their system.

Transportation

The Town Plan's Transportation chapter reflects extensive work done through two documents; the Jericho Transportation Study, and the Jericho Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Master Plan (completed in 2015). The chapter does not specifically address transportation in the Commercial District, but takes a Town-wide approach. The Plan should discuss access management, particularly as it relates to allowing new development to access Route 15. In general, policies should reflect a preference to having new development in the Commercial District utilize existing or future internal streets as their primary access points. This will limit new curb cuts on Route 15.

In an effort to reduce commuter traffic and congestion along Route 15 in and around the Commercial District, future roads should be considered and discussed in the Transportation Chapter. For example, it might be possible to develop a new road that connects Raceway Rd. with the north side of the Commercial District (over Brown's River). This could provide an alternative access to the Commercial District that might help reduce congestion on Route 15 to some extent. Additionally, reconfiguring the way Orr Road meets Brown's Trace might help reduce potential vehicle conflicts (by increasing distance from the intersection with Route 15) and allow for additional commercial property to be developed. Policy should suggest incorporating potential roads in the Commercial District into an Official Map. (See Appendix B, Map #5: Potential Trails and Roads.)

Policy in the Transportation chapter should specify that new development in the Commercial District should take a Complete Streets approach, utilize internal road designs that meet Town Road and Bridge Standards, and should provide adequate area for bicycling and walking. Policy should also encourage shared parking. Further, action items that relate to a shared use path(s) that connect Riverside and Jericho Corners through the Commercial District should recommend investigating an option along Brown's River in addition to the previously proposed path along Route 15.

Why Complete Streets?

Complete Streets projects can provide a wide range of benefits, including:

Streets that accommodate all users are safer for everyone, including automobile drivers and passengers.

Complete Streets can provide greater mobility and accessibility to those without a car.

Complete streets can offer a choice for less costly modes of transportation, which has economic benefit to individuals or families.

Active travel (walking and bicycling) can improve health and provide needed daily exercise.

It is more efficient to accommodate all modes at the planning and design stage, rather than retrofit after the fact, and correct safety issues for non-automobile road users.

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If higher density development were encouraged in the Commercial District, there might be an opportunity to add an additional stop for the Chittenden County Transportation Authority's Jeffersonville Commuter bus in the district. The Plan should support the creation of a Park and Ride in the Commercial district that can accommodate busses.

Energy

The Jericho Town Plan addresses the benefits of reduced energy consumption by concentrating development and infrastructure close to local services, as well as the efficiency of mixed use and multi-family dwellings. However, it currently focuses on directing these patterns of development to the three Village Centers. The Plan should consider incorporating these principles into policy relating to the Commercial District. Additionally, the Town may want to identify areas within the Commercial District where renewable energy generation may be preferred.

The Planning Commission is in the process of developing an Enhanced Energy Plan that creates policy for the community that strives to reach the goals and targets for greenhouse gas reductions and energy conservation of the Vermont Statewide Energy Plan. This Master Plan, if integrated into the Town Plan, will need to support the Enhanced Energy Plan if adopted.

Land Use

The Jericho Town Plan has an overarching goal to "concentrate new development in Jericho's three Village Centers and the Commercial District." However, in the Land Use Chapter, the Plan indicates that the "primary purpose of the Commercial District is to provide a location for minimum impact commercial enterprises that cannot or should not be located in the Village Center District. Generally, this refers to light industrial or commercial uses that rely on trucks and/or heavy equipment that would come into conflict with pedestrians and/or residential uses in the Village Center District."

This Master Plan envisions a broader mix of uses, beyond those that "cannot or should not" be located in the villages. While this area may be appropriate for those uses, it should not be limited to only those, instead taking advantage of multi-story buildings, multiple uses in each building and higher density to create an area that offers a location to work, live and access services in harmony with Jericho's villages. The Plan should reflect this vision, noting that the proposed pattern of development envisioned is designed to avoid strip development maintain open space and enhance rural character.

The Plan should include policies and implementation items that specifically relate to the Commercial District, including the consideration of infrastructure investments and the suggested changes to the zoning bylaw necessary to achieve the vision. Policies should support the three essential components of the Master Plan's Vision – connectivity, mixed use and appropriate scale. In addition, the Plan may want to consider further the idea of redefining the boundary for the Commercial District. Appendix B, Map #6: Potential Alternate Boundaries for Commercial District, shows several possible approaches to revising the Commercial District Boundary. Alternate C

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(shown on Map #6) was developed based on input from the Commercial District Advisory Committee. To the north, the boundary follows the river and extends east to Riverside. On the south, Alternate C removes much of the lands that are part of the Jericho East Homeowners Association recognizing that development there is largely residential.

Regulations

If this Master Plan is incorporated into the Jericho Town Plan and duly adopted, the next step to implement the vision will be to revise the Jericho Land Use and Development Regulations (Adopted in 2018). The following areas have been identified as needing to be modified or enhanced to accommodate the vision of this Master Plan.

District Title

Throughout the master planning process, it was acknowledged that the district name contributed to public misconceptions of what the vision of the district is and could be. The Planning Commission should strongly consider changing the district name to reflect the more broad vision for this district as outlined in Section III.

Uses

The only way a developer can have more than one principle building on a lot, or utilize a mixed-use approach to development, is to apply as a Planned Unit Development (PUD). While PUDs allow for some flexibility with regard to site and lot layout, building design, placement and clustering of buildings; they are often perceived as more complicated for the developer. Instead, developers will choose single-lot development. If the Town desires the level of scrutiny associated with Planned Unit Developments, it may want to consider making PUDs mandatory within the Commercial District. Whether or not the PUD is the tool used, the Commercial District regulations should be revised to allow for multiple uses on a single lot and/or within a single building, particularly if they take advantage of multiple stories.

The 2018 Land Use and Development Regulations allow a significant number of use types in the Commercial District. While in general, there was support for a broad range of uses in the Commercial District, there are uses currently allowed in the Commercial District that may not be appropriate (such as heavy industrial). In addition, some currently allowed uses may require refinement. For example, formula (or chain) retail

Changing District Classifications

If a community seeks to significantly revise the boundaries of a zoning district, they must first go through the process of revising the Municipal Plan's Future Land Use plan and map (V.S.A. Title 24, Chapter 117 §4401 requires that zoning be in conformance with the Plan).

This process requires, at a minimum three public hearings (one Planning Commission, two Selectboard) and typically involves more significant public process as draft amendments to the Plan are being made. Once hearings are complete, the Selectboard is authorized to vote to adopt any amendments.

This would be followed by an amendment to the Zoning map, which would also require at least three public hearings and a vote of the Selectboard to adopt.

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may not fit in with the rural character of the community (as opposed to locally owned retail).

Density and Lot Area

In addition to multiple uses in a single building, to implement the Master Plan's vision regulations would need to be changed to allow higher density development if water and sewer service are readily available. In these instances, density should be as small as $\frac{1}{4}$ acre provided that there is adequate access to sewer and water. Road frontage requirements should be amended accordingly, with flexibility if one building has multiple uses. Residential density requirements in the Commercial District should be amended to allow multiple units (greater than one single family residential unit or two multi-family units) within a mixed-use building per minimum lot area.

Setbacks

Setbacks in the Commercial District are presently 50 or 30 feet depending on whether or not a development is accessing Route 15. The 50 foot setback from Route 15 should be maintained for the purposes of protecting the aesthetics of the corridor and maintaining consistency with existing development. However, for development within the Commercial District that does not directly access Route 15, setbacks should be reduced to allow for a more comfortable feel. If a PUD is the primary method used to implement the vision of this Master Plan, the buffer zone requirements should be amended to allow for higher density development.

Site Planning & Design Standards

In addition to the site plan standards outlined in the Jericho Planning and Zoning Regulations, the Planning Commission may want to consider design standards that address the character of development, including things such as shopfront frontage, building form, façades, floor heights, etc.

Site planning requirements should continue to prioritize the goal of avoiding patterns of development common to strip development. This pattern of development is typically recognized as including broad road frontage, a predominance of single-story buildings, limited reliance on shared access to VT Route 15, a lack of connection to any existing settlement except by major roads, a lack of connection to surrounding land uses except by major roads, a lack of coordination with surrounding land uses, and limited accessibility for pedestrians. Site plans should require screening for development immediately adjacent to Route 15 and should minimize the visual impacts of parking. On internal streets, shared and on-street parking should be considered in densely developed areas. Landscaping should be consistent with the surrounding landscape and consideration should be given to views of the Commercial District from Route 15 as well as from neighborhoods, such as the Foothills, Raceway and Jericho East.

Performance Standards should be designed to ensure that uses within the District are not wholly out of character with the surrounding area. For example, a light industrial

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facility that requires constant trucking at all hours of the night, may be less appropriate in Jericho. As such, it might be necessary to establish limitations on the hours of operation for a commercial business to reduce the impact of traffic. Other nuisances should also be considered, including noise and light, based on surrounding uses.

B. Infrastructure Investment

To facilitate this Master Plan's vision for the Commercial District, investments (whether through public or private means) will need to be made in new infrastructure. The Existing Conditions and Capacity Analysis (appendix A) identified several promising options for expansion of infrastructure. Funding for potential infrastructure investments is discussed in the next section.

Water

Five alternatives for the provision of water to the Commercial District were considered as part of the Existing Conditions and Capacity Analysis. The most viable option (see Appendix B, Map #7: Preferred Water Line Extension Alternative) was to connect the Commercial District to the Jericho Village Water District by extending a line along Route 15 from Jericho Corners Village. The following steps would need to be taken in order to move forward on any proposed extension of the water system:

- **Meet with Water Districts** – If developers, landowners or the Town of Jericho is seeking to connect to an existing system, initial contact will need to be made with the appropriate water district to determine if there is interest in adding new customers to the system.
- **Feasibility Study** – A feasibility study, preferably one that looks at several of the options considered, will need to be conducted by a qualified engineer to identify any barriers to extending water.
- **Priority Consideration** – With positive results from a feasibility study in hand, the town should work with the state to get on the State's priority list for the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (if the Town is going to be involved with the funding of the extension)
- **Identify Funding** – Funding methods are discussed in Section C of this Chapter. Funding options can be public, private or public/private partnership.
- **Planning & Design** – The Town would hire an engineer to draft a including a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) and an Environmental Information Document (EID)
- **Design & Construction** – An engineer would design the proposed system extension and move forward into the construction phase.

Sewer

The development of a public wastewater system that serves the Commercial district was not considered as a part of this Master Plan, as the Jericho Town Plan prioritizes the Villages for such investments. If, in the future a design for a public system is developed, it may want to include serving the Commercial District as well. For the purposes of this

Master Plan, however, a shared onsite wastewater system was identified as the optimal approach to providing wastewater capacity that will allow for greater density (see Appendix B, Map #8: Promising Shared Onsite WW Locations).

- **Site Analysis** – Potential wastewater system sites should be identified more thoroughly, and if possible, additional sites should be identified.
- **Feasibility Study** – Once potential sites have been confirmed, a feasibility study, will need to be conducted by a qualified engineer to identify any barriers to developing the systems and extending service to the Commercial District.
- **Identify Funding** – Funding methods are discussed in Section C of this Chapter. Funding options can be public, private or public/private partnership.
- **Planning & Design** – The Town would hire an engineer to draft a including a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) and an Environmental Information Document (EID)
- **Design & Construction** – An engineer would design the proposed system extension and move forward into the construction phase.

Gas

Although Vermont gas does provide service to the villages of Jericho and Riverside, there are coverage gaps. Most notable is the gap between The River and Brown's trace along Route 15. In the event that VT Gas seeks Jericho's support for future line extensions, these gaps as well as future service within the Commercial District should be discussed and considered in any future plans.

Energy

The presence of three phase power in the Commercial District may facilitate the development of renewable energy in the Commercial District.

Roads

Typically municipalities are unwilling to take on new roads unless there is a critical mass of development served and it is up to the Selectboard to determine what a "critical mass" is. Private developers should work with the community to determine what standards must be used if it is intended that the Town eventually take over the maintenance and upkeep of the road. A complete streets approach to developing roads and sidewalks should be required for new development within the Commercial District.

If Jericho is seeking to develop new roads in specific locations, an Official Map should be adopted. State Statute enables communities with an adopted Municipal Plan to adopt an Official Map. The Official Map is a tool that communities can use to control design by identifying locations of future public facilities. For example, an official map can include future streets and roads, planned trails, sites reserved for public buildings, and areas reserved for stormwater or flood control. Through the official map, municipalities have the authority to require the reservation of easements or land to

accomplish a public purpose, such as the creation of a new road or a public park. As part of the permitting process, applicants can use the official map to understand where public facilities like roads or trails are going to be developed and how their development must be designed to accommodate them.

The adoption of an official map identifies the areas where a community plans public facilities and establishes the procedure by which sites can be acquired (typically through financial compensation) before they are developed for other uses. At any point in that process, a municipality can opt not to acquire property and allow a proposed development to proceed. Adopting an official map does not commit the municipality to purchase properties on which future public infrastructure projects are shown. (See Appendix B, Map #5: Potential Roads and Trails Map).

Jericho should work with landowners, the State of Vermont, the local Transit Authority and the Tri-Town Alternate Transportation Committee to identify potential locations in the Commercial District that may be suitable for a Park and Ride Facility. Any park and ride facility should be designed to integrate with the Jericho Energy Plan and/or Enhanced Energy Plan. This would include providing adequate facilities for bus service including shelter and EV charging stations.

C. Funding

The most significant barrier to infrastructure investment is cost and who will bear the cost. For infrastructure that serves all or a significant portion of a municipality, it is not uncommon for new infrastructure to be fully financed by the Town through a mix of local funding, grants and loans. Communities have the ability to levee special taxes, or create districts that will help fund new infrastructure investments as well.

In an area like the Commercial District, where there is a desire from local landowners to have access to sewer and water, a public/private partnership may be one approach to funding. Municipalities have access to low-interest loans and grant programs that cannot be utilized by private developers. However, working with a developer, a community can use these funds in tandem with private funding to finance new infrastructure will reducing the overall burden on taxpayers. Various approaches to funding infrastructure investments is outlined below.

Municipal Funding Programs

Local Option Taxes

Communities are enabled by statute to impose a 1% local option tax on sales, meals, alcoholic beverages and rooms. These funds are a way to generate additional tax revenue to fund the upkeep and development of infrastructure. This is a particularly valuable option if a community has a significant tourist population that uses infrastructure but does not pay property taxes to cover their use. Twenty-one

communities in VT use the local option tax. In order to levy a local option tax, a community must vote to do so.

Impact Fees

Impact fees are authorized under state law (24 V.S.A. §§5200, et. Seq.), for the purposes of enabling “municipalities to require the beneficiaries of new development to pay their proportionate share of the cost of municipal and school capital projects which benefit them and to require them to pay for or mitigate the negative effects of construction.”

Typically, Impact Fees are instituted in response to very rapid growth. The process for developing impact fees begins with identifying the facilities and services affected by the sudden growth. This is followed by the identification of capital projects that are needed to bring the level of service to “acceptable standards.” These standards could be determined from existing levels of service, accepted state or federal standards, or a standard that is part of an adopted municipal plan or capital budget and program. Capital projects that are needed to support anticipated development are candidates for impact fees. It is important to note that impact fees cannot be used to cover operation or maintenance costs, or to address any existing deficiencies with infrastructure. Communities develop an impact fee formula that connects the capital costs of new facilities or facility capacity to the demand for that capacity generated by new growth. This formula must rely on a “rational nexus” to serve as the logical and legal foundation for the impact fee. Typically, studies are utilized to develop and document impact fee formulae and to support adopted fee schedules. Once the formulae and fee schedules are developed, communities must adopt them via an ordinance or as part of a bylaw.

Communities with impact fees are required to account for revenues collected through impact fees on a yearly basis. State law requires that impact fee revenues must be expended for designated capital projects within six years of the date they are collected or be refunded at the request of the property owner.

The pros and cons of impact fees are varied. Proponents often argue that impact fees are a way to have “developers pay” for the impacts of their development. However, in strong property markets, the developer will typically pass on the cost of the fee to the new occupant in the form of a higher purchase price or increased rent. Or, the developer may be less willing to pay top dollar for a property due to the added cost of impact fees. And yet, with impact fees in place, developers can be fairly certain that necessary infrastructure and facilities that are needed by their development will be provided. Impact Fees are commonly a reaction to significant development growth.

Tax Increment Financing

24 V.S.A. §§1891 et. seq., enables communities to utilize Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as a tool to finance public infrastructure improvements that are necessary to ensure development of an area. Using the “build it and they will come” theory of development and growth, communities are able to borrow funds against future tax revenue within a designated TIF District. This assumes that with infrastructure

investments, additional development will occur and more tax revenue will be developed. As part of the TIF development process, the municipality designates the area which requires redevelopment as the TIF district and freezes the base tax of the District. Property taxes increase with new development and a portion of that increment is utilized to help retire the debt incurred to fund the infrastructure improvements. The TIF is particularly useful when there are parties interested in developing the real property within the District if necessary infrastructure is built.

Unlike the Impact Fee, a TIF District must be approved by the State. Prior to filing an application with the Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC), communities must undergo a process of local planning (including an appropriate level of public process) to develop and adopt a TIF District Plan and Finance Plan. Communities pledge a minimum of 85% of the municipal incremental property tax revenue within the TIF District will go toward TIF District debt. State Statute outlines the criteria under which VEPC can approve an application for a TIF district. This includes a close look at the public process utilized at the municipal level including an assessment of the District's compatibility with local and regional plans.

A TIF District is considered an appropriate financing tool when:

- There is a need for substantial real property development or redevelopment to improve the economic viability of a defined area.
- The development/redevelopment requires a substantial scale of new public infrastructure or infrastructure improvements.
- Normal and available financing mechanisms are not available or are insufficient to ensure the public infrastructure improvements.
- The development/redevelopment will generate incremental real property taxes sufficient to help finance infrastructure debt.
- There are parties interested in developing the real property within the District if the infrastructure is built/improved.
- There is commitment of municipality to champion project through process.
- Project can meet statutory approval criteria and outcomes will meet statutory purposes:
 - Stimulate development
 - Provide employment opportunities
 - Improve/Broaden tax base
 - Enhance general economic vitality of municipality, region, state

An application for a TIF District will need to include an analysis of infrastructure cost and debt assumptions, real property development and property tax revenue generation assumptions. Also necessary, is an analysis of revenues including property taxes, grants and other sources of funding, and the ability to service debt.

The laws that govern TIF districts had previously set a limit of no more than two districts per county. Chittenden County already has six active TIF districts. In 2017, legislation was passed that grandfathered existing TIF districts, allowing for two additional TIFs in

Chittenden County. If there is interest in creating a TIF district in the Jericho Commercial District project area, Jericho should be engaged in discussions about the process with VEPC and the Regional Planning Commission in the near term.

Loans, Grants and Bonds

Loans and/or bonding are common components of a major infrastructure investments at the municipal level. While loans and bonds can be the primary source of funding for a project, they are often utilized in addition to state or federal grants. In Vermont, there are far more diverse funding opportunities for Water and Wastewater projects than Transportation projects.

Vermont Municipal Bond Bank

The Vermont Municipal Bond Bank (VMBB) provides low-interest, tax exempt, taxable and tax credit bonds for municipal projects. General obligation bonds are generally considered relatively safe, as municipalities can utilize any source of revenue available to them, such as tax revenues, fees, etc. Projects VMBB will finance using general obligation bonds include "infrastructure installation and repairs," and "water supply systems and wastewater systems." Revenue bonds are backed by the revenue generated by the specific project being financed. As such, VMBB limits the types of projects that can be implemented using revenue bonds to those that will generate income through fees, such as water supply and wastewater systems and TIF districts.

Vermont State Infrastructure Bank

The Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA) works with VTrans and the Federal Highway Administration to provide funding assistance with construction of highways, roads, bridges and pedestrian facilities. Like bonds, interest rates are generally very low. Borrowers are required to provide an equity contribution of 1-20%.

Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund

The Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund is administered by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation and funded by the EPA. Its purpose is to assist communities with the planning, design and construction of public drinking water improvements to comply with drinking water standards and protect public health. Loans from this program can be used for public water system, wastewater collection system and treatment facility construction, as well as the development of community decentralized wastewater disposal systems. There are separate pools of funding for planning and construction, and it is likely that requests for funding would be competitive with other communities. If there is interest in creating a decentralized wastewater system to serve new development the Jericho Riverside area, this fund should be considered.

Community Development Block Grants

Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) assists communities on a competitive basis by providing financial and technical assistance to identify and address local needs, including the development of public facilities and services. The

program's Planning and Implementation Grants could be applicable to the development of a decentralized wastewater system in the Commercial District, however infrastructure projects of this nature typically fall under the Low-Moderate Income (LMI) Area Wide benefit criteria. In order to meet the LMI criteria a projected funded through VCDP at least 51% of the service area residents would need to be LMI. According to HUD, area wide LMI date for the Town of Jericho is at approximately 23%, which is well below the 51% that is required under VCDP. If the new infrastructure was going to directly benefit a business by creating jobs available to LMI persons or housing units that will meet the required 51% LMI area benefit, then it would be worth contacting VCDP staff for further discussion.

USDA Water & Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program

USDA provides low-interest, long-term loans for the acquisition, construction and improvement of drinking water sourcing, treatment, storage and distribution; and sewer collection, disposal and treatment. The facilities that receive federal financing must be used for public purposes and must be financially sustainable. Interest rates vary based on the need for the project and the median household income of the area to be served. Jericho's high median income (as compared to Chittenden County), would result in a higher interest rate.

Transportation Alternatives Program

The VTrans Transportation Alternatives Program has, in the past, been utilized to fund pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular improvements. However, in 2017 the program was significantly revised to focus on projects relating to storm water and highways in part to address statewide stormwater runoff concerns. As a result, this program is not suited to the development of new roadway infrastructure.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Program

The VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Program is intended to provide safe and convenient facilities for alternative transportation. The program is highly competitive with a limited amount of available funding on a yearly basis. Funding has been focused on implementation vs. scoping over the past several years.

V. Appendices

- A. Existing Conditions Report
- B. Maps & Renderings

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