

# DRAFT RICHFORD TOWN PLAN

## INTRODUCTION

Town plans are a place where communities have an opportunity to reflect on the past accomplishments, take stock in where they are, and set a course for the future. Richford has been involved in town planning since its establishment over two centuries ago. Charting streets, establishing schools, and building water and sewer lines all needed town planning, even if the plans were never written down. Modern planning began in Richford in the 1980's, with the first Town Plan adopted in 1989.

The primary purpose of any plan is to be a guide for future goals. A town plan is a community statement describing where you came from, where you are now, and where you want to go in the future.

Vermont municipalities are not required to plan, but most do – to protect community interest, to retain local control, to promote desired forms of growth and development, to target public investment, to protect scarce public resources, and build and sustain a sense of community.

The Town Plan has a variety of uses. It provides information on the Town to be used in town planning decisions. The plan can also be used to evaluate development proposals for conformance with the town's goals and policies. Determination of a specific project's conformance, or otherwise, with the town plan is one method of participating in the Act 250 and Section 248 development review processes. The Town Plan also allows the Town to be eligible for certain state grants. Finally, The Richford Town Plan serves as the legal basis for the Town's zoning & development regulations. The Town Plan states community goals and charts the course, while zoning and capital budgets are vehicles to get there.

A town plan is developed by first identifying community issues and needs; collecting and analyzing background information about the town; and then combining them into a vision (statement) of how the community should develop. Goals and policies are written to address specific topics such as land use, housing, or education.

The need for involvement of town residents in the planning process is essential. While it is the responsibility of the Planning Commission to develop the plan, residents can have an active role in gathering information and formulating plan policies for guiding development. A better plan is the result of a group effort.

The Plan must be updated every eight years or it expires. This provides opportunity for resident involvement, and it acts as a review of the effectiveness of the Plan and its policies.

For the 2026 Town Plan, the Planning Commission conducted a survey of Town residents. Information on the survey was sent to all registered voters, as well as advertised on the Town website. The survey received 171 responses, representing roughly 7% of all residents responding. Information from the survey has been included throughout the plan. While the Planning Commission aimed to reach all residents, renter residents were underrepresented in survey responses.

The Richford Town Plan is divided into nine chapters that address both the required elements and other key areas of concern. Each subject is addressed in detail including past conditions, current status, and future needs. Each chapter has one or more goals and policies. **Goals** reflect the community’s long-term ideal future outcome. **Policies** describe how the Town will attain those goals.

## AUTHORITY

The Town of Richford is authorized to prepare and adopt a Municipal Plan via Chapter 117, Title 24 of the VSA (Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act). Section 4382 of the Act dictates what needs to be included in a plan. The intent of the law is to encourage a municipality to “engage in a continuing planning process that will further several stated goals.” The Act further states that municipal plans shall be re-examined, updated, and re-adopted every eight years. This process should be ongoing, whereby the Plan is continually reassessed and revised to meet the changing needs of the community. There will be future opportunities to review and amend the Plan. Residents, community groups, and anyone with an interest in the Town are encouraged to provide input into this ever-continuing process to the Richford Planning Commission.

## 12 Required Elements of Town Plans

A town must address twelve (12) elements in its plan, which are the following:

- Objectives, policies, and programs of the municipality to guide the future growth and development of land, public services and facilities, and to protect the environment;
- A land use plan;
- A transportation plan;
- A utility and facility plan;
- Policies on the preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic and historic features and resources;
- An educational facilities plan;
- A recommended program for the implementation of the objectives of the plan;
- A statement indicating how the plan relates to development trends and plans for adjacent municipalities, areas and the region developed under this title;
- An energy plan;
- A housing element that shall include a recommended program for addressing low and moderate-income persons’ housing needs;
- An economic development element that describes present economic conditions and the location, type, and scale of desired economic development; and
- A flood resilience plan.

## VISION

In the future, Richford:

- Is a small town full of promise that honors its traditions and embraces new ideas;
- Has a vibrant, attractive and economically strong downtown;
- Is a home for people of all generations, with a range of good well-maintained housing options;
- Is known for its beautiful and healthy environment, including its river, scenery and parks;
- Provides high-quality community facilities and recreation at an affordable cost to taxpayers;
- Is a regional center for lifelong learning;
- Provides a safe and efficient transportation system in and around town; and
- Is growing in a controlled manner to support the needs of its residents and its economy.



## IMPLEMENTATION

As required by statute, a municipal plan must have a plan for implementation. The following is a list of projects that Richford hopes to start over the next 8 years to implement the goals and policies outlined in this plan.

### PROJECT 1

**Project:** Improve enforcement of the housing code to improve the quality of rental units in the town.

**Responsible Party:** Selectboard & Planning Commission

**Timeline:** 1-3 Years

**Explanation:** Richford has a large inventory of rental units. Many of these units are empty or substandard. Richford will administer and enforce existing codes and ordinances to improve the quality of all rental units and seek ways to improve the existing codes and ordinances to ensure better quality rental units in the future. The Selectboard is examining options to expand rental inspections.

## PROJECT 2

**Project:** Maintain the historic character of the village.

**Responsible Party:** Selectboard & Planning Commission

**Timeline:** 3-5 Years

**Explanation:** The village is a key gathering place for the community. Under the newly updated Vermont designation program, the area designated for center benefits has expanded, and new neighborhood areas will be designated. The Town should support outreach to private property owners to utilize state grants for the preservation of historic properties.

## PROJECT 3

**Project:** Examine parking solutions in Richford including zoning bylaw parking requirements and parking enforcement.

**Responsible Party:** Selectboard & Planning Commission

**Timeline:** 3-5 Years

**Explanation:** Re-development of housing in the Village is often challenging due to lack of off-street parking at these historic locations. However, there is also a need to ensure there is on-street parking available to customers of local businesses. To address these needs, the Town could make amendments to the zoning bylaw to add flexibility to parking requirements for historic properties in the Village. The Town can also consider opportunities to enforce on-street parking standards.

## PROJECT 4

**Project:** Determine ways that Richford can actively support local businesses.

**Responsible Party:** Selectboard

**Timeline:** 1-3 Years

**Explanation:** Richford would like to determine ways to provide support to new and existing businesses that develop in accordance with the land use plan and provide high-wage jobs. Strategies that could be used include tax stabilization and assistance in seeking grant funding.

## PROJECT 5

**Project:** Construct a visitor's center to welcome families and provide local information.

**Responsible Party:** Selectboard

**Timeline:** 5-8 Years

**Explanation:** The visitor's center would advertise town businesses, services, events, and more including golf courses, farm stands, sugaring operations, etc. Richford shall work with key stakeholders to find an appropriate location and funding for construction. One possible location is the old Railroad Depot building; however, this may require additional discussion with the property owner to determine if feasible.

## PROJECT 6

**Project:** Create a capital budget to plan for future municipal projects and create a vibrant commercial downtown.

**Responsible Party:** Selectboard

**Timeline:** 1-3 Years

**Explanation:** Richford is in need of several large capital improvements in the future including streetscape and sidewalk repairs and maintenance of water and wastewater systems. The Town should properly plan for these large capital expenses.

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**Sub-Project A:** Identify and plan for water and wastewater service system’s needs.

**Explanation:** There are needs for improvements and repairs to the water and wastewater system in the Special District.

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**Sub-Project B:** Develop a plan for sidewalk repair and improvements.

**Explanation:** The Town has recently had a sidewalk inventory completed by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission. The Town should coordinate a plan to maintain and improve sidewalks based on local needs and available funding.

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**Sub-Project C:** Install wayfinding signs, lighting, and landscaping.

**Explanation:** Visitors are unaware of what Richford has to offer because it lacks signage. The Town should work to install local signs to direct visitors to points of interest and services in Richford. The Town should also explore ways to make the “public space” in the village more inviting to visitors through the installation of lighting and landscaping.

## PROJECT 7

**Project:** Construct the planned trail network from the Village to the Elementary School.

**Responsible Party:** Selectboard

**Timeline:** 3-5 years

**Explanation:** The Richford Re-Connect project developed a plan for trail connections between the Elementary School and Village, with several phases proposed. The Town should seek funding to implement the project as phased.

## PROJECT 8

**Project:** Examine opportunities to build paths from the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail

**Responsible Party:** Selectboard

**Timeline:** 5-8 years

**Explanation:** Consider opportunities to extend paths from the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail to the river within Town owned or controlled land.

### PROJECT 9

**Project:** Develop formal bus shelters

**Responsible Party:** Selectboard & Planning Commission

**Timeline:** 1-3 years

**Explanation:** Work with the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the Rural Community Transportation (RCT) to develop formal bus shelters.

### PROJECT 10

**Project:** Consider starting an artist in residence program in Richford.

**Responsible Party:** Selectboard & Planning Commission

**Timeline:** 1-3 years

**Explanation:** Artists-in-residence programs can be an effective way to use existing unused residential buildings and add vibrancy to the village. The Town should consider opportunities to participate in an artist-in-residence program.

### PROJECT 11

**Project:** Increase the availability of broadband services.

**Responsible Party:** Selectboard

**Timeline:** 1-3 Years

**Explanation:** Areas of Richford are still without broadband services and US cellular service. Richford shall work with private providers and the Communications Union District to support increased access to this necessary infrastructure.

**Status:** Outstanding

### PROJECT 12

**Project:** Work on flood resiliency issues.

**Responsible Party:** Planning Commission

**Timeline:** 1-3 Years

**Explanation:** As extreme weather events become more increasing, Richford should work to ensure that flooding does not threaten the citizens and public infrastructure. Richford shall apply for grants from FEMA and the state to complete project that mitigate the potential effects of flooding.

### PROJECT 13

**Project:** Investigate options for shared services for policing.

**Responsible Party:** Selectboard

**Timeline:** 5-8 Years

**Explanation:** The Richford Police Department was disbanded many years ago. Re-establishing a municipal police force may not be financially feasible. The Town is exploring options to share police services with neighboring communities.

## PROJECT 14

**Project:** Implement Enhanced Energy Plan

**Responsible Party:** Selectboard

**Timeline:** 5-8 Years

**Explanation:** Richford had completed an enhanced energy plan per 24 V.S.A. 4352 (Chapter 7). The intent of the plan is to have Richford plan to do its part in achieving ambitious regional and state energy planning goals. Richford will implement the specific projects identified in the Energy chapter to further the goals of Richford's enhanced energy planning.

## PLANNING PROCESS GOALS AND POLICIES

**GOAL: THAT RICHFORD HAS A DOCUMENT THAT REPRESENTS THE COLLECTIVE VISION OF THE TOWN OF RICHFORD FOR THE FUTURE.**

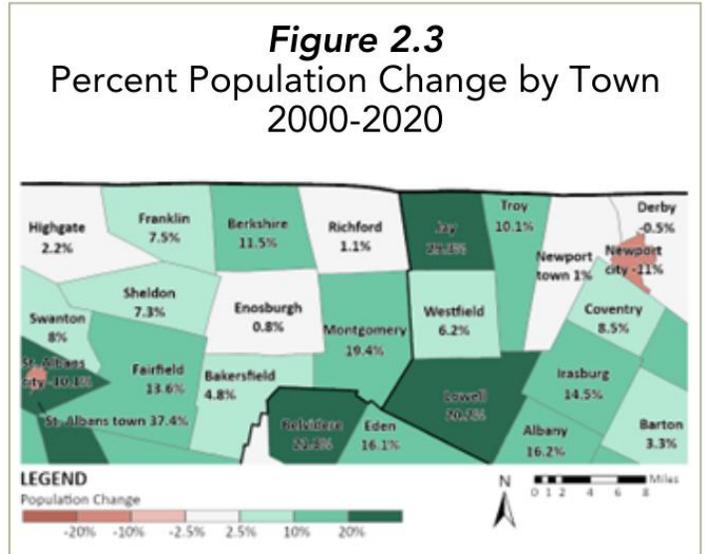
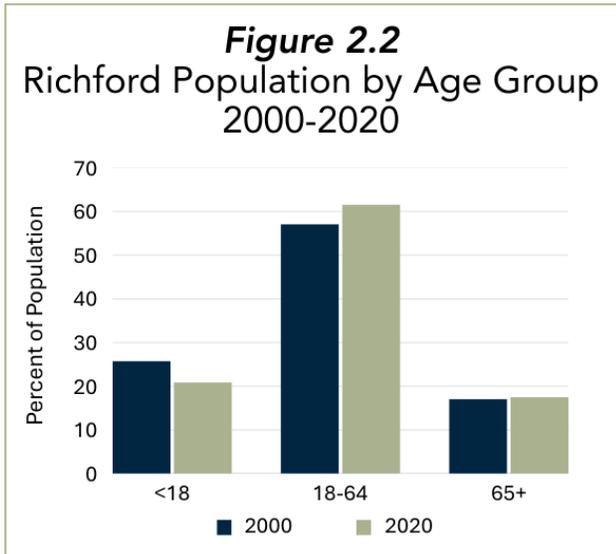
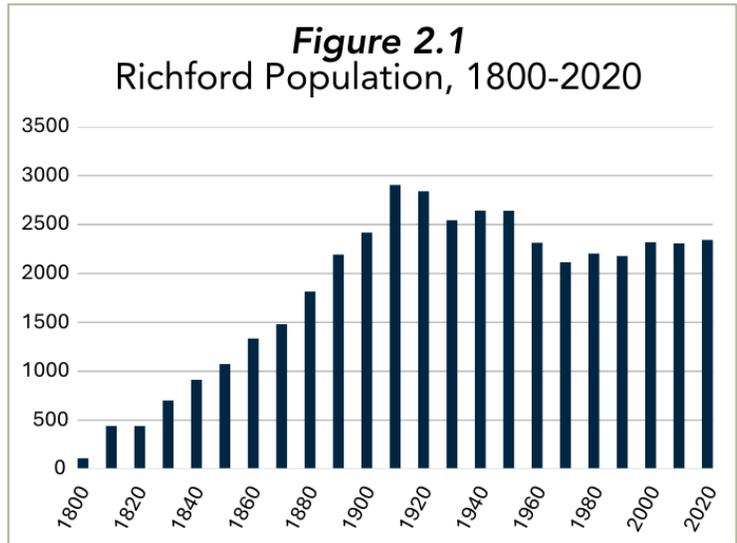
### **POLICIES:**

- Encourage citizen involvement at all levels of the planning process.
- Ensure that decisions having local impacts are made at the most local level possible and with local input.
- Represent and advocate local interests as time and resources permit, through participation in regional, state, and federal planning, legislative efforts, and/or regulatory proceedings that may affect the Town of Richford and the interest of its residents.
- Participate as a statutory party in state Act 250 proceedings as appropriate.

# THE RICHFORD COMMUNITY

## DATA ON POPULATION

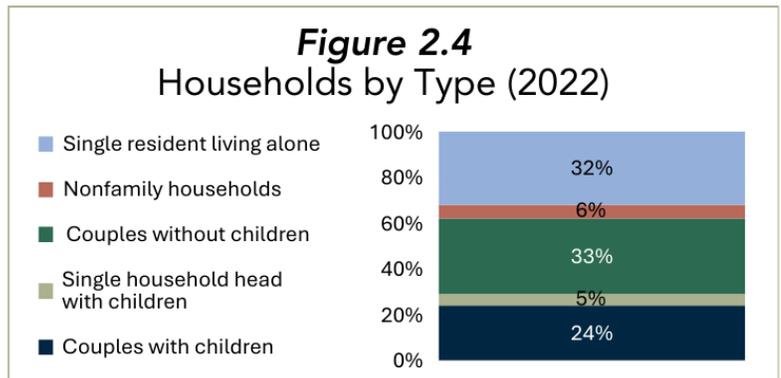
In 2020, 2,346 people lived in Richford. The number of residents in Richford has stayed roughly the same over the last 20 years. Richford’s population has grown significantly less than most of its neighboring communities.



The average Richford resident is 39.6 years old. Since 2000, Richford’s population has gotten older due to a decrease in the number of youth under age 18.

## DATA ON HOUSEHOLDS

There are 1,003 households in Richford. The number of residents per household has decreased over time due to a decrease in the number of families. Roughly 1/3 of Richford residents live alone.



# NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

## HISTORIC RESOURCES

### ***BRIEF HISTORY OF RICHFORD***

European settlers first arrived in Richford in 1795. Joseph Stanhope settled the area which is now Richford Village. By the mid-1880s the town had a growing lumber industry. Many of the Town’s most important historic buildings were built in the late 1800s and early 1900s as the lumber industry was at its peak.

### ***ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES***

Archeological sites contain a fragile, complex and irreplaceable record of past human activities. Richford has several known archeological sites and areas having a high probability of containing archeological remains. Precise locations of archeological sites are not publicly available due to risks of vandalism. The 3.5-mile segment of the Missisquoi River from the Berkshire town line to one mile east of the village district is of high sensitivity for possible archaeological remains.

### ***HISTORICAL DISTRICT***

A complete survey of the historical buildings in Richford, including the mapping of the Downtown Richford Historic District and the East Richford Historic District, was completed in 2001 by the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation and chronicled in a book titled *The Historic Architecture of Richford*. This book hereby incorporated by reference into the Richford Town Plan.

### ***STATE AND NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTER***

The National Historic Register and the State Historic Register are lists of buildings of national or statewide historic importance. The entire Downtown Richford Historic District is included on the National Historic Register. There are 7 additional buildings on the National Historic Register as listed in Chart 3.1. There are 31 sites listed in the State Historic Register, including many historic barns and private residences built in 1800s and early 1900s.



**CEMETERIES**

The earliest known cemetery in Richford is Davis Family Cemetery dating back to 1809. Although only three headstones remain, it is believed that earlier there had been more. A few years later a second cemetery was established on what is now Troy Street.

<b>CHART 3.1 PROPERTIES ON THE NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTER</b>	
<b>Property Name</b>	<b>Address</b>
Boright, Sheldon, House	122 River Street
Downtown Richford Historic District	Main and River Street
Missisquoi River Bridge	VT Route 105 over the Missisquoi River
Richford Primary School	140 Intervale Avenue
St. Ann’s Episcopal Church	Jct. of Church and Town Streets
Sweat-Comings Company House	10-12 Powell Street
U.S. Inspection Station-East Richford, Vermont	357 Glen Sutton Road
U.S. Inspection Station-Richford, Vermont	VT Route 139
Wheeler, F.W., House	31 Intervale Avenue

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

This section is an inventory of Richford’s natural resources, including climate, topography, water resources, woodlands, wetlands, floodplains, and fish and wildlife resources. This information will enable residents of Richford to develop a better understanding of the town’s natural resources and how to best use them wisely.

**CLIMATE AND AIR QUALITY**

Climate

Richford is located on the western edge of the Green Mountains. As elevation increases from the Missisquoi River Valley up towards the Green Mountains average temperature drops and average precipitation increases. Historically, Richford has had long winters with significant snowfall, and shorter summers. The growing season of Richford is between 110 and 120 days, up to 50 days shorter than in the Champlain Valley. Richford’s roads and buildings have been designed to meet these climatic conditions.

Across Vermont, the climate is changing. Temperatures are increasing, and the winter season is shortening. Annual precipitation has also increased by almost 7 inches in the past 50 years, which in some areas has led to increased flooding. In the future, Richford and its residents may need to plan for roads, bridges and other infrastructure that can handle hotter weather and more rain.

### Air Quality

Air quality is generally good in Richford. The most common reason for air quality issues is pollution from wildfires or other sources outside of the state. Traffic and idling of automobiles may also create temporary poor air quality.

## **GEOLOGY, STEEP SLOPES AND SOILS**

### Geology

As in much of Vermont, the dominant rock formations in Richford are metamorphic, including schist, gneiss, and quartzites. Due to its location at the foothills of the Green Mountains, rock in Richford is generally more resistant to weathering than shale, slate, and limestone of the Champlain Lowlands to the west.

The largest sand reserve is along Route 105 near the Berkshire town border (Vermont Geological survey maps, 1974). The most significant geologic site in Richford is the Richford Mineral Area, located along Lucas Brook in the northeast part of the town. The site covers ten acres and contains a variety of minerals including talc, actinolite, fuchsite, and magnetite.

### Steep Slopes

Located at the foothills of the Green Mountains, Richford includes both mountains and valleys. The lowest point in Richford is along the Missisquoi River near Berkshire, approximately 400 feet above sea level. The land rises to 3,400 feet at the border of Orleans County, along the spine of the Green Mountains. Most human activity, houses, farming, and businesses can be found between 430 and 650 feet above mean sea level. Steep slopes can present major limitations for development since there is a greater risk of erosion, structural problems, and water pollution than on shallower slopes.

### Soils

The National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), classifies soils for planning purposes based on their suitability for various types of development.

In planning for growth and development, it is important to target development in areas with appropriate septic capacity. See below for a map of the soils most suitable for the septic systems. It is also important to consider which soils are best for farming. Much of the best farmland in Richford is in the floodplain and therefore protected from development.

## ***WATER RESOURCES***

### *Ponds*

Richford has two ponds. Guilmette Pond is the only major pond in town, located south of Hardwood Hill. There are a few single-family dwellings close to the pond, although there is not much development directly on the shoreline. Fishing enthusiasts pull pickerel, bullhead, and perch from the pond. The smaller Paradise Pond consists of two ponds separated by a beaver dam. The town should protect the integrity of Guilmette and Paradise Ponds.

### *Rivers & Streams*

The Missisquoi River enters the town at the Canadian border near East Richford, flows through the Village and leaves the town at the town boundary with Berkshire. While it was once used for power generation and water supply, today it is considered primarily a recreational asset.

The portion of the Missisquoi River located in Richford is a designated National and Scenic River. The designation recognizes the outstanding scenic, recreational and natural resource value of the river. This designation enables access to federal funding for projects to preserve the recreational, scenic, historic, cultural, natural, and geologic resources of the river. The designation does not prohibit development or give the Federal government control over private property. The river is also part of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail (see Recreation).

### *Wetlands*

Wetlands are important for a variety of reasons. Wetlands provide temporary storage for floodwaters, reducing the damages from flooding. They also act to filter surface and ground water. Wetlands provide habitat for aquatic animals and plants. Finally, wetlands provide scenic beauty and recreational opportunities. Most wetlands in Richford occur in low-lying areas along the Missisquoi where they absorb great quantities of water during flood season and gradually release the water throughout the summer.

### *Groundwater & Water Quality*

Most Richford residents rely on groundwater for well water. In Richford, areas of high groundwater potentials are located within sand and gravel deposits in the valleys of the Missisquoi River and its tributaries.

Water from the surface slowly seeps into the ground to form groundwater aquifers. Activity in these groundwater recharge areas can affect the quality and quantity of the potential water supply. Failed septic systems, leaking gas tanks, road salt, industrial wastes, and chemical application in agriculture are all common sources of groundwater pollution. Once a groundwater system is contaminated it is expensive and difficult, if not impossible, to fix.

The quality and quantity of water in the municipal water supply also depends on the development which occur in the water supply recharge areas. The town has designated a Reservoir Protection Overlay and Water Supply Protection Zone to protect the water supply.

**CRITICAL AREAS**

Critical areas are natural areas requiring special protection from development. They include areas that have environmental, ecological, educational, and/or scenic value. The Town has identified Stanhope Brook Watershed area, the Guilmette Pond wetland area, and the Paradise Pond wetlands area as important critical areas. These areas should be protected from incompatible development.

**WOODLANDS**

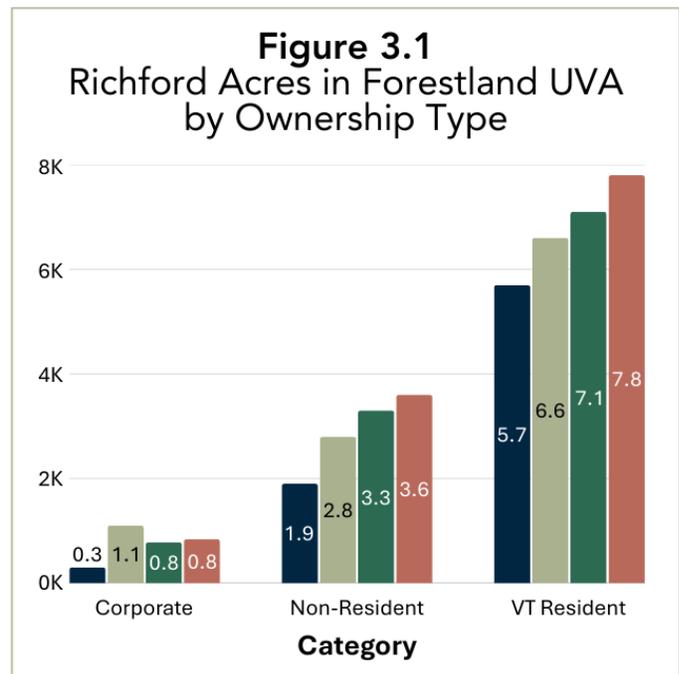
Despite the past decline of forest products businesses such as logging in Vermont, they remain an important segment of the state’s economy. In Richford, the forest ecosystem supports many hardwood tree species including sugar maple, red maple, beech, yellow birch, white birch, and poplar. The soft wood species include white pine, hemlock, red spruce, and balsam fir. Forests should be protected from misuse and poor resource management. Proper management of Richford’s forests will maintain the forest long-term, contributing to a stable economy. Forests should be protected from poor resource management and excessive development.

**HABITAT BLOCKS**

Maintaining large areas of forest, wetlands and other natural areas is critical for the wildlife population. Large habitat blocks also support activities like hunting, hiking and logging. Richford is part of the “Cold Hollow to Canada” corridor which connects forests in Vermont to forests in Quebec. The largest habitat block in Richford consists of much of the east side of Town at higher elevations.

Even low densities of development and rural roads can fragment habitat blocks. Roads and homes disrupt animal travel, resulting in invasive species taking root, and creating more conflict points between humans and animals. Additionally, residential development can lead to less available land for logging and hunting.

Richford has mostly avoided significant fragmentation of its forests and important habitats. The amount of land protected under



the Vermont Department of Taxes Current Use Program has increased from 2005-2020, while the number of large parcels has stayed the same.

### ***WILDLIFE RESOURCES***

In addition to habitat blocks, the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife has developed maps which show key habitats of different species. Deer yards are areas where deer live in the winter. Large deer yards are located around Alder Brook and north of the Missisquoi River near East Richford, while smaller deer yards are near Lucas, Stanhope, Mountain, and Whittaker Brooks. There is also a rare animal community along the Missisquoi River. Species specific information on rare animals is not included due to risks of poaching. Local officials should consider deer yards and other important wildlife habitat must when making land use planning and development decisions. The need to encourage conservation of these areas cannot be overstated. Additionally, the habitat of the fan-tailed darter fish should be protected in local land use planning.

### ***DISASTER RESILIENCE***

#### *Flood Resilience*

There are two types of flooding that are common in Vermont: inundation flooding and fluvial erosion. Inundation flooding occurs when the water level of a river, stream or pond rises beyond its banks and flows into nearby land, The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps areas that have a 1% chance of flooding each year. This area is known as the special flood hazard area (SFHA). The SFHAs in Richford are along the Missisquoi River. Richford's zoning bylaw restricts development within the SFHA. These regulations comply with the standards set by FEMA for participation in the National Flood Insurance Program, a federal program which allows residents and businesses to purchase government-backed flood insurance. Official Special Flood Hazard Area maps from FEMA can be found in the vault at the Town Office or online at the FEMA Map Service Center.

A second type of flooding is known as fluvial erosion. Fluvial erosion is the destruction of riverbanks caused by the fast movement of rivers and streams. Fluvial erosion occurs when heavy rains or alterations to the river channel cause the water to move faster. Fluvial erosion is a common cause of road and bridge washouts during flooding events. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources has mapped river and stream corridors that are at risk for fluvial erosion. Richford may want to consider developing a fluvial erosion section within its zoning bylaw.

#### *Climate Resilience*

According to the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, the number of days with extreme precipitation (rain and snow) is likely to increase by 2044. Increased precipitation may increase the size and frequency of floods. The Town should consider how to reduce flooding risks when building or improving roads, buildings and other infrastructure.

The number of days above 90 degrees Fahrenheit may increase to as many as 40 days a summer by 2050. Currently, many private residences and public buildings in Richford lack air-conditioning or other cooling methods effective in extremely high heats.

## GOALS AND POLICIES

**GOAL: SUPPORT PRESERVATION OF RICHFORD'S ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES.**

**POLICIES:**

- Protect sites of potential archaeological significance.
- Projects occurring in the 'archeologically sensitive region' should consider the potential impact of their project and propose mitigation during the early stages of development.
- Encourage the renovation and reuse of historic buildings whenever feasible.
- Encourage the promotion and protection, to the extent feasible, of the Richford Historic District.

**CLIMATE AND AIR QUALITY GOAL: PROMOTE RICHFORD'S RESILIENCE TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND TO ENSURE HIGH AIR QUALITY.**

**POLICY:**

- Consider climatic conditions and weather patterns in planning for future land use, development, and energy requirements, and in the siting, design, and construction of roads, buildings, and other services and facilities.

**GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY GOAL: MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE LAND BY DISCOURAGING DEVELOPMENT ON STEEP SLOPES.**

**POLICIES:**

- Prohibit all land development on slopes greater than 25%. Vegetative cover should be maintained to the extent possible.
- Regulate development on slopes greater than 15% to avoid high environmental and social costs.

**SOILS GOAL: TO MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE PRIME AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY SOILS.**

**POLICIES:**

- Discourage use of farmland for industrial or commercial purposes if the site has sewer and water access and can contribute significantly to the area's economy.
- Require restoration of recently abandoned earth resource extraction sites where appropriate.
- Stormwater runoff and erosion shall be managed during all phases of construction,
- Mineral and earth resource extraction and processing facilities should be planned, constructed, and managed so as to not adversely impact:
  - a) existing or planned uses within the vicinity of the project site;
  - b) fish and wildlife habitat and surrounding land uses;
  - c) waters leaving the site that will not undergo further off-site management;
  - d) prime agricultural land;
  - e) function and safety of existing road systems serving the project site, (increased heavy traffic, heavy trucks, impacts on the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians, etc.), and
  - f) to provide direct access to Class 3 or better highways.

**WATER RESOURCES GOAL: CONTINUE TO HAVE HIGH QUALITY SURFACE WATERS AND GROUNDWATERS.**

**POLICIES:**

- Maintain wetlands and shorelines in their natural state, and protect them from pollution through appropriate regulations.
- Review and consider adopting river corridor and vegetative buffer regulations.
- Prohibit land waste disposal or storage of possible contaminants in high water table and groundwater recharge areas.
- Carefully manage the Stanhope Brook Watershed and maintain land use regulations to control development in this area.
- Avoid new development in identified flood hazard, fluvial erosion, and river corridor protection areas. If new development is to be built in such areas, it shall not exacerbate flooding and fluvial erosion.
- Encourage the protection and restoration of floodplains and upland forested areas that attenuate and moderate flooding and fluvial erosion.
- Adopt flood emergency preparedness and response plans.

**CRITICAL AREAS GOAL: THAT RICHFORD PROTECTS CRITICAL NATURAL AREAS INCLUDING WOODLANDS, WETLANDS, FLOOD HAZARD AREAS, AND WILDLIFE HABITAT AND ENSURE THE MAINTENANCE OF THE EXISTING NATIVE BIODIVERSITY OF THE REGION.**

**POLICIES:**

- Protect endangered and threatened species and their habitats.
- Support the purchase and protection of natural or fragile areas by local or state conservation agencies.
- Development shall not encroach on Vermont Significant Wetlands (Class I and II).
- Encourage establishment of vegetative buffer strips around wetlands and, where appropriate, other critical natural areas.
- The town shall regulate development in the special flood hazard area to enable property owners to buy flood insurance and to prevent damage and loss of life from flooding.
- Support efforts of community organizations to through the conserve, maintain, and enhance habitat blocks within the Cold Hollow to Canada Corridor.
- Development shall be prohibited on land over 2500 feet in elevation except for agriculture and forestry purposes.

# PUBLIC UTILITIES, FACILITIES, AND SERVICES

## PUBLIC UTILITIES

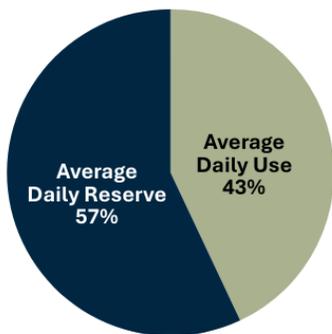
Richford has invested in public infrastructure that benefit both the people of Richford and the regional economy.

### **WATER**

The primary source of village water is the Stanhope Brook. The Loveland Brook serves as a secondary source. The system has a total capacity of 471,000 gallons per day, while 202,100 gallons per day are currently being used. This leaves a reserve capacity of 268,900 gallons per day. Most properties in the village district are connected to the water system and capacity still exists to serve future development. The 1889 water system serves as emergency backup for the current system.

The slow-sand filtration system receives water from either the brook or the reservoir. After being filtered and chlorinated, water is stored in the 1 million gallon covered reservoir until being drawn through transmission lines to the network of distribution lines.

**Figure 4.1**  
Freshwater  
Reservoir Capacity



In 1993, the Village Trustees approved an ordinance which established regulations for the water system. All properties connected to the system are now billed a base rate and for each gallon used, with the rate set to cover operations and debt. The rate change encouraged conservation of water and reduced water usage.

The Water District has worked to replace older leaking water lines, including replacing the water line on Golf Course Road and beginning planning to replace the waterline on Noyes Street.

Outside of the village, Richford residents rely on wells or private springs for water.

### **WASTEWATER**

The town owns and operates a wastewater treatment facility. The facility was built in 1969/1970 and serves most of the village district properties and a small number of town properties. The treatment plant has a design capacity of 380,000 gallons per day (GPD) for the primary and secondary aerated lagoons. Currently, only 244,100 GPD are being used; this leaves a reserve of 135,900 GPD. The system has three pumping stations which pump waste to a central treatment plant.

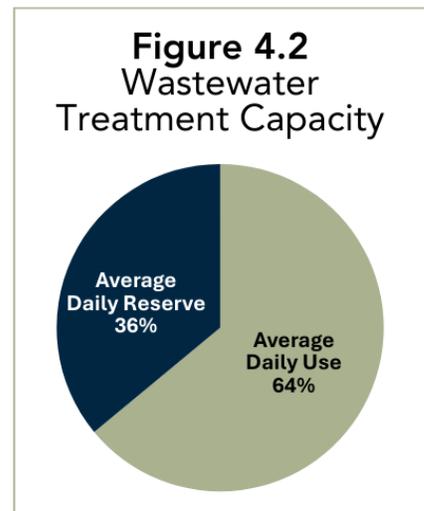
Most residents outside of the village district depend on on-site systems, primarily septic and mound systems, for sewage disposal. Most wastewater issues are now under the jurisdiction of the

Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Many of the soils in Richford are not suited for standard septic systems because of their slope characteristics, shallow depth to the seasonal water table or bedrock, and/or low percolation rates. For health reasons, proper system siting and design are especially important in these areas.

### **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

The Town of Richford currently has a contract with John Weatherby for the disposal of solid waste in the Special District. Town residents outside of the district may either take the trash to transfer stations in Montgomery or Highgate or hire private haulers for collection. Richford is a member community of the Northwest Vermont Solid Waste Management District which has a regional solid waste management plan and a certified regional facility.

The Northwest Solid Waste District sponsors “special collections” (bulky items, scrap metal, and tires) and Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collections (oil-based paints, solvents, cleaners, pesticides, and other chemicals that would be harmful to the environment if not handled properly). Recycling is mandatory in the Solid Waste District and is free of charge. It is illegal to burn or dump garbage in Richford.



### **INTERNET, CELLULAR SERVICE AND OTHER TELECOMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

The Town of Richford, particularly the village district has good cellular service and internet connectivity. While there are no fiber internet services in town, roughly 90% of residents have access to internet service that meets the federal definition of broadband and 70% have access to high-speed cable.

Comcast provides cable and internet service in Richford. Consolidated Communications provides telephone and internet in Richford. There are two cellular companies serving the area, Verizon Wireless and AT&T. Cell service and roaming charges continue to be an issue near the border. Satellite services have become more popular and faster in recent years, providing another option for residents.

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

### **MUNICIPAL FACILITIES & SERVICES**

**Arvin A. Brown Public Library:** The library has an excellent collection of fiction and literature; it includes large print materials for the visually impaired. In addition, the library is developing a strong

multi-media collection including fiction and non-fiction videos and DVDs, computer software, audiobooks, music and non-traditional items such as binoculars.

The library also serves as a community center with many regular programs including weekday and weekend story hours for toddlers and preschoolers, summer reading programs for elementary and secondary students, art classes, tutoring session in math, history and literature, and evening book discussions for adults. The library contributes activities and performers to the Richford Summer Day Camp, hosts summer school classes, and partners with local service organizations and other Franklin County libraries to bring speakers and performance groups to the area. The library is also open to creating new programs that meet the needs of residents.

The majority of survey respondents rated both the library's facilities and services as good or excellent.

**The Post Office:** The Post Office Building is owned and maintained by the Town. The Town rents facility space to the U.S. Post Office and the North Federal Credit Union Bank. In 2023, the Town, rebuilt the ADA ramp on the back of the building, replaced the furnace and rebuilt the post office loading dock.

**The Town Hall:** The Town Hall was originally a church, built in 1871, and has been renovated many times over the years. It includes an 1872 Seth Thomas clock that chimes on the hour and half hour from the tower above. The Town Hall currently houses all of the Town's offices. The Colonial Theater, a beautiful auditorium on the second floor, continues to stage elementary and high school music and drama productions. It is the site for municipal meetings and public hearings, and is used by local groups and traveling performers for fundraising and cultural events.

The former jail is now part of the vault for town records. The Listers have a 1<sup>st</sup> floor office in what was once the coal bin. The former library is now offices for the town clerk, the administrative assistant and the zoning administrator. The majority of survey respondents rated the Town Hall facilities as good or excellent.

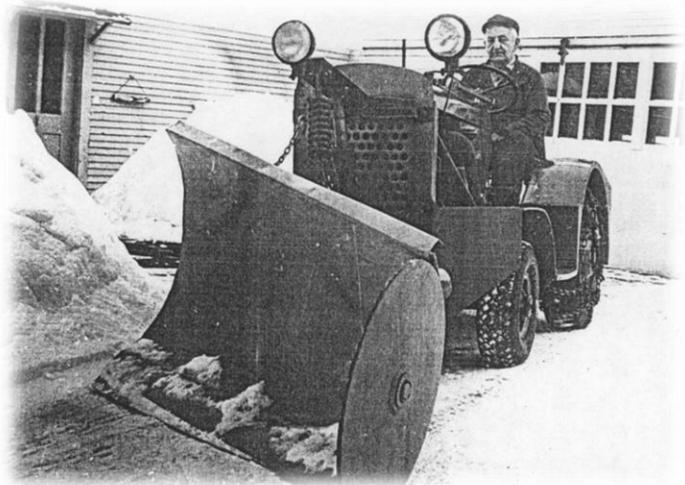
**The Highway Department and Town Garage:** The Town Garage is in good condition and is adequate to serve the needs of the community for years to come.

Highway equipment includes:

- 1998 Mack Dump/Plow Truck
- 2000 International Dump/Plow Truck
- 2002 International Tandem Dump/Plow Truck
- 2007 International Tandem Dump/Plow Truck
- 2002 1-Ton Truck

## DRAFT RICHFORD TOWN PLAN

- 2006 Pick-up Truck
- Cat Loader
- Cat Backhoe
- Grader
- Sidewalk Plow
- Kabota Tractor/ Mower/Plow



### ***EMERGENCY SERVICES***

The high school, elementary school, and emergency services building each house an emergency generator to be used by the public in the case of a power outage or natural disaster.

#### *Police*

Richford does not have a municipal police department. Police protection is provided by the State Police. Parking and ordinance violations may be enforced by any enforcement agency and the Town Constable.

Lack of adequate police protection was one of the major concerns of survey respondents. 2/3 of respondents considered police services poor. The top thing respondents wanted to see change in Richford is improved safety and less crime. Vermont State Police generally only respond to major emergencies and crimes.

The high cost of a municipal police department has been the main barrier to improving police services. The Town should continue to examine all options for improving police services at a cost affordable to residents. Sharing police services with other municipalities may be a more affordable option for providing some local police services.

#### *Fire*

The Richford Fire Department is now made up of trained and dedicated volunteers. The Department responds to mutual aid calls in Montgomery, Enosburgh, Berkshire, and Sutton, Quebec.

Members of the department are also active in the Richford Firefighters Association. The Association conducts fundraisers assisted by civic groups and organizations to purchase equipment not provided for in the town appropriation.

The department currently owns the following vehicles:

- 1989 E-one pumper with 1000-gallon tank and 1500 gpm pump;
- 2004 Ford F350 grass fire pickup with 225-gallon tank and cascade system;
- 2006 International pumper/tanker with 1800-gallon tank with 1250 gpm pump; and

## DRAFT RICHFORD TOWN PLAN

- 2011 International 3050-gallon tanker with 500 gpm pump and portable 400 gpm pump.
- Tower 1 ladder truck
- Heavy Rescue Truck

The Firefighter Auxiliary is a separate organization providing community services (Breakfast with Santa Claus) and support to the department. Auxiliary members are usually on-site at major fires, dispensing coffee and sandwiches to the firefighters.

The Fire Services are considered adequate at this time. The majority of survey respondents rated fire services as good or excellent.

### Ambulance

The Richford Ambulance Service is owned by the Town of Richford and managed by the Richford Health Center. The Ambulance Service maintains 24-hour, seven day a week continuous service. Richford Ambulance Service is an ALS certified service equipped with 2 ambulances. Both are equipped with advanced life saving devices and staffed by qualified emergency medical technicians.

The Town of Richford offers a subscription service for residents at \$75.00 per year per household. Each subscription provides 12 months of service with assurance that the household will not be billed for services beyond insurance coverage. The majority of survey respondents rated ambulance services as good or excellent.



*The emergency services building dedicated July 4, 1998.*

### Emergency Building

The emergency building hosts the Fire Department and Ambulance Service. The building needs a new roof because the existing roof is leaking despite several previous patches.

## **EDUCATION & CHILDCARE**

### Education

Richford's elementary school, which serves grades pre-K to 5, is located just south of the Village on Route 105 on a 65-acre site. Originally constructed in 1968, and expanded in 1989, the school is 27,360 square feet with 14 classrooms, several multi-purpose rooms, a library, gymnasium, health room, and kitchen. The school has capacity for 300 students and current enrollment is 212 students. School enrollment has decreased slightly over the last 20 years, so the existing school capacity should serve the children of Richford for many years to come. The facility currently meets all state educational requirements and provides space for community functions.

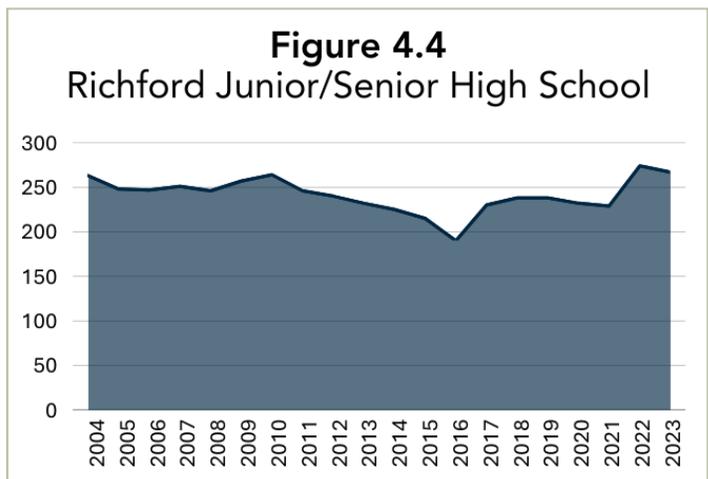
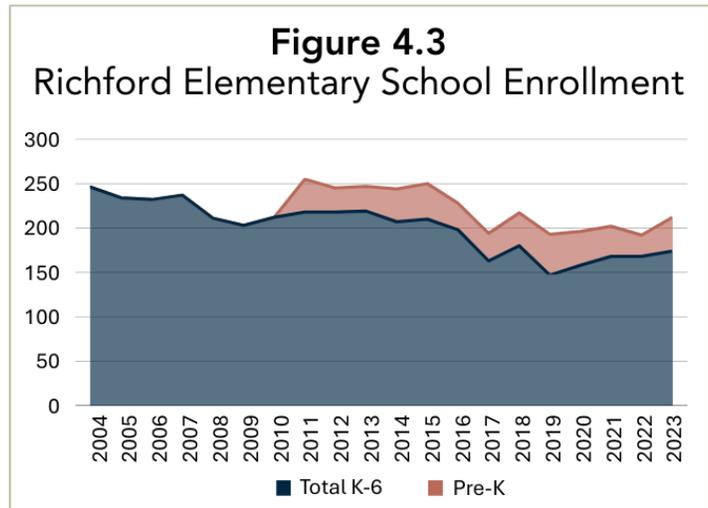
The Richford Junior-Senior High School, which serves grades 6-12, is a 26,000 square foot building, located on a 20-acre site in the Village owned by the Franklin Northeast Supervisory District. It was built in 1917 and renovated in 1997. Facilities include 19 classrooms, a library, study hall, shop, and gymnasium. The school serves students in Richford and neighboring communities. The enrollment at Richford Junior-Senior High School has been relatively consistent with a small increase in recent years. Enrollment is not currently expected to exceed the facilities' capacity.

Currently all students are bussed to school. The Town has developed a plan for a path from the Village to the Elementary School. If constructed this could allow some students to walk to school.

The Franklin County Early Childhood Programs (FCECP) is a collaborative early care and education program for young children (birth to school age) and their families operated by the public schools in the Franklin Central, Franklin Northeast and Franklin Northwest Supervisory Union School Districts. The FCECP primarily serves children who are developmentally at risk or developmentally delayed and their families. In addition, they provide a variety of services to prepare children for public school kindergarten and ensure that public school kindergarten programs are prepared for young children with a variety of developmental needs.

A full range of vocational education is available to Richford residents at the Cold Hollow Career Center in Enosburg Falls. The Center offers various courses in Business, Agriculture, Construction Technology, Industrial Mechanics, and Adult Education.

Opportunities exist for higher education around the State of Vermont, although only one is located in Franklin County. The Community College of Vermont (CCV) offers classes in St. Albans. Other colleges in the area include Northern Vermont University, The University of Vermont, St. Michaels, and Champlain College.



### Childcare

Availability and cost of childcare is a growing concern for working families. High quality, available childcare is a critical to supporting a stable workforce.

Richford currently has 4 registered childcare homes and the Early Childhood Program at the Elementary School, with a total capacity of 67 children. There are 1.5 children under the age of 6 for each available registered childcare spot in Richford. Data on other options, such as siblings, stay at home parents, family care providers, un-registered childcare homes or other opportunities are not available. According to the “Stalled at the Start” Report by Let’s Grow Kids, 74% of infants and 54% of toddlers in Franklin County do not have access to regulated childcare.

### **RECREATION**

**Richford Park:** A 15-acre playground is located off Intervale Avenue in the village. Fields and courts are available for soccer, softball, baseball, and basketball. The playground is used by the Richford School District, Little League, Babe Ruth, and adult leagues.

**Elementary and Junior Senior High School:** The Elementary and High Schools also have a soccer field, basketball courts and tennis courts.

**Memorial Park:** Located on the corner of Main and Troy Streets, the park is a favorite summer spot for children and bikers and is used for seasonal community celebrations. It also boasts the restored Corliss Fountain and views of Jay Peak.

**Davis Park:** Located on River Street the banks of the Missisquoi River with benches set in shady spots for quiet resting. It offers a playground, bandstand for summer concerts, a canoe launch, and an information kiosk. In the winter, a skating rink is set up in the park.

**Missisquoi Park:** A new park consisting of 8 acres of town owned land between Troy Street and the Missisquoi River. Currently, the park includes a ½ acre access for a canoe/kayak boat launch and park benches. The Town developed a plan for the remainder of the park, but it is not expected to be constructed at this time.

**Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail (MVRT):** The MVRT is a 26-mile trail which connects St. Albans and Richford. The trail can be used for biking, walking, running, horseback riding, snowmobiling, and cross-county skiing. The trail passes through beautiful Vermont landscapes, including agricultural farmland and river valleys.

**Missisquoi River:** The river is available for fishing, canoeing, tubing, swimming, and nature walks. The Missisquoi River Basin Association was organized in the mid-1990s and provides a forum for all groups and individuals interested in promoting and protecting the river. The group organizes educational and recreational outings.

**Northern Forest Canoe Trail:** Richford is located along the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, a 740-mile trail from New York to Maine. The Town has canoes available for rental.

**The Richford Country Club:** The Country Club is a beautiful 186-acre, 9-hole golf course located just north of the Special District. Golf carts are available for rent, and meals and refreshments are available at the clubhouse. The course is well maintained and is well used by residents and visitors.

**Richford Day Camp:** During the summer months, the Richford Elementary School runs a summer camp program for youth.

**Richford Recreation:** Richford recreation is a new community organization which supports recreation programming for residents.

**Future Recreation Needs:** The Richford Re-Connect project developed a phased plan for trail infrastructure to connect the Elementary School with the Village sidewalk network. Later phases of the project would connect existing trail networks to fishing access points, could include a storywalk and dog park.

A significant number of survey respondents identified a need for youth recreation opportunities/community center space which could provide a safe environment for youth outside of school hours.

## ***CIVIC GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS***

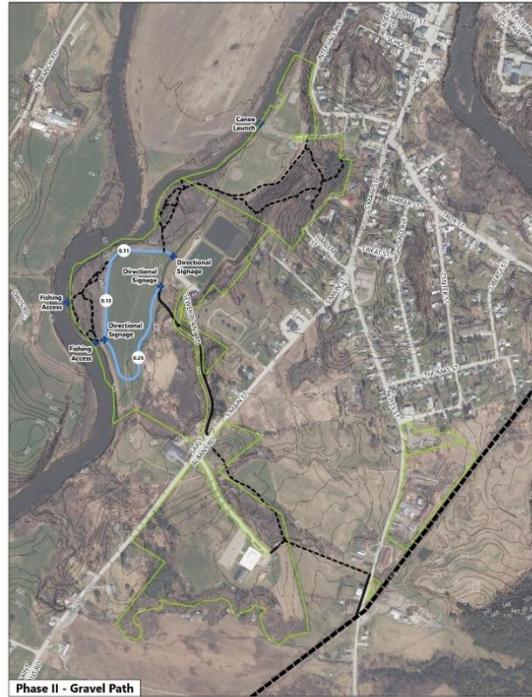
### *Health Services*

Richford Health Center, Inc. d/b/a Northern Tier Center for Health, (NOTCH), is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) that now serves the rural communities of Franklin and Grand Isle Counties in Vermont. Primary medical care, behavioral health counseling dental care, and pharmaceutical programs are provided within Richford. The nearest hospital is the Northwestern Medical Center in St. Albans, approximately 30 miles away.

There are several civic groups and organizations that serve the Richford community. Local groups and organizations are vital to the Town. They support educational, safety, and service organizations, and often support each other. Without the many dedicated members and volunteers working together through these organizations, many of the vital services and programs now in place would be unable to continue. **See Appendix B for a description of organizations that serve the Richford community.**

One particular group has been active in the Richford community over the past several years: The Richford Economic Advancement Corporation (REAC). REAC is a private non-profit, quasi-municipal organization formed in 1982 to promote economic and community development. Governed by a Board of Directors, REAC serves as a contact for commercial/industrial concerns and with local, regional, and state agencies and officials.

# DRAFT RICHFORD TOWN PLAN



Project Title  
**School to Park Trail  
Richford, VT**

Sheet Title  
**Proposed Trail Plan**

**Legend**

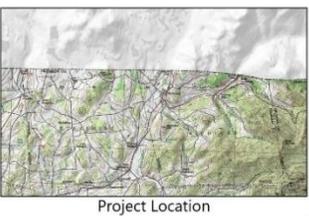
Green outline	Town Owned Lands	Blue dashed line	Current Phase Proposed Trail
Blue dashed line	Proposed Trail Feature	Blue solid line	Footpath
Blue dashed line with diamond	Proposed Trail Feature	Black dashed line	Constructed Trail
Black dashed line	Existing Sidewalk	Black solid line	Footpath
Black dashed line with square	Existing Rail Trail	Black solid line	Gravel
Black dashed line with circle	Existing Trails (1.36 mi)	Orange square	Potential Dog Park (10,000 SF)
Black dashed line with triangle	Existing Trails (1.36 mi)	Orange circle	Continous (S)

Sources: Aerial Imagery by VCEI (Delmas Outlets); The Parcel Boundary compiled by VCEI; Roads by Whelan (2018); All other layers by VCEI (2020).

**Project Information:**  
 Date: 06/14/24  
 Scale: 1 inch = 400 feet  
 Project Number: 23-181  
 Drawn By: ADP  
 Project Manager: JAD

Disclaimer: The accuracy of information presented is determined by its source as downloaded from the Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI). Data shall be used for planning purposes only and VCEI is not responsible for any errors or omissions that may exist. Questions of air- or ground-level conditions can be resolved by site inspections and/or surveys by a registered surveyor. This map is not a replacement for surveyed information or engineering studies.

Map created with ArcGIS Online. All rights reserved. © 2024 Esri. All other layers by VCEI (2020).



REAC, with support from the Northwest Regional Planning Commission and the Town, sponsored the Brownfields Area-Wide Assessment Project; an economic development strategic planning process that will provide market, environmental, and structural assessments for four sites in the Special District and position them for redevelopment. REAC also worked with the Selectboard to purchase 2 properties on Main Street in support of the creation of the riverfront park. The area currently has a canoe and kayak boat launch as well as several public benches.

## PUBLIC UTILITIES, FACILITIES, AND SERVICES GOALS AND POLICIES

**WATER SERVICE GOAL: RICHFORD HAS AN ADEQUATE AND RELIABLE SUPPLY OF CLEAN WATER FOR ALL RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.**

**POLICIES:**

- Enforce the Water Supply Ordinance, including provisions for the expense of expanding the system to be borne proportionately by the developer(s).
- Continue upgrades and improvements of the municipal water system.

**WASTEWATER TREATMENT GOAL: ALL WASTEWATER IN RICHFORD IS TREATED APPROPRIATELY, WHETHER ON-SITE OR AT THE MUNICIPAL SEWER PLANT, TO PROTECT THE HEALTH OF RESIDENTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT.**

**POLICIES:**

- Enforce the Wastewater Treatment System Ordinance, including provisions for the expense of expanding the system to be borne proportionately by the developer(s).
- Continue upgrades and improvements of the municipal wastewater treatment system.

**SOLID WASTE GOAL: MAINTAIN A CONVENIENT, COST-EFFECTIVE, AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL SYSTEM WHICH PROMOTES REDUCTION, REUSE, AND RECYCLING.**

**POLICIES:**

- Continue to provide solid waste collection in the village district that is available and affordable for ratepayers.
- Help the Northwest Solid Waste Management District in their efforts, including special collections of household hazardous materials and bulky items.

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION GOAL: SUPPORT EFFORTS TO PROVIDE STATE OF THE ART TECHNOLOGY FOR BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDUALS IN THE TOWN OF RICHFORD.**

**POLICY:**

- Support efforts to increase U.S. cellular phone service throughout Richford.

**GENERAL GOAL: DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A CAPITAL BUDGET AND PLAN FOR ALL PUBLICLY FUNDED UTILITIES, FACILITIES, AND SERVICES.**

**POLICY:**

- ???

**PUBLIC FACILITIES GOAL: SUPPORT AND MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES INCLUDING THE ARVIN A. BROWN PUBLIC LIBRARY, THE POST OFFICE, THE TOWN HALL, AND THE TOWN GARAGE.**

**POLICIES:**

- Support library activities and services.
- Support continued maintenance, preservation, and public use of the Town Hall and its auditorium.
- Maintain Town Garage and highway equipment as needed to maintain Town roads.

**POLICE SERVICES GOAL: PROVIDE LAW ENFORCEMENT TO PROTECT THE HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE OF THE RESIDENTS AND VISITORS OF RICHFORD.**

**POLICIES:**

- Provide appropriate law enforcement coverage within the means of the town taxpayers.
- Continue the use of security cameras in public locations throughout Town.

**FIRE PROTECTION GOAL: PROVIDE SUFFICIENT FIRE PROTECTION TO ENSURE THE HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE OF ITS RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.**

**POLICIES:**

- Train members of the fire department in the essential courses.
- Work with the Fire Marshall to enforce the Minimum Housing Standards Ordinance.
- Continue fundraising efforts to purchase equipment for fire services.
- Support the mutual aid arrangements with Richford's neighboring communities.

**AMBULANCE SERVICES GOAL: PROVIDE SUFFICIENT EMERGENCY SERVICES TO ENSURE THE HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE OF ITS RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.**

**POLICIES:**

- Assure proper and adequate training for all emergency service volunteers.
- Encourage participation in the subscription plan for individuals throughout Town.

**HEALTH SERVICES GOAL: PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE HEALTH OF RICHFORD RESIDENTS.**

**POLICIES:**

- Support and promote local health services for primary care and dental care.
- Enforce the Minimum Housing Codes as substandard housing contributes significantly to health problems in Richford.
- Support efforts to educate residents on healthy lifestyles and prevention measures.
- Support Summer Day Camp as a means of providing inspiring activities that develop strong bodies and foster a healthy mind in children.
- Continue to coordinate with rescue services to provide emergency care.

**EDUCATION GOAL: BROADEN ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES TO ENSURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL RESIDENTS.**

**POLICIES:**

- Support the efforts of the School District to provide the best educational facilities that the community can afford.
- Encourage appropriate public use of educational facilities.
- Support the school district's effort to join the Safe Routes to School Program to create other options for access to the education facilities.

**CHILD CARE GOAL: ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT LICENSED CHILDCARE FACILITIES THAT ARE SAFE, AFFORDABLE, AND HIGH QUALITY.**

**POLICY:**

- Support the availability of safe and affordable child care.

**RECREATION GOAL: MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR RICHFORD RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.**

**POLICIES:**

- Encourage improvements, including signage for existing recreational facilities.
- Investigate the feasibility of improved access to the Missisquoi River.
- Support easements that protect prime recreational resources from incompatible land uses and preserve scenic qualities (including agricultural land, woodland, riverbanks, shorelines, and ridge and mountain tops).
- Prohibit future development from limiting public access to public recreational lands and waters.
- Provide recreational opportunities for disabled and senior residents and visitors.
- Support after school opportunities and activities.
- Support efforts to use state funds to develop a location for a Visitor’s Center to welcome families and provide local information.
- Encourage maintenance and use of the VAST trail network.

**CIVIC GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS GOAL: HAVE AN ACTIVE AND HEALTHY CIVIC COMMUNITY WHERE RESIDENTS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE FUTURE OF RICHFORD.**

**POLICY:**

- Support the efforts of the formal and ad-hoc community organizations to provide for development, recreation, service, and community improvement opportunities in the Town of Richford.

# TRANSPORTATION

## COMPLETE STREETS

Complete streets are streets that accommodate everyone using the road, including cars, bicyclists, pedestrians and public transportation. Complete streets consider the context of the road or street. For example, in a village a street may have a sidewalk for frequent pedestrian traffic, while in a rural area a wide striped shoulder may serve bicyclists and the occasional pedestrian.

Percent of Workers Commuting	
Richford	21%
Franklin County (excluding Richford)	40%
Chittenden County	15%
Orleans County	5%
Lamoille County	5%
All Other VT Counties	9%
Out-of-State	4%
Unknown	1%

## COMMUTING

Roughly one-fifth of Richford residents work in Richford, while another 40% work in other Franklin County towns such as St. Albans and Enosburgh.

Eighty-four percent of residents commute by driving alone while roughly 10% carpool. The Vermont Go! Application allows residents to find carpools.

## ROADS AND BRIDGES

### ROADS

VT Route 105 south and east from Richford provide access to Interstates 89 and 91. However, most of Richford’s transportation needs are met by the local road system. There are 62 miles of roads in Richford (see chart 5.1).

CHART 5.1 STATE AND TOWN HIGHWAYS		
Classification	Description	Miles
State Highway	State highways with route number.	10.0
Town Highway 1	Extensions of state highway routes that carry a state highway route number.	2.8
Town Highway 2	Most important routes in Town as determined by the Selectboard.	8.2
Town Highway 3	Majority of roads in Town. Maintained and passable year-round.	38.9
Town Highway 4	Roads which may not be maintained or passable year-round.	2.4

The Town Selectboard’s Road Policy specifies the requirements for upgrading current roads, admitting new roads to the town system, and for driveway standards to ensure safe access onto public roads. Richford’s roads are well maintained. In 2023, roughly 40% of the Town’s overall expenditure was spent on maintaining roadways.

The Town of Richford continues to be an active participant on Northwest Regional Planning Commission’s Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). This committee provides greater local input into transportation planning.

**BRIDGES**

Richford has 5 town-owned bridges and 6 state owned bridges. All of the bridges meet the minimum bridge standards. There have been some issues with truck traffic over the historic iron Main Street Bridge. Main Street is a major truck route for Richford businesses. However, the nearby intersection is surrounded by commercial buildings and has a tight turning radius for truck traffic. A local ordinance for a 4-way stop has helped control traffic at this intersection. The Selectboard recently restricted on-street parking near the bridge to provide further turning radius.

**PARKING**

Public parking is available within the village district in town and privately owned lots. Town-owned lots are underused due to lack of signage. Striping was recently added to the Town-owned lot.

**BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRAVEL**

**EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE**

Sidewalks are present on Main Street, River Street, Troy Street, Province Street, and Eastern Avenue. The former Central Vermont Railroad has been abandoned and has been converted to the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, 26-mile long multi-use bike and pedestrian trail on the old rail bed connecting Richford to St. Albans. During the winter months the trail is accessible to snowmobiles and cross-country skiers.

**PLANNED INFRASTRUCTURE**

In 2023, the Town completed a streetscape master plan to develop a concept design for improvements to Main and River Street. The project identified 12 opportunities for improving the streetscape that address both transportation safety and improvement of the streetscape.

What is a streetscape?

A streetscape is combined impact of all of the features which can be included on a street. This includes both things like sidewalks and bike lanes but also things that make the street a more enjoyable place to be, like landscaping. Benches and public art. A well-designed streetscape can spur economic growth by increasing foot traffic for local businesses and encouraging private investment in buildings and businesses.

**CHART 5.2 STATE AND TOWN HIGHWAYS**

<b>Priority Ranking</b>	<b>Project Opportunity</b>
<b>High</b>	Pedestrian enhancement to Noyes Street intersection.
<b>High</b>	Narrow Main and Troy intersection with curb extension and sidewalk relocation.
<b>High</b>	Bicycle and pedestrian enhancements at Troy and Main intersection.
<b>High</b>	Plow-friendly curb extensions and painted crosswalks on Main Street.
<b>High</b>	Improved stormwater management and wayfinding at the Main Street Market/Notch crossing.
<b>High</b>	Add pedestrian-scale street lighting.
<b>High</b>	Add bike amenities at Memorial Park.
<b>High</b>	Fill sidewalk gaps and improve existing sidewalks with curbing.
<b>High</b>	Improvements to the River Street parking lot, including reducing entrance area length and adding landscaping.
<b>Medium</b>	Add ADA compliant ramps to access River Street businesses.
<b>Medium</b>	Add bicycle parking racks.
<b>Medium</b>	Add murals on building facades.

With the exception of the Noyes Street intersection project, the next step is to seek additional funding for scoping for a larger project or design construction funds for a smaller one, either of which would likely require the Town to contribute substantial matching funds from its budget. There is a need to better understand the impacts on emergency vehicle access and accessibility.

In 2023-2024, the Town completed a scoping study for trails and pedestrian improvements to better connect the village downtown with the Elementary School. The plan identifies trail connections from Richford Park to the Elementary School (see map below). The path would allow for students living in the Village to safely walk to the Elementary School. The next step would be to apply for construction funding for the first phase of the project.

# DRAFT RICHFORD TOWN PLAN



Project Title  
**School to Park Trail  
Richford, VT**

Sheet Title  
**Proposed Trail Plan**

Scale: 0 400 800 1,200 1,600 feet

**Legend**

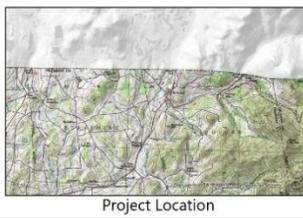
Town Owned Lands	Current Phase Proposed Trail
Proposed Trail Feature	Footpath
Proposed Trail Feature	Constructed Trail
Existing Sidewalk	Footpath
Existing Rail Trail	Gravel
Existing Trails (1.36 mi)	Potential Dog Park (10,000 SF Contiguous)

Sources: Aerial Imagery by VDOT (Satellite Data); The Parcel Boundary compiled by VDOT, Rebuilt by VTrans (2019); All other data by GIS (2019).

Project Information:  
Date: 06/14/24  
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Project Number: 23-181  
Drawn By: ADP  
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We received our funding from the Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI) through the Planning Cycle from the State of Vermont.  
www.vcgis.com



# DRAFT RICHFORD TOWN PLAN



Project Title  
**School to Park Trail**  
**Richford, VT**

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Sheet Title  
**Proposed Trail Plan**

0 200 400 600 800 Feet

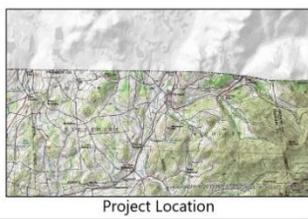
**Legend**

Town Owned Lands	Selective Tree Clearing (1.25 ac)
Parcel Boundary	Story Walk (0.3 mi)
Future Proposed Sidewalk (Project By Others)	Potential Dog Park (10,000 SF)
Existing Sidewalk	Contours (5')
Existing Rail Trail	Class II Wetland Buffer (50')
Existing Trails (1.36 mi)	TCE Wetland Delineation
Proposed Trail (1.48 mi)	Class II
Footpath	Class III
Gravel	

Sources: Aerial Imagery by VDOT (Verano Drone); Parcel Boundary compiled by VDOT; Roads by Vermont GIS; All other layers by TCE (2015).

Project Information:  
 Date: 06/17/24  
 Scale: 1 inch = 200 feet  
 Project Number: 23-181  
 Drawn By: ADP  
 Project Manager: JAD

Disclaimer: The accuracy of information presented is determined by its source as downloaded from the Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI). Data shall be used for planning purposes only and TCE is not responsible for any errors or omissions that may exist. Questions of on-the-ground location can be resolved by site inspectors and/or survey by a registered surveyor. This map is not a replacement for surveyed information or engineering studies.



In 2025, the Town completed a sidewalk inventory. The inventory identifies the locations and conditions of existing sidewalks. The Town should review the sidewalk inventory and consider a plan for prioritizing maintenance of its sidewalk network given limited available funding.

[Add map of sidewalk inventory here]

## PUBLIC TRANSIT

Rural Community Transportation (RCT) operates a bus service from Richford to St. Albans. Service transferred from Green Mountain Transit to RCT in January of 2026. The Richford to St. Albans route is a fixed, once-a-day route to get people from home to work and back. On average 26 people use this service each day. While ridership has increased since the 2020 pandemic, it remains below pre-2020 levels. Residents have been pushing for a second route to be implemented and would also like a bus shelter to be created to keep people out of the elements. RCT also provides Medicaid Transportation and Elderly and Disabled Transportation in Richford.

## RAIL & AIR FACILITIES

### ***RAIL***

The Canadian Pacific Railroad enters the United States at East Richford and then swings north, just east of the Richford Village district, back into Canada. The railroad has major switching and siding facilities, which serve Kent Nutritionals and Kaytec. The Canadian Pacific Railroad owns the abandoned historic Richford depot building. The building is in urgent need of repairs and restoration. The nearest passenger train service is available in St. Albans with service to New York City and Washington, DC.

### ***AIR***

The nearest airports with regular commercial service are the Burlington International Airport, Plattsburgh International Airport and the Mirabel and Trudeau airports in Quebec, Canada. Franklin County Airport is the nearest airport for private air travel.

## TRANSPORTATION GOALS & POLICIES

**GOAL: TO PROVIDE AND MAINTAIN A SAFE, CONVENIENT, ECONOMICAL, AND ENERGY EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT INCLUDES PUBLIC TRANSIT OPTIONS, PATHS FOR PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS, AND RESPECTS THE INTEGRITY OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.**

### **POLICIES:**

- Encourage RCT to add an additional stop at the Richford Park & Ride and construct bus shelters at the bus stop locations.
- Adhere to the adopted Road Policy for acceptance of new roads into the town system.
- Have a local representative on the Regional TAC to facilitate transportation plans and policies that are in the best interest of the region and the Town of Richford.
- Consider opportunities to extend the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail to the river.
- Consider widening Troy Street to ensure safer bicycle traffic.
- Maintain adequate vehicular and bicycle parking to support tourism and commercial activity in Richford.
- Limit the number of curb cuts to alleviate potential conflicts with traffic flow and with bicycle and pedestrian traffic.
- Focus repair and construction of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure within the Village.

# ENERGY

## INTRODUCTION

The intent of this energy section is to meet the municipal determination standards for enhanced energy planning enabled in 24 V.S.A. 4352. The purpose of enhanced energy planning is to further regional and state energy goals, including the goal of having 90% of energy used in Vermont come from renewable sources by 2050 (90 x 50 goal), and the following:

- A. *Vermont's greenhouse gas reduction goals under 10 V.S.A. § 578(a);*
- B. *Vermont's 25 by 25 goal for renewable energy under 10 V.S.A. § 580;*
- C. *Vermont's building efficiency goals under 10 V.S.A. § 581;*
- D. *State energy policy under 30 V.S.A. § 202a and the recommendations for regional and municipal energy planning pertaining to the efficient use of energy and the siting and development of renewable energy resources contained in the State energy plans adopted pursuant to 30 V.S.A. §§ 202 and 202b (State energy plans); and*
- E. *The distributed renewable generation and energy transformation categories of resources to meet the requirements of the Renewable Energy Standard under 30 V.S.A. §§ 8004 and 8005.*

A positive determination of compliance with the requirements of enhanced energy planning, as provided by the Regional Planning Commission, will enable Richford to achieve “substantial deference” instead of “due consideration” in Section 248 applications for energy generation facilities (ex. wind facilities, solar facilities, hydro facilities, etc.) under Criteria (b)(1)-Orderly Development. In short, this means that Richford will have a greater “say” in Certificate of Public Good proceedings before the Vermont Public Service Board about where these facilities should or should not be located in the community.

To receive a positive determination of energy compliance, an enhanced energy plan must be duly adopted, regionally approved, and must contain the following information:

- A. An analysis of current energy resources, needs, scarcities, costs, and problems.
- B. Targets for future energy use and generation.
- C. “Pathways,” or implementation actions, to help the Richford achieve the established targets.
- D. Mapping to help guide the conversation about the siting of renewables.

## MUNICIPAL ENERGY CONSUMPTION & TARGETS

### **SUMMARY**

The following section reviews current data and future targets for thermal/space heating, transportation, electrical energy use and energy generation. These targets are based on the overall goals of the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan. As required under Vermont state statute targets are set for 2025, 2035 and 2050.

### **DATA AND MODELING**

While the data used in this plan offers insights into current needs and progress, it is also imperfect in multiple respects. Because of the relatively small population of Richford and the region, there is a high margin of error on data from the American Community Survey. Many other available data sources are not regularly updated or incomplete in their scope. Regardless, the data provided in this plan is the best available and still provides valuable insight.

Energy targets were created by the Department of Public Service using the LEAP (Long-range Energy Alternatives Planning) software to create a model of the demand for and supply of total energy usage in Vermont and the region. LEAP software is a system that allows users to create complex models of future energy use. The LEAP model does not identify specific costs that would be incurred in the future. Instead, it compares 2050 costs among various scenarios, in order to achieve the least-cost alternative to meet legislative goals. The LEAP model also includes impacts that do not result in out-of-pocket costs, such as impacts of pollution. Because of the model’s complexity, it is difficult to explain comprehensively. The following scenarios provide some background on the methodology and the inputs used to create both statewide and regional models in LEAP. Appendix A presents the full model results for the region and the state as well as a more thorough explanation of the model assumptions and methodology. Targets for generation were developed by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission in partnership with the Department of Public Service.

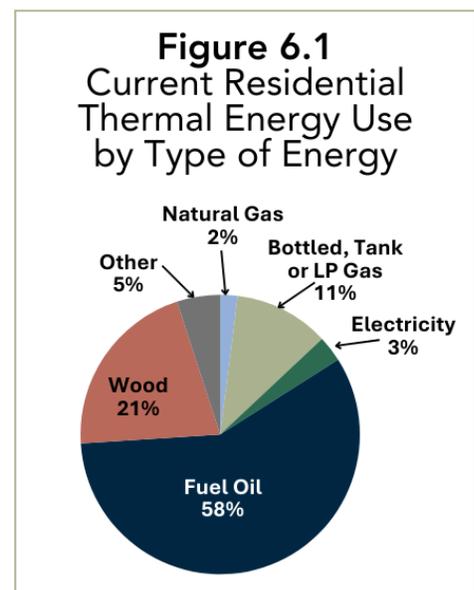
### **THERMAL ENERGY/SPACE HEATING**

Thermal energy use means energy used to heat homes, commercial and industrial buildings.

### **RESIDENTIAL SPACE HEATING**

#### Current Use

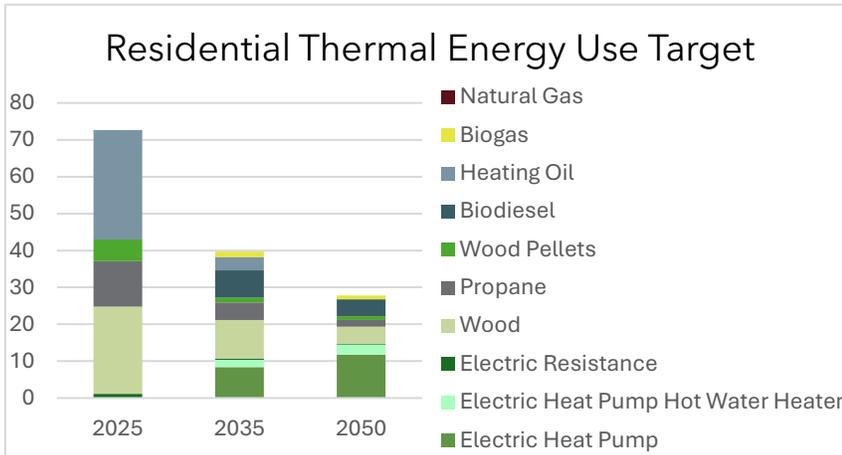
The most common fuels used for heating in Richford are fuel oil, wood, and bottled, tank or LP gas. Overall, residential heating in the Town is 101.2 billion BTUs.



44 households have installed cold climate heat pumps through Efficiency Vermont’s programs. Cold climate electric heat pumps use less energy to provide the same amount of heat as fossil fuel heating systems.

Target

The 2050 target is to significantly reduce residential thermal energy use by transitioning to more efficient electric heat pumps. Additionally, the target assumes that current homes will be weatherized to better retain heat, and new homes will be energy efficient.



<u>Target Number of Residential Heat Pumps</u>	
YEAR	NUMBER
2025	279
2035	750
2050	1105

**RESIDENTIAL THERMAL GOALS**

- ↓ Significantly decrease the use of fossil fuels including fuel oil, natural gas and propane.
- ↑ Significantly increase the number of residential cold climate heat pumps and heat pump hot water heaters.
- ↑ Increase the number of weatherized homes.

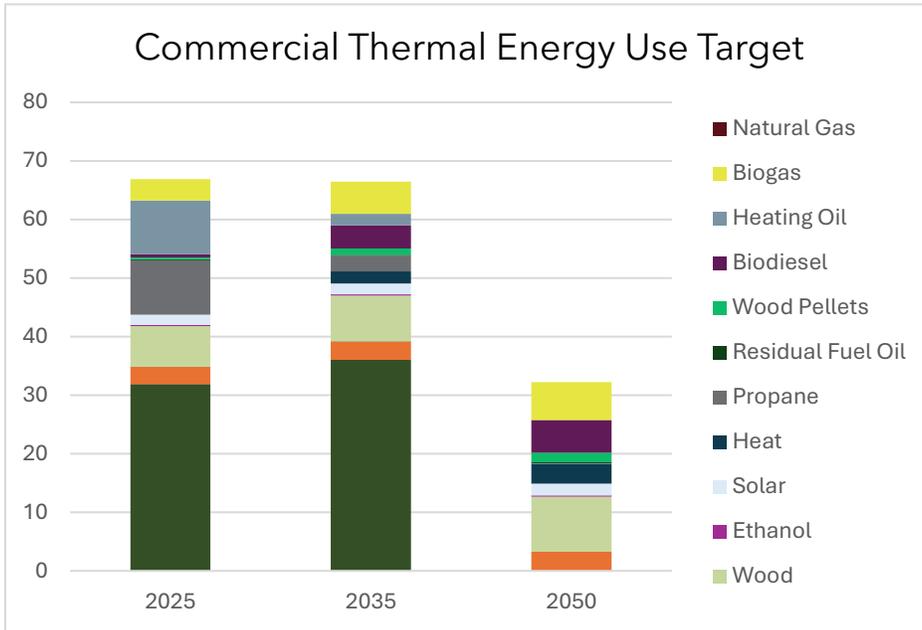
**COMMERCIAL SPACE HEATING**

Current Use

There is no survey data on commercial and industrial heating energy use, or the types of fuel used. Based on statewide trends and the businesses located in Richford, commercial and industrial heating use is estimated to be around 75 billion BTUs per year. 1 business has installed cold climate heat pumps through Efficiency Vermont’s programs.

Target

Similar to residential heat use, the 2050 target for commercial and industrial heat use is to reduce thermal energy use by significantly decreasing the use of fossil fuels and increasing the use of efficient heat pumps.



Target Number of Commercial Heat Pumps	
YEAR	NUMBER
2025	203
2035	615
2050	787

### COMMERCIAL THERMAL GOALS

- ↓ Significantly decrease the use of fossil fuels.
- ↑ Significantly increase the number of commercial cold climate heat pumps and heat pump hot water heaters.

### TRANSPORTATION

Transportation energy use includes gas, diesel and electric vehicles. It accounts for the largest percentage of energy use in Vermont.

### TRANSPORTATION GOALS

- ↓ Decrease the total amount of miles travelled in personal vehicles.
- ↓ Significantly decrease use of fossil fuels including gasoline and diesel.
- ↑ Significantly increase the adoption of electric vehicles.

### LAND USE, TRANSIT & COMPLETE STREETS

A key strategy to reducing the energy spent on transportation is to reduce the number of total miles driven. Public transit trips are more energy efficient than typical car trips. The Route #116 Green Mountain Transit bus service connects Richford to Enosburgh and St. Albans once per day, with connections in St. Albans to Burlington via the LINK service. Carpooling also reduces the number

of vehicles on the road and the total energy used. The Town should encourage the use and expansion of public transit and carpooling.

The Town can also support a reduction in personal vehicle trips by encouraging compact land use patterns and complete streets that promote walking and cycling. It is one of the fundamental building blocks of a more efficient, resilient, and greener community. More information on these goals and policies can be found in Chapter 5: Transportation.

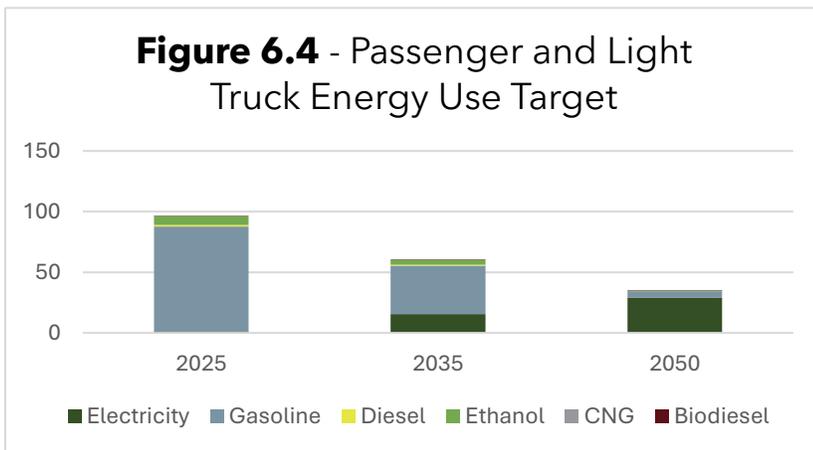
**PASSENGER VEHICLES AND LIGHT-DUTY TRUCKS**

Current Use

The vast majority of personal vehicles and trucks in Richford use fossil fuels such as gasoline (1503 vehicles). There are an estimated 11 plug-in hybrid and electric vehicles. Personal vehicle use represents roughly 101 billion BTUs of energy use in Town.

Target

The 2050 target for passenger vehicles and light duty trucks requires almost all vehicles to be fully electric by 2050. Electric vehicles are more efficient than gasoline and diesel vehicles, with typical fuel economy equivalent to more than 100 MPG. Therefore, the switch to electric vehicles will reduce total transportation energy consumption. The 2050 target also assumes that the number of vehicle miles travelled will decrease 10% due to increases in carpooling, public transit, walking and cycling.



Target Number of Electric Vehicles		
YEAR	PLUG-IN HYBRID	ELECTRIC
2025	6	37
2035	5	453
2050	1	987

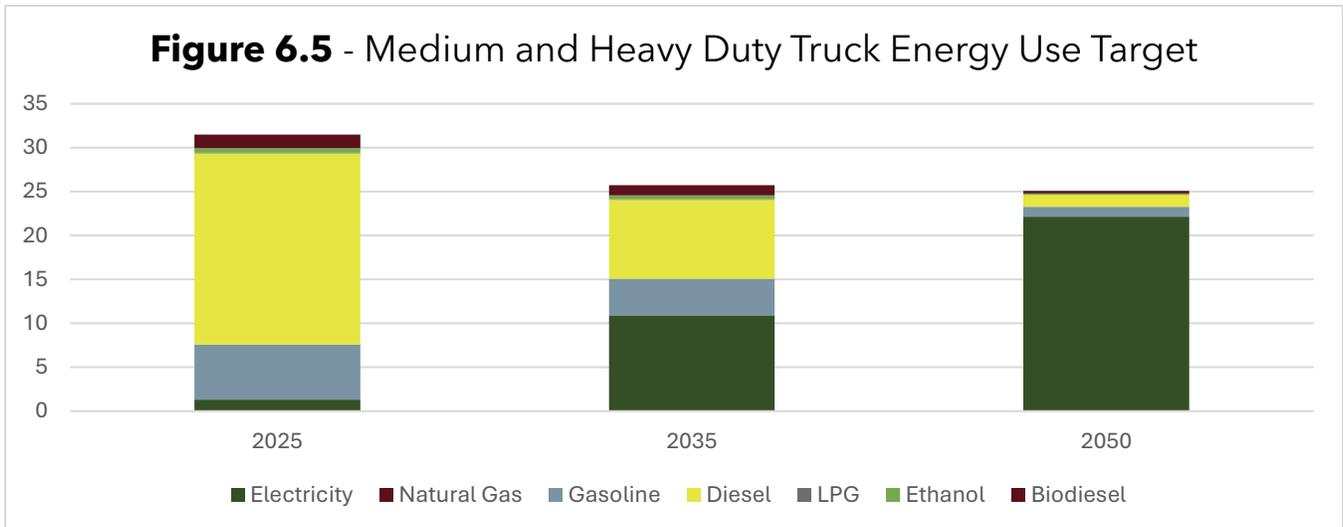
**MEDIUM AND HEAVY-DUTY TRUCKS**

Current Use

There is no available on current energy use of medium or heavy-duty trucks. Diesel is the most common form of fuel for heavy-duty vehicles in Vermont (VTrans 2021, Vermont Transportation Energy Profile).

Target

Similar to passenger vehicles and light trucks, the target for medium and heavy-duty trucks is that the majority will be electric vehicles by 2050. Advancements in electric vehicle technology will be required to meet this goal.



ELECTRICITY

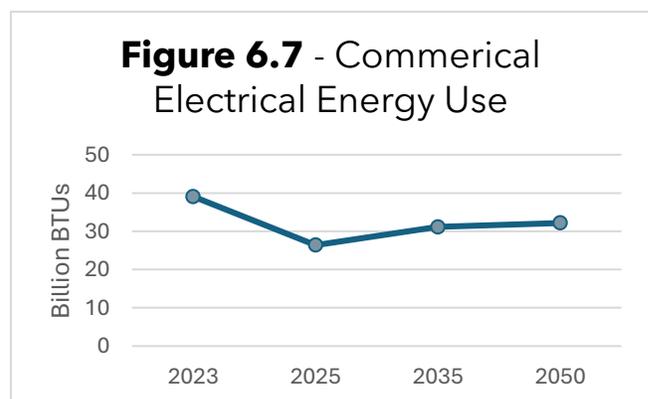
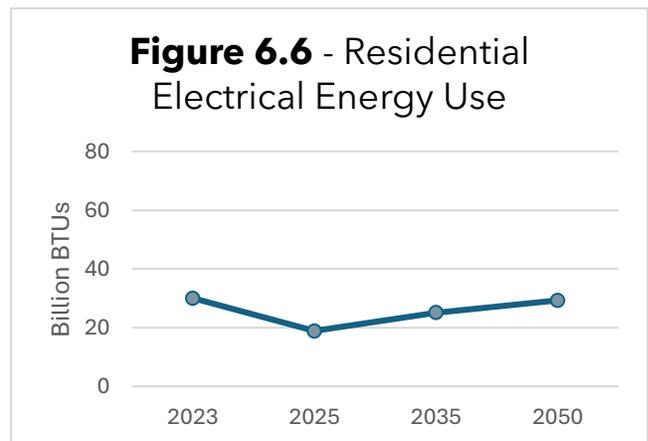
**RESIDENTIAL ELECTRICITY**

Current Use

Electrical energy use in Town is equivalent to 69 billion BTUs. 43% is residential and 57% is commercial.

Target

Data on electrical energy use is difficult to interpret. Increased energy efficiency of household appliances, lightbulbs and devices should bring electrical energy use down over time. However, increased use of electricity for heating via heat pumps and for transportation via electric vehicles will increase electrical demand significantly. Therefore, the total amount of electrical energy use is expected to increase by 2050, even as total energy use declines.



**ELECTRICAL GOAL**

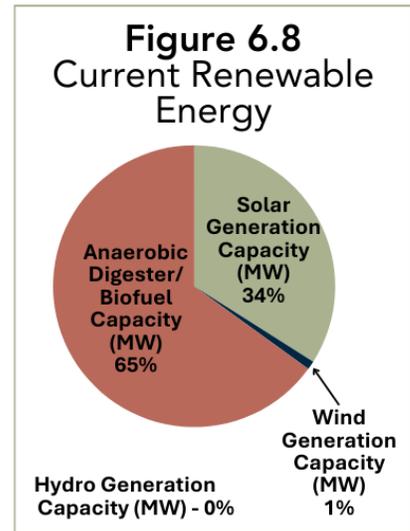
↑ Electrical use will increase due to increasing use of electricity for heating and vehicles.

**ENERGY GENERATION**

**ENERGY GENERATION**

As the amount of electricity needed for heating and transportation increases, some of that energy will need to be generated locally. This plan assumes about half of all electricity generation will occur locally. The overall renewable target is for 6.4 MW of new energy to be produced in Richford, equivalent to the power needed for 1094 homes.

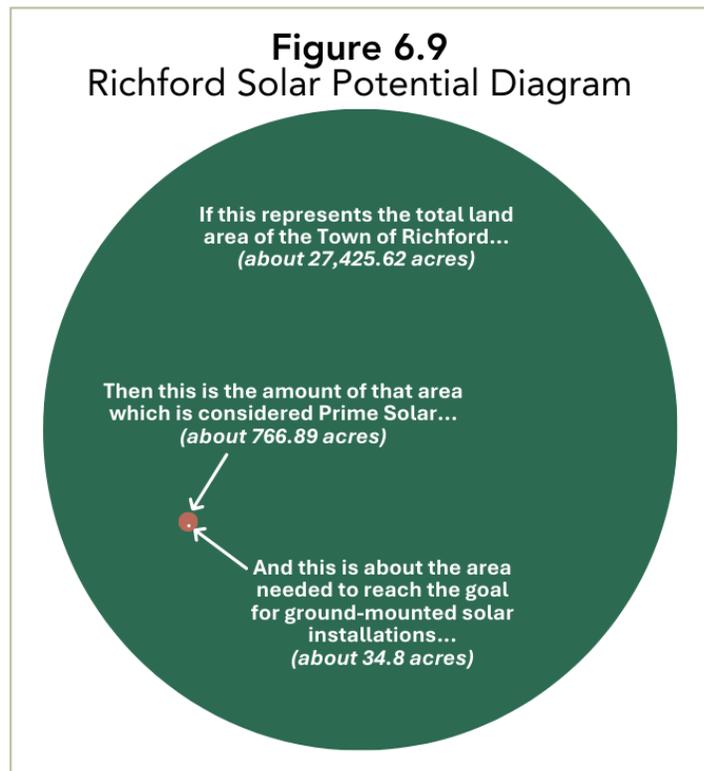
Since availability of some renewable energy sources such as wind and hydro can vary widely based on the environment, the municipal target assumes all renewable energy will come from solar power.



**ENERGY GENERATION TARGETS**

**SOLAR**

The Town currently has .3 MW of solar power generation. An additional 6.4 MW will be required to meet the 2050 goal. The goal assumes that 1.4 MW of this will be generated by rooftop solar systems. This is equivalent to roughly ¼ of homes and businesses having rooftop solar. The remaining 5 MW will be generated by ground-mounted solar, which is roughly 34.8 acres of solar fields.



## ***WIND***

The Town currently has 9.5 kW of wind generation. There is not much wind generation potential in Richford.

Smaller, net-metering scale wind generation may be possible throughout most of the region at lower elevations. More information is needed regarding the viability and affordability of these systems, but generally Richford views these types of facilities favorably provided that impacts to known constraints are avoided, impacts to possible constraints are mitigated, and site-specific concerns are addressed. Richford does not support the construction of “industrial” or “commercial” wind generation facilities within the region. For more information, [please see Section V](#).

## ***HYDRO***

The portion of the Trout/Missisquoi River that runs through Richford is a federally designated Wild & Scenic River. As such new dams or other hydroelectric projects on the river are highly unlikely to be permitted.

## ***BIODIGESTERS***

Biodigesters are facilities which convert food scraps or manure into renewable natural gas (RNG). RNG may be used directly in place of fossil fuel natural gas or burned in a generator to convert the energy to electricity. On-farm biodigesters generally require a minimum of 500 cattle. There is one farm in Richford which may be large enough to support biodigesters. Thermal generation from a “district heating facility”—a central facility that would provide heat to several structures is another potential use for biodigesters.

## ***ENERGY STORAGE***

One potential issue with increasing renewable energy production is that some renewables can only produce energy under the right environmental conditions. For instance, solar panels can only generate power when the sun is out. To address this, there will be a need for additional energy storage systems such as batteries. There is no specific target for energy storage.

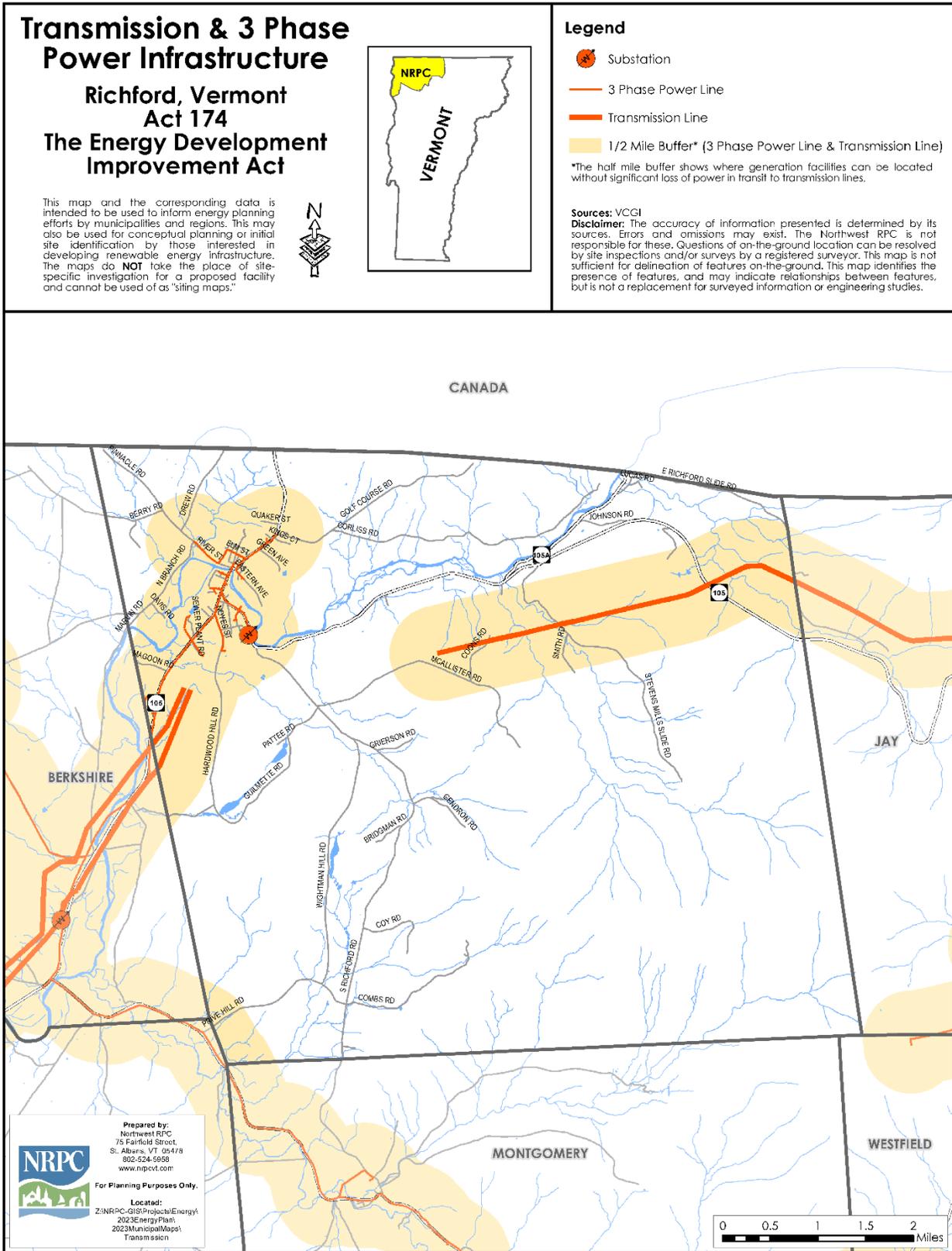
## ***NEW TECHNOLOGIES***

New technologies continue to develop, including the emergence of geothermal heat as an electricity source. Investigating which technologies are suitable for our region and its residents will be an ongoing process. It is hard to know exactly what the future makeup of Vermont’s electricity generation will be, but it is important to support a diverse, distributed, and robust set of generation facilities in the region. This will ensure resilience, equity, and adaptability for the future.

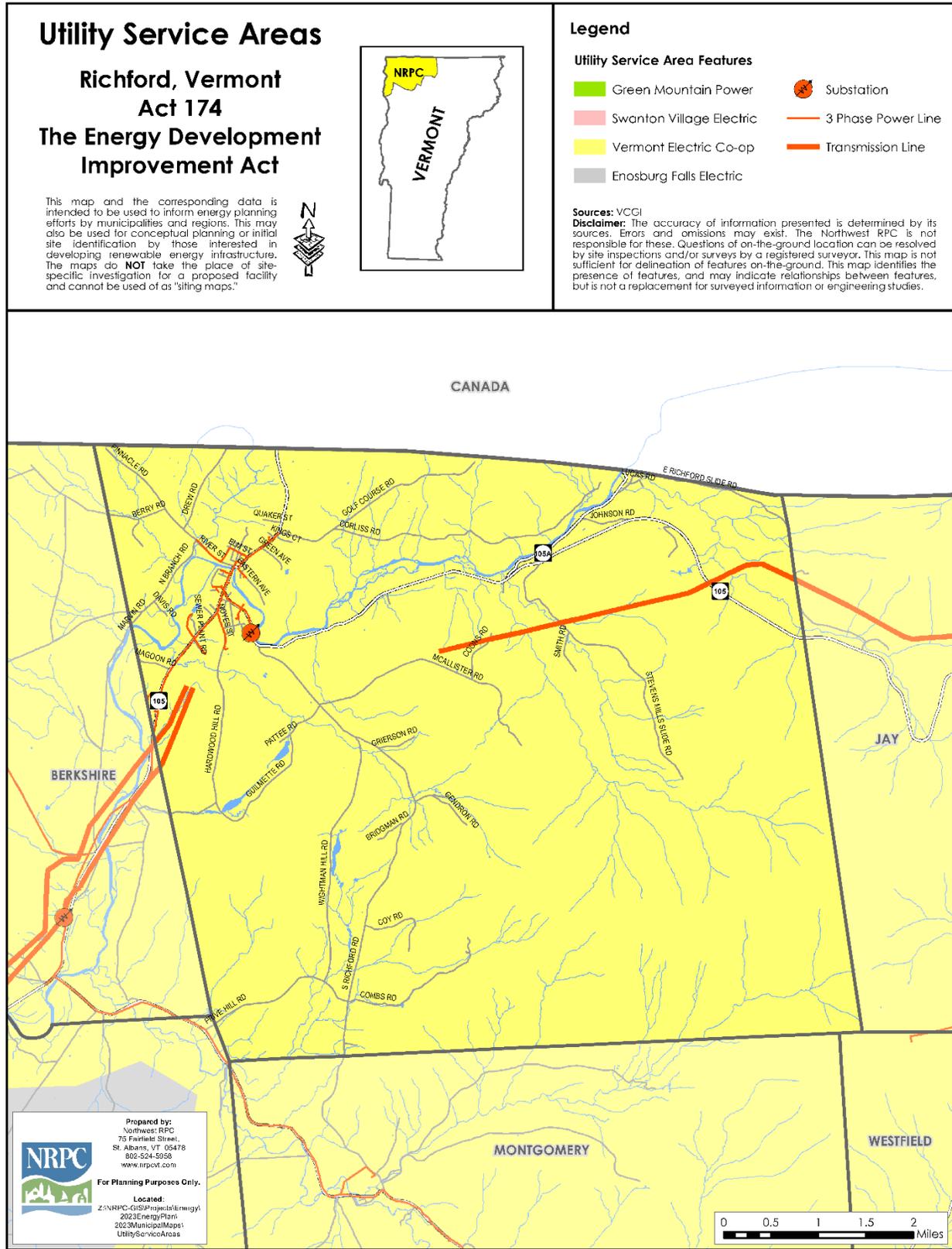
## ENERGY GENERATION MAPS

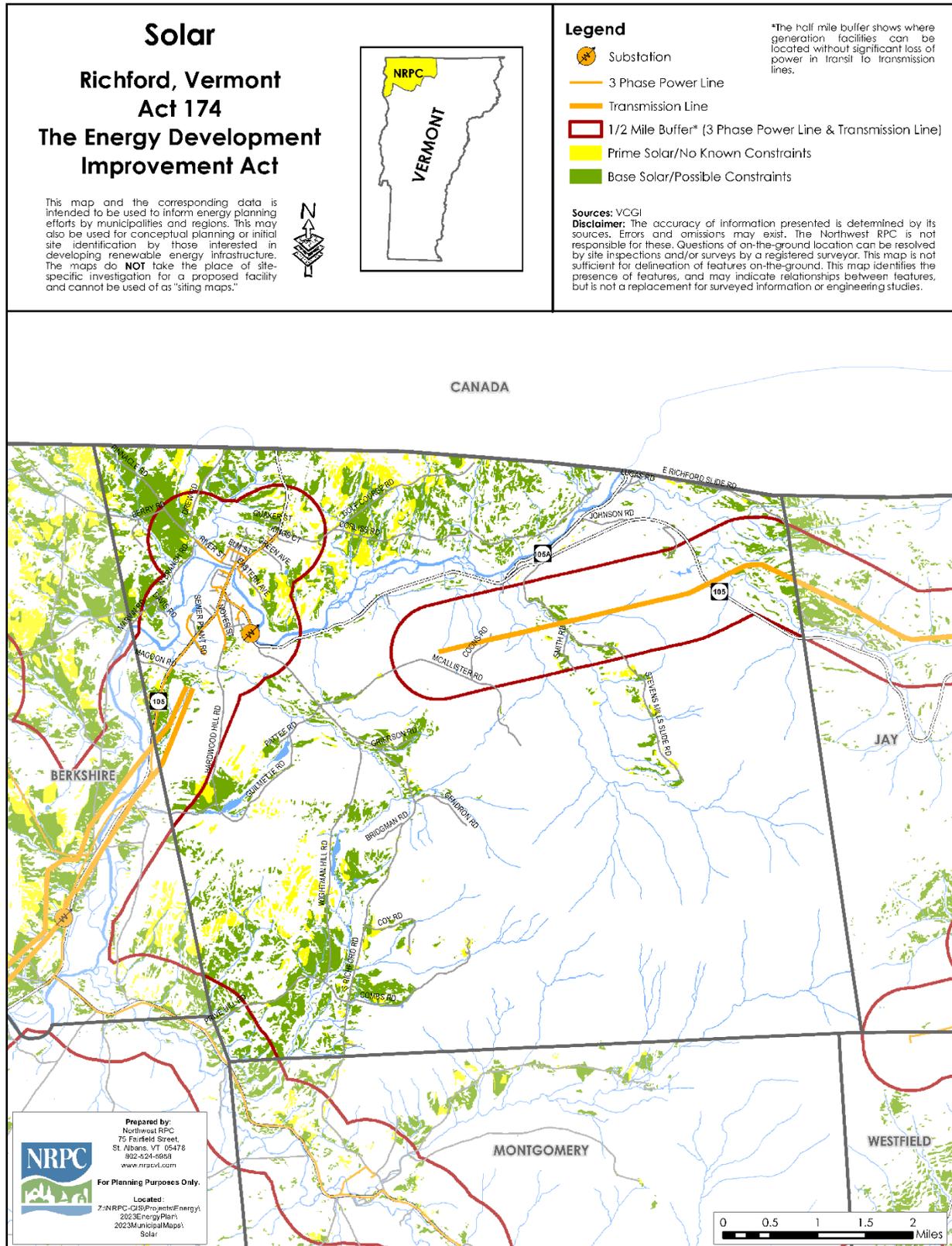
Energy generation maps show the potential areas available for solar, wind, and hydro power, as well as existing biomass which could be used for wood heating. These maps exclude high priority resources which are known constraints. Energy generation facilities shall not be located in areas where known constraints exist.

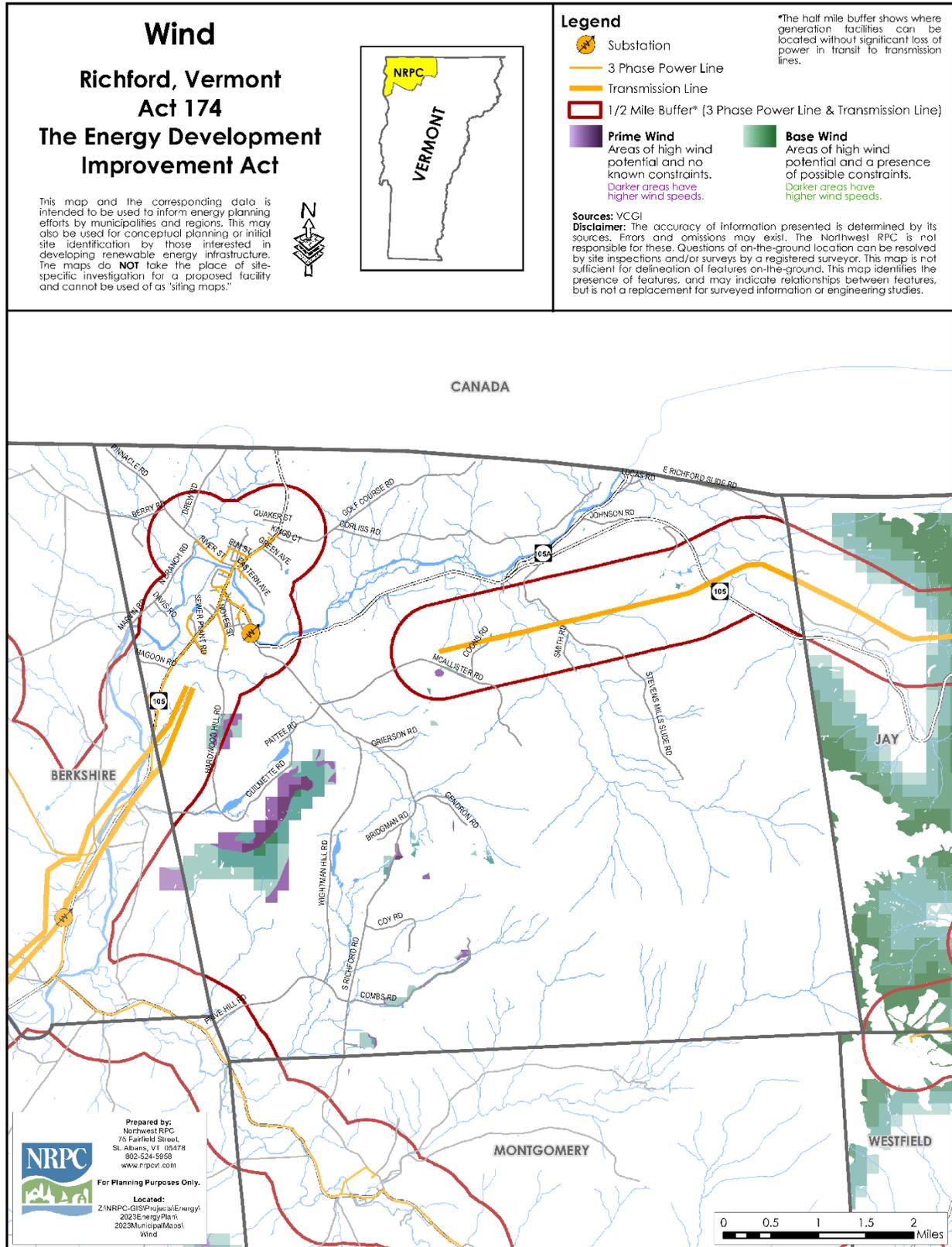
The maps also consider lower priority resources as Possible Constraints. These resources often impact the siting process for generation facilities. New generation facilities shall not have an undue adverse impact upon possible constraints. Often, site-specific mitigation solutions are possible when possible constraints exist on a parcel. Therefore, possible constraints have been included in the area designated as “base” on the regional energy generation maps (solar, wind, biomass, hydro).

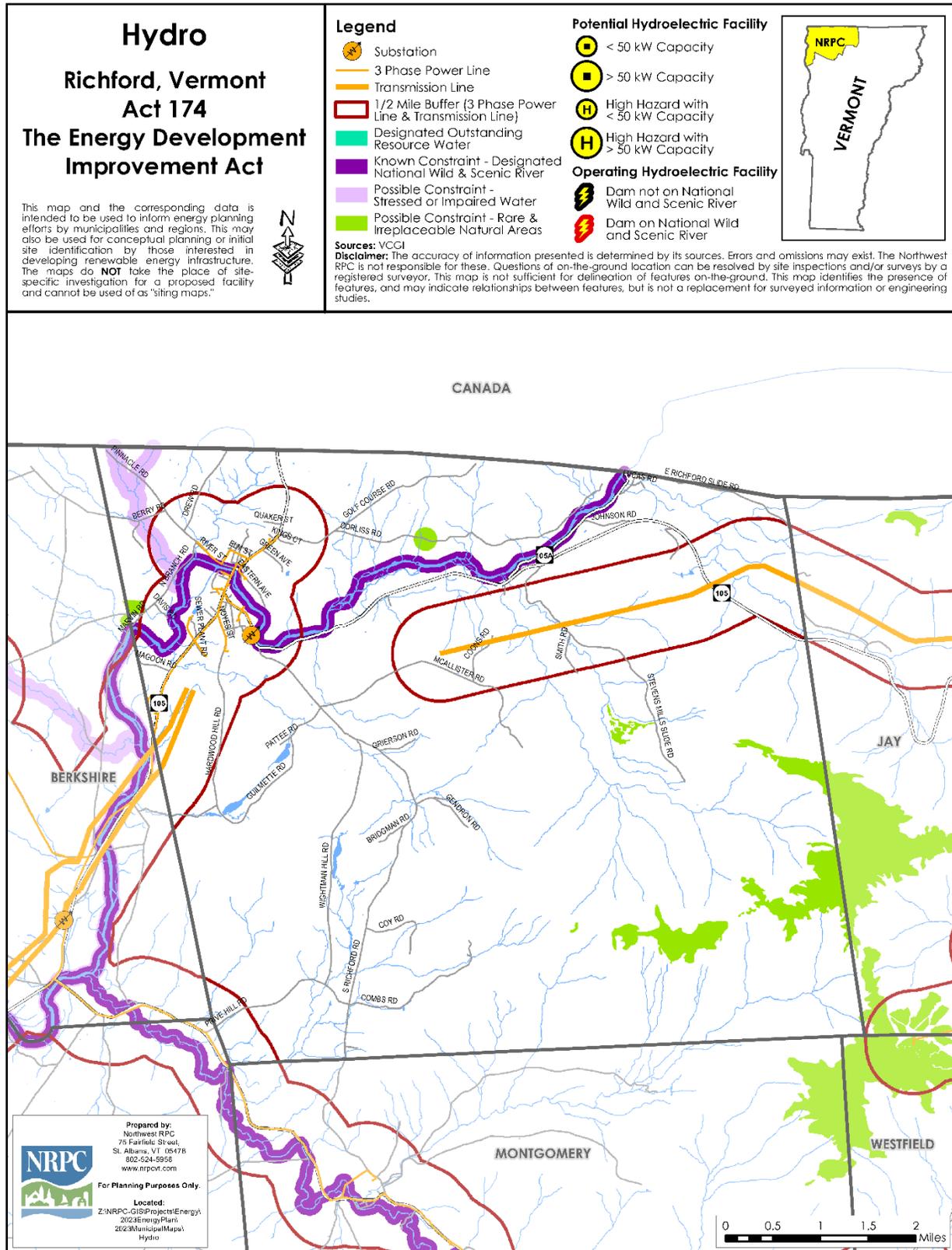


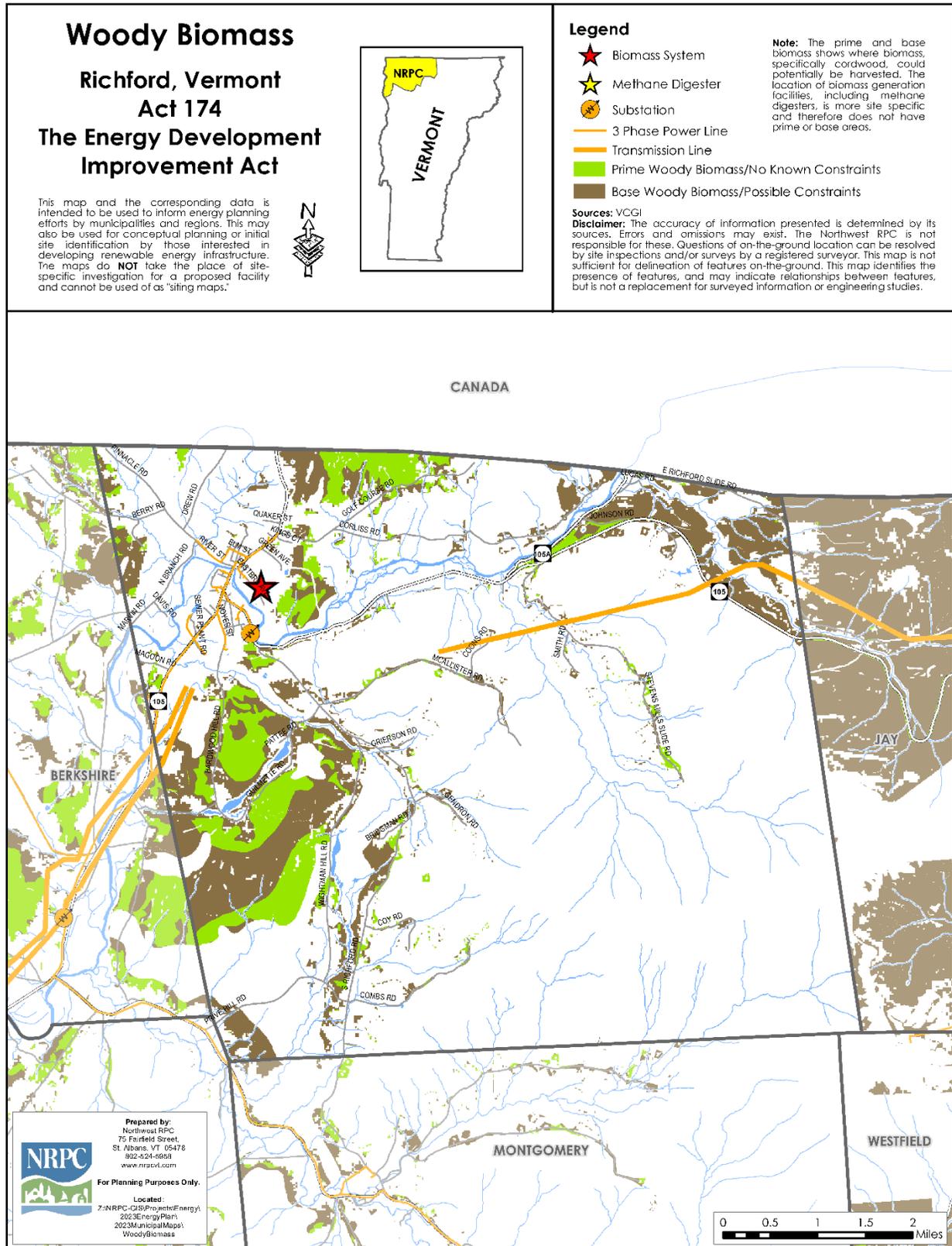












## EQUITY, FEASIBILITY, AND CHALLENGES

### ***EQUITY***

It is the policy of Richford that no segment of the population should, because of its racial, cultural, or economic makeup, bear a disproportionate share of environmental burdens or be denied an equitable share of environmental benefits. It is further the policy of the Richford to provide the opportunity for the meaningful participation of all individuals, with particular attention to environmental justice focus populations, in the development, implementation, or enforcement of any law, regulation, or policy.

#### *Declaration of Inclusion*

*The Town of Richford condemns racism and welcomes all persons regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age or disability, or socioeconomic status, and wants everyone to feel safe and welcome in our community.*

*As a town, we formally condemn discrimination in all its forms, commit to fair and equal treatment of everyone in our community, and will strive to ensure all of our action policies and operating procedures reflect this commitment.*

*The Town of Richford is and will continue to be a place where individuals can live freely and express their opinions.*

Richford adopted the above Declaration of Inclusion in 2024. These themes and ideas have been incorporated into this plan and will be considered further in the implementation of this plan. The Richford will continue to identify ways to implement the statement of inclusion and identify how to consider equity and inclusion within their work. Richford will continue to partner with local and regional organizations to ensure projects and programs support improved access to opportunity for all people in Richford.

#### *Generation Siting*

Richford finds it to be essential that all decisions regarding new renewable energy generation facilities take into consideration concerns about health and safety. The noise, vibration, glare, or other impacts from generation facilities shall be mitigated by developers to ensure that such impacts do not have an undue adverse impact upon neighboring properties.

It is hard to know exactly what the future makeup of Vermont's electricity generation will be, but it is important to support a diverse, distributed, and robust set of generation facilities in the region. This will ensure resiliency, equity, and adaptability for the future.

#### *Split Incentives*

72% of households are owner-occupied and 28% are renter households. In many rental housing options, the landlord is responsible for building maintenance while the tenant is responsible for

utility bills. As a result, the landlord may not have a strong financial incentive to invest into home improvements such as weatherization or heat pumps and renters may face high utility costs with few options to address them. This is a particular problem given that in the Northwest Region the median renter household has half the income of the median owner-occupied household. Finding new ways to incentivize both landlords and tenants as well as provide targeted outreach and education on this topic could help to alleviate this issue.

## ***FEASIBILITY AND CHALLENGES***

Richford faces several challenges in achieving the targets laid out in this plan which will require the cooperation and coordination of the federal government, state government, NRPC, and private sector.

### *High Upfront Costs*

While efficient technologies such as heat pumps and electric cars are more affordable to operate, they also tend to have higher up-front costs. Incentives have been created to help Vermonters, especially low-income Vermonters, access these technologies. Unfortunately, many residents still find a gap between the subsidized cost and the amount they can afford. Increased incentives, especially for middle income households, as well as the quickly improving technology, could help to alleviate this barrier for Richford's residents. There is also a need to substantially increase the capacity of existing programs for low-income residents, such as the low-income weatherization programs to reduce wait times.

### *Grid Limitations*

The Vermont electrical grid was developed to have a one-way flow of electricity and distributed renewable generation can impact the function of the electrical grid. As with the rest of the United States, Vermont has historically depended on a small number of centralized power plants—the vast majority of which are located outside of the state.

### *Impact on Local Energy Companies*

The changing energy landscape may have negative impacts on local energy companies, such as heating fuel and gas stations, that cannot evolve their business model. In the short term, this may hinder residents from accessing new, innovative heating and transportation technologies locally. In the long term, it may lead some local energy companies to disband, with lost jobs as a consequence. There are several programs in the state and region to help retrain workers who currently work in the fossil fuel industry. Certain sectors, including weatherization and green technology installation, will require additional labor and can provide careers for those transitioning out of fossil fuel industries.

Despite the challenges involved in implementation, it is important to remember the key issues this plan hopes to address: energy security, environmental protection, economic need/opportunities,

and equity. Without making significant changes to how Richford generates and uses energy, our energy future will be less secure, our environment less healthy, and our economic situation potentially dire. Richford finds that any and all progress toward the goals of this plan is important. A lack of action at the state, regional, and local levels may have serious consequences.

The goals and policies of the entire Town Plan shall be considered goals and policies of the enhanced energy plan. In addition to those goals and policies, the following energy specific goals and policies apply:

## ENERGY GOALS & POLICIES

### **ENERGY GOAL: ENCOURAGE ENERGY EFFICIENCY, RESILIENCY AND LOCALLY PRODUCED RENEWABLE ENERGY.**

#### **POLICIES:**

- Support and encourage school participation in Vermont Energy Education Program (VEEP) activities to foster an educational foundation geared toward energy savings.
- Encourage HVAC and weatherization providers to join the Building Performance Professionals Association of Vermont (BPPA-VT) to provide holistic energy advice to Vermonters.
- Support the efforts of Efficiency Vermont to promote the selection and installation of devices, appliances, and equipment that will perform work using less energy (e.g., ENERGY STAR).
- Participate in grant programs to improve the efficiency and resilience of municipal buildings with updated technologies, weatherization, battery backup systems, etc.
- Consider and prioritize efficiency along with cost when replacing current systems in municipal buildings and municipal fleet vehicles.
- Support development of electric vehicle chargers in the Village.
- Richford does not have suitable locations for the construction of “industrial” or “commercial” wind turbines. Therefore, the construction of new “commercial” or “industrial” wind facilities is not in conformance with the local energy plan. For the purposes of this plan, Richford will consider any wind facility with a tower height (excluding blades) in excess of 100 feet tall to be considered an “industrial” or “commercial” wind facility.
- Examine opportunities to use solar power for municipal uses, including solar-powered lighted signs.
- In partnership with utilities, NRPC, and other stakeholders, educate owners of rental housing about weatherization and funding opportunities, particularly in village areas.

## APPENDIX A: ENERGY PLAN DATA AND LEAP MODELING

Under 24 V.S.A § 4348a(a)(3) municipal enhanced energy plans must include data on current energy use by sector and municipal targets for 2025, 2035 and 2050 which comply with the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan. This appendix describes how current use and municipal targets were developed.

### ***CURRENT USE***

Data on current energy use was developed using the Department of Public Service municipal consumption tool. The following details the data sources for each sector of energy use. The best available data sources were use.

There are several limitations on the data. With the exception of metered electricity and natural gas, there is no direct measures of energy usage. Therefore, the current use data relies heavily on state estimates of energy use per house or business. Additionally, at the town level, there is a high margin of error for U.S. Census American Community Survey data which impacts accuracy.

#### *Thermal Energy Use*

Residential thermal energy use was estimated based on the number of housing units in the Richford and the average state heating use per household. Commercial thermal energy use was estimated using data from the Vermont Department of Labor on the number and type of businesses and a statewide estimate of the typical heating energy use of those types of businesses.

#### *Transportation Energy Use*

Transportation energy use was estimated based on the total Vermont DMV registrations for internal combustion and electric vehicles and statewide estimates of average vehicle mile travelled and fuel economy. Vermont registrations are based on address, differences between zip code address and municipal boundaries exist in some communities which make this data less accurate.

#### *Electrical Energy Use*

Metered electrical energy use is reported by the distribution utilities to Efficiency Vermont for residential and commercial uses. Farm operations may choose to select the residential or commercial energy rate.

### ***2025, 2035 AND 2050 CONSUMPTION TARGETS***

The 2025, 2035 and 2050 municipal targets are based on a proportion of the regional targets found in the Northwest Regional Energy Plan. Regional targets were developed by the Department of Public Service based on the 2022 Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan.

The 2022 Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan included a Low Emissions Analysis Platform (LEAP) analysis of one pathway towards reaching the state's statutory 2050 energy goals. This scenario is

known as the CAP mitigation scenario. Information on the state’s LEAP modeling process can be found at <https://publicservice.vermont.gov/document/2022-cep-analysis-greenhouse-gas-emission-reduction-pathways-vermont>.

The statewide LEAP model targets were then divided among the Regional Planning Commissions by the Vermont Department of Public Service. NRPC has divided each consumption target by Richford based on the percentage of current energy use in the Richford. For thermal energy use, the natural gas portion of the target was allocated only to communities with existing natural gas lines, as large-scale expansions of the existing natural gas pipelines are not expected.

### **2025, 2035 AND 2050 GENERATION TARGETS**

NRPC developed the regional energy generation targets using the Vermont Department of Service’s generation scenarios tool. NRPC assumed that 50% of the regional energy supply would be produced by renewable sources within the region. More information on the regional target can be found in the Northwest Regional Energy Plan.

The regional target was then divided by Richford based on total population, under the assumption that municipalities with higher population will have higher energy demand. These targets were divided between ground-mount and rooftop solar under the assumption that one-quarter of the total available rooftop solar potential will be developed.

Finally, the targets were adjusted to remove the ground-mount solar target for St. Albans City, as under regional policy the entire community is within a growth area where ground-mount solar is not appropriate. This adjustment had the impact of adding roughly 800 kW of ground-mount solar to all other municipal targets. All other municipalities have sufficient land area outside of growth areas for ground-mount solar.

## APPENDIX B: ENERGY RESOURCE MAPPING CONSTRAINTS

### **SOLAR, WIND AND BIOMASS MAPS**

#### Known Constraints

- **Confirmed Vernal Pools:** There is a 600-foot buffer around confirmed vernal pools. (Source: ANR)
- **State Significant Natural Communities and Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species:** Rankings S1 through S3 were used as constraints. These include all of the rare and uncommon rankings within the file. For more information on the specific rankings, explore the methodology for the shapefile. (Source: VCGI)

- **River Corridors:** Only mapped River Corridors were mapped. Does not include 50 foot buffer for streams with a drainage area less than 2 square miles. (Source: VCGI)
- **National Wilderness Areas:** (Source: VCGI)
- **FEMA Floodways:** (Source: VCGI)
- **Class 1 and Class 2 Wetlands:** (Source: VCGI)
- **Designated Downtowns, Designated Growth Centers, and Designated Village Centers:** These areas the center of dense, traditional development in the region. This constraint does not apply to roof-mounted solar within such designated areas. The inclusion of this resource as a regional constraint is consistent with goals and policies of the Northwest Regional Plan. (Source: NRPC)
- **FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Special Flood Hazard Areas:** Special flood hazard areas as digitized by the NRPC were used—just 100-year flood plain (500-year floodplain not mapped). The inclusion of this resource as a regional constraint is consistent with goals and policies of the Northwest Regional Plan. (Source: NRPC)
- **Ground and Surface Waters Drinking Protection Areas:** Buffered Source Protection Areas (SPAs) are designated by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). SPA boundaries are approximate but are conservative enough to capture the areas most susceptible to contamination. The inclusion of this resource as a regional constraint is consistent with goals and policies of the Northwest Regional Plan. (Source: Vermont Agency of Natural Resources [ANR])
- **Vermont Conservation Design Highest Priority Forest Blocks:** The lands and waters identified here are the areas of the state that are of highest priority for maintaining ecological integrity. Together, these lands comprise a connected landscape of large and intact forested habitat, healthy aquatic and riparian systems, and a full range of physical features (bedrock, soils, elevation, slope, and aspect) on which plant and animal natural communities depend. The inclusion of this resource as a regional constraint is consistent with goals and policies of the Northwest Regional Plan. (Source: ANR)
- **Public Water Sources:** A 200-foot buffer is used around public drinking water wellheads. The inclusion of this resource as a regional constraint is consistent with goals and policies of the Northwest Regional Plan. (Source: ANR)
- **National Natural Landmark – Chazy Fossil Reef:** The Chazy Fossil Reef in Isle La Motte has been designated a National Natural Landmark by the US Department of Interior. (Source: NRPC)
- **Municipal Conservation Land Use Areas:** Conservation Land Use Districts, as designated in municipal plans, that include strict language that strongly deters or prohibits development have been included as a known constraint.

### Possible Constraints

- **Potential and Probable Vernal Pools:** There is a 600-foot buffer around unconfirmed vernal pools. (Source: ANR)
- **Protected Lands:** This constraint includes public lands held by agencies with conservation or natural resource oriented missions, municipal natural resource holdings (ex. Town forests), public boating and fishing access areas, public and private educational institution holdings with natural resource uses and protections, publicly owned rights on private lands, parcels owned in fee by non-profit organizations dedicated to conserving land or resources, and private parcels with conservation easements held by non-profit organizations. (Source: VCGI)
- **Features from ANR's Vermont Conservation Design:** Highest Priority Interior Forest Blocks, Highest Priority Connectivity Blocks, Highest Priority Physical Landscape Blocks and Highest Priority Surface Water and Riparian Areas.
- **Deer Wintering Areas:** Deer wintering habitat as identified by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.(Source: VCGI)
- **Hydric Soils:** Hydric soils as identified by the US Department of Agriculture. (Source: VCGI)
- **Agricultural Soils:** Local, statewide, and prime agricultural soils are considered. (Source: VCGI)
- **Act 250 Agricultural Soil Mitigation Areas:** Sites conserved as a condition of an Act 250 permit.(Source: VCGI)
- **Class 3 Wetlands:** Class 3 wetlands in the region have been identified have been included as a Regional Possible Constraint. The inclusion of this resource as a regional constraint is consistent with goals and policies of the Northwest Regional Plan (Source: ANR)
- **Municipal Conservation Land Use Areas:** Conservation Land Use Districts, as designated in municipal plans, that include strict language that deters, but does not prohibit development.

### **HYDRO MAPS**

#### Known Constraints

- **National Scenic and Recreational Rivers:** Known constraint; Missisquoi and Trout Rivers. This constraint will only be incorporated into the Hydroelectric Resource Map. Dams occurring within an impacted area will be displayed as such on maps. (Source: Digitized by the BCRC from Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers, Wild and Scenic Study Management Plan)

Possible Constraints

- **“303d” List of Stressed Waters:** Possible constraint. This constraint will only be incorporated into the Hydroelectric Resource Map. Dams occurring within an impacted area will be displayed as such on maps. (Source: ANR)
- **Impaired Water:** Possible constraint. This constraint will only be incorporated into the Hydroelectric Resource Map. Dams occurring within an impacted area will be displayed as such on maps. (Source: ANR)
- **State Significant Natural Communities and Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species:** Rankings S1 through S3 were used as constraints. These include all of the rare and uncommon rankings within the file. For more information on the specific rankings, explore the methodology for the shapefile. (Source: VCGI)

# HOUSING

All Richford residents, present and future, should have safe and affordable housing. However, if poorly planned, housing development can increase demands on available facilities and services and may adversely affect environmentally sensitive areas. Planning is necessary to meet anticipated needs, to avoid overburdening services, and to protect natural resources. Planning should include not only the character of the housing stock, but also the patterns of development within the community and housing affordability.

## EXISTING HOUSING SUPPLY

### HOUSING DATA

While the population of Richford has been relatively stable over the past 20 years, the number of households has increased. The increase in households is due to a decrease in the number of families in Richford.

Just under  $\frac{3}{4}$  of housing in Richford are single unit homes or mobile homes, while  $\frac{1}{4}$  are multi-unit homes.

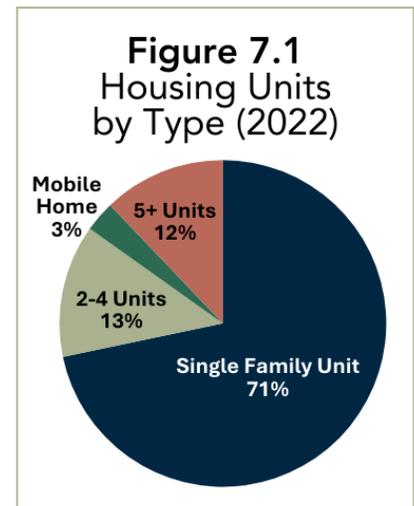
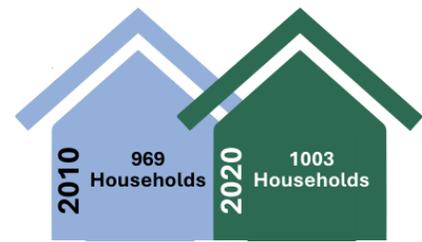
28% of Richford residents are renters, while the remainder own their homes.

### HOUSING AGE & QUALITY ISSUES

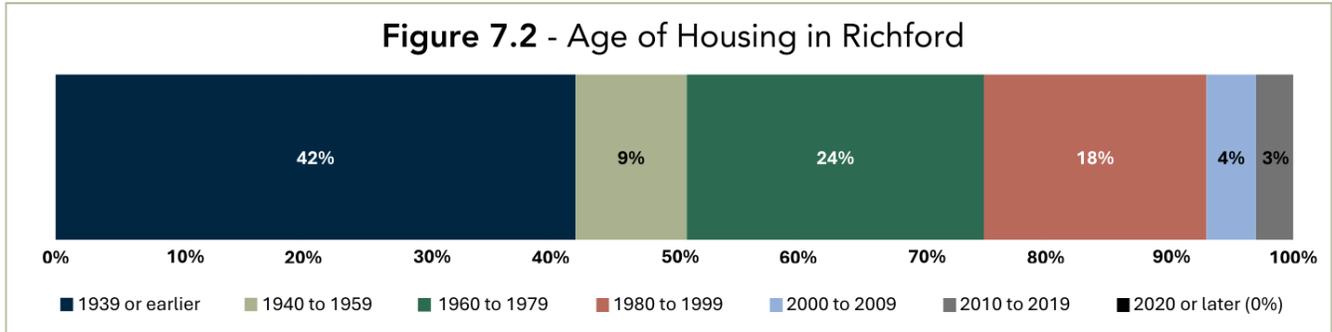
Roughly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all housing in Richford was built before 1980 and 42% was built 1939 or before. In the village, these trends are even more extreme with over half of all housing being constructed before 1939.

While many of the towns' older homes and apartments are in good condition, some have not been as well maintained. Based on tax appraisal data, while land values are higher in the Village, the per unit appraised value of the building itself is lower along Main and River Street. This may be an indicator of distressed residential development.

Almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Richford survey respondents were concerned about poorly maintained houses & apartments in town. Over time, these issues can lead to reductions in property values and average rents in a neighborhood, which results in homeowners and landlords being less likely to improve their building. A majority of survey respondents supported a stricter rental housing code and stricter ordinance on trash as methods for addressing these issues.



Another concern for Richford is the number of vacant homes and apartments. Excluding seasonal units, 9% of all housing units in Richford are vacant. Almost 40% of these units are not available for sale or rent currently. These units may be kept vacant for personal reasons, be used for storage, or may need repairs that make renting or selling difficult.



**AVAILABLE HOUSING ASSISTANCE**

Richford has many residents with special needs. In addition to a variety of services and programs (which are discussed in a later section), there are four facilities that operate to meet special housing needs in Richford (listed below). In total, Richford has 31 low-income senior or disabled units, 5 units for mentally handicapped, and 88 units of assisted living, including 45 units to assist seniors with memory loss.

**Missisquoi Manor:** This was constructed in the early 1980’s with Section 8 funding and contains elderly and handicapped housing. It has 24 single bedroom units but is typically full, though waiting lists are short. To qualify, applicants must be either disabled or over 65, and have either low or very low income (as defined by HUD).

**Academy Lane Apartments:** Located on Intervale Avenue, the Old School House has been renovated to seven senior handicap accessible apartments.

**Ave Maria Community Care Home:** Locally owned and operated, Ave Maria is licensed as a Level III Residential Care facility located on School Street, providing 24-hour residential care for up to 17 residents. Nurse overview and medication administration is provided. Services include an activity director, in-house doctor visits, a beautician, three French-speaking staff, daily devotions for those interested, weekly prayer services provided by area clergy, and weekly transportation to church. Meals are prepared by an in-house chef.

**Our Lady of the Meadows:** Located on Pinnacle Meadows, this facility is also a Level III residential care facility. Owned and operated by Doe Family, the Meadows has a total of 71 units all with private bath, including the St. Joseph’s Memory Loss Unit (45 units), a special unit devoted to the care of seniors with dementia, Alzheimer’s, and other memory disabilities.

To meet housing needs Richford, the State, and the Federal government have a variety of programs to support residents with special needs.

The **Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA)** is the state’s largest financier of affordable home ownership opportunities. VHFA directs its funding toward increasing the availability of both new and rehabilitated low-cost housing.

The **Office of Economic Opportunity** administers a number of programs for low-income Vermonters including financial assistance for homeless and emergency shelters.

The **Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA)** administers rental assistance programs and helps private and non-profit developers of affordable housing. The primary source of funding comes from HUD through the various “Section 8” programs. VSHA also administers the ENABLE program that provides loans to improve handicap accessibility.

The **Champlain Housing Trust**, serving Chittenden, Grand Isle, and Franklin Counties, has a Housing Loan Fund that includes Home Repair Loans. This Loan helps with roof replacement, electrical updates, plumbing or septic repairs, well repairs or replacement, and furnace replacement. It can also be used to finance home access modifications and energy efficiency upgrades.

**Richford Renaissance:** The mission of Richford Renaissance is to improve Richford housing for the benefit of the occupants and the community. One of their goals is to improve the quality and preserve affordability of housing for homeowners and renters by identifying projects for housing improvements and providing information and assistance to renters and owners. They also develop, operate, finance, and manage affordable housing projects for the Designated Village Center.

## HOUSING NEEDS

### ***OVERALL HOUSING NEEDS***

As required by state law, the housing goal for Richford is to have at least 62 new housing units by 2030 and at least 338 new housing units by 2050. This will require a major change in the amount of housing built in Richford given that only 10 new homes have been built in the last 3 years.

### Housing Goals

**2030:** 62-98 units  
**2050:** 338-665 units

Of highest priority for the Town is the rehabilitation of existing vacant housing units. There are over 80 units in the Town which are currently vacant and not for rent or sale. Supporting the rehabilitation of these units will provide more housing and improve the character of the Village. Many residents noted a preference for improving existing housing in the Town Plan survey.

To meet the long-term housing goal, the Town will need to add new housing. Most new housing should be built in Richford Village. The Town supports gentle infill in the Village, such as adding accessory dwelling units and small multi-unit apartments that fit the existing character. Outside of the village, development should be at a rate consistent with the rural nature of the area. The Town supports affordable housing options such as manufactured homes.

There will need to be economic changes and an increase in population in Richford to achieve the 2050 housing goal of 338 or more units. The number of private sector employees in Richford has been relatively level in the last 10 years, as has the total population. Increasing the number of available living wage jobs in Richford will attract new residents and increase demand for workforce housing.

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Compared to surrounding towns, home prices in Richford are generally lower. The average home sale price in 2023 was \$164,000.

Housing prices are generally affordable to county residents making 80% or more of the county median income.

Accurate data on the cost of rental housing in Richford is harder to find. According to the U.S. Census American Community Survey, the median rent in Richford is \$1,111, which is affordable to those making \$44,440 or more a year.

While homeownership and rentals are generally affordable to county residents, roughly 1/3 of current Richford residents are paying more than 30% of their income on housing. Especially for middle- and low-

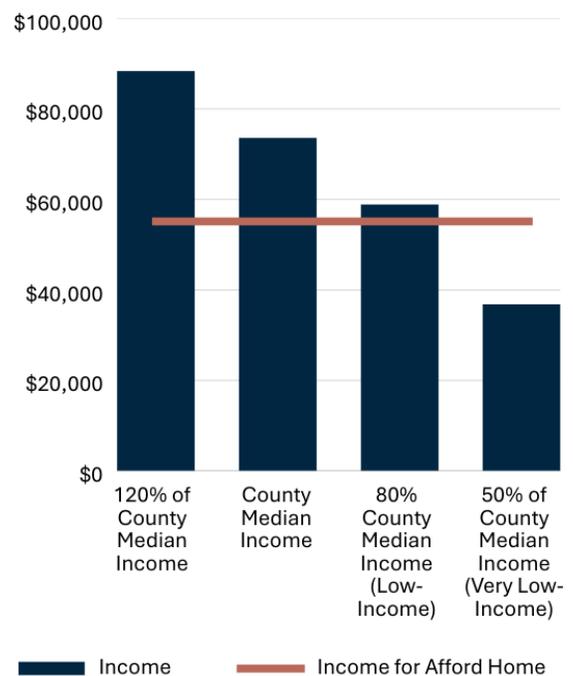
Defining Affordable Housing

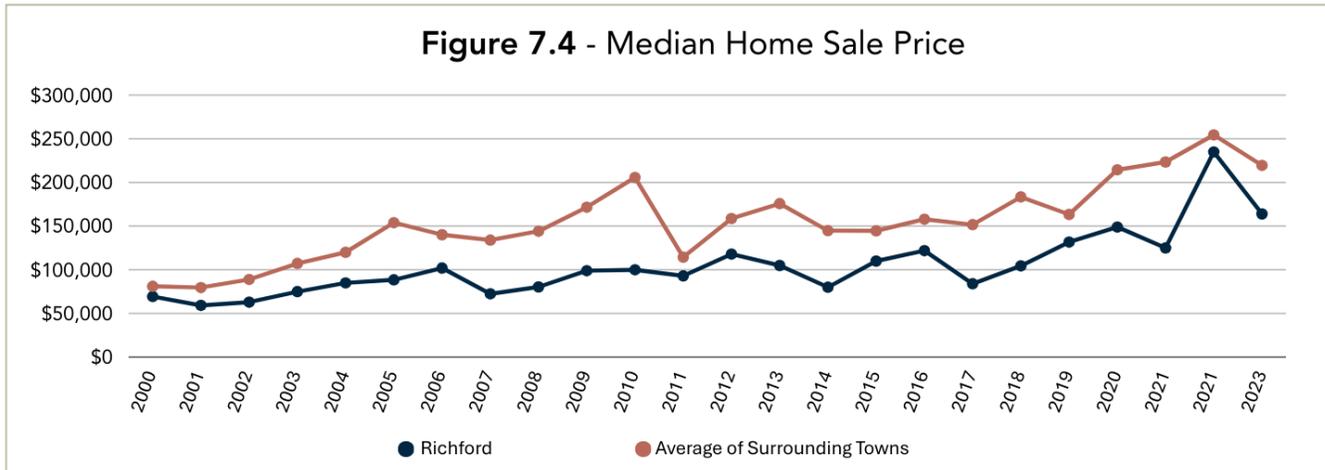
At an individual level, housing is considered affordable when a household spends 30% or less of their total income on housing. At the community level, affordability is defined based on the metropolitan statistical area or county median household income. While Richford is within the Burlington-South Burlington Metropolitan Statistical Area, its incomes tend to be much lower. Therefore, this plan uses the Franklin County median income. The following definitions apply:

**Rental housing:** Rent affordable to a household earning 80% of the county median household income (\$58,906)

**Home purchase:** Mortgage affordable to a household earning 120% of the county median income (\$88,360)

**Figure 7.3**  
Homeownership Affordability



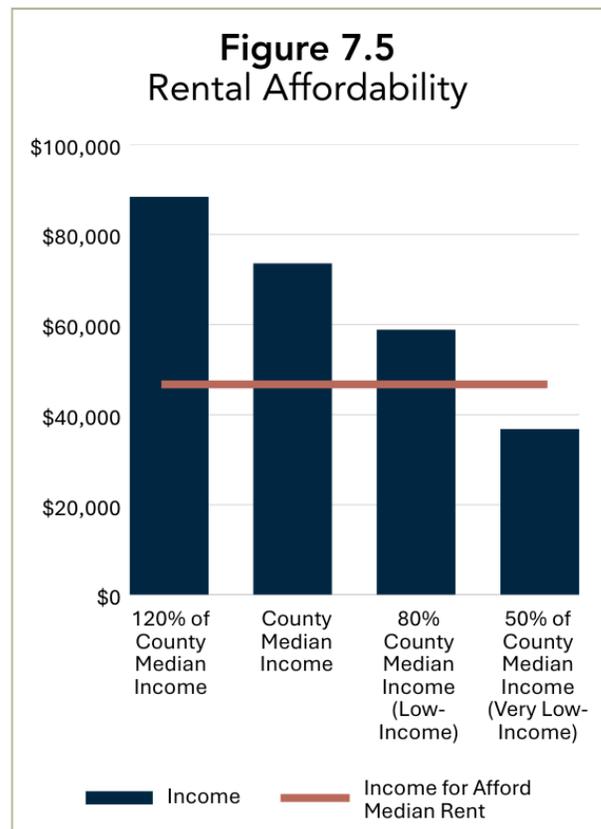


income households, this can result in financial challenges and housing instability. This trend is likely driven by the lower average incomes in Richford as compared to the county.

Therefore, while housing is affordable to many of those looking to move to Richford, there is still a need to support housing that is affordable for current residents.

**SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING**

In addition to affordable housing, some residents may need special forms of housing such as group homes, nursing homes, assisted living and other senior housing. The Town encourages the development of these forms of housing, especially in the Village which has access to infrastructure and services for residents.



HOUSING GOALS & POLICIES

**GOALS (continued on next page):**  
**HAVE AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF SAFE, HEALTHY, ATTRACTIVE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING THAT SATISFIES RESIDENTS' NEEDS.**

**GOALS:**

**HAVE HOUSING AVAILABLE IN A VARIETY OF TYPES FOR ALL INCOMES AND AGES AND IS IN A CONVENIENT LOCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT, SERVICES, RETAIL CENTERS, AND EDUCATIONAL AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.**

**RICHFORD HOUSEHOLDS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL HOUSING NEEDS, INCLUDING SENIORS, PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY DISABLED RESIDENTS, AND LOW AND MODERATE-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS HAVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING.**

**HISTORIC BUILDINGS SHALL BE MAINTAINED AND CONTINUE TO BE USED TO HOUSE THE RESIDENTS OF RICHFORD.**

**POLICIES:**

Housing supply and demand

- Prioritize the rehabilitation of vacant housing units in town over new housing development in the allocation of public funds if such units can be renovated to provide safe housing.
- Support using the second story of commercial buildings for residential rental units.

Housing safety and quality

- Fully support the efforts of the Housing Code Enforcement Officer, Fire Chief, and State Fire Marshall in their enforcement of the Minimum Housing Codes and revise housing codes to improve the quality of rental units in the village.
- Prohibit residential development in the floodplain.

Aesthetics

- Ensure that housing and buildings in the village continue the settlement pattern that characterizes Richford.
- Promote landscaping and site design that ensures that new development is compatible with the unique and individual characteristics of the Village Residential and Mixed-Use Districts.

Special housing needs

- Encourage high quality design, efficient construction, and energy efficiency to provide affordable housing that minimizes long-term living costs
- Promote compact development that is inherently more affordable due to being located closer to existing infrastructure, walkable areas, and public utilities.

Housing assistance agencies

- Support efforts by municipal, regional, and non-profit organizations to provide increased opportunities for affordable home ownership.
- Support efforts that assist senior and disabled residents to remain in their homes (if desired) and support community-based health care systems that enable senior and disabled people to remain in the community.

# ECONOMY

A strong economy is key to improving the quality of life in Richford. Jobs and higher salaries will raise the standard of living, allowing investment in improved housing, services, and leisure. Retail businesses locate where there are people with money to spend and manufacturing is located where the local labor force has the necessary skills. The future economy of Richford must be one where resources are used sustainably, local strengths are built upon, and all residents can achieve success.

## DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING A STRONG AND DIVERSE ECONOMY

### **EMPLOYMENT WITHIN RICHFORD**

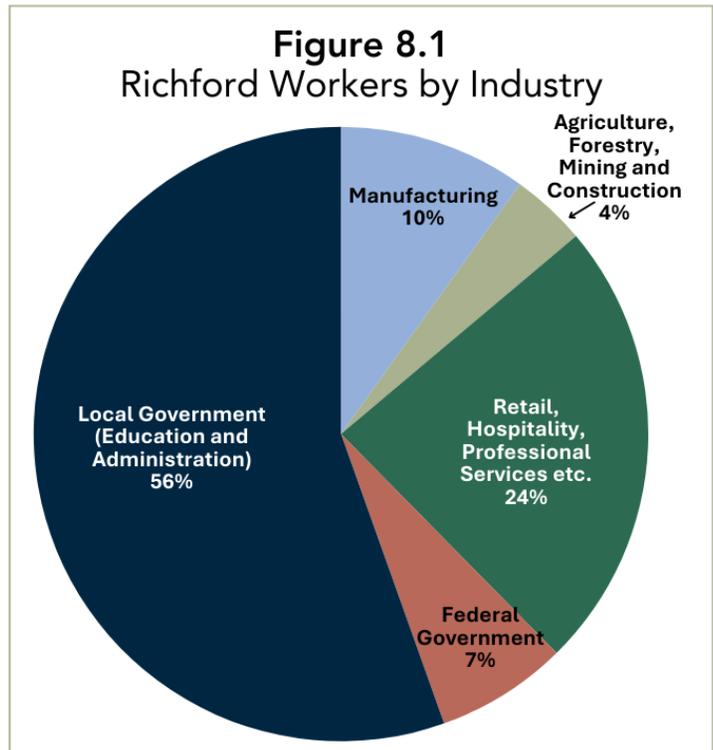
Richford’s economy has five main sectors: agriculture (farm and forestry), manufacturing, government, retail, and tourism. While some of these sectors have been in Richford for many years, others are only now getting started. Richford is interested in adopting policies that will help local businesses to grow.

### **AGRICULTURE (FARM AND FORESTRY)**

Farming and forestry are two of the historic industries in Richford. However, in recent years the number of workers in these industries has dropped across Vermont, including in Richford. While an exact estimate of agriculture and forestry workers is not available, it is less than 4% of all workers in Richford.

### **MANUFACTURING**

10% of Richford workers work in manufacturing. Richford has a 23-acre industrial park on Route 105 which is fully built out. Kaytec is located in the park and provides 60-75 jobs for both residents and non-residents. The Town evaluated several sites for possible future industrial development and two sites were recommended. Fairview Commons, a commercial park in the Special District, was established in 1990 although no development has occurred to date.



## **GOVERNMENT**

As Richford is a border community with three crossings into Canada, it has become the location for government facilities including customs and border stations. These positions are an important source of well-paying jobs and every effort should be made to ensure they are not relocated to another community. 7% of all Richford workers work for the Federal government.

An additional 56% of all workers work for the local government, mainly those working for the school system. Combined, government workers make up a substantial majority of Richford workers.

## **RETAIL & TOURISM**

Roughly ¼ of Richford workers work in service-providing industries (such as retail, hospitality, and professional services). The commercial and retail sectors in Richford have been struggling in recent years with a lack of commercial traffic. One opportunity to increase commercial trade is the many truckers and travelers which pass through Richford on their way to Canada. The biggest weakness facing the business community is Richford's image.

Richford could expand tourism. The miles of forested hills, proximity to Jay Peak Resort, the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, the Long Trail, and the Missisquoi River make Richford an outdoor enthusiast's dream. Visitors to Richford in the summer have easy access to canoeing, fishing, mountain biking, and hiking opportunities. In the winter, guests can go cross-country and downhill skiing, snowmobiling, and hunting. These assets should be capitalized upon.

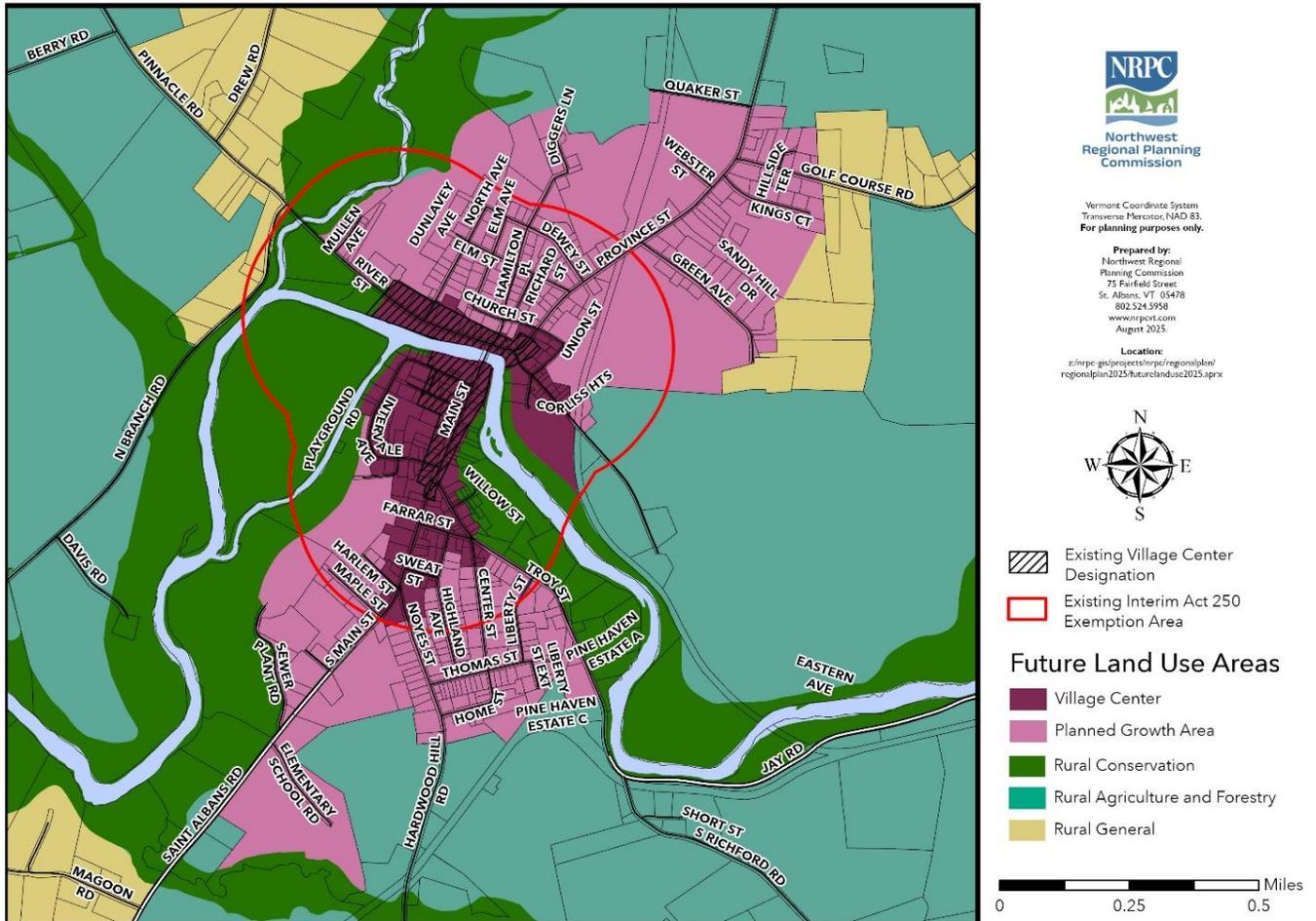
## **RICHFORD VILLAGE**

Because of the availability of municipal services within its boundaries, the Village is still the commercial hub of Richford. Unfortunately, commercial activity is limited and does not meet all of the daily needs of residents. Residents noted a hardware store, and restaurant/coffee shop, and gym/fitness establishments as the types of businesses they would like to see the most.

The State of Vermont runs incentive programs to support historic re-development in villages. For many years, the Town held a Village Center designation in 2024. Under a new law passed in 2024, the previously state designated Village Center will be expanded and a new neighborhood designation area will be added. In these areas, private property owners can apply for tax credits along with other benefits. A map of the areas designated is below.

Redevelopment of the Village is a major priority for the Town. Buildings in disrepair and empty storefronts are not only signs of economic distress, but also discourage traffic to existing and new buildings. In an open-ended question about what residents would like to see changed in Richford, nearly 1 in 5 noted the economy needed improvement.

# NRPC Draft Future Land Use - Richford



While there is still work to be done, progress has been made including the redevelopment of the Sweats-Coming building and development of the 111-113 Main Street Park. The Town has also worked to support existing and new businesses in the Village such as supporting the sale of the Main Street Market to the nonprofit NOTCH and recruiting a new credit union to downtown.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS**

While Richford supports the growth of businesses, it is important to utilize its resources sustainably without pollution. Industries that release pollutants into water and air must meet all state and federal standards and should not degrade or endanger either resource. Richford is committed to ensuring future economic growth while maintaining environmental quality.

## EARNING A LIVABLE WAGE

### **WAGES & UNEMPLOYMENT DATA**

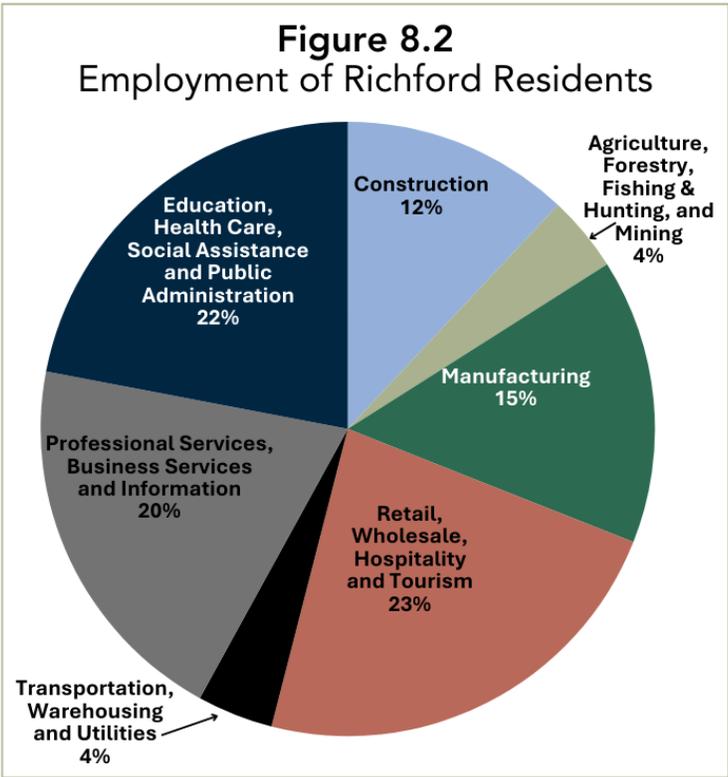
While there are roughly 1,000 workers in Richford, less than ¼ of them are Richford residents. The majority of residents commute to other Franklin and Chittenden County destinations. Compared to the jobs available in Richford, a greater percentage of Richford residents work in manufacturing, construction and service-based industries. 2.2% of Richford residents are unemployed. With the exception of the 2020 pandemic, the unemployment rate in Richford has steadily fallen over time.

While unemployment is low, the average household income in Richford remains lower than the state average. The median household income in the town is \$60,347 compared to \$78,024 in the state. The rate of poverty has also increased from roughly 12% in 2019 to 20% in 2023.

The Town should continue to work to attract businesses that will provide livable wages for Richford residents.

**Richford Residents  
Employment**

- 2.2% unemployed
- 20% below the poverty line
- \$60,347 median household income



## ECONOMY GOALS & POLICIES

**GOALS:**

**PROMOTE A STABLE AND DIVERSE ECONOMY THAT PROVIDES SATISFYING AND REWARDING JOB OPPORTUNITIES AT A LIVABLE WAGE.**

**MAINTAIN THE VILLAGE DISTRICT IN RICHFORD AS AN EMPLOYMENT AND COMMERCIAL CENTER FOR EASTERN FRANKLIN COUNTY.**

**BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRIES IN RICHFORD SHALL MAINTAIN HIGH ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS.**

**(policies on next page)**

**POLICIES:**

- Focus municipal economic development efforts on tourism, technology, and forest industries, including efforts to expand value added manufacturing.
- Prioritize the retention of government jobs.
- Support existing businesses and attract new businesses that provide jobs at livable wages and utilize the skills of the local labor market.
- Decrease municipal property tax rates to attract business by retiring existing municipal debts and increasing the Grand List.
- Discourage strip commercial development along highways and ensure that the zoning bylaws include rules that require that commercial and industrial development be well designed and attractive.
- Industrial development should be planned in industrial park areas which are served by necessary facilities including sewer, water and transportation.
- Commercial development should be located within the Village Special District to be convenient to employees and to take advantage of the existing infrastructure.
- Remove blighted buildings which are safety hazards and rehabilitate all other blighted building to improve the image and perception of the Village.
- Attract businesses to use vacant buildings in the Village.
- Remain a Designated Center to improve the ability to attract residents and businesses by enhancing livability and promoting the Village's unique sense of place.
- Support property owners' application for tax credits and other assistance from state agencies that are needed to update structures to meet building codes and to preserve historic structures.
- Enhance police presence to decrease petty crimes which detract from the Village.

# LAND USE

Planning gives Richford the opportunity to guide growth so it fits the communities character, balancing natural rural landscape and developed settlements.

Land should be developed based on its physical characteristics, projected need, capacity of existing municipal services, and compatibility with existing land uses. Development should consider both natural features such as soils, terrain, and critical areas as well as impacts to the economy, housing needs and public services. Future development also may be planned to protect, and perhaps restore, scenic areas and historic features.

The goals and policies of the natural resources, economics, utilities, facilities and services, housing, and community profile sections of the plan help define the goals and policies for future land use in Richford.

## CURRENT LAND USE

### ***RESIDENTIAL USES***

Residential uses are more easily developed on sites with on-site water and sewer. Municipal water and sewer are available in Richford primarily within the Special District. There are two significant extensions outside of the Special District: along Route 105 to the Industrial Park and along Route 139 to the Canadian border.

Over half of Richford’s existing housing is located within the Village. Uses along Main Street and River Street are a mix of commercial and residential uses, while the side streets are mostly residential. Some areas are very densely settled, particularly at the south end of the Special District, with many dwellings on small lots. Without extensions of water and sewer, the Special District will remain the primary location for high-density residential growth.

Outside of the Village, there is scattered residential development at low densities throughout the Town. East Richford has somewhat more concentrated housing development.

There has not been much new housing development in Richford recently. Only 8% of all homes occupied in Richford were constructed after 2000 and just 10 units were built from 2020-2023.

### ***COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL USES***

The Special District is the commercial center for the town. The commercial establishments in the Special District meet most daily needs of town residents. Because of the availability of municipal services within the Special District, it makes sense that the intense commercial development

should occur there. Historically, industrial development occurred along the river in the Special District but recently industrial development has been encouraged to locate in the industrial park.

**AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY**

Agriculture and forestry have historically been important industries in Richford. The majority of land in Richford consists of fields and forests. Most farms and fields in Richford are located in the northwest corner. The remainder of the town is mostly forested. Just under half of all land in Richford is in the current use program for forestry, while roughly 15% is in the current use program for agriculture.

**SCENIC AREAS**

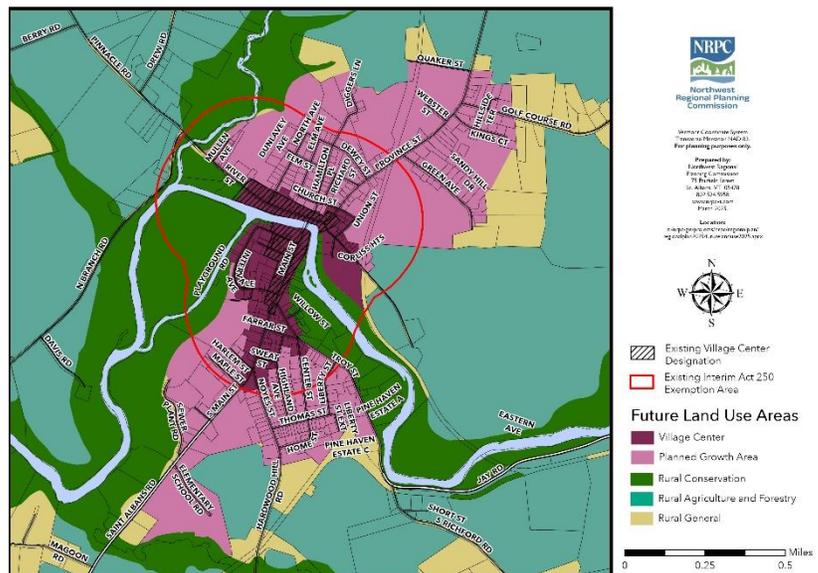
Richford’s scenic beauty is of high importance to its residents. In an open-ended question about what they liked most about Richford, 20% of respondents referenced Richford’s scenery. The river, historic buildings and the rural landscape all contribute to Richford’s scenic nature.

**PROPOSED LAND USE**

**RICHFORD VILLAGE STATE DESIGNATIONS**

Portions of Richford Village shown as Village Center and Planned Growth Area in the map below are eligible for center and neighborhood state designations under the updated state designation program. The center and neighborhood designations provide incentives, including tax credit programs, to support redevelopment in the Village.

NRPC Draft Future Land Use - Richford



**SUMMARY**

The Town considered historical patterns of development, available infrastructure as well as development constraints when developing its future land use planning areas. The following development limitations were considered in drafting the proposed future land use map: historical land use, high elevations (over 1500 feet), steep slopes (over 15%), soil suitability, wetlands, deer wintering habitat, the Stanhope Brook Watershed, flood hazard areas, and potential groundwater recharge areas.

The overall goal of the future land use planning areas is to guide development towards existing settled areas while preserving farms and forests. The majority of residential development should be located in the Village with medium-density development located in areas adjacent to the Village and in East Richford. Low-density development in the agricultural district may occur but should be monitored to ensure it does not conflict with agricultural and forestry uses. Only very low densities should be allowed in the Forest/Conservation District and residential dwellings should be prohibited in the Recreation/Conservation District. These lands have severe site limitations, remote locations, extreme topography, and shallow soils.

Future seasonal residential development should take place in the same area where lower and medium density residential development is targeted, since seasonal development is also dependent upon site specific water and sewer facilities and needs to be accessible by town services.

Commercial development should occur largely within the boundaries of the Special District, although small operations may be allowable in the rural areas. Home occupations are encouraged in all districts, although special care may be needed to prevent impacts in the Water Supply, Conservation and Floodplain Districts. Industrial development compatible with the Town's environmental standards is encouraged in the Industrial Park.

Agriculture is the prime desired land use in two of the districts – agriculture and floodplain. In these areas, other land uses should only be permitted if they do not conflict with farming. Farming will not be discouraged in other districts, although it is not expected to have as important a role.

Careless management and planning of the forest can cause flooding and damage fish and wildlife habitat. The forests are used for many purposes in addition to timber harvesting, including hiking, snowmobiling, hunting, cross-country skiing, bird watching, and sightseeing. Forestry is anticipated in the Forest/Conservation and Water Protection District. It may also be appropriate in the Agricultural and Rural Residential Areas.

### ***FUTURE LAND USE PLANNING AREAS***

**Mixed Use District:** The Mixed-Use District is generally located in center of the Village around the intersection of Main and River Streets, and along Troy Street. This district provides for increased densities of development suitable for the traditional village environment. Development in the district shall promote the continuation of higher density commercial and residential uses while providing a pedestrian orientated environment.

**Village Residential District:** The Village Residential District is generally located on both sides of Main Street, north of River Street, and east of Province Street. This district provides for increased densities of development suitable for the traditional village environment. Development in the district shall promote the continuation of higher density residential uses while providing a pedestrian orientated environment.

**Commercial/Industrial District:** The Commercial/Industrial District is located in the Troy Street area, the Province Street area, the South Main Street area, and completely encompasses the Richford Business Park. The Commercial/Industrial District provides for increased densities of commercial and industrial development suitable for the traditional village environment and, in the business park, industry that may be inappropriate for the village setting.

**Rural Residential District:** The Rural Residential District is determined by the historical use of land in the area, proximity to other centers, and the soil's suitability for septic systems. The intent of the Rural Residential District is to accommodate residential growth without burdening the town by extending sewer or water. This area may also accommodate small commercial or resource based light industrial development. For residential uses, cluster housing is encouraged.

**Agricultural District:** The Agricultural District is land in town which has somewhat limiting soils but not so much as to prevent all development. These areas have historically been, and continue to be, used for agriculture and forestry.

**Recreation/Conservation District:** The Recreation/Conservation District includes areas that offer unique environmental and public use opportunities within the Special District. It also seeks to conserve environmentally fragile areas and minimize any hardship that may arise as a result of nature's acts. Residential development is not appropriate for this district.

**Forest/Conservation District:** The Forest/Conservation District has limited suitability for community growth and development because of severe limitations, including remote locations, extreme topography, and shallow soils. It is intended to protect the scenic and natural resource values of this land for forestry, wildlife habitat, wetlands, and outdoor recreation. Only limited low-density development is allowed in this district.

**Education District:** The purpose of this district is to reserve areas for current and future educational facilities and their accessory uses within the central village area. Uses in this district must be compatible with the primary function of the area and the presence of school children.

**Water Supply Protection District:** The Water Supply Protection District is defined by the watershed that supplies the Stanhope Brook Reservoir. It is intended to protect Richford's municipal water system as well as other water recharge areas, including wetlands.

**Flood Hazard Area Overlay:** The Flood Hazard Area has been designated to minimize future and private losses due to floods by regulating future land development in hazard areas. Designation of this district is also required for continued town eligibility in the National Flood Insurance Program. Included are all areas in the 100-year flood plain as shown in the Flood Insurance Study and Maps prepared by the Federal Flood Insurance Administration; these are on file at the Town Clerks office. The remaining sections of this land use plan address some of the key land uses and their appropriateness in each district.

Land Use/Land Cover Map

Zoning Map

## COMPATIBILITY WITH ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES AND THE REGION

The Towns of Montgomery, Enosburgh, Jay, Westfield, and Berkshire have regionally adopted plans. According to state regulations, the Richford Town Plan must be compatible with other adopted plans.

Richford's Proposed Land Use Map is compatible with Berkshire's Proposed Land Use Map. Adjoining borders are classified as rural lands/residential, agriculture, and conservation. The only area dissimilar is the existing industrial park in Richford on the Berkshire line. Berkshire's plan notes that siting of these uses on the border has not presented any issues. Additionally, the Missisquoi River creates a natural barrier between these uses and the more rural areas of Berkshire. Therefore, the Town does not anticipate any compatibility issues.

Richford's and Montgomery's proposed land use maps are compatible, with rural residential and conservation districts at their adjoining border. Richford's and Enosburgh's proposed land use maps are compatible. Richford's Agricultural District meets with the corner of Enosburgh in the Rural Residential and Agricultural Districts.

Richford's and Jay's proposed land use maps are compatible. The Agricultural District, Conservation District, and Water Supply Protection District in Richford border a rural area in Jay. Route 105 crosses into Jay from the Forest/Conservation District in Richford to the rural area in Jay. Similar low densities of residential development are permitted along the corridor in both neighboring towns.

Richford's and Westfield's proposed land use maps are compatible, with the Jay State Forest encompassing the border area of the two towns.

Richford's plan is compatible with the Northwest Regional Plan. The areas planned for growth in the Regional Plan are also within the Village zoning districts for the Town Plan. The remainder of land in both the Town and the Region are largely planned for rural land uses.

## LAND USE GOALS & POLICIES

**HISTORIC SETTLEMENT PATTERN GOAL: PLAN DEVELOPMENT TO MAINTAIN THE HISTORIC SETTLEMENT PATTERN OF COMPACT VILLAGES SEPARATED BY RURAL COUNTRYSIDE.**

**POLICIES:**

- Review and, if necessary, amend the zoning bylaws to be consistent with this Town Plan.
- Continue to support the development and redevelopment of mixed-use structures that reinforce traditional settlement patterns within the Village Center and take advantage of the existing infrastructure.
- Discourage large-scale commercial and industrial development in the rural areas of Richford.
- Continue to participate in development review - whether through site plan review, zoning, or Act 250.

**RESIDENTIAL GOAL: ENSURE ENOUGH LAND IS AVAILABLE FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN AREAS PLANNED FOR GROWTH WHILE MAINTAINING THE RURAL LANDSCAPE OF RICHFORD.**

**POLICIES:**

- Encourage low densities where low levels of services are to be provided, and higher densities only where they can be properly served.
- Conserve and protect the quality and vitality of existing residential neighborhoods and renew or rehabilitate obsolete and deteriorating dwellings and neighborhoods.
- Encourage planned unit developments and site plan review, where appropriate, to protect open space/agricultural land and woodland.

**COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL GOAL: PLAN PUBLIC INVESTMENT TO MINIMIZE DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE ON AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST LAND.**

**POLICIES:**

- Prohibit strip commercial development along highways.
- Commercial construction should protect adjacent land with appropriately landscaped buffers.
- Industrial development shall not be allowed if it overburdens municipal services and or if it has undue adverse environmental impacts.
- Design industrial land construction well, protecting adjacent land with appropriately landscaped buffers.
- Plan Industrial development in industrial park areas which are served by necessary facilities including sewer, water, and transportation.

**RECREATION AND SCENIC USES GOAL: PROVIDE, IN CONVENIENT AND SUITABLE LOCATIONS, RECREATIONAL AREAS AND NECESSARY MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES FOR THE USE AND ENJOYMENT OF TOWN RESIDENTS.**

**POLICIES:**

- Encourage sustainable recreational activities within the agricultural, conservation, and floodplain districts that will protect open areas and provide more recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.
- Protect prime recreational resources (such as woodlands, riverbanks and ridges) from incompatible land uses to preserve scenic qualities.

**AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY GOAL: ENCOURAGE THE CONTINUATION OF AGRICULTURE AND THE CONSERVATION OF MAJOR FORESTLANDS.**

**POLICIES:**

- Support incentives, such as current use and conservation easements, and other available means to keep prime agricultural lands in productivity.
- Provide for continued public and private recreation opportunities, sound forest harvest practices, and compatible rural uses.
- Support efforts of the Vermont Land Trust in the purchase of development rights on farms containing prime agricultural soils.

# APPENDICES

## APPENIX A: INVENTORY OF STUDIES AND PLANS

### 1. **Richford Re-Connect**

Ongoing as of November 2025

#### **Summary**

The Town is in the process of finalizing the plan. The plan includes a phased proposal for construction of pathways that connect the Village to the Elementary School with associated cost proposals.

### 2. **Richford Streetscape Master Plan**

June 2023

#### **Introduction and Purpose**

The purpose of the Richford Streetscape Master Plan is to develop a vision and concept design for streetscape improvements along Main Street and River Street in the designated village center of Richford. Streetscape improvements are one component of the Town’s economic development strategy, which focuses on becoming a hub for accessing the abundant outdoor recreation activities at its doorstep. Investing in the physical elements of the public roadway will result in numerous benefits that will improve the overall health and vibrancy of the community as a whole. These benefits include:

- Reduced traffic congestion and pollution,
- Healthier, more active lifestyles,
- Increased property values,
- Safer streets for people of all ages, and
- More active and vibrant streets.

### 3. **Richford 2019 Revitalization Plan**

December 10, 2019

#### **Top 4 Priority Focus Areas**

##### 1. Administration Capacity and Local Leadership

Task 1: Fund a local economic development staff position for the Town of Richford

2. Improving the Quality of Housing

Task 2: Review Community and Housing Data/ Relevant Plans

Task 3: Strengthen Enforcement of the Housing Code

Task 4: Consider Incentives for Housing Improvements

3. Marketing, Communications and Public Relations

Task 5: Create/Improve the culture of communication in the municipality

Task 6: Create a strong community brand for Richford

4. Development - Public Space & Private Business/Property Development

Task 7: Work to occupy the vacant and underused buildings within the village center core

Task 8: Identify and market funding opportunities for façade and physical improvements in the village center

Task 9: Pursue streetscape improvements to beautify, improve walkability and incentivize private investment

Task 10: Consider rehabilitation and reuse of rail property on Province Street; explore feasibility of a Welcome Center.

4. **Richford Area Wide Brownfield Redevelopment Plan**

October 22, 2013

Stone Environmental and the Northwest Regional Planning Commission

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Area Wide Brownfield Planning project in Richford, Vermont brought a team of consultants together to plan for the revitalization of the village center, with additional concentration on how to redevelop four historic brownfield properties as an important catalyst for growth and opportunity. Stone Environmental, Inc. (Stone) and our partners the Hartland Group and Lamoureux & Dickinson (together the Stone Team) were retained by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission to perform the project utilizing funds provided through a Brownfield Assessment Grant from United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA).

The Stone Team led a community planning session attended by over 80 community members, where they developed the following vision for the Village Center:

- A welcoming, attractive community with a positive image.
- A productive downtown that capitalizes on the town’s architecture, the Missisquoi River, and its location proximate to recreation resources.
- To implement the vision, the plan has identified short and long term projects. The highest priorities include:
  - The Missisquoi Park and Main Street Overlook Park at 111, 113 Main Street;
  - Main/River Street Improvements, including upgrades to the streetscape and building facades, and redevelopments;
  - Municipal parking; and
  - Welcome center.

Site-specific assessment at four historic brownfield properties identified environmental, infrastructure, and structural conditions that would significantly impact redevelopment, which generally include Phase II Environmental Assessments, infrastructure improvements ranging from upgraded utility services to reconfigured sidewalks to create accessible entrances, structural deficiencies, and required code improvements that will increase the cost of redevelopment. The private properties selected for specific redevelopment feasibility analysis include:

- The Taylor Block (2 Main Street),
- The Boright Block (1 Main Street),
- The Wheeler Building (32 River Street), and
- The Bank Block (aka, the Mason’s Building, 61 Main Street).

Property Profile Sheets for each of the selected sites are provided following the Executive Summary.

The community is committed to maintaining commercial uses on the ground floors of all four sites, except 1 Main Street where a Community Center is currently located and considering staying on the first floor and basement. Based on an analysis of market feasibility, the following prospective new businesses have the best chance of success in downtown Richford: Full-Service Restaurant, Limited Service Eating Places, Used Clothing Store, Sporting Goods Store, and General Merchandise. Filling the vacant commercial spaces on Main Street will require property owners to be entrepreneurial in opening their own businesses, as in the case of 61 Main Street, or aggressive in recruiting tenants for the other spaces. It is unlikely that redevelopment of 1 Main Street and 32 River Street will happen without significant public subsidy due to the structural, infrastructure, environmental and market challenges. This project recommends that property owners consider affordable rental housing for the upper floors of these two buildings, a strategy which can give access to the resources needed to address the buildings’ needs while providing stable occupancy and professional management.

This overall effort identifies feasible yet challenging projects and tasks that will improve the character of the downtown, one step at a time. Recommended next steps are outlined and identified for implementation by various project stakeholders and the community at large. It will take significant public/private partnership and community involvement to accomplish many of the projects and tasks, but as each one is completed it will heighten the sense of anticipation and energy for the community to continue moving forward!

## **5. Richford Community Visit – Report and Actions Plan**

July 2007

Vermont Council on Rural Development

## **INTRODUCTION**

Beautifully situated on the Missisquoi River, framed by fertile farmland and lush Vermont hills, Richford is, in many ways, a place of abundance. Richford is a classic Vermont village with graceful

and historic architecture that enjoys modern amenities such as broadband, a superb health care center, and some impressively renovated buildings.

Yet Richford has struggled, like many Vermont towns, with a loss of economic stability, social and family fractures, and isolation. The people of Richford, keenly aware of both their assets and challenges, invited the Vermont Council on Rural Development to return to the town a decade after the first Community Visit was conducted in 1997. That invitation, and residents' participation during this four-month process, is indicative of Richford's most enduring strength – its people.

None of the issues identified during the Community Visit Program in Richford are insurmountable. Yet nothing can be accomplished without the town's commitment to share its skills, spirit, time and financial resources among each and every member of the community. The Program seeks to unify and strengthen a community by placing the responsibility of leadership – and the compassion and commitment that leadership entails – in the hands of community members. VCRD is proud to work with the people of Richford, and applauds their courage and tenacity in working toward a stronger future for their town.

The Task Forces formed during this process will address some of the most significant issues faced by Richford. The Job Creation and Retention Task Force will work to expand entrepreneurial and border opportunities, unify existing business associations, and actively promote economic development. The Task Force on Law Enforcement will address resident concerns about safety and consider appropriate law enforcement staffing and how to achieve it, while addressing fundamental issues contributing to lawlessness and fear. Finally, the Image and Communication Task Force will confront substandard housing, work to improve the downtown and public areas, and actively develop and promote a positive town image, both internally and beyond the borders of Richford.

## APPENDIX B: LIST OF CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

**Richford Lions Club:** Besides their national projects with special emphasis on needs in sight and hearing, the Richford Lions Club supports the school bands, school sports and class activities, scholarships, Old Home Days on the first weekend in July, and numerous community service projects.

**American Legion Post #12:** The Legion provides their banquet hall for senior citizen meals and meals for deceased member's families after funerals and provide Christmas baskets to elderly legion members and donate to little league programs, girl scouts, and various other youth programs. The Legion also provides three \$1000 scholarships for Richford High School seniors going to college and sponsorship for Richford High School boys attending Boys State, which organizes the Town's annual Memorial Day parade and program.

**Knights of Columbus:** Among the many charitable activities quietly conducted by the Knights of Columbus are sponsorship of a cub scouts' troop and donations of food baskets for shut-ins. Missisquoi Lodge 9 F & AM provides support to Shriner Hospitals for impaired and burned children and awards two scholarships to Richford High School graduating seniors. The Lodge assists with sponsoring Mason CARES seminars (Comprehensive Assessment and Recovery Effort) through area schools.

**The Beautification and Image Committee** works to keep the Special District attractive. The small group raises funds to purchase trees and plants for the parks. Trees have been planted along Main Street, and the committee takes charge of planters at the Town Hall, Library, and Post Office buildings. The committee also purchases and maintains lighted ornaments, which are put up on utility poles at Christmas. The committee presents the Golden Service Award, at the annual holiday gathering to a community member who has volunteered time and effort to improving the community for all.

**The Stage Committee** maintains the stage on the second floor of the Town Hall, provides physical and technical support, and oversees use of the stage and audio-visual equipment. The Christmas Concert, the Mr. Falcon Contest, the Elementary School play, the library, and summer youth programs make use the stage. The Hometown Follies, a variety show featuring local talent, is staged annually raising funds to assist the Meal Site.

**The Richford Historical Society** is now housed in the 1908 Fire Station. The Society's plan is to both preserve the building as their home, and utilize it as the Fire Station Museum, (to be renovated through local donations and fund raisers), which will then contain artifacts pertaining to the history of Richford. The Society has received enthusiastic support from the community and its members meet monthly.

### **Richford Fire Department**

#### **Richford Fire Department Auxiliary**

#### **Richford Parent-Teacher Organization**

**Franklin County Community Action** assists the low-income residents. Among the programs offered are commodity distribution and WIC, a food and nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children.

**BERMMA:** Another homegrown organization assisting low-income residents is the Berkshire, Enosburgh, Richford, and Montgomery Ministry Association. It operates the food shelf and receives and distributes donated clothes, furniture, and house ware. BERMMA helps its clients get back on their feet and are given assistance with budgeting and finding jobs.

**Richford Renaissance** is in existence to improve Richford’s housing for the benefit of the community through the development, operation, financing and management of affordable projects with the goals of improving quality and preserving affordability. The organization has completed one rental project that included four buildings: Academy Lane Schoolhouse Apartments, the Janes Block, and two duplexes on Powell Street and Intervale Avenue. That project is fully occupied. The volunteer board of Richford Renaissance is committed to the improvement of housing within the Special District.