

# Richmond Town Plan

## ACF-Related Priorities, Goals and Actions

[\(Full Document\)](#)

### Introduction

#### Vision

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Wisely steward our **natural and working lands**, ensuring the beauty and health of our landscapes, waterways, open spaces, wildlife, and agricultural resources.

#### Acts 171 and 174

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The goal of Act 171[\*] is to maximize the significant benefits that intact blocks of forested land provide by reducing fragmentation into the foreseeable future. “Development,” which includes most activities that significantly alter the natural state of the areas, is not prohibited, but is to be done carefully, respecting the work that has been done to understand how the economic and ecological functions of forests can be best preserved. Employment opportunities in the timber and biomass industries; recreation and tourism, and natural resource management and study, will be protected by this law, as will the natural resources contained within these areas.

### Community Development

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- GOAL 3: Support and create outdoor recreation opportunities that are available to the public

#### ACTIONS:

1. Work with landowners who are willing to allow public access to privately accessed natural and open space areas
2. Support the Richmond and Vermont Land Trusts in their endeavors to protect natural resources that will have public access for recreational purposes
3. Encourage collaboration between the trails committee, conservation commission, planning commission, and regional organizations

4. Create and distribute materials that foster responsible use and enjoyment of Richmond's natural areas, including trail maps, kiosks, improved parking and access, and signage
5. Support long-standing outdoor recreation opportunities such as Cochran's Ski Area and Chittenden County Fish & Game
6. Support outdoor recreation opportunities and programs that include canoe access on the Winooski River, swimming, cross country skiing, skating, mountain biking, etc.

## **Future Land Use**

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### **6. Significant Natural Areas:**

- **Location:** Portions of High Priority Contiguous Habitat Units, High Priority Forest Blocks, and Habitat Connectors. These areas are found in Richmond's northeast quadrant, eastern and southern borders, southwest border and Bryant Hill. They have been defined by state and regional mapping efforts [\*\*].
- **Purpose:** To minimize forest and habitat connector fragmentation and protect significant natural resources and the ecological services they provide. These areas will have the lowest density of development in Richmond.
- **Current Uses:** conserved lands, low density residential, or and agricultural and forestry uses, with some accessory uses such as cottage industries and home-based businesses
- **Future Uses:**
  - further conservation or protection of these areas
  - uses that minimize forest and habitat connector fragmentation, soil erosion, and water pollution
  - uses that minimize impacts to scenic views, ridgeline habitat connectors, sensitive ecosystems, and steep slopes
  - low density residential or agricultural development that is clustered and in the fringes of these areas,
  - cottage industries and home-based businesses
  - other uses that are compatible with Act 171
- **GOAL 2:** Protect important natural lands including but not limited to floodplain, scenic viewsheds, and high priority forest blocks

**ACTIONS:**

1. Continue to prohibit damaging or dangerous types of development in sensitive or conserved areas such as floodplain or steep slopes
2. Restrict certain types of development in sensitive or high priority natural areas
3. Encourage development that protects natural resources and preserves scenic and/or historic character of Richmond

## **Natural Resources**

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In line with the state's forest block preservation goals, the town has recently acquired its first town forest, previously owned by the Andrews Family. Roughly 428 acres were purchased and conserved by the town on March 27th 2018 through the generosity of the Andrews Family and joint efforts and support from the Town of Richmond, Richmond Conservation Commission, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, Vermont Land Trust, and many community members. The Town intends to utilize a management plan for continuous stewardship of this land to protect its ecological, timber, recreational, educational, open space, and scenic resources

### Pages 32-34

- GOAL 1: Protect priority natural areas in order to maintain the health and function of those areas and their ecosystem services

## LAND ACTIONS

1. Utilize the best available science to inform the creation of supplemental land use regulations and maps that would further conserve or protect sensitive natural areas
2. Continue to support the efforts of the public and private organizations such as the Richmond Conservation Commission, Richmond Trails Committee, and Richmond Land Trust to protect sensitive natural areas
3. Facilitate a town-wide discussion about the development and management of trails and trail networks in Richmond
4. Minimize the fragmentation of and intrusion into sensitive wildlife habitats and forests, including Contiguous Habitat Units and Wildlife Travel Corridors, through land use regulation that promotes Vermont's Smart Growth principles such as clustering development, siting development in a manner to preserve contiguous habitat areas, and through coordinating with neighboring towns on border areas.

5. Restrict development on steep slopes between 20% and 35%, cliffs, and ridgelines over 900ft in elevation, and prohibit all structural development (including renewable energy generation facilities and
6. distribution/transmission infrastructure) on slopes greater than 35% , in order to maintain habitat connectors and mitigate erosion
7. Create and maintain a library of ecological studies and maps
8. Partner with state and regional organizations to secure funding and collaborate on projects that would support conservation efforts
9. Construct trails to avoid sensitive natural areas and minimize impact on water quality, wildlife, soils, and other resources
10. Continue to support invasive species control efforts including removal and mitigation of Japanese Knotweed, Garlic Mustard, Barberry, Buckthorn, and other fast spreading non-native plants.

#### WATER ACTIONS:

15. Safeguard water quality, stream channel stability, habitats, and habitat connectivity by protecting riparian areas

- GOAL 4: Utilize best management practices for Richmond-owned, publicly accessible natural and recreational areas

#### ACTIONS:

1. Utilize a management plan for the Town Forest, and continually assess for necessary amendments to the plan to ensure best stewardship of that land and forest and to ensure that the requirements of the *Grant of Development Rights, Conservation Restrictions and Public Access Easement* are being met.
2. Manage trail development and usage on Town lands to protect neighboring property owner rights and possible sensitive natural areas or conservation priorities such as those listed previously
3. Create a municipal properties management policy including rights of way, access, safety, and maintenance in order to ensure both natural resource protection and proper land stewardship
4. Control the growth and spread of invasive species on town properties.
5. Utilize the conservation reserve fund to protect important natural resources and public access to them where appropriate.

## Transportation

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- GOAL 1: Maintain a “Complete Streets” policy that encourages multi-modal transportation options such as walking and biking in addition to vehicle traffic

## ACTIONS

5. Support interconnectivity of trails and connectivity of trails with destinations such as the market or park and ride in order to provide non-motorized means of travel

[\*Act 171 was enacted in 2016 to promote strategies to maintain intact forests in Vermont. It requires municipalities and regional planning commissions to identify areas that are important as forest blocks and habitat connectors and to plan for development in these areas to minimize forest fragmentation. [More info.](#)]

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([Town Plan Maps](#), Page 13)

Contiguous Habitat Units w/i ACF

