



**Town of Williston**  
7900 Williston Road  
Williston, VT 05495  
town.williston.vt.us

1763

Town Manager  
878-0919

Town Clerk/ Treasurer  
878-5121

Planning/ Zoning  
878-6704

Lister/ Assessor  
878-1091

Public Works  
878-1239

Recreation  
878-1239

Police  
878-6611

Fire  
878-5622

Dorothy Alling  
Memorial Library  
878-4918

May 6, 2024

Williston Selectboard Members  
7900 Williston Road  
Williston, Vermont 05495

Dear Selectboard Members,

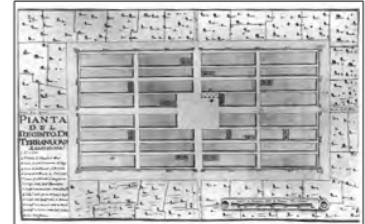
As co-chairs of the Williston Planning Commission, we write to support the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to study the feasibility of establishing a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District. A feasibility study will inform a decision on the use of this powerful tool and will give the Town insights into the relationship between its economy and infrastructure. Investments in public infrastructure and facilities could impact future land-use and economic patterns in the Taft Corners Growth Center. A study can help the Town make sound decisions that will have far-reaching impacts on both its built environment and fiscal sustainability, regardless of the tools it ultimately chooses.

A TIF study examines and compares alternate futures for the Town, showing how the potential district is likely to change with and without the street, utility, and facility improvements that would be made possible through TIF funding. While other funding for these things is sometimes available, communities in Vermont like South Burlington and Saint Albans City have shown that TIF is by far the strongest funding source available and is often the key funding source to leverage other state, federal, and private investment.

## VISION PLAN FOR TAFT CORNERS: OVERARCHING ISSUES

### *Phasing (avoiding scattershot development and Place-Dilution)*

The Vision Plan is fundamentally about "placemaking" - the creation of immersive environments. Coordinating development is the only way to build the place envisioned. As few as four buildings can begin to form a place--a street space--if they are aligned and facing across a street. In an area as large as Taft Corners, twenty buildings randomly scattered would have little if any, synergy, and not lead to a sense of place.



As identified in the 2021 Taft Corners Vision Plan, one of the greatest risks for Williston is that Taft Corners will grow in a "scattershot" pattern that fails to achieve the walkable, compact, mixed-use pattern the Town desires. One of the most powerful ways to ensure that new growth in Taft Corners crystallizes into a Town Center is to build new public streets, parks, and community facilities to a carefully considered plan. Private investment will follow the public infrastructure. This is discussed in the Vision Plan and is viewable in the real world along Market and Garden Streets in the South Burlington TIF District. A study for Williston will help identify opportunities for the same success here.

Studying the feasibility of a TIF for Williston will answer critical questions about the future of our Growth Center and Town and will help us identify the best strategies to achieve the goals of our Comprehensive Plan. We ask the Selectboard to include the TIF study in their package of ARPA projects.

Jill Pardini  
Shayla Livingston

Co-Chairs, Williston Planning Commission

