

MEMO

To: Erik Wells, Town Manager
From: Matt Boulanger, Planning Director; Emily Heymann, Planner
Date: November 28, 2023
Re: **New Homes and People:**
5-year Outlook- Predicted Residential and Commercial Growth FY25-29



This memorandum contains predictions of potential growth in Williston for FY25-FY29 based on a combination of staff knowledge about permitted projects, typical permitting and buildout timelines, trends in household size, and constraints on development created by Williston's permitting timeframes, Growth Management rules, and Sewer Allocation system.

Estimate for Growth¹ in Williston from FY 25-FY29

- ***Williston could add up to 625 homes and 920 people, growing from 10,400 people estimated at the beginning of FY2025 to 11,534 people at the end of FY2029, an annual growth rate of about 2.1%. Per the 2020 Decennial Census, the annual rate of growth from 2010-2020 was about 1.64%.***
- ***Estimated commercial growth for FY 25-29 is about 300,000 SF building footprint and 430 PM peak-hour trips These two metrics are discussed further below.***

Past Predictions Have Overestimated the Volume and Pace of Growth

Staff's past predictions, made in November of 2021 and 2022 have been overly optimistic using the same methodology, with growth in FY23 falling short of predictions made in 2021. In 2021, this memorandum predicted that 200 units would be constructed in FY23, but only 38 were built. Similarly, the 2021 prediction for FY24 was 172 units, but as of this writing, nearly halfway through FY 24, only 10 have been started.

Demographic Change, Shrinking Household Sizes, and Unit Types Constructed in Williston

Demographic change in the form of shrinking household sizes is ongoing in Williston and will impact total number of residents in the Town. Following Chittenden County trends, average household size is expected to decrease from 2.45 in 2020 to 2.12 in 2050. Following this trend, the existing nearly 4,333 dwellings in Williston that today hold 10,400 people, might only hold 10,185 people by the end of FY2029. This projected decrease of over 200 people from existing homes counters the projected increases from new homes.

The homes under construction now and anticipated in the next five years will be smaller than those constructed ten or more years ago. In the 1990s and 2000s, dwellings constructed in Williston were mostly single-unit homes, duplexes, or condominiums with two or more bedrooms. Today, new projects are integrating smaller dwellings, including 1-bedroom and studio apartments in multifamily structures. While most new development in the Taft Corners Growth Center is multi-unit, this trend is also occurring in traditionally single-unit areas like the Residential Zoning District (RZD).

¹ ***Past projections using this same methodology have overestimated growth. This projection is based on a high projection of growth. It assumes larger household sizes than may be created, the fastest possible development schedule given permit requirements, and the fastest pace of construction Williston has experienced to date. This projection (a net gain of 920 people) accounts for an overall shrinking household size in existing dwellings in Williston due to demographic trends (a loss of 215 people by FY2029) as well as new residents occupying new dwellings (A gain of 1134 people).***

The Role of Growth Management

Williston’s Growth Management (GM) system has a target of 80 dwelling unit equivalents (DUe) per year. Applicants have significant flexibility regarding when they start a project and when they construct the units in that project. Some growth in the Town, including senior housing, commercial staff housing, and affordable housing at or below 80% Area Median Income, is not reflected in the Growth Management schedule, but is projected in Table 2, below.

Growth Management Demand

Williston has set a Growth Target of 80 DUe/year, and splits this “allocation” unevenly amongst three geographic areas: the Growth Center (50 DUe/year), the remaining Sewer Service Area (20 DUe/year), and the remainder of the Town outside the Sewer Service Area (10 DUe/year). In relationship to available residential allocation, demand is very high in the Sewer Service Area outside the Growth Center

Inclusionary Zoning, Specific Plans, and Sewer Capacity

While there are other paths to residential approval available that do not require allocation in the Growth Management System, all new developments in Williston that will connect to Town sewer must purchase sewer treatment capacity from the amount made available by the Selectboard in Attachment A to the Sewer Allocation Ordinance each year. This constraint will continue to limit the overall pace of all new development in Williston.

Table 1: Growth Management Demand

	Demand Level	Growth Target (DUe per fiscal year)		DUe available allocation across FY2025-2034			DUe requests in March 2024 ²	Percentage of Available Allocation Requested
			10-year Total	Allocated	Eligible in 2024 ¹	Percent Available ¹		
Outside Sewer Service	Very Low	10	100	0	57	100%	6	11%
	<i>Three subdivisions (6 DUe total) will seek allocation in March 2024. 100% of available units across FY2024-2033 are available. Low demand has been the trend for several years and staff anticipates low demand in coming years. Developing in this part of town is costly and challenging, and recent market trends increase the difficulty.</i>							
Sewer Service Area Outside Growth Center	Very High	20	200	75.5	39.5	34%	243.5	625%
	<i>Three subdivisions will seek allocation for up to 243.5 DUe (243.5 with Glaser or 63.5 without Glaser), but the DRB can only allocate 39.5 DUe. When many projects compete for a limited supply, no project receives full allocation in 1 cycle, and it is possible for low scoring projects to be denied allocation. If the Glaser Specific Plan does not move forward (109 DUe) then the 130- and 180-unit options are expected to seek allocation.</i>							
Growth Center (including Form-Based Code Overlay District)	Moderate	50	500	154	133	46%	78 ²	58%
	<i>Two projects seek allocation. The Annex needs 38.5 DUe. The 3JT LLC building (2nd FBC application ever) proposes 59 dwellings and needs allocation for 39.5 DUe. Form-Based Code projects are allocated by the Zoning Administrator at any time during the cycle, whereas projects in Growth Center but outside FBC (i.e. The Annex) can only be allocated by DRB in March. As anticipated, with Form-Based Code in place, requests are of 20-70 units on a “per building” basis rather than major planned developments requesting hundreds of dwellings all at once.</i>							
¹ DUe available is based upon allocated & units eligible for allocation in upcoming DRB hearing. It does NOT include DUe in Growth Target that are subject to hold back provisions. ² Projects within the Form-Based Code Overlay District are included in the demand calculation, though they may receive allocation from the Zoning Administrator at any time during the cycle.								

Map 1. Williston Growth Management Areas and New Dwellings created 2017-2022
76% of new dwellings were built in the Growth Center. Larger boxes indicate multi-unit buildings.

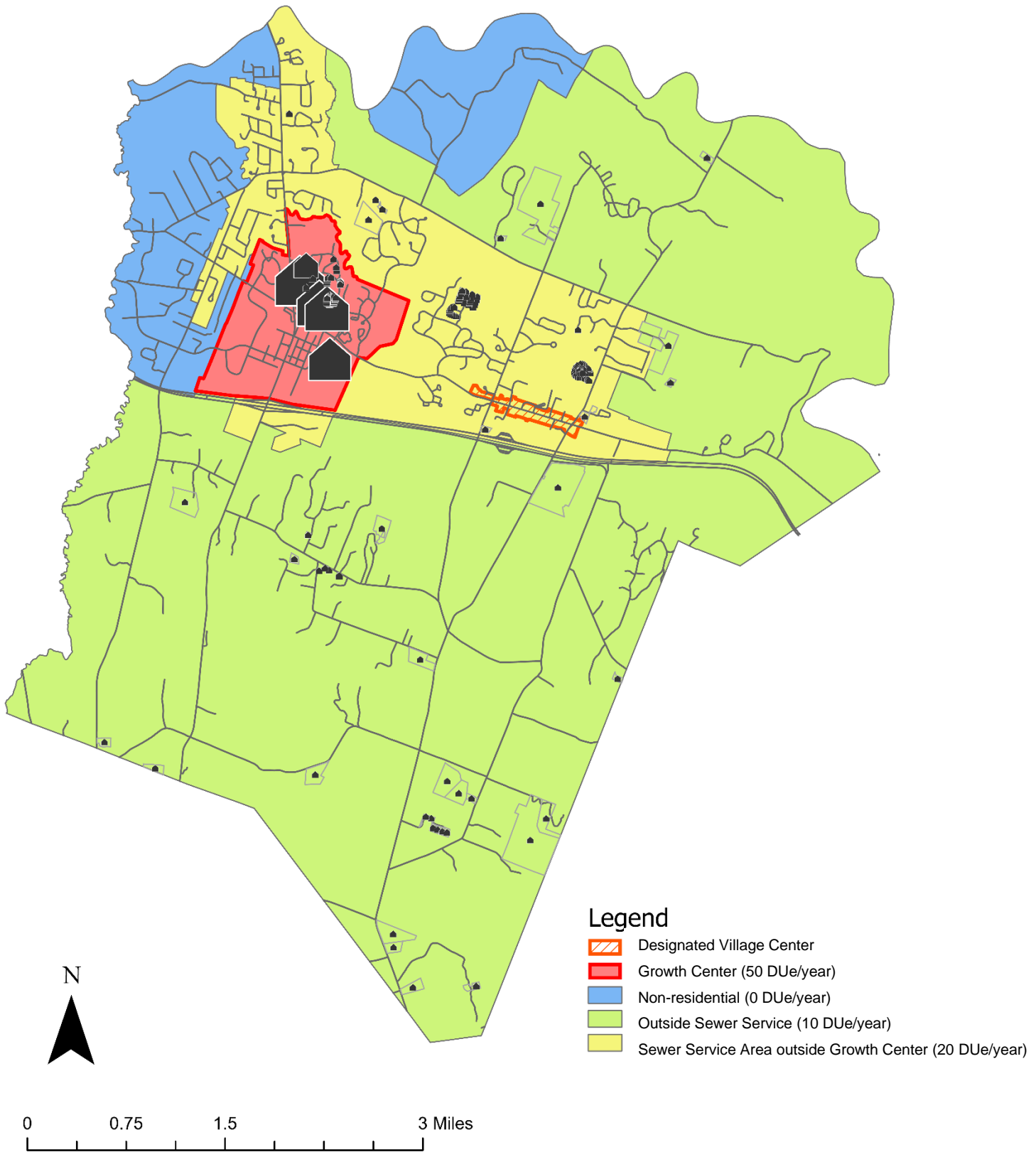


Table 2: Williston Potential Residential Build-Out FY 2025-FY2029

GM Area	Project Name	Total Units	Units Pre-FY2025	Estimated Year Unit is Occupied					Estimated Total Units FY2025-2028	Estimated Residents in New Dwellings
				FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029		
Growth Center (including Form-Based Code Overlay District)	Finney Crossing (post-FBC)	40	0				40		40	1.75/unit 70
	Cottonwood Crossing	209	81				47	47	94	1.75/unit 165
	The Annex	276	0		66	66	20	20	172	2/unit 344
	The Annex Senior Housing	65	0				65		65	1.5/unit 98
	Aldi Phase 2	24	0					24	24	1.75/unit 42
	3JT Mixed-Use	59	0			59			59	1.75/unit 104
	TOTALS	673	81						454	725
Sewer Service Area Outside Growth Center	Glaser	109-180				18	18	18	54	2.5/unit 135
	Summer Field	141			10	15	15	15	55	2.5/unit 135
	McCullough	39	1			5	5	23	34	1.75/unit 60
	Michaud	15	1			4	5	5	14	2.5/unit 35
	Northridge	39	35	4					4	2/unit 8
	TOTALS	343-414	37						161	373
Outside Sewer Service Area	Trinity Baptist	2	0				1	1	2	2.5/unit 5
	Boardman	1	0	1					1	2.5/unit 3
	Olson	1	0	1					1	2.5/unit 3
	Fournier	2	0			1	1		2	2.5/unit 5
	Willard	2	0		1	1			2	2.5/unit 5
	Benedetto	2	0			1	1		2	2.5/unit 5
	TOTALS	10	0						10	26
GRAND TOTAL: 625 New Homes, 523 new PM Peak-Hour Trips, and 1,134 New Residents, FY 2025-2029										

Williston’s Projected Non-Residential Development

The Impact of New Commercial Development

It is important to contextualize the impact of new residential growth within the total growth the Town is expected to experience. Based on known projects, 301,350 SF of building footprint across 47 acres is anticipated. One metric that is common to both residential and commercial development is new traffic, typically measured by PM Peak-Hour trips. All residential growth predicted through FY29 in Williston is estimated to add about 523 such trips, while commercial growth currently in the permitting process and likely to be constructed before FY 2028 will add an estimated 430 trips.

This table includes projects that have begun permit review and whose approvals have not expired.

Staff has not predicted a build-date for these projects, and instead included the year of their most recent permit approval and permit status. The commercial market is volatile and speculative builds have become uncommon. For example, the Robear subdivision created 8 developable lots in 2018. Lot 6 built out almost immediately whereas Lots 1 and 2 have no documented prospects.

Table 3: Williston Non-Residential Build Out

Project Name	Address	Permit Status	Date of Last Permit	Use Type	Lot Size & Building Footprint	New PM Peak-Hour Vehicle Trips
Finney Crossing Hotel 2	281 Holland Lane	Under construction	2023	Commercial	1.9 acres 15,000 SF	
Robear Lot 1	Williston Road	Plat only	2018	Industrial/ Commercial	1.2 acres 13,000 SF	20
U-Haul Expansion Robear Lot 2	5010 Williston Road	Under construction	2023	Industrial/ Commercial	1.86 acres 36,600 SF	19
GPA LLC – Industrial Spec building Robear Lot 4	Williston Road	Under construction	2023	Industrial/ Commercial	8.74 acres 103,750 SF	35
Robear Lot 5	Shunpike Road	Partially permitted	2022	Industrial	7.77 acres 50,000 SF	39
Aldi Grocery store	Wright Ave	Partially permitted	2021	Retail	3.3 acres 19,000 SF	205
Finney Crossing – Building A	Behind 31 Market Street	Partially permitted	2018	Retail/Office	0.91 acres 6,000 SF	60
Cottonwood Crossing – Building A1	Cottonwood Drive	Must renew; permit expired	2019	Commercial/ Office	2.05 acres 20,000 SF	25
Trudell Office Expansion	478 Blair Park Road	Partially permitted	2022	Office	1.75 acres 5,000 SF	11
Annex Senior Living – 65 units	Alpine Drive	Partially permitted	2022	Commercial	3 acres 22,000	16
Kia Car Dealership Addition	586 Marshall Ave	Partially permitted	2022	Retail/ Industrial	9.57 acres 5,475 SF	0
MD Motors – New Car Dealership	4626 Williston Road	Under construction	2023	Retail	4.47acres 5,525 SF	TBD
GRAND TOTAL: 46.5 acres to be developed with 301,350 SF building footprint and 430 new PM peak hour trips.						