

Memorandum

TO:

Vermont Department of Housing and
Community Development
City of South Burlington Planning Commission
Town of Essex Planning Commission
Town of Hinesburg Planning Commission
Town of Jericho Planning Commission

Chittenden County Regional Planning
Commission
Town of Richmond Planning Commission
Town of Shelburne Planning Commission
Town of St. George Planning Commission
Village of Essex Junction Planning Commission

FROM: Matt Boulanger, AICP, Planning Director

DATE: January 12, 2021

SUBJECT: **Town of Williston Unified Development Bylaw – Planning Commission Public Hearing to consider a proposal to adopt a Form Based Code for the Taft Corners Growth Center and to establish an Official Map for all of Williston.**

The Williston Planning Commission will hold a public hearing to consider the proposed amendments to the *Williston Unified Development Bylaw* on Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 7:00 PM. The hearing will be held at the Williston Town Hall Annex Building with an option to attend virtually via Zoom (Meeting ID 158-006-871 on zoom.us/join or 1-646-558-8656). Public comment at this hearing is welcomed and encouraged.

The proposed amendments to the Town's *Unified Development Bylaw* will replace most of the zoning requirements in the Taft Corners Growth Center with a Form-Based Code Overlay District and will establish:

- A Regulating Plan that specifies the location and type of new streets, bike paths, public parks, and green spaces to be constructed and dedicated as a requirement of new development in Taft Corners. The Plan also establishes parking setbacks and building build-to lines.
- Architectural Standards intended to result in construction that is simple and functional, includes sustainable elements, and that will result in quality development that uses durable materials and design, the application of which creates a cohesive ensemble of buildings within Taft Corners.
- Building Form Standards that establish the rules for development and redevelopment on private lots. They work through form and function controls on building frontages to frame the street-space and foster a vital public realm.
- Public Realm Standards designed to establish environments within Taft Corners that encourage and facilitate pedestrian and bicycle activity by creating streets and other parts of the public realm that are comfortable, efficient, safe, and interesting.
- An Amended Zoning Map showing the boundaries of the Form-Based Code District.
- A Town-wide Official Map showing planned public streets, paths, trails, green spaces and facilities within and outside of the Form-Based Code overlay District. Within the Form Based Code district the Official Map is the same as the Form Based Code Regulating Plan.

The proposed form-based code language, bylaw amendments, amended zoning map and new official map may be viewed at the Williston Planning Office, 7878 Williston Road or online at this link: <https://bit.ly/mytaftcorners>.

Additional information can be obtained by contacting Matt Boulanger, Director of Planning at the Williston Planning Office by calling (802) 878-6704, or by email to mboulanger@willistonvt.org.

Attachments: Planning Commission Reporting Form for Municipal Bylaw Amendments
Copy of Public Notice
Williston Unified Development Bylaw Documents with Proposed Changes

Town of Williston, Vermont

7900 Williston Road
Williston, VT 05495

Planning Commission Reporting Form for Municipal Bylaw Amendments

The Town of Williston, Vermont is proposing changes to the town’s development regulations contained in the *Williston Unified Development Bylaw*. This report summarizes the proposed changes to the chapters of the *Unified Development Bylaw* being considered.

This report is in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4441 (c) which states:

“When considering an amendment to a bylaw, the planning commission shall prepare and approve a written report on the proposal. A single report may be prepared so as to satisfy the requirements of this subsection concerning bylaw amendments and subsection 4384(c) of this title concerning plan amendments..... The report shall provide (:)

a) brief explanation of the proposed bylaw, amendment, or repeal andinclude a statement of purpose as required for notice under section §4444 of this title.

The Town of Williston is considering the adoption of a Form-Based Code to implement a Vision Plan developed through a public process. The proposed Form-Based Code focuses on community character, through an emphasis on development character, intensity, and physical form and patterns, rather than solely on land uses. This code emphasizes the relationship between private development and the public realm to promote an overall sense of place within Taft Corners while allowing a wide variety of land uses. Taft Corners is intended to be a model of sustainability, employing smart planning and technologies for solar gain and generation, storm- water management and enabling transportation alternatives to the automobile. The Taft Corners FBC regulations establish requirements related to form, character and design that will promote compatible redevelopment and create an environment where people can live, work, learn, worship, and relax within a compact walkable setting.

The Vermont Planning Information Center defines an Official Map as a “powerful tool available to Vermont municipalities to control community design by identifying the locations of future public facilities. The map—which can show future street alignments, planned trails, sites reserved for public buildings, and areas reserved for stormwater and flood control—provides a clear picture to property owners, developers, and the public of the municipality’s intentions with regard to its future physical form and design.”

The Town of Williston is considering the adoption of an Official Map to 1) identify and locate desired facilities in a systematic manner and 2) provide the regulatory means to develop these facilities as mapped.

Improving the transportation system, including bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and public transit, has been a longstanding high priority in Williston. Williston has multiple geographically disconnected nodes of residential, commercial and mixed-use development that are not yet connected by multi-use paths, sidewalks, trails, or in some cases, streets. Connecting these places within the Town will increase livability and provide additional options for multimodal travel.

The adoption of a Form Based Code and Official Map concurrently will help to achieve complementary goals of making Taft Corners a more vibrant, pedestrian friendly, and people-oriented place, while supporting the development of facilities throughout town that will enhance multimodal connections.

Amendments are also proposed for various chapters in the bylaw to reference and incorporate the Form Based Code and Official Map to ensure consistency with these proposed elements. The Official Zoning Map will be amended to include the boundary of the Taft Corners Form Based Code Overlay District.

b) and shall include findings regarding how the proposal:

1. Conforms with or furthers the goals and policies contained in the municipal plan, including the effect of the proposal on the availability of safe and affordable housing:

The proposed amendments further the goals of the Williston Comprehensive Plan to:

- **3.1 – Taft Corners and Growth Center.** The Town of Williston will encourage and support a design-conscious, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development and redevelopment pattern in the Taft Corners area. The town has worked toward this objective by successfully obtaining Growth Center Designation in 2008 and revising the Unified Development Bylaw in 2009. The town envisions the majority of new growth and development activity taking place in the Growth Center. The town will continue to support this objective by encouraging the construction of planned infrastructure in the Growth Center, concentrating new development in the Growth Center, and examining and monitoring the effectiveness of its bylaws
- **3.1.1 Work with Developers to Build Grid Streets.** Williston will support and encourage landowners to build the grid streets that have been planned for the Taft Corners area west of route 2A between Marshall Avenue and Williston Road...These streets will provide the access needed for a more intense, bicycle and pedestrian friendly development pattern. They should also help relieve congestion on Route 2A and Marshall Avenue.
- **3.1.3 Commercial Zoning Districts. Taft Corners** – The Taft Corners Zoning District (TCZD) is the core of Williston’s commercial area – the place where the town’s goal of creating a pedestrian-friendly, design conscious, mixed use commercial center can best be realized. Coupled with the construction of the grid streets, this will allow diverse, smaller-scale retail, office, and residential uses to be intermingled with the large retail stores and extensive parking areas that now dominate the area.

- **3.1.4 Review and Refine Development Standards in the Zoning Districts within the Town’s Growth Center.** ...The town should evaluate the effectiveness of these standards thus far based on current experience and consider refining these standards further if necessary....
- **3.1.5 Consider Developing and Adopting a Form Based Code.** ...The town should consider making greater use of form-based techniques in the Growth Center as a means of refining the town’s current development standards...
- **4.2.3 Minimize the Surface Area Devoted to Parking.** The town will continue to require adequate parking and to require shared parking where feasible to create “park once” conditions in the growth center.
- **4.2.4 Continue to Minimize the Visual Impact of Parking.** Asphalt and automobiles should not dominate Williston streetscapes. The design guidelines will continue to require that parking be placed behind or beside buildings wherever the site permits.
- **4.4.3 Refine the Requirements for Urban Parks.** The town will examine the effectiveness of the current requirements for urban parks and will revise these requirements as necessary...
- **5.1.6 Encourage Higher Density Residential Development in the Town’s Approved Growth Center.**
- **6.1.2.1 Build the Paths Supported by the Bond Issue.** ...The town should periodically review the identified needs and gaps in the path system, and establish priorities in order to continue to vigorously pursue grant opportunities to supplement these funds and continue to build out the town’s multi-use path network.
- **6.1.2.2 Build Other Sidewalks and Paths, as Needed.**
- **6.1.2.5 Link Recreation Paths and Trails to Sidewalk Network.** The town’s recreation paths and trails should be tied to paths and trails in the town and region designed primarily for transportation.
- **6.1.2.7 Build Paths in New Developments.** New development projects, especially those in the town’s Growth Center, should continue to include requirements for pedestrian and non-motorized transportation facilities with these projects.
- **6.1.3.2 Continue to Promote Construction of Ride Sharing Facilities.**
- **6.1.3.3 Build a Transit Center.**Williston requires a conveniently located, comprehensive, and central transfer station that would allow riders to easily connect between these various bus lines, provide options and facilities for riders from all transportation modes to access the center, and provide shelter for users during waiting periods. A comprehensive transit center such as this would best be located in the town’s

designated Growth Center in the Taft Corners area where high intensity development already exists and is anticipated in the future, and where the existing bus lines through Williston intersect.

- **6.4.1 Connect Marshall Avenue and Williston Road (Trader Lane). Extend Wright Avenue West to Harvest Lane.** Working with landowners to build these grid streets in the Taft Corners area (see Map 3 – Taft Corners Grid Streets) will provide better access and relieve congestion. It may also alleviate the need for improvements at the intersection of Route 2A and Marshall Avenue...
- **6.4.6 Build Other Taft Corners Grid Streets.** ...Other grid streets in the Taft Corners area, including those linking the properties to the east to Maple Tree Place should be constructed as development proceeds.
- **6.6.1 Continue to Require Developers to Provide Local Streets and Bicycle and Pedestrian Ways.**
- **7.4 – Support Additional Affordable Housing.** ...The town will also explore other means of promoting the provision of more diverse, more affordable housing.
- **11.3.5 Encourage Walking, Cycling, Ride-Sharing and the Use of Public Transportation.** ...provide the infrastructure needed to support pedestrians, cyclists, and public transportation. Planning objectives should support grid streets and pedestrian friendly developments...
- **11.4 – Energy Conservation and Efficiency through Land Use** - The Town of Williston will continue to pursue a land use and transportation strategy centered on mixed-use, compact development in the town’s Growth Center.

2. Is compatible with the proposed future land uses and densities of the municipal plan:

The proposed amendments are supported by Williston’s stated vision for the future:

Williston will strive to balance responsible, livable suburban growth with rural character and conservation. To do this, the town will concentrate and limit high intensity development to areas within the town’s designated Growth Center in and around Taft Corners.

The Comprehensive Plan Section 3.1 states the goal to concentrate the majority of new development in the Growth Center:

The town envisions the majority of new growth and development activity taking place in the Growth Center. The town will continue to support this objective by encouraging the construction of planned infrastructure in the Growth Center, concentrating new development in the Growth Center, and examining and monitoring the effectiveness of its bylaws. The town has worked

toward this objective by successfully obtaining Growth Center Designation in 2008 and revising the Unified Development Bylaw in 2009.

The adoption of Form Based Code for Taft Corners supports the goal of more dense development in the Growth Center by reducing parking requirements and encouraging multi-story buildings for new development.

3. Carries out, as applicable, any specific proposals for any planned community facilities.

The adoption of Form Based Code and an Official Map would establish a regulatory framework for building out desired grid streets and facilities in the Growth Center – Trader Lane, Wright Avenue and a transit center are called out specifically in the Comprehensive Plan and are shown on the proposed Regulating Plan and Official Map. The grid streets on the Regulating Plan would be required to be constructed as parcels build out. The Official Map ensures that other facilities likely to be built by the town, such as a transit center, must be accommodated by future development.

Notice of Public Hearing

TOWN OF WILLISTON

February 1, 2022, 7:00 PM Town Hall Annex Meeting Room

To participate remotely: zoom.us/join or call (646) 558-8656

Zoom Meeting ID 158 006 871

The Williston Planning Commission will hold a public hearing to consider amendments to the *Williston Unified Development Bylaw* on February 1, 2022, at 7:00 PM. The public hearing will be held in-person and virtually on Zoom. Public comment at this hearing is welcomed and encouraged.

The proposed amendments to the Town's *Unified Development Bylaw* will replace most of the zoning requirements in the Taft Corners Growth Center with a Form-Based Code Overlay District, will establish an Official Map for all of Williston, and will generally include:

- A Regulating Plan that specifies the location and type of new streets, alleys, bike paths, public parks, and green spaces to be constructed and dedicated as a requirement of new development in Taft Corners and also identifies parking setbacks and building build-to lines,
- Architectural Requirements for all new buildings in the Form-Based Code Overlay District
- Building Form Standards regulating building height, maximum width and footprint, and placement in the Form-Based Code Overlay District
- An Amended Zoning Map showing the boundaries of the Form-Based Code Overlay District
- A Town-wide Official Map showing planned public streets, paths, trails, green spaces and facilities within and outside of the Form-Based Code overlay District
- General amendments to WDB Chapters 1-46 to incorporate the Form-Based Code into the existing bylaws.

The proposed form-based code language, bylaw amendments, amended zoning map and new official map may be viewed at the Williston Planning Office, 7878 Williston Road or online at this link: <https://bit.ly/mytaftcorners>

Contact Matt Boulanger at the Williston Planning Office at (802) 878-6704 or mboulanger@willistonvt.org for additional information.

Certification of Service

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Deane C. Davis Building, 6th Floor
Montpelier, VT 05620-0501

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110 West Canal Street, #202
Winooski, VT 05404

City of South Burlington Planning Commission
575 Dorset Street
South Burlington, VT 05403

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1 Barber Road,
St. George, VT 05495

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