

SUBDIVISION & PUD SKETCH PLAN

Owner: David Lyman Applicant: Hinesburg Center Investments, LLC Brett Grabowski, 32 Seymour Street, Williston, VT 05495	
Surveyor/Engineer: Engineer – Ruggiano Engineering, 30 Kimball Avenue, So. Burlington Vt. 05403 Landscape and Site design – T.J. Boyle Associates LLC., 301 College Street, Burlington Vermont 05401	Property Tax Parcel: 08-01-06.320 46 acres

BACKGROUND

The Applicant is requesting sketch plan approval for Phase II of the Hinesburg Center project, located in the Village (VG) district, parcel # 08-01-06.320 directly to the west of Kaileys Way. The subject parcel is approximately 46.2 acres, and is owned by David Lyman. The eastern portion (approximately 9.7 acres) is located in the Village Northwest zoning district. The western portion (approximately 36.5 acres) is located in the Agricultural zoning district. It is lot 32, the remaining land from several earlier subdivisions of the original Lyman property done by the Applicant (e.g., Hinesburg Center Phase I project, Creekside project). This project is an expansion of the existing Hinesburg Center Phase I project, and is bounded by Patrick Brook and the LaPlatte River, and their associated stream buffers to the north and west, the Creekside neighborhood to the South, and Hinesburg Center I to the east. Natural features include Patrick Brook and the LaPlatte River riparian areas along with associated flood hazard areas that impact a large percentage of the property. Prime agricultural soils are present throughout much of the property. Although not shown on the sketch plans, wetland delineations done for previous subdivisions indicated limited wetland areas, primarily on the western side of the parcel.

The project is proposed to consist of 74 residential units ranging from single 3-4 bedroom homes on .15 acre lots to multi-family units. Approximately 9,400 square feet of commercial space is proposed divided among three buildings with two “pocket park” areas and a small community garden area. Parking will be a combination of on street and off street parking areas. Plans include a road extension connecting to the proposed Haystack Crossing (Black Rock Construction) development to the north. Until that connection is complete this area will be served solely via Farmall Drive to Route 116. To the west of the proposed developed area in the Agricultural district, the plan calls for a stormwater detention area, but provides no other information as to the future use of those 36 acres.

ISSUES

1. **Development Density** – The project proposes more residential dwelling units than the proposed sketch plan layout can support. We recommend reducing the dwelling unit count by approximately 20 units, revising elements of the sketch plan to add more off-street parking and yard space (e.g., replacing some single family home lots on the western side with townhomes), or some combination thereof. Here is the rationale:

- a. **Overall parking** – A total of 114 parking spaces are proposed (61 off-street; 53 on-street); however, a minimum of 14 of the proposed on-street spaces need to be eliminated due to proximity to intersections and unnecessary impact within the Patrick Brook stream buffer area. After this adjustment, a total of 100 parking spaces would remain. This is not sufficient for the proposed uses.
 - b. **Off-street parking (section 5.5, Zoning)** – The project proposes 61 off-street parking spaces, which will need to be sufficient during winter storms to serve 50 dwelling units that lack on-lot parking (43 apartments, 7 townhomes). This is insufficient.
 - c. **Yard space (section 5.1.4 & 5.1.5, Subdivision)** – Limited yard space is proposed for most of the interior buildings. Most problematic are the 24-unit mixed use building and the six townhouses with rear accessed garages on the west side of the project. While community green spaces are provided in relatively close proximity (e.g., future town green, community park), a 3-story building with such a large footprint (24-unit mixed use building) also needs some yard space and “elbow room”. As proposed, this largest building in the development (phase 1 and phase 2) is hemmed in by parking lots, roads, and the existing stormwater pond – essentially on a defacto lot that is about the size of the building footprint itself. A 3-story, mixed use building in this location is not the problem, rather it is the size of the building and the lack yard space. Similarly, the six townhouses on the western side of the project (in two 3-plex buildings) have little to no usable yard space or elbow room for driveway and alleyway snow storage, landscaping personalization, etc. Frankly, the five single family homes on the opposite side of the ally are also very tightly spaced. Barring a layout redesign, reducing dwelling units in these three locations is recommended.
 - d. **Mix of uses (section 3.5, Zoning)** – Office uses, retail uses, and service establishments will fit nicely into the commercial spaces proposed. Office and retail uses are not the only non-residential uses envisioned in the Village zoning district. Just as the Haystack Crossing sketch plan set aside space for larger commercial or light manufacturing sites, phase 2 of the Hinesburg Center project has a similar opportunity to allow for a more vibrant mix of uses. The 6-unit residential building on the northern edge of the site is well positioned for a compatible non-residential use that might require a standalone building with room for a side/rear loading dock. Consider, for example, a use like some of those already established on Commerce Street. We need more spaces for new business and economic development of this sort – e.g., the next micro-brewery like Frost Beer Works, the next precision manufacturer like Nestech, the next technology firm like Darkstar Lighting. We recommend revising the 6-unit building to be non-residential, with a flexible site design to be determined by the future tenant. This would also help ameliorate the parking issues mentioned above.
2. **Development Density Bonuses (section 2.9, Zoning)** - This development requests the maximum possible density available for this district via density bonuses for a mixture of affordable units, smaller sized units, renewable energy generation and a donation for a project for the good of the public. The layout of the sketch depends on achieving these bonuses, and more detail is necessary to determine if the development density and layout of

this sketch will be feasible. Bonuses for affordable and smaller units are straightforward. The Applicant should provide more information on how the renewable energy bonus will be obtained. The Applicant should also provide details of the proposal to construct a component of the future Town Common/Green behind the fire station. Pursuant to section 2.9.4 (Zoning), bonuses based on the provision of important public spaces shall be determined by the DRB in consultation with the Selectboard. The DRB should review the details of the proposal, and then get Selectboard feedback before deciding on this sketch plan application.

3. **Western Agricultural Fields** – The Applicant needs to provide a vision for the future use of the agricultural fields to the west of the development area. Undoubtedly, this will be set aside as greenspace, and its purpose and future ownership needs to be fleshed out. Beyond continued agricultural use, a sizable riparian buffer area along the LaPlatte River should be protected and allowed to revegetate with woody shrubs and trees to help bolster water quality and wildlife habitat (this area is identified as a wildlife corridor on Map 14 of the Town Plan. Coordination to preserve the VAST snowmobile trail in this area will also be necessary.

Ideally this expansive 36 acres of fields and flood hazard area should be better integrated into the design of the development. The proposed plan essentially walls off these fields with the row of single family lots on the western side of the project. Perhaps eliminating one or two of these lots would allow the landscape architect to create a view corridor and a more interesting connection between the dense development and the open fields to the west. The regulations actually call for shifts in scenic views and the creation of new views from the new street network that are available to the public – Village Growth Area Purpose, section 3.1 (Zoning). Such an opening/connection to the west is also more consistent with the previous conceptual masterplan that was part of the 2010 subdivision that created Hinesburg Center phase 1.

Beyond redesign and elucidation of the vision for this western area, certain technical issues also bear mentioning. The proposed stormwater detention basin is shown in a location that will obstruct access to the agricultural lands. This must be revised pursuant to section 5.1.10 and section 6.12.2 #3 of the Subdivision Regulations. Ownership of the western fields likely should be separate from common lands within the development that might be the purview of an association.

4. **Phasing (section 4.8, Zoning)** - All of the development proposed in this project will be served by Town water and wastewater treatment. The recent bond vote on improvements to the water supply system clarified that the Town does not currently have the capacity to serve this project. The new well scheduled to come online in 2015 will replace two problematic wells that serve current users. The new well will not add substantial new capacity to the water system, so additional water system improvements (i.e., one or more wells) will be needed to serve this project. The Town does have some wastewater treatment capacity, but not enough to support the full build out of all the projects currently being reviewed. The Town is actively discussing ways to increase capacity for both systems, but no decisions have been made, and timing is uncertain. We are unlikely to have clarity about additional water and wastewater treatment capacity until later in 2015.

As discussed during the Haystack Crossing project review, this project, along with other forthcoming and previously approved developments will trigger the need for additional Town staff and capital equipment. Phasing of this project will be an important conversation as the review moves forward to ensure that necessary infrastructure and municipal resources are available. Pay particular attention to section 4.8 of the Zoning Regulations.

The Applicant has provided estimates of how many school aged children the project will generate based on a 2007 VT Housing and Finance Agency (VHFA) report. Staff is currently seeking input from the Chittenden South Supervisory Union to assess impacts on school enrollment and capacity based on the estimate, and taking into account other development projects that are approved but awaiting construction (e.g., Green Street) or in the review process (e.g., Norris; Haystack Crossing). This will not be ready for the December 16 meeting.

The Board and the applicant should think carefully about designing the project so that it can be phased and built in a coherent fashion. One that provides for relatively complete and attractive development areas, which augment and complement the existing village, and are not surrounded by a landscape dominated by unused roads and other visible placeholder infrastructure. The Board should consider requesting renderings of what each phase of the project would look like during the sketch plan review to help with specific phasing discussions. Furthermore, the first phase should include the road connection to the north, if the Haystack Crossing project is also moving forward.

5. **Stormwater Treatment in Agricultural District** - Similar to the an issue brought up with the Haystack Crossing project, the Hinesburg Center phase two sketch plan shows the principal stormwater detention pond in the Agricultural zoning district. The Board should discuss whether placement of essential development infrastructure outside of the village growth area bounds is acceptable. Section 2.4.4 (Zoning) clearly prohibits the transfer of development density into or out of the Village Growth Area, but it doesn't speak to necessary infrastructure to support that density. It should be noted that the previous conceptual master plan also showed stormwater treatment in this area – i.e., the current plan is consistent with the previous plan on that front.

On a related front, Low Impact Development (LID) practices should be incorporated to maximize on-lot infiltration and reduce overall stormwater volumes and the need for a very large detention areas. Introducing more yard space and “elbow room” into the sketch plan (as noted above) could make this easier to accomplish.

6. **Community Park & Creekside Neighborhood** – The plan calls out lot 30 from the former Creekside subdivision as a “community park”. This is an important greenspace element that has been the subject of much concern by the Creekside neighborhood due to drainage and intermittent flooding issues. The Applicant should clarify the future ownership and use of this “community park”. The Applicant should also clarify the proposed improvements that will be made to this area, per previous discussions – i.e., additional fill, drainage improvements, replanting of affected trees, etc. Details can be worked out at later steps of the review process, but some clarity about intentions and conceptual plans would be helpful

for the record. The Board should be aware that the Applicant retained control of this lot, even though it appeared to be part of the Creekside Community Association. The area from this lot is being used toward the development density calculations for the proposed project.

7. **Alleyway & Front Yard Waivers** - The proposed “alleyway” access is in fact a street under existing definitions. As such, a waiver of the garage setbacks in section 5.22.3 #5 (Zoning) will be necessary in order for this concept to be utilized. The alleyway concept is an interesting way to create rear vehicular access while preserving attractive, pedestrian focused front yards and primary streetscapes. If the Board is comfortable with the concept, we believe waivers are appropriate since the alleyway won't function the same way as the other streets in terms of the design standards and streetscape provisions in the regulations.
8. **Overall Grading & Elevations** – The Board is reminded that in its Hinesburg Center phase 1 approvals, it clearly put the Applicant on notice regarding overall grading, fill, and elevations for development to the west (Conclusion #3, 5/15/2012 decision). Stepping down the finished elevation of the site, roads, and buildings will be an important consideration at later stages of the review. The inability to adequately address this issue may require substantial layout revisions after any sketch plan approval.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Erb & Alex Weinhausen

cc: Applicant & Landowner