

CHARLOTTE PLANNING COMMISSION

Charlotte Town Office

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Charlotte, VT 05445

Phone: 802-425-3533

November 2, 2017

Otto E. Hanson, VI
R.L. Vallee, Inc.
280 South Main Street
St. Albans, Vermont 05478

Re: Sketch Plan Review – Application Number PC-17-101-SK

Dear Mr. Hanson,

The purpose of this letter is to summarize the Sketch Plan Review for the proposed land development project on the 2.95-acre property located at 3171 Ethan Allen Highway. The development is proposed to occur within the Village Commercial (VCM) zoning district.

A Sketch Plan Review for the project was held at the Planning Commission meeting on September 21, 2017. A site visit was conducted at the property prior to that meeting, which was attended by Planning Commissioners Peter Joslin (Vice-Chair), Dick Eastman, and Gerald Bouchard. Also in attendance were the applicants, the Town Planner, several neighboring property owners, and others.

Although it is not required by 24 VSA Chapter 117, notice of the public meeting was mailed out to all of the adjoining property owners. Furthermore, hardcopy notices were posted at the Town offices, the Old Brick Store, and the Spear Street Store. Electronic notice was posted on the Town of Charlotte website Meeting Calendar.

The Planning Commission has classified your project as a “Site Plan Review” for a change of use criteria in accordance with Section 5.5 of the Charlotte Land Use Regulations (hereafter referred to as “the Regulations”). To complete the formal Site Plan, you will need to submit a Final Plan Application, including any waiver requests within six months of the date of this letter and participate in at least one subsequent public hearing, in accordance with Section 6.5 of the Regulations.

The Planning Commission is providing the following guidance for the Final Plan Review Application, which should be addressed in addition to the regular submission requirements articulated within the Regulations (to view the Regulations, visit: <https://is.gd/c1Jwx2>).

1. As per Section 5.5(E) of the Regulations, your forthcoming Site Plan Review application should include the following elements;

- A. Site Features should consider the protection of significant site features, such as the property's wetland, which will need to be mapped on your Site Plan. The adjacent parcel at 86 Ferry Road (owned by the Harriet S Patrick Trust), which has been tested for wastewater capacity should also be included for wetlands, natural resources, and other significant site feature delineation. The Planning Commission requests that the State-approved permit for the forced sanitary main to be installed underneath US Route 7 be submitted as part of the application.
- B. Site Layout and Design: This project is proposed to be constructed at Charlotte's primary (and most travelled) intersection. The Planning Commission feels that any future development in this location will be strongly associated with the Town's identity. To ensure the size, scale, arrangement, and appearance of your project reflects a sense of place that is in context with the vision expressed within Charlotte's Town Plan, the Planning Commission calls for a design group to be convened (which may include members of the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Selectboard, or other members of the community) to develop an optimal design for the service station. Solar and energy efficiency should be considered for the structure(s) to be constructed. As the property is within the Village Commercial District (VCM), the project site should not consume more than 40% coverage of the parcel, as outlined in Section 2.3 of the Regulations. Additionally, you will need to submit a signage plan for the project that is in accordance with Sections 3.13 and 4.9 of the Regulations. Furthermore, it would be advisable to check with the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) regarding State regulations for any proposed signage. For further information, please visit; <http://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/sign-information>
- C. Access with regard to traffic management. An area of concern relates to tractor-trailer access/egress to the site and dedicated parking area. The Planning Commission feels that this may need to be eliminated unless your proposal adequately addresses anticipated traffic circulation and efficient design that accommodates the optimal turning radius of 53' trailer trucks based on guidance from the *AASHTO Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets (i.e. the "Green Book")*, *NCHRP Report 505: Review of Truck Characteristics as Factors In Roadway Design*, and/or other relevant guidance. Furthermore, as this section of US Route 7 has been listed with the State as a High-Crash Location (HCL) since at least the early 2000s, the Planning Commission will require you to pay for an independent consultant to undertake a traffic and circulation study that will investigate and propose mitigation for any of the causes behind this issue, make safe provision for all modes of traffic (e.g. auto, truck, bicycle, and pedestrian) entering and exiting from US Route 7 and Church Hill Road, and address the parking concerns raised in item D (below). Safe pedestrian access to and from Ferry Road to the site will also need to be emphasized as part of the study. The Planning Commission will seek input from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) Transportation Program during the development of RFP. Either the Town of Charlotte or CCRPC will put the study out for bid.

D. Parking, Loading, and Service Areas: The parking area on the west side of the main building facing US Route 7 should be eliminated from the Site Plan. Your proposal will need to demonstrate how the total number of parking spaces are determined, based on the services that are planned to be offered on site. To calculate the required parking capacity for the site, refer to **Table 3.1** of Chapter III, page 32 of the Regulations. Your parking plan should conform to Section 3.11 of the Regulations, and be in compliance with the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design. Additionally, your Site Plan should include;

1. A bicycle rack that is installed in proximity to the main building. It should be made of non-edged thick tubular steel that is mounted below grade, or flange-mounted on concrete, with a capacity to hold at least eight (8) bicycles.
2. An off-road diesel pump.
3. An electric vehicle charging station that will accommodate at least two (2) vehicles, and
4. An increased capacity of the proposed Park-and-Ride facility that will accommodate at least fifteen (15) vehicles. Where the facility may be reconfigured in future site planning (with the approval of the Planning Commission), it should be dedicated for such use exclusively and follow the property in future land transfer.

A potential access/egress conflict exists between the location of the proposed 3-lot parking area for tractor-trailer trucks and the Park-and-Ride facility. The aforementioned traffic and circulation study will be required to address this issue. The Planning Commission disapproves of truck-idling, as it would be a nuisance to nearby residences. However, Truck Stop Electrification (TSE) would be allowed to service parked trucks. Furthermore, as an area to be utilized as a public space (e.g. a farmers' market, park, etc.) has been proposed for this application, the Town requests that an easement for the Town is drafted for such use, which will follow the property in future land transfer.

- E. Landscaping and Screening: Please submit a landscaping plan that addresses the items discussed in Section 5.5(E)(5) and Section 7.9 of the Regulations;
 - F. Stormwater Management and Erosion Control should be discussed in accordance with applicable standards covered in Section 5.5(E)(6) and Section 7.8 of the Regulations. As part of your Site Plan Review application, the Planning Commission will require a stormwater management and erosion control plan that is prepared by a licensed professional, as per Section 7.8(A)(2) of the Regulations.
 - G. Outdoor Lighting should be in conformance with the standards outlined in Section 3.9 of the Regulations.
2. The proposed change of use of your project within the VCM district will require an additional application for Conditional Use approval with the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA). You will therefore need to participate in a separate public hearing process for the

ZBA, which may run concurrently with your Site Plan Review with the Planning Commission. Upon receipt of your applications, the appropriate hearings will be scheduled.

3. Other issues may be considered during the review of your forthcoming Final Plan application. In accordance with Section 6.3(D) of the Regulations, this Sketch Plan Review is valid for six months.

Please let me know if I can answer any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Joslin", written in a cursive style.

Peter Joslin (Chair),
Charlotte Planning Commission