A New Town Center for Berlin

PREPARED FOR THE TOWN OF BERLIN AND BERLIN MALL LLC
BY LAND STRATEGIES
FEBRUARY 24, 2016
EXISTING CONDITIONS
PUBLIC POLICY
GOALS
BUILDING BLOCKS
CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION

Topics
Existing conditions

REGIONAL AND LOCAL ACTIVITY CENTERS
Metro areas

- Barre Micropolitan Statistical Area
- Burlington – South Burlington Metropolitan Statistical Area
- Claremont-Lebanon Micropolitan Statistical Area

[Map showing metro areas with population numbers: 217,167, 58,998, and 217,634]
Malls
A TIME OF UPHEAVAL
## BTV mall redevelopment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOW</th>
<th>PROPOSED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail – 180,000 SF</td>
<td>Retail – 340,000 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office – 30,000 SF</td>
<td>Office – 350,000 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential – none</td>
<td>Residential – 340,000 SF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAR – 4.1</td>
<td>FAR – 14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking – 500 spaces</td>
<td>Parking – 950 spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking/1000 SF – 2.4</td>
<td>Parking/1000 SF – 0.9</td>
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</table>
UNIVERSITY MALL
SOUTH BURLINGTON
Components of redevelopment plan

Pedestrian friendly boulevard
Silo signage
Hotel
Movie theater
Ice rink
200 residential units
Commercial strip

THE REBIRTH OF THE STRIP
BARRE MONTPELIER ROAD
BERLIN
TAFT CORNERS
WILLISTON
ROUTE 12
WEST LEBANON, NH
Downtowns

AN ESSENTIAL PART
OF VERMONT’S UNIQUE CHARACTER
MONTPELIER
Location of competing centers of activity

Burlington
South Burlington
Williston
Downtown Montpelier
Downtown Barre
Barre-Montpelier Road
West Lebanon
Types of competing activity centers

Malls
Commercial strips
Downtowns
What is missing from nearby competitive locations?

- **No park or playground** in downtown Montpelier or Barre or along the Barre-Montpelier Road
- **Lack of modern housing** at all price points in downtown Montpelier and Barre and none at all along the Barre-Montpelier Road
- **Lack of child-oriented uses** in all three locations
Public policy

WHAT DO THE TOWN OF BERLIN
AND STATE OF VERMONT WANT AT THIS LOCATION?
For many years, the Town has encouraged the emergence of a town center at this location.

- Wilbur Smith Associates prepared the Berlin Mall Village Center Study in the early 2000s.
- As a result in 2005, the Town added a Town Center District to the Town Plan and Zoning Ordinance.
- In 2007 the Town Center Task Force and Planning Commission held a "Visioning Forum".
- In 2007 the Town prepared a Draft Conceptual Master Plan for Town Center.
- The collapse in real estate markets and ensuing Great Recession prevented further implementation at that time.
Berlin’s Town Plan goals for the Town Center District

- Economically viable core
- Mixture of retail, office, residential and service uses
- Safe and appealing to pedestrians and bicyclists
- Parks, plazas, recreation areas and other public amenities
Berlin’s current zoning calls for a Town Center at this location
Berlin’s proposed zoning regulations also call for a Town Center at this location
Proposed purposes of Town Center District

- Reinforce as a regional service center
- A well-defined, mixed-use, compact and walkable center
- Infill with smaller buildings . . . within underutilized parcels and parking lots
- Higher density housing
- Reduced parking footprints

PREPARED BY LAND STRATEGIES
Proposed permitted uses in Berlin’s Town Center District
**Proposed zoning calls for increased density**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CURRENT</th>
<th>PROPOSED</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❑ No FAR restriction</td>
<td>❑ 3.0 FAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ 75% lot coverage</td>
<td>❑ 70% lot coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❑ No minimum height; 45' maximum height</td>
<td>❑ 25' minimum height; 60' maximum height</td>
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</table>
The Berlin Mall uses only a small percentage of the developable square footage that will be allowed on the site.
Vermont’s “new town center” policy

“New town center” means the area planned for or developing as a community’s central business district, composed of compact, pedestrian-friendly, multi-story, and mixed use development that is characteristic of a traditional downtown, supported by planned or existing urban infrastructure, including curbed streets with sidewalks and on-street parking, stormwater treatment, sanitary sewers and public water supply.

24 V.S.A. Sec. 2791
Berlin lacks a traditional center

The legislative body of a municipality having no traditional downtown or a village center within the municipality is eligible to apply for designation. The intent to apply for New Town Center designation must be station in the municipal plan with an explanation of how it would further municipal and statewide goals.
Benefits of designation as a New Town Center

- May create a special taxing district for the purpose of financing both capital and operating costs of a project
- Eligible for designation as a Neighborhood Development Area and Growth Center giving projects grant priority
- Becomes an “existing settlement” for the purposes of Act 250
- Mixed income and mixed use housing projects trigger higher thresholds for Act 250
Existing New Town Centers

- Colchester
- South Burlington
Proposed boundaries for Berlin’s New Town Center designation (<125 acres)
Connections
Between parcels
With existing road network
Building blocks
. . . for becoming a town center
Transform Berlin Mall Road into a traditional “Main Street”
Transform Berlin Mall Road into a traditional “Main Street”
Transform Berlin Mall Road into a traditional “Main Street”
Create a street presence for all tenants
Create a town commons
Incorporate a walking/jogging trail
Include civic and cultural uses
Add co-working space
Include housing
Add a hardware store
Provide more services
Add a freestanding restaurant
Transform unused open space into garden center/nursery and managed woodland
... for becoming child friendly
Provide a playground
Add a children’s clothing store
Add a dance studio
Add a gymnastics center
Provide childcare/preschool
Create makerspace for homemakers and crafters
Add a cool laundromat
... for becoming a showcase for food and drink
Create flex space
Add food services
Add a tavern or taproom
Add a specialty food store and produce stand
Transform public areas into a “third place”
Include a meat and seafood market
Add a bakery/coffee shop
Add a cheese and wine shop
Become the site of a craft brewery
Provide space for a CSA depot
Host a seasonal farmers market
APPLY NOW FOR

2016

FESTIVALS

Schedule monthly festivals
Illustrative exterior design changes and site plan

WHAT BERLIN’S NEW TOWN CENTER MIGHT LOOK LIKE
Existing conditions
Existing tenant spaces
Create a street presence for tenants with color and/or façade materials

PREPARED BY LAND STRATEGIES
Add exterior signage for tenants
Detail of exterior
Existing conditions
Existing conditions
Illustrative site plan
Initial phase

Note: Actual site plan will be developed after further design analysis and meetings with Berlin officials, staff and residents.
Initial phase

Detail of town commons, garden center and woodland

Seasonal event space

Town Commons with playground, event space, outdoor dining

Garden center with year round greenhouses

Trails for walkers, joggers, bikers, snowshoers, cross-country skiers
Illustrative site plan
Later phases
Note: Actual site plan will be developed after further design analysis and meetings with Berlin officials, staff and residents.
# Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BY BUILDING</th>
<th>SQUARE FOOTAGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>75,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freestanding retail buildings</td>
<td>49,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street mixed-use buildings</td>
<td>245,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior housing</td>
<td>63,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhomes</td>
<td>36,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery</td>
<td>11,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>480,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicly accessible open space</td>
<td>6.4 acres</td>
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Program by type of use

- Residential: 51%
- Hotel: 16%
- Retail: 20%
- Office: 10%
- Garden center: 3%
Developable Square Foot Analysis

- Existing 3%
- Proposed 6%
- Unused 91%
Implementation

BEING DESIGNATED A NEW TOWN CENTER BY THE STATE OF VERMONT
Pre-application steps

- Select Board agrees to seek designation
- Berlin Mall LLC agrees to provide staff support for application process
- Town of Berlin adds required language to Town Plan
Pre-application meeting with DHCD

- At the meeting DHCD will discuss
  - Program requirements
  - Possible boundaries
  - Timeline for follow-up

- After the meeting DHCD will issue written comments
  - Municipality’s readiness to proceed
  - Identify any designation requirements that are not yet met
  - Explain any issues of likely Downtown Board concern
Submit draft application

- At least 3 months before the Downtown Board is scheduled to take action
- Notify regional planning commission and regional development corporation of intent to apply
- DHCD provides written comments within 30 days of submission date
Submit final application

- Not later than the first Monday of the month in which the Downtown Board is scheduled to take action
- DHCD determines completeness
- If not complete, DHCD will identify the deficiencies and explain how they can be remedied
- If complete, the application goes to the Board and it has 45 days to make a decision
Presentation to the Downtown Board

- 10 minutes
- Describe the municipality’s plans for the New Town Center
  - Overview – why is the municipality applying for the designation now
  - Future plans – the town’s goals and implementation plans over the next 5 years
  - Assistance – how can the state help the municipality achieve its goals
Conclusion
Opportunity for a true public-private partnership
Contact information
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