



# TOWN OF BERLIN, VERMONT

Selectboard:

Brad Towne, Chair  
Jeremy Hansen, Vice Chair  
Angelina Capron, Secretary  
Florence Smith  
Justin Lawrence

Municipal Office Building  
108 Shed Road  
Berlin, Vermont 05602  
Telephone: 802-223-4405  
Fax Number: 802-223-4404

Town Administrator  
Dana Hadley

April 30, 2019

Richard Amore, AICP  
Planning & Project Manager  
Community Planning + Revitalization  
Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development  
1 National Life Drive, Davis Bldg, 6th Floor  
Montpelier, VT 05620-0501

RE: Town of Berlin – Designated Village Center Application – Village of Berlin Corners

Dear Richard: As you are well aware, the Town of Berlin has taken an aggressive approach with respect to its land use planning and economic growth. The Town adopted a fresh outlook to its Town Plan in August of 2018. This Plan called for the recognition of the historic villages of Riverton and Berlin Corners and to seek Designated Village Center status for each. To that end, the Town approved new Land Use and Development Regulations that promotes this designation. Village center designation supports the revitalization of these small historic centers which the Berlin Selectboard fully encourages.

For purposes of this Application please use the following for me as primary contact:

- Dana Hadley, Town Administrator
- 108 Shed Road, Berlin, VT 05602
- 802-552-8801; [townadministrator@berlinvt.org](mailto:townadministrator@berlinvt.org)

The following is a list of documents included in this Application:

- Berlin Corner Narrative – “Berlin Corners – Then, Now and Future”
- Resolution of Village Center Designation by Selectboard March 21, 2019
- Notification Letter to Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission April 2, 2019
- Notification Letter to Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation April 2, 2019
- Confirmation Planning Process Letter October 30, 2018
- Village Center Designation Map and Photos April 2019
- Municipal Plan Integration August 14, 2018
- Zoning Map and Bylaw Language March 5, 2019

In closing, I want to thank the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and yourself for giving both time and expertise. Berlin’s future looks brighter for it.

Sincerely,

Dana Hadley

Town Administrator

## **Berlin Corners – Then, Now and Future**

The Berlin Corner area developed as a small village in the early 19th century. Located at the outlet of Berlin Pond, Pond Brook provided water power for grist and saw mills and was the Town's early economic center. In short order, other commercial and civic enterprises were established including blacksmith, two churches (Congregational and Methodist) along with parsonages for both, a school, a hoe factory, several farms and numerous residences. Though Berlin Corners has lost the school and one church, it has gained the Town offices and a small park. Buildings and uses come and go, but the fabric of the village remains and should be preserved as an important part of Berlin's history and engine for Berlin's future economic growth.

The Town envisioned this future by earmarking Berlin Corners, in its 2018 Town Plan, as a key area where "residents have expressed an interest in retaining the historic scale and character of Berlin Corners, and in preventing the (larger) commercial development near Exit 7 from extending further south along Paine Turnpike." To that end, the Town has adopted zoning changes that allow for greater housing densities while encouraging scale appropriate commercial activity in Berlin Corners.

The Town Plan further help define the border of the Village Designation area. Using the historical travel ways of Scott Hill Road and Crosstown Road, (Berlin's "Corner") with the Town Office as anchor on the north, the First Congregational Church as anchor on the south, a National Historic Registry building as anchor on the west and small Town Park as anchor on the east.

In 2016, the Town of Berlin completed its first municipal water system, portions of which serve the Berlin Corners section of Town. Additionally, the Berlin Public Works Board is exploring options to bring municipal sewer service to the Crosstown Road portion of the Village. It is anticipated that sewer service maybe available as soon as the Fall of 2020.

In conclusion, Village Center Designation would support the Town's land use policies related to maintaining the historic scale and pattern of development, encourage private investment in historic buildings, and promoting infill and improving the walkability of the Town's existing and planned centers. State designation would offer both the Town and property owners within the designated areas benefits including:

- Owners of income producing historic buildings could access tax credits for eligible improvements
- Land within and near the village center would be eligible for the State's Neighbor Development program
- Berlin would be more competitive when seeking grant funding for projects in the village center



## Resolution for Village Center Designation Application

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Berlin Selectboard recognizes the importance of its historic centers of Riverton and Berlin Corners and;

**WHEREAS**, Riverton and Berlin Corners are mixed-use areas that serve the surrounding population with goods and services, civic and religious functions, jobs and residences and;

**WHEREAS**, the continued social and economic viability of Riverton and Berlin Corners is critical to the Town of Berlin's future growth and prosperity and;

**WHEREAS**, the State of Vermont, through its Agency of Commerce & Community Development, recognizes the importance of the continued health of these historic centers by establishing the Village Center Designation Program and;

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Berlin is applying for Village Center Designation for the village of Riverton and the village of Berlin Corners;

**Now, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**

1. That the Berlin Selectboard agrees to and supports the applications for Village Center Designation for Riverton and Berlin Corners.

Passed this 21<sup>st</sup> day of March, 2019.

**Town of Berlin Selectboard**

Brad Towne

Jeremy Hanson

Angelina Capron

Florence Smith

Justin Lawrence

*Bradley Towne*

*Florence E. Smith*

*Justin Lawrence*



## TOWN OF BERLIN, VERMONT

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Fax Number: 802-223-4404

Town Administrator  
Dana Hadley

April 2, 2019

Bonnie Waninger  
Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission  
29 Main Street, Suite #4  
Montpelier, VT 05602

RE: Designated Village Centers – Riverton and Berlin Corners

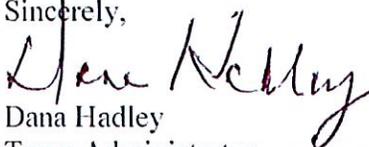
Dear Bonnie:

The Town of Berlin is envisioning itself with pedestrian friendly, walkable neighborhoods that bring together commerce and community, unlike the Town has seen in several generations. This vision began with a comprehensive rewrite of the Town Plan. The plan is a streamlined and succinct policy document that provides a robust foundation for municipal decisions and actions. It focuses on the policies, programs and actions that a small-town government can reasonably pursue. The Plan calls for three areas of the Town, Riverton, Berlin Corners and New Town Center, to have concentrated planning and development efforts to bring this vision to reality. This Plan was approved by the voters by a 2 to 1 margin in August 2018.

With that in mind, the Town of Berlin, with the assistance of your staff, is in the process of developing applications for the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to add Riverton and Berlin Corners to the Designated Village Center program. Village Center designation supports the revitalization efforts of small and medium-sized historic centers. The designation brings financial incentives, training and technical assistance needed to attract new business and vitality to Riverton and Berlin Corners. Once designated, these communities may apply for the neighborhood development area designation to bring additional benefits to build new housing within walking distance of the village centers. It is the intent of the Town to apply for each of these designations by June 1, 2019.

I want to again thank you and your staff for the efforts on behalf of the Town of Berlin. It is exciting times for Berlin.

Sincerely,



Dana Hadley  
Town Administrator



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Town Administrator  
Dana Hadley

April 2, 2019

Jamie Stewart  
Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation  
P.O. 1439  
Montpelier, VT 05601-1439

RE: Designated Village Centers – Riverton and Berlin Corners

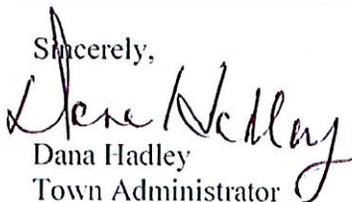
Dear Jamie:

The Town of Berlin is envisioning itself with pedestrian friendly, walkable neighborhoods that bring together commerce and community, unlike the Town has seen in several generations. This vision began with a comprehensive rewrite of the Town Plan. The plan is a streamlined and succinct policy document that provides a robust foundation for municipal decisions and actions. It focuses on the policies, programs and actions that a small-town government can reasonably pursue. The Plan calls for three areas of the Town, Riverton, Berlin Corners and New Town Center, to have concentrated planning and development efforts to bring this vision to reality. This Plan was approved by the voters by a 2 to 1 margin in August 2018.

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I want to again thank you and your staff for the efforts on behalf of the Town of Berlin. It is exciting times for Berlin.

Sincerely,

  
Dana Hadley  
Town Administrator



October 30, 2018

Dana Hadley, Town Administrator  
Town of Berlin  
108 Shed Road  
Berlin, VT 05602

Dear Mr. Hadley;

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) held a public hearing on October 4, 2018 to consider approval of *A Town Plan for Berlin, VT (Aug 2018)* and confirmation the Town's planning process. CVRPC reviewed the plan in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 4350.

The CVRPC Board of Commissioners reviewed public hearing comments at its October 9, 2018 meeting and considered recommendations from its Town Plan Review Committee. The Board concluded *A Town Plan for Berlin, VT (Aug 2018)* should be approved, and it confirmed the Town's planning process. A resolution attesting to the approval and confirmation is enclosed.

The Board of Commissioners noted that - for the Town to retain confirmation of its planning process - progress towards attainment of two State Planning Goals will need to be documented in the municipal plan before CVRPC completes its next consultation in 2022. The two goals are:

- State Planning Goal 3: *To broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure the full realization of the abilities of all Vermonters; and*
- State Planning Goal 13: *To ensure the availability of safe and affordable child care and to integrate child care issues into the planning process, including child care financing, infrastructure, business assistance for child care providers, and child care work force development.*

Confirmation of the Town's planning process means:

- The municipality's plan will not be subject to review by the Commissioner of Housing and Community Development under 24 V.S.A. § 4351.
- State agency plans adopted under 3 V.S.A. chapter 67 shall be compatible with the municipality's approved plan.

- The municipality may levy impact fees on new development within its borders, according to the provisions of 24 V.S.A chapter 131.
- The municipality shall be eligible to receive additional funds from the municipal and regional planning fund. [municipal planning grants]

CVRPC has copied the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development on this communication.

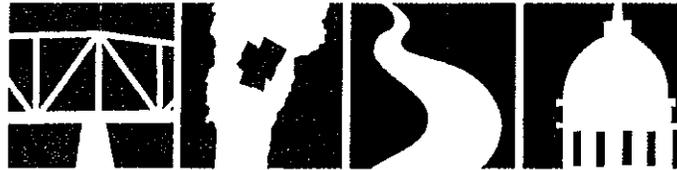
Congratulations on the hard work your municipality has put into this process and for supporting the future planning of the Town! Please contact me if you have any questions or need assistance.

Regards,



Clare Rock  
Senior Planner

cc: Berlin Planning Commission Chair & VT Department of Housing and Community Development with enclosures



## Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

### RESOLUTION

**Whereas** Title 24, VSA, Section §4350 requires that regional planning commissions, after public notice, shall review the planning process of member municipalities and shall so confirm when a municipality:

1. is engaged in a continuing planning process that, within a reasonable time, will result in a plan that is consistent with the goals contained in 24 V.S.A. § 4302;
2. is engaged in a process to implement its municipal plan, consistent with the program for implementation required under 24 V.S.A. § 4382; and
3. is maintaining its efforts to provide local funds for municipal and regional planning purposes;

**Whereas** as part of the consultation process, a regional planning commission shall consider whether a municipality has adopted a plan;

**Whereas** a regional planning commission shall review and approve plans of its member municipalities, when approval is requested and warranted, and a commission shall approve a plan if it finds that the plan:

1. is consistent with the goals established in 24 V.S.A. § 4302;
2. is compatible with its regional plan;
3. is compatible with approved plans of other municipalities in the region; and
4. contains all the elements included in 24 V.S.A. § 4382(a)(1)-(12);

**Whereas** the Town of Berlin prepared a municipal plan in accordance with 24 V.S.A Chapter 117;

**Whereas** the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission concluded that the 2018 Berlin Town Plan, *A Town Plan for Berlin, VT*, meets the requirements for approval; now, therefore, be it

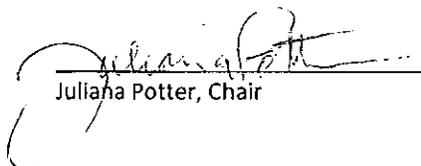
**Resolved**, that the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission:

1. approves *A Town Plan for Berlin, VT*, adopted August 4, 2018; and
2. consulted with and confirms the planning process of the Town of Berlin.

Under 24 V.S.A. § 4350, when an adopted municipal plan expires, its approval and confirmation of the municipality's planning process also expire. Recommendations made by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission are attached and should be considered when developing the next municipal plan.

A municipality that has adopted a plan may define and regulate land development in any manner that the municipality establishes in its bylaws, provided those bylaws are in conformance with the plan and are adopted for the purposes set forth in 24 V.S.A. § 4302.

ADOPTED by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission on October 9, 2018.

  
Juliana Potter, Chair

29 Main Street Suite 4 Montpelier Vermont 05602  
802-229-0389 E Mail: CVRPC@CVRegion.com

## **Municipal Plan Integration**

The following are excerpts from the Berlin Town Plan adopted August 14, 2018:

### **Vision**

The vision below expresses Berlin's overall direction and is intended to help town government and community members connect many small actions and measure achievement towards larger objectives. Having a shared vision will allow townspeople to come together, set goals and evaluate progress over time.

#### **Berlin will be a town:**

That is a **hub of commerce and industry** for the region with revitalized commercial areas and a diverse economic base;

With an **identifiable and vibrant town center** – a place where people can live, work, eat, shop and gather – that promotes a greater sense of community and attracts new residents; and

That **preserves its rural character and working lands** – the open spaces, viable farms, working forests, low-density settlement pattern, natural resources and scenic views that characterize most areas of town.

### **Purpose**

The Berlin Town Plan states the town's objectives, policies and actions for guiding future land use and development in the community consistent with the vision expressed above. The plan allows decisions to be made by considering the future of the community as a whole. Planning can help manage the cost of public services and ensure that investments benefit everyone.

This plan will help Berlin continue to provide and maintain infrastructure, attract residents and businesses, and protect natural resources and rural character. More people can choose to live and work anywhere and more are looking for places that offer a high quality of life. More people want to live in walkable, connected, distinctive communities, rather than in generic subdivisions or on remote house lots. This plan outlines the deliberate steps needed to maintain, improve and revitalize Berlin so that it can be a great place to live and work now and into the future.

### **Village Centers**

**RIVERTON.** Riverton or West Berlin is a historic hamlet along the Dog River on Route 12 that developed as a small industrial center due to the availability of water power and later access to the railroad. Town residents have expressed support for revitalizing this area, which formerly supported more businesses, homes and civic buildings than it does today. The town has proposed creating a new mixed-use zoning district for Riverton that would recognize and maintain its historic settlement pattern. #

**BERLIN CORNERS.** Berlin Corners is a historic hamlet that formed around the intersection of Crosstown Road (the only road connecting the eastern and western sides of town) and Paine Turnpike. While it has been overshadowed by development around Exit 7 and the airport, it continues in its role as a civic center. Town residents have expressed an interest in retaining the historic scale and character of Berlin Corners, and in preventing the commercial development near Exit 7 from extending further south along Paine Turnpike. The town has proposed zoning changes that would allow for additional housing, but that would limit the scale of commercial activity in Berlin Corners. #

**DESIGNATION.** The town plans to seek Village Center designations for these two historic hamlets from the state. Designation would support the town's land use policies related to maintaining the historic scale and pattern of development, encouraging private investment in historic buildings, and promoting infill and improving the walkability of the town's existing and planned centers. State designation would offer both the town and property owners within the designated area benefits including:

- Owners of income-producing historic buildings could access tax credits for eligible improvements.
- Land within and near village centers would be eligible for the state's Neighborhood Development Area program.
- Berlin would be more competitive when seeking grant funding for projects in the village centers.

# Comprehensive rewrite of Town of **Berlin Land Use and Development Regulations** approved by voters March 5, 2019, by a 2 to 1 margin and include Hamlet and Residential Zoning Districts.