

**From:** [Rachel Kring](mailto:mcypes@hinesburg.org)  
**To:** [mcypes@hinesburg.org](mailto:mcypes@hinesburg.org)  
**Subject:** Questions re new development impact  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 28, 2021 11:24:16 AM

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Hi Mitch,

I hope this email finds you well. I am a Hinesburg resident and live on Pond Rd. I read recently about the proposed Mechanicsville Rd development and have some questions about the impact to current homeowners and traffic issues. I have raised some of these issues before but haven't gotten very far, and I am wondering if these things are considered when new developments are seeking approval.

Truck engine brake noise has been worsening on Pond Rd for a while now. I live near the intersection of Pond Brook Rd, and we're frequently treated to a pre- 7:00 am wakeup from dump trucks and other large vehicles that seem to use the engine brake starting at the "Welcome to Hinesburg" sign and all the way down the hill into town. Vehicle noise echoes quite a bit off the hillside here, and it's just obnoxious. I can only imagine this will get worse with the several major developments in the works. And honestly, I've noticed that many drivers are just shuttling back and forth and not particularly paying attention to speed or crossing lane lines.

I drive Mechanicsville Rd regularly and often have to take the left onto 116. Are there any plans in the works to improve that intersection with all the new traffic that will exist during the morning and evening commuting hours?

Hinesburg also has a number of unsafe crosswalks. The majority of cars do not stop for pedestrians. I tried for a couple years to get flashing beacons at the one in front of the Hinesburg Community School, which is a long and frustrating story, but to boil it down I'm concerned that our crosswalks will be even more dangerous as we increase Hinesburg's population and the number of cars on the road.

I am always happy to help be part of any solution and share this information in the appropriate way (DRB meeting??). I have tried requesting police enforcement around any of the issues where it applies. In general, I'd like to get an idea about how much up- and down-stream consideration goes into new development approvals. I can foresee a lot of these issues getting much worse and would hope those impacts are taken into consideration and mitigated as much as possible. A lot of what I am describing is probably true for other areas of town that are busy through-ways. This is just what I observe outside my door and in my normal travels.

Thank you,

Rachel Kring

## Hinesburg Conservation Commission Review Form for Subdivision and Variance Applications

Name of Applicant: Laster

Location/Address of Subdivision: Mechanicsville Rd, East Side

Date of Preliminary Application:

Date of Commission Review: August 10, 2021

Recommended Request for additional natural resources information to be provided by applicant: (describe type of information and why it is requested)

Yes       No

Request for site visit:

Yes       No

Request to question applicant or applicant's representative:

Yes       No

Request to have a review of the application completed by a natural resources professional: (if yes, provide rationale for this request)

It is strongly recommended that the applicant complete a natural resource assessment by a qualified professional.

### Decision:

Conservation Commission has no concerns with the project as proposed

Conservation Commission has the following concerns with the project as proposed:

Assessment by the HCC indicates that core habitat exists on the Eastern portions of the site which the Town Plan identifies as being of high interest for preservation and minimal disturbance from development. Therefore the HCC has the following concerns:

- (1) Disturbance of and impingement on priority and core habitat by the proposed Phase III of development on the Eastern half of the site;
- (2) Proposed trails intersect steep slopes and cross cut core habitat

Determination of the property's natural resource inventory including:

- Surface Water, Wetland, and Riparian Resources
- Forest Blocks, Connectivity, and Resiliency Resources
- Farmland Resources
- Working Forest Resources
- Recreation Resources
- Wildlife, Plant, and Natural Communities

(describe resources and sources of information relied upon)

The site has been screened for the presence of natural resources (Figures 1-4 attached) using the Hinesburg Natural Resource Inventory Map available at (<https://map.ccrpcvt.org/hinesburgnaturalresourcesviewer/>). Surface water resources transect the center and northern portion of the site with associated wetlands and required setbacks. The eastern portion of the site has steep slopes, is designated as priority interior forest; core wildlife habitat; and the majority of the site is designated as part of the priority interior and connector blocks. A possible wildlife corridor extends from the center of the property north to Partridge Hill Rd and a nearby designated wildlife corridor. Existing town trails exist to the south of the site. The western, lower elevation portion of the site is designated as potential grassland habitat with agricultural soil.

Assessment of potential impacts of application proposal on natural resources of importance:

(describe possible impact and sources of information relied upon for analysis)

The development plan as proposed will fully occupy the potential grassland/agricultural portion of the property. The Phase III cul-de-sac will however significantly impinge on the priority forest block; priority interior and connector block and core wildlife habitat areas of the property. Goal 3.4.6 of the Hinesburg Town Plan, which received Top priority, states that development should be directed "...to minimize impacts on secondary resource areas including...core wildlife habitat and wildlife corridors" as further outlined in Chapter 5. This Goal and should be duly considered in conjunction with with Goal 5.1 of the Hinesburg Town Plan directing the DRB to consider Natural Resource Protection (Goal 5.2.1) in its review of the proposal. Phase III is additionally proposed in the RR1 zoning district where it would set a distinct precedent in development pattern not found elsewhere in that district.

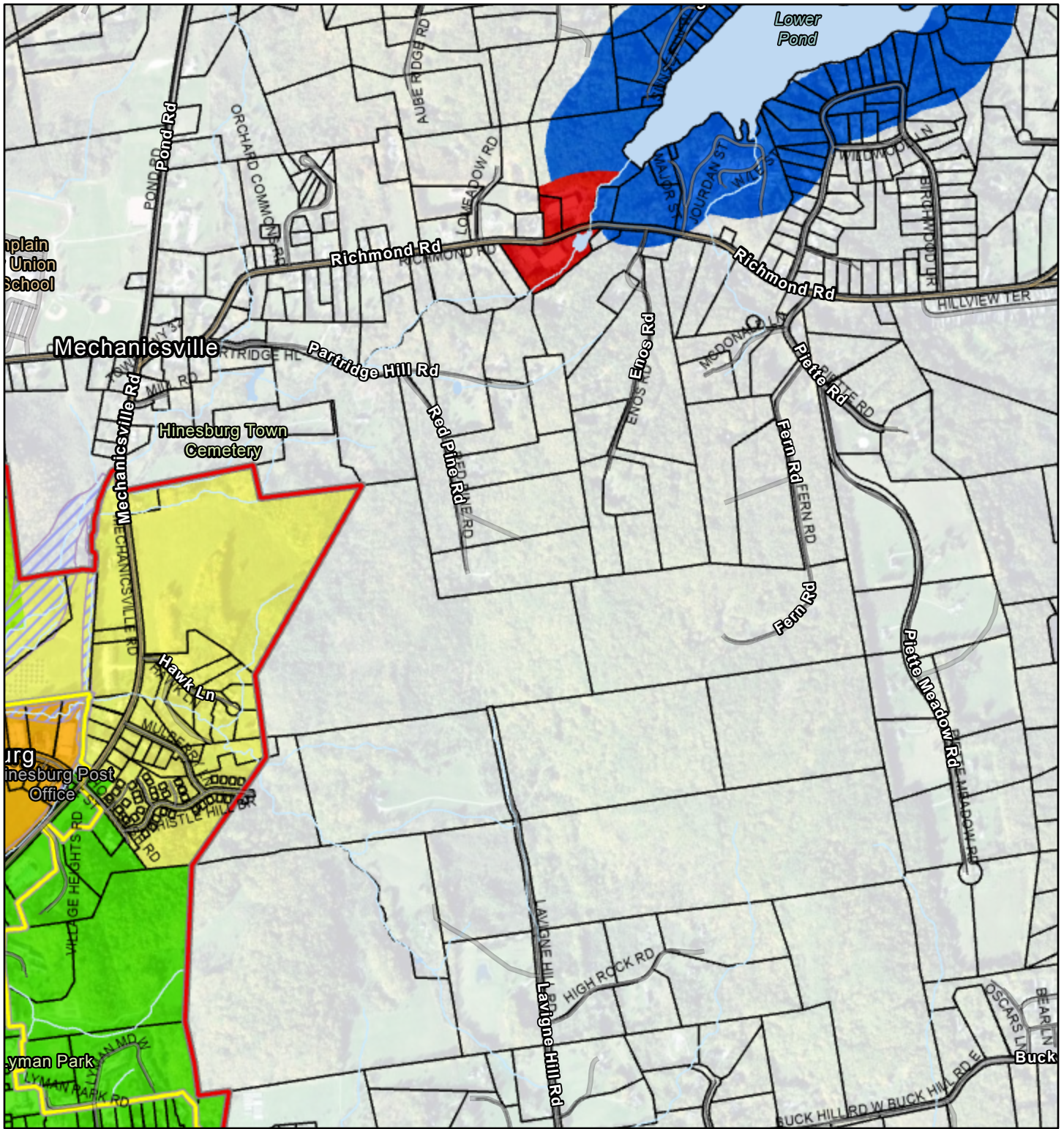
Proposed trail locations cross-cut designated core wildlife habitat and should be reconsidered in partnership with the HCC and Hinesburg Town Trails committee on final location.

Recommendation of Hinesburg Conservation Commission:

Based on the analysis described above, the Hinesburg Conservation Commission recommends the following:

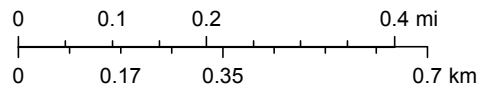
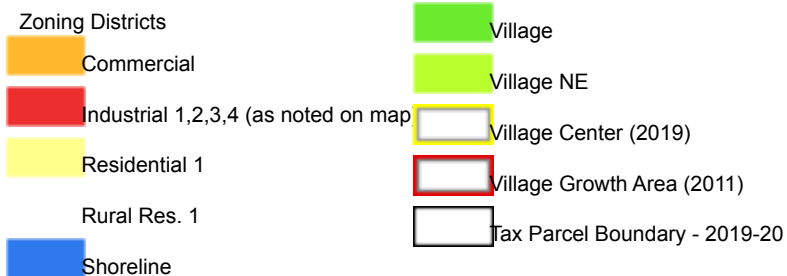
- The applicant is strongly recommended to minimize the impact of planned development, particularly the proposed Phase III, on the core wildlife habitat and priority interior connector block portions of the property. Strategies may include reducing the total number of planned houses and clustering development in the Village zoning district portions of the site to maintain the largest possible contiguous area undisturbed and to meet RR1 regulations in the eastern side.
- The applicant is strongly recommended to engage a natural resource professional to assess existing site conditions.
- The applicant is strongly recommended to consider the placement of planned trail connections to minimize bisection of priority and core habitat areas.





7/30/2021, 3:14:19 PM

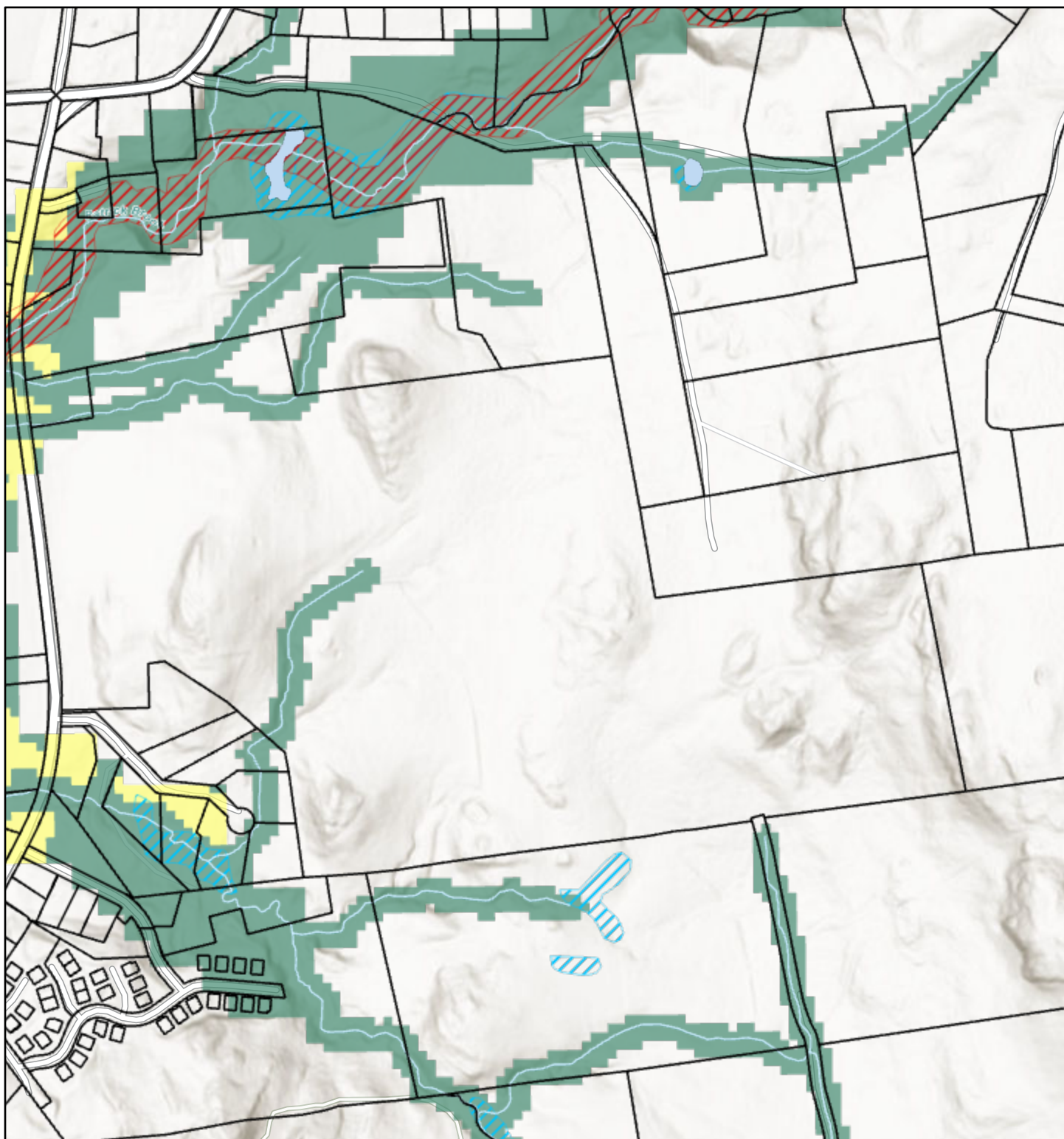
1:18,056



Source: Esri, USDA FSA, Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community









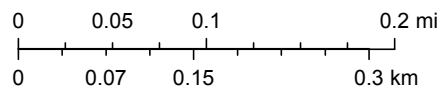
# Laster - Water Resources



7/30/2021, 3:21:08 PM

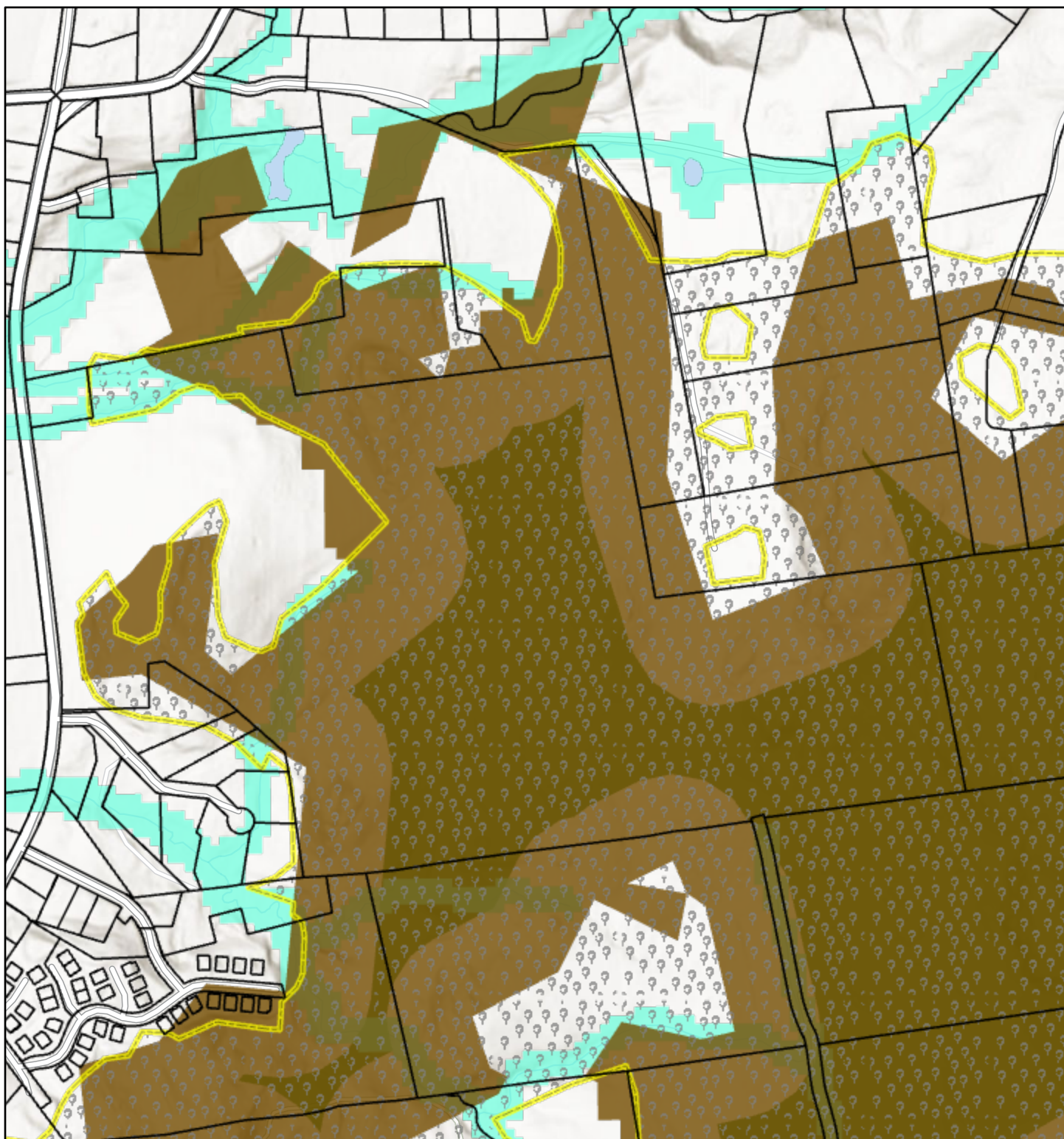
1:9,028

-  Tax Parcel Boundary - 2019-20
-  Surface Water
-  Highest Priority Surface Waters and Riparian Areas
-  Wetlands (Advisory)
-  Fluvial Erosion Hazard Areas
-  Surface Water









Sources: Esri, Airbus DS, USGS, NGA, NASA, CGIAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, Geodataslyreisen, Rijkswaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap and the GIS user community, Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

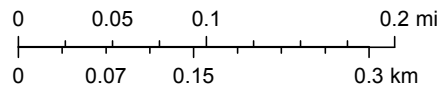
Mapping Application Prepared by CCRPC



7/30/2021, 3:24:18 PM

1:9,028

-  Tax Parcel Boundary - 2019-20
-  Surface Water
-  Physical Landscape Diversity Blocks
-  Riparian Wildlife Connectivity
-  Core Habitat
-  Priority Interior Forest Blocks

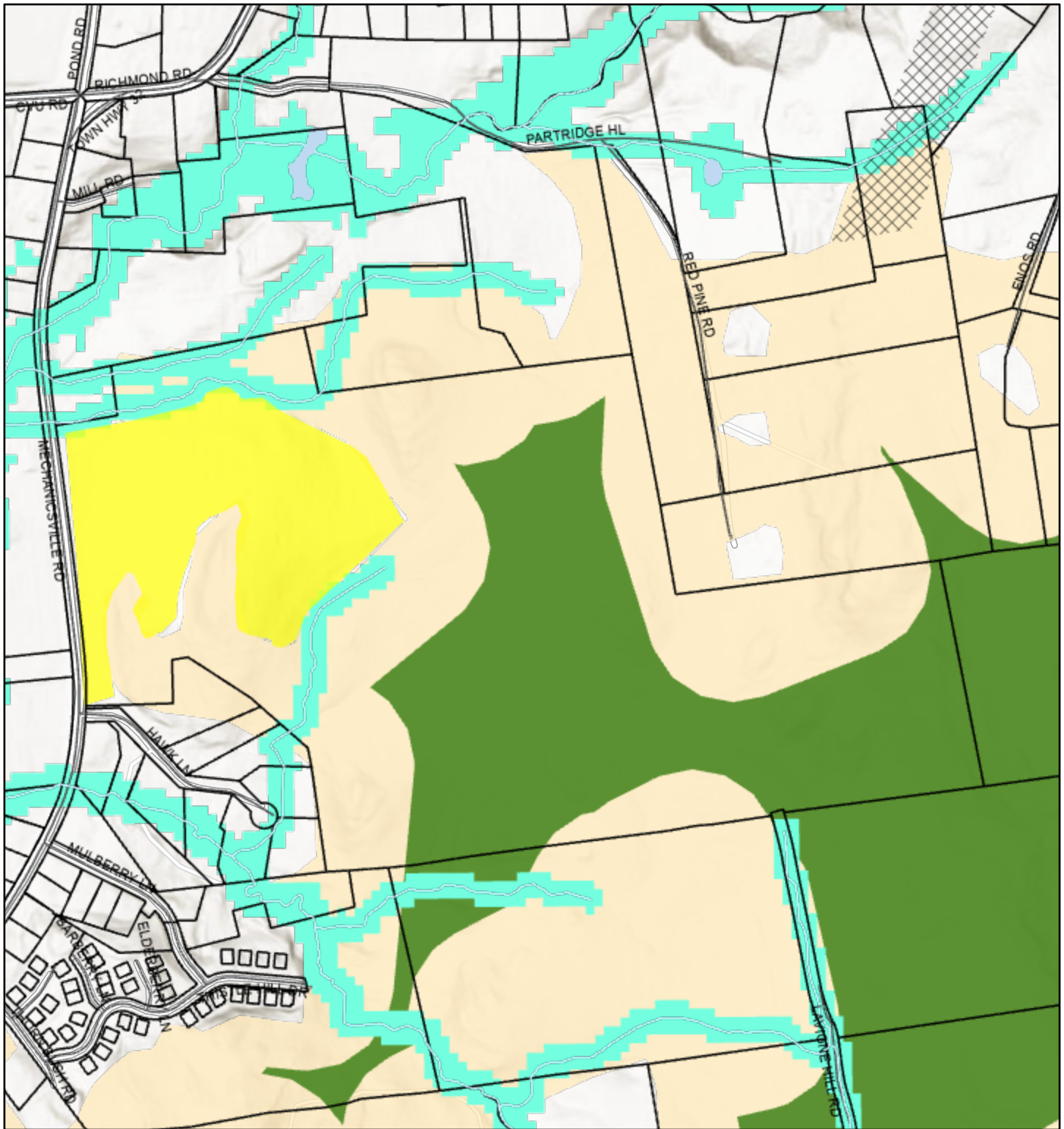


Sources: Esri, Airbus DS, USGS, NGA, NASA, CGIAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, Geodastyrelsen, Rijkswaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap and the GIS user community, Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Mapping Application Prepared by CCRPC












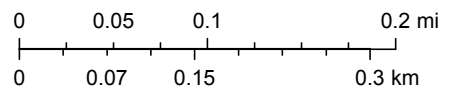
# Laster - Wildlife Summary



8/10/2021, 8:51:07 AM

1:9,028

-  Tax Parcel Boundary - 2019-20
-  Priority Interior and Connector Blocks
-  Surface Water
-  Riparian Wildlife Connectivity
-  Road Centerline
-  Wildlife Corridor/Linkage
-  Stream Centerline
-  Potential Grassland Habitat
-  Core Wildlife Habitats



Sources: Esri, Airbus DS, USGS, NGA, NASA, CGIAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, Geodatastyrelsen, Rijkswaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap and the GIS user community, Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Mapping Application Prepared by CCRPC

**From:** [Patricia O'Donnell](#)  
**To:** "Mitchel Cypes"  
**Cc:** [broadreachjjd@gmavt.net](mailto:broadreachjjd@gmavt.net)  
**Subject:** Issue with Laster subdivision layout  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 11, 2021 6:32:12 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.emz](#)  
[image002.png](#)

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Mitch,

I have reviewed the Laster subdivision drawings. Please enter these comments into the project record:

1. In relationship to 613 Mechanicsville, the entry drive to this entire subdivision is directed upon exit at the east façade or front wall of that 3 family residence. The location of this main drive, if constructed as shown will devalue the opposite property at 613 Mechanicsville Road. The lights of all cars coming out of that entry road will shine directly into 613 Mechanicsville first and second floor windows. The noise of all entry and exit movements will also disrupt the relative quiet of this neighborhood. This entry road location is unacceptable.
2. As shown, this is a very intensive development with 55 lots. It will make a huge additions of traffic along Mechanicsville Road and the surrounding streets.
3. The layout plan as shown would create considerable site disturbance, including woodland clearing for the group of house sites farthest to the east.
4. The entire subdivision should be downsized.

Jim may also have some comments. We will try to attend the actual hearing on Zoom as we are traveling that day.

Best regards,

Patricia M. O'Donnell, PLA, FASLA, AICP, F. US/ICOMOS, Founder  
ASLA Firm Award Honoree  
VT Office 802.425.4330  
501 Lake Road, Charlotte VT 05445  
Visit our new website at: [heritagelandscapes.com](http://heritagelandscapes.com)

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**From:** Mitchel Cypes <[mcypes@hinesburg.org](mailto:mcypes@hinesburg.org)>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 2, 2021 4:05 PM  
**To:** [mcypes@hinesburg.org](mailto:mcypes@hinesburg.org)  
**Subject:** Notice for Laster subdivision hearing

Dear abutting landowners to the Laster property,

If you are receiving this email, you are an abutting land owner to the Laster property on the east side of Mechanicsville Road. Attached is a notice letter for a sketch plan application that proposes to

build 55 single family residences. Here is the direct link to the DRB project directory, which is easier to read from an email than typing a letter:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gdvy7mlkoak37y2/AAD4rF30qUMk9V-k4brxaxMLa?dl=0>

The DRB is scheduling a sketch plan application, which is a very preliminary review, for this project on August 17<sup>th</sup>. Contact me should you have any questions on this, and/or if I can be of any assistance.

Mitch

Mitchel Cypes, P.E.

Hinesburg Development Review Coordinator

[mcypes@hinesburg.org](mailto:mcypes@hinesburg.org)

802-482-4211

10632 Route 116, Hinesburg, VT 05461

**From:** [Barbara Forauer](#)  
**To:** [mitch cypes](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on Laster Development Application  
**Date:** Friday, September 10, 2021 2:27:24 PM

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I do admit I am pleasantly surprised and relieved by the thought this applicant has invested in working with the landscape, environmental concerns and climate change issues. It is refreshing because after my first look at the plans, I was horrified (55 houses) and sad to see this lovely open meadow disappear.

The applicant's efforts to make smaller, efficient homes is what needs to happen here and with all developments. Their hope to have all their designs be Net Zero by 2030 works right into our state energy expectations.

I do support the inclusion of several duplex buildings to be added to the plan. Depending upon their location within the plan, this could offer larger surface area for rooftop solar. As I said at the meeting, I support all new development to be Net Zero.

Referring to our town zoning regs covering solar: 6.12.4,#3,#6.

It would be less costly (sort of!) to build this in at the start than add it 10-15 years later. Having recently added solar rooftop panels to our own home, I do understand this process. By the time construction will begin, more technological advances will be made in the area of renewables making this just another part of building.

Points made by other attendees are important to consider. The road entrance and exit placement spoken about by Mr. Donovan may seem a small point but crucial to those it will affect.

Zoning regs: 6.1.3,6,8,11 may apply here.

I have a safety concern about there being only one entrance and exit. I live on such a road and when we had a major blowdown 4 years ago, our road was completely useless.

Also for safety, while not a blind spot, as one drives south on Mechanicsville Road, this entrance/exit will be in a precarious location. It is at the bottom of a hill with a slight curve. Here most vehicles increase speed because the road becomes straight and flat. Maybe a traffic study???

Mr. McEntee who lives along Hawk Lane offered well thought out concerns too.

I would suggest keeping the tree/hedgerow along Mechanicsville Road as a natural screening of the development. Perhaps some selective cutting would enhance this.

Might the developer consider planting an orchard in the community areas? I assume there will be someone caretaking these areas so it would be part of the job while providing fruit for families living there. And also community gardens in the form of raised beds with water access. It is good to know that Mr. Laster has already been in contact with the town Trails committee with good give and take reports so far.



New England and Vermont are in a good position to lead in good planning actions. My hope is this will be an innovative, creative, efficient development rather than a cookie cutter presentation. May it serve as a model for future build outs in Vermont and beyond.

As a town resident, I will help make this the best it can be in any way I can. There are issues I am not addressing at this time so look forward to hearing from me again!

Barbara Forauer

TO: Members of the Development Review Board

FROM: The Hinesburg Affordable Housing Committee

RE: Joe Laster Project Sketch Plan

DATE: September 20, 2021

CC: Joe Laster, Mitch Cypes, Alex Weinhagen, Todd Odit, Joy Dubin Grossman, Planning Commission, Select Board

**Background:** The Hinesburg Affordable Housing Committee (HAHC) has been working to bring much needed affordable housing to Hinesburg since 2006. The Green Street project in 2016 remains the greatest success to date as it is the only project developed as a perpetual affordable housing project with 21 of the 23 units being affordable ones. And despite the Green Street project, Hinesburg still is experiencing an affordable housing crisis. The 2017 Hinesburg Housing Needs Assessment Report makes it clear that despite the Green Street project, Hinesburg could use another Green Street type project pretty much immediately. The Report states "*Over the next five years, the need exists to create another rental housing development comparable in size and income-eligibility to the Green Street Village Apartments.*"

Hinesburg's other affordable units are minimal as the inclusionary zoning requirement triggers very few actual affordable units. There are future affordable units planned in the Haystack Crossing project- twenty (20) units are planned in Phase I and thirty (30) are planned in Phase II. As the pandemic is clearly showing, the ability to find affordable housing for those seeking housing, both in our community and the state, is harder than ever. Just ask anyone that has tried to find a home to rent or buy! The affordable units planned in the Haystack Crossing project, along with affordable units in Joe Laster's project, will result in a more vibrant and diverse Hinesburg community.

Because this project is only in the sketch plan review, the HAHC has not met formally with Joe Laster. However, Carl Bohlen as Chair, has discussed the project with Joe.

Based on the project documents and the discussion with Joe, along with the information discussed at the DRB meeting on August 17, 2021, the HAHC would like to provide the following input to the DRB as it reviews the sketch plan application.

**Affordable Housing & Potential Nonprofit Partnership:** The HAHC is very interested in seeing more perpetually affordable housing units than the six (6) units we understand would be required by the Town's inclusionary zoning regulations. The HAHC is working to set up a meeting with staff of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) and Champlain Housing Trust (CHT) to ascertain their interest and get input on the feasibility of designing a perpetually affordable housing project as part of the overall project. This may well include seeking funding from VHCB to do some initial pre-development work to assist in making a feasibility assessment. In discussions with Joe Laster, he was willing to consider options that would increase the number of affordable units. Once the HAHC has some options to discuss with Joe, we will invite him to join us at one of our meetings.

**Accessory Apartments:** The HAHC is very supportive of the project's design that would allow the future addition of accessory apartments.

**Solar Energy:** While the Hinesburg Energy Committee will likely weigh in with more detailed reaction to the project, the HAHC fully supports the plan to have units sited for maximum solar orientation.

The HAHC is more than willing to continue working with Joe Laster, the DRB and Hinesburg staff in any way that is helpful, and we thank Hinesburg staff and the DRB for their work reviewing this project.

**From:** Maggie Gordon <mgordon@gmavt.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 20, 2021 10:39 AM  
**To:** Mitchell Cypes  
**Cc:** Alex Weinhagen  
**Subject:** Laster Proposal - Comments

Hi Mitch,

I attended the first DRB meeting on the proposed Laster development and hope to attend the second this week. I'd like to offer just a couple of comments.

First, I was very pleased to see the range of housing sizes from small to medium (max. 2,100sf). Household sizes have been steadily decreasing over time in Chittenden County, and forecasts show that trend will continue. ([Average Household Size-Chittenden County; https://www.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Household-Size-Forecast-Memo-2.10.17.pdf](https://www.ccrpcvt.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Household-Size-Forecast-Memo-2.10.17.pdf)). Smaller houses are especially appealing to two demographics: first-time homebuyers and homeowners looking to downsize. Smaller homes are also more energy efficient, increasing their affordability over time. I would love to see a variety of sizes, with an emphasis on the smaller and more affordable ones.

There have been a number of comments about additional multi-family housing. If that is possible, I would suggest that those buildings, along with other affordable housing units, be integrated throughout the development, rather than segregated from it.

I love the idea of leaving some lot sizes large enough to allow for future additions of garages and accessory apartments. I just wanted to give a heads up about what happened at Thistle Hill some time ago, where the HOA voted not to allow accessory apartments even though the town encourages them. It will be important to bake that option into future bylaws.

Finally, I'd like to encourage variety as a fundamental feature of the streetscape: a mix of lot sizes, building sizes, architectural styles, and architectural features. The goal is to integrate the development into the existing, visually interesting streetscape of the village Main Street, which has grown organically over decades, and to integrate new development into the existing community.

This proposal has a lot to offer Hinesburg, and I look forward to seeing the final results.

Best regards,

Maggie Gordon  
mgordon@gmavt.net



802-482-4216 (H)  
802-318-7100 (C)