



June 2, 2016

Burlington Planning Commission
Department of Planning & Zoning
City Hall
149 Church Street
Burlington, VT 05401

RECEIVED

JUN - 6 2016

DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING & ZONING

Re: BTV Mall Redevelopment Process

Dear Commission Members,

The redevelopment of the Burlington Town Mall into a downtown city center sets a critical and positive precedent for future statewide development and growth. The plan for a mixed use space containing offices, apartments and commercial spaces embraces Vermont's social and environmental priorities, and creates more choices for housing and transportation. If we are not able to continue to grow our most developed city, it will negatively influence similar projects in other communities that need the added jobs and revenue.

In addition to reinforcing a smart growth precedent for development, the economic impacts will be felt on a statewide level. Per the economic projections done by the University of Vermont, the project is estimated to support 1,296 new jobs and contribute as much as \$194.09 million per year to the regional economy from commercial activity. As lawmakers continue to grapple with a State budget gap year after year, the potential for new rooms, meals and sales tax revenue cannot be ignored.

Additionally, the project offers nuanced opportunities to help retain and attract young professionals and support our strong entrepreneurial culture by providing space for startups and expansions. The Vermont Futures Project (www.VTFuturesProject.org) has identified upcoming workforce demographic challenges as population growth slows and young people continue to leave the state. Adding new vibrancy to the Burlington downtown is one way to take action and appeal to those who desire an urban lifestyle without compromising the quality of life Vermont offers.

For all of the above reasons, the Vermont Chamber of Commerce strongly supports the redevelopment of the Burlington Town Mall. The opportunities presented by this project are not only for Chittenden County, but for Vermont at large.

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Bishop".
Betsy Bishop, President

Meagan Tuttle

From: Carolyn Bates <cbates@burlingtontelecom.net>
Sent: Saturday, June 04, 2016 11:18 PM
To: Carolyn Bates
Subject: Parking Downtown Mixed Use Core Overlay p. 11

"from PROPOSED: ZA-16-?? – Downtown Mixed Use Core Overlay p. 11
DRAFT - 5/4/2016

5. Parking

a. The required setback between the parking and the public street at the **ground level must be occupied by an active use (such as, but not limited to, residential, retail, office, recreational or services)**. This requirement shall not apply to parking along a secondary street frontage or located either entirely below-grade or above the ground floor where parking may come right up to the building's perimeter. "

NB

Sinex has floors **2-3-4 fully occupied by parking** in the massive structure between pine/stpaul/bank/cherry st where you are allowing 100% of the floor to be fully built out. He has slots, not windows, and they look silly. NB in all of his illustrations, lots of work has been put into making these look like windows. When they are merely slots, not windows, and illustrations are NOT giving you a true example of what these floors look like on the exteriors of the building.

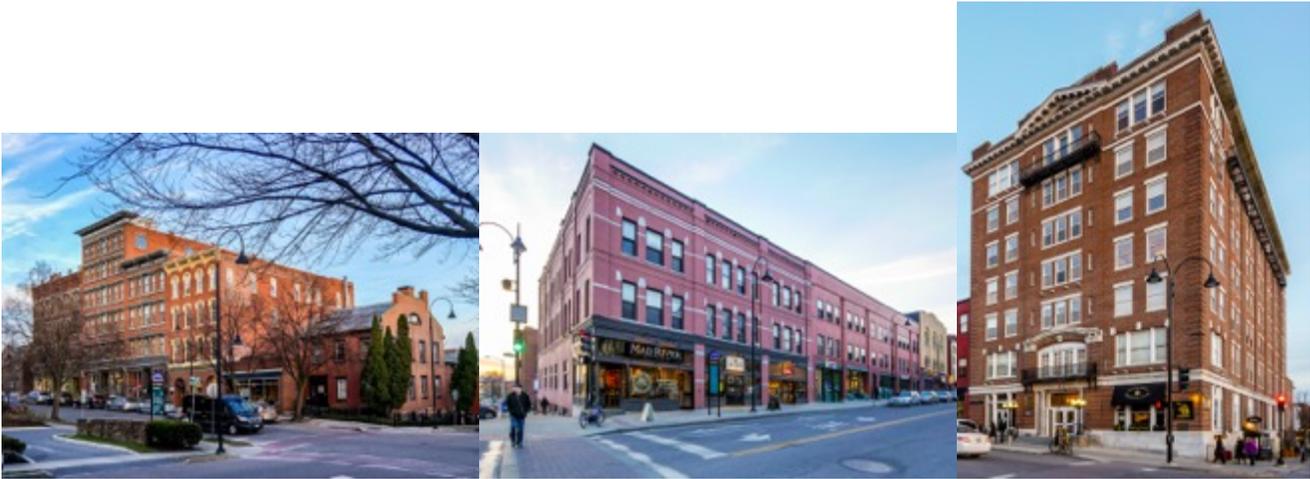
And I ask that the above rule I have noted is changed to read something like this:

All floors of parking in the first five floors must be occupied by an active use, and fronted with real windows, like every other occupied, non straight parking lot building in the Downtown Burlington area.)

Furthermore:

Sinex can put parking underground. He is speculating that the cost will be xyz. But he has NOT done a core sample, nor has he given you a real print out from a real contractor to prove is estimate is correct.

See enclosed images of some beautiful buildings in downtown that Sinex should emulate.



Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Carolyn L. Bates

June 3, 2016

Carolyn L. Bates Photography

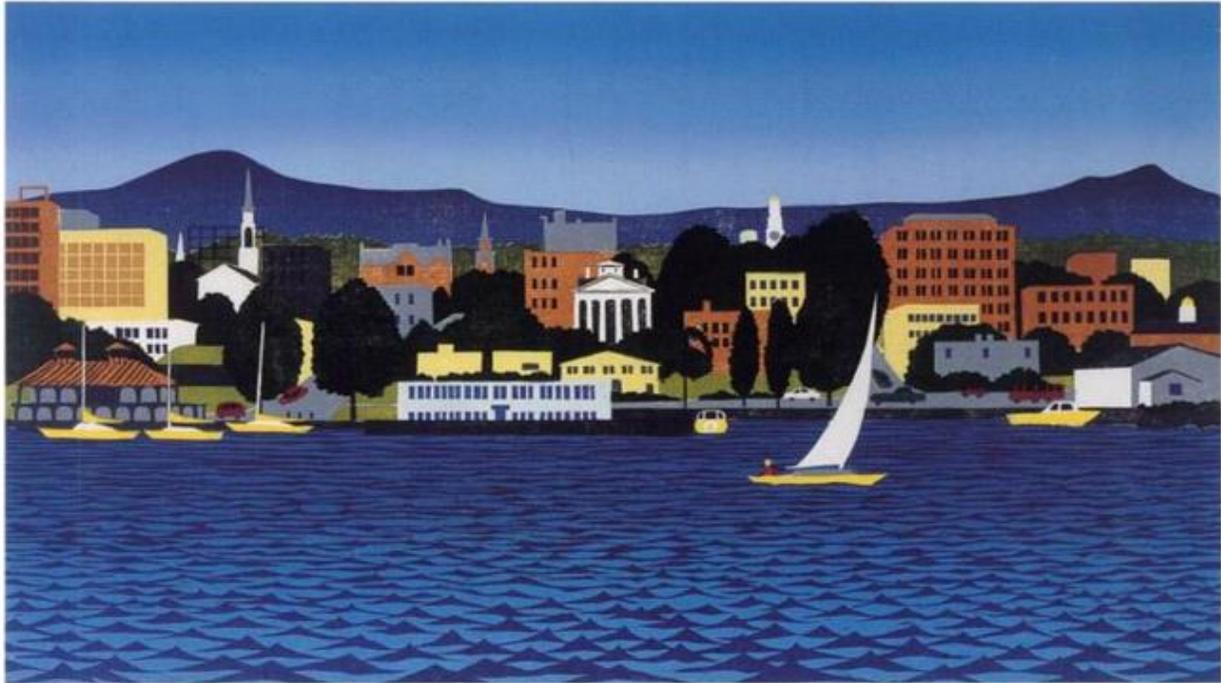
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Phone: (802) 238-4213
Web: [www carolynbates.com](http://www.carolynbates.com)

To: Burlington Planning Commission members

From: Robert Herendeen, 83 Nottingham Lane, 862-5017, raherendeen@yahoo.com

Date: 6 June 2016

Re: Burlington Town Center Redevelopment Proposal: Rezone to greater building heights?



- Sabra Field, "Burlington from Lake Champlain", 1988. This was the logo for the conference "Sustainable Communities 2004" held in Burlington in July, 2004.

MIDWEST PLANNERS ADMIRE BURLINGTON.

Over 12 years ending in 2005 I taught a course called "Ecological Numeracy: Quantitative Analysis of Environmental Issues" at the University of Illinois. The home department was Urban and Regional Planning. Also during that time I met regularly with planners from Urbana and Champaign, IL as part of the doctoral work of my student Rumi Shammin. So although I'm a physical scientist, I am quite familiar with the challenges and pressures planners must deal with.

In Urbana and Champaign the planners wanted to implement good planning practice, which-to me-seemed somewhat formulaic. My sense was that they would have done the same things and reached similar conclusions almost anywhere-at least anywhere in the Midwest. During our sessions several cities were frequently mentioned (with sighs) as being different: buzzy, lively, with inspiration from-and care for-their natural scene. Those cities were Portland, OR; Boulder, CO; and Burlington.

GETTING TO BURLINGTON.

This clicked with my New York State background, so I participated in the Sustainable Communities 2004 conference in Burlington, and looked and biked around...and my wife Ann and I came here in 2006. We remark every day on our good fortune to be in this wonderful place, and I have responded to the Vermont challenge to become engaged locally and regionally.

MY QUESTION: How is “standard” planning modified to recognize, maintain, and enhance the connection with our unique, stunning, and powerful natural scene?

MY ANSWER: Streetside visual connection is necessary.

The details of appropriate development are complicated and daunting, with lots of room for creative solutions (and for mistakes). To me a clear necessity is to have a streetside visual connection, not the view from a 10th story observation deck. For almost of downtown today, the connection is there. I don’t always have a straight sight line to Lake Champlain and the Adirondacks, but I have frequent glimpses of that and of green things in general, and an inspiring, liberating exposure to open sky.

HOW DOES THE PROPOSED BURLINGTON TOWN CENTER STACK UP?

Below are images “before and after” completion of the proposed project, which has a height of 160 feet, 52% higher than the present maximum. To me these show a large scale deterioration of the visual connection I’ve mentioned-an assault on it, actually.

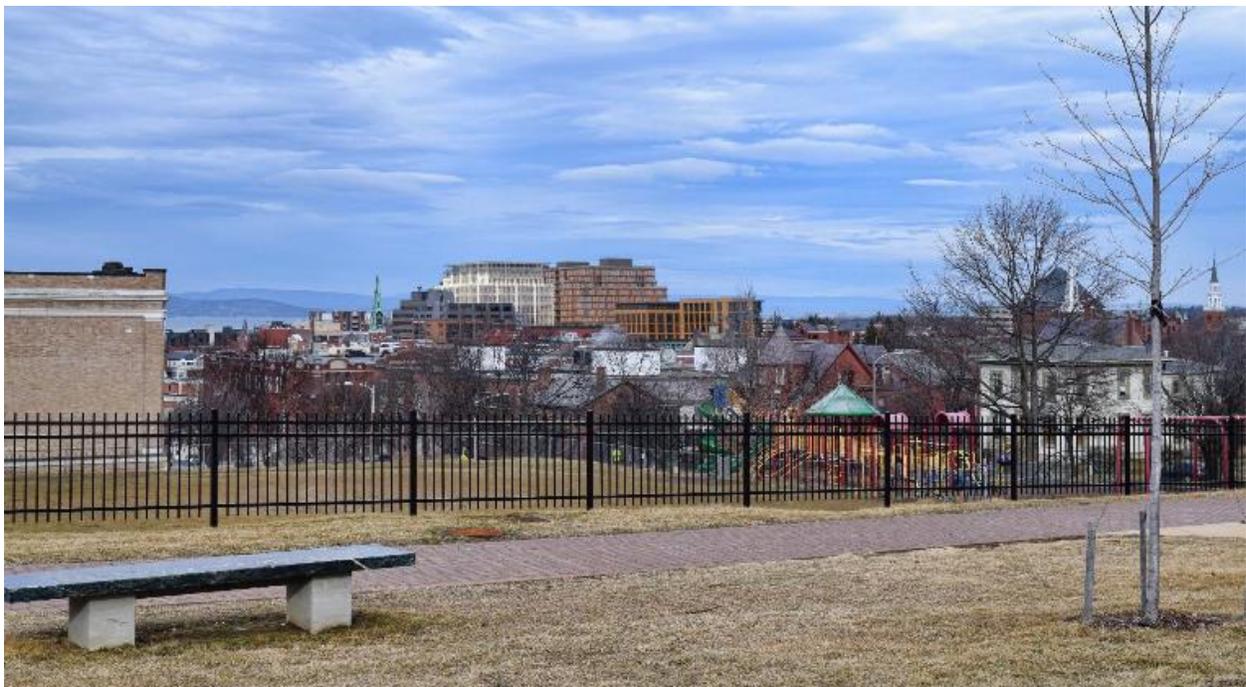
UPSHOT.

This all means setting and holding a limit on building height. In particular, it means not raising the present limit at all. This is a constraint, but also is an opportunity to live up to our reputation to be creatively green. And to engage and celebrate our place...in this place.

“BEFORE AND AFTER” IMAGES.

The Burlington images are all accessed through the City’s website; internet addresses are given. I also include two images from Champaign County, Illinois, for comparison.

THANK YOU.



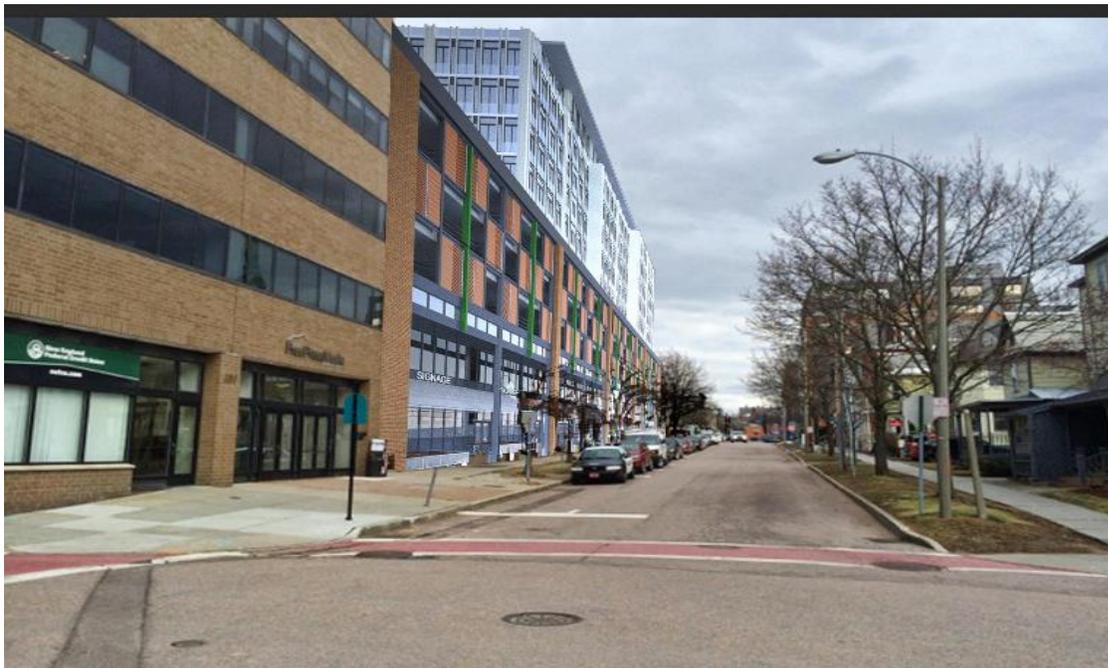
From Champlain College...before (top), after (bottom).

<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/CEDO/Files/btmall/all%20views%20combined.pdf>



From Lake Champlain...before (top), after (bottom).

<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/CEDO/Files/btvmall/all%20views%20combined.pdf>



Looking E on Bank St. from Pine St....before (top), after (bottom).

<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/CEDO/Files/btvmall/all%20views%20combined.pdf>



Looking N on St. Paul St. from Main St....before (top), after (bottom).

<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/CEDO/Files/btvmall/all%20views%20combined.pdf>



Looking N on St. Paul St. from Bank St....after

https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/CEDO/Files/btvmall/Presentation%202016_01_05_BURLINGTON.pdf



Looking E on Bank St. at corner of Pine....after

https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/CEDO/Files/btvmall/Presentation%202016_01_05_BURLINGTON.pdf



Champaign County, Illinois



Champaign, Illinois

MEMO: BURLINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: STEVE GOODKIND



6/7/2016

RE: MALL PARKING AND HEIGHT OPTIONS

One of the first promises made and subsequently broken by mall redevelopers was to replace their existing above ground 600 car parking structure with a 900 space below ground facility. Citing the cost of excavation, the project now includes a three story parking facility entirely above grade with a footprint that takes up almost the entire block of Cherry, Bank, Pine and St. Paul Streets.

Making matters even worse, this garage increases the height of the buildings that rest on top of it by three or four stories and pushes the "open space" on the site up to the fifth story above street level.

Up until now, the city administration has championed this plan for mall redevelopment by supporting "**spot zoning**" changes that will accommodate the above ground garage and the 150+ foot buildings rather than zoning changes that would allow a redevelopment more in character with our downtown. What is really needed is a zoning approach that allows/encourages parking to be provided off site, while retaining all the other requirements of our existing laws.

The concept is simple. The mall would provide some, but possibly even none of the required parking on site in an underground facility and/or above grade with buildings rapped around it. The remainder would be provided by increasing the capacity of existing parking lots and structures by adding decks and/or constructing a new facility on the Superblock. The developer would pay for this.

This can be done many ways. For illustrative purposes, here is just one example of the four elements of this concept:

1) The developer will provide half of the parking (450 spaces) onsite in an underground garage. This would require considerably less excavation and construction than 900 spaces.

2) The developer would participate in the construction of 450 offsite parking spaces at no cost to the city. Offsite candidates for expanded capacity could include the garage behind the Hilton, the Marketplace Garage, the Library lot, the lot behind Boves and the Superblock. Because these new spaces are above ground, they should be relatively economical to build.

3) The top elevations of buildings on the redevelopment site would be lowered by three or four stories because of the garage changes. They will be further reduced by spreading the building footprints over the entire site.

This gets things closer, however, other changes may be required to get the top elevations to fall within the existing zoning limit. Eliminating two floors of student housing might help. The developer would have to do whatever is required to earn height bonuses up to the limit of the existing ordinance.

4) The only zoning amendments needed are to allow the offsite parking options and closing the loophole that allows a small buyout option in lieu of inclusionary housing. (The parking piece may already be allowed without a zoning change).

This could work. To turn a phrase, we don't have to throw the entire bathtub out with the bathwater for this development. A good project can be accomplished within the rules and vision that we have in place.