



**29 Church St., Suite 3-5
Burlington, Vermont 05401
802-863-1175**

The Burlington Business Association, founded in 1978, is a non-profit, non-political membership organization with 200 business and non-profit members.

Our mission is to enhance and promote the economic vitality of Burlington, Vermont, and to assure that the City of Burlington continues as the cultural, social, political, educational and economic center of northwestern Vermont.

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September 29, 2015
David White
Director of Planning & Zoning
Department of Planning & Zoning
City Hall
Burlington, Vermont
05401

Dear David and Department of Planning and Zoning Staff:

The Burlington Business Association (BBA) is a membership-based organization with the mission of enhancing Burlington, VT's economic vitality. We advocate for community initiatives and special projects that we feel will benefit the local business community and the economic development of Burlington and the surrounding area.

The South End Action Group (SEAG) is a BBA committee made up of business leaders in the south end of town. On behalf of this group, we are reaching out to you with our feedback on the Plan BTV South End Draft document.

The Plan BTV South End Draft recommends solutions to existing issues with infrastructure, including streetscape improvements and mobility and access issues. We believe that with the growth of the Pine street corridor, the need for improvements to the street which encourage pedestrian and bicycle transportation by assuring safety for these modes of travel, including fixing sidewalks, enhancing greenbelts, improving bike lanes and creating traffic calming solutions should all be priorities that will help residents and visitors travel safely within the South End.

The intended development of the Champlain Parkway has the potential to solve some of the existing traffic and parking issues that are the result of Pine Street's use as a thoroughfare into the downtown of Burlington. Although we are in support of this project, there is the potential for construction to have a negative impact on small businesses in the short term, due to access issues (i.e. entrances to parking lots and entryways being hindered). The potential for the parkway to help alleviate traffic in front of the elementary school, and re-route truck traffic off of local streets would ultimately have positive impacts on the South End.



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Along with infrastructure improvements, we believe that Economic Development is a key aspect to be considered in the planning of the South End. Without adding housing to the enterprise zone, it is important to find other resources that will build the tax base and provide revenue to fund improvements. Tax producing entities are limited, and individual property taxes are already high. We believe it is important to undertake the treatment of brownfield sites so as to create more sites for future development. We fully support the re-zoning from light industrial to retail that is necessary in order for City Market to proceed with the development of their intended South End location.

Housing continues to be a critical issue for Burlington. We believe that the South End should be considered along with other parts of the city for housing development. We, along with other members of the business community believe that the high cost of housing and consistently low vacancy rate in Burlington are issues that urgently need to be addressed in order to ensure our city's economic future and enhance Burlington's ability to attract and retain employees at all levels.

Thank you for your work on the Plan BTV South End Draft. We believe the process of developing this draft plan and the resulting public dialogue has brought city attention to the South End, and has highlighted the importance of this cultural hub for all of Burlington. We are excited about the energy and growth of the arts, industry, community and the long-term sustainable evolution of this vibrant, unique neighborhood.

On behalf of our South End members, thank you for your time. Please feel free to reach out to me directly with your questions, comments or concerns.

Sincerely,

Kelly Devine
Executive Director

Russ Scully
Committee Chair & Owner of The Spot, WND + WVS