

**City of Barre, VT
Regular Meeting of the
Barre City Planning Commission
Thursday, October 8, 2026 at 5:30 PM**

Hybrid Participation (both in person and remotely via Zoom)

[Zoom Meeting Link](#)

Meeting ID: 831 3294 4524

Passcode: 381609

[Zoom Join Instructions](#)

AGENDA

Agenda Item #	Page No.	Description
1	-	Call to Order
2	-	Adjustments to the Agenda
3	-	Public comment (for something not on the agenda)
4	2	Consideration of Minutes of August 13, 2026
5		New Business
	3	TIF (Tax Increment Financing) Presentation by Carol Dawes, City Treasurer and TIF Consultant
6		Old Business
	4	Alcohol and Tobacco Retail Establishments Locations Discussion
		Discussion on potential revisions to the zoning map
		Discussion on Municipal Plan Consultant RFP
7		Set Base Agenda for upcoming Commission meeting
8		Confirmation of next meeting date of November 12, 2026
9		Executive Session – as needed
10	~~30~~ 32	Staff updates – as needed
11		Roundtable
12		Adjourn

To be approved at the 10/08/2026 meeting

Barre City Planning Commission
August 13, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Present: David Sichel (Chair), Wendy Ducey (Vice Chair), Cat Allen, Wilson Ballantyne, Erica Smith, Erica Rosset, Maddie Cobb

Staff: Janet Shatney, Planning Director

1. Call to Order: 5:30 pm.
2. Adjustments to the Agenda: None.
3. Public comment (for something not on the agenda): None.
4. Approval of Minutes for **July 9, 2026** regular meeting:
Allen moved and seconded, unanimous in favor.

5. New Business.

Cat Allen to present *Analysis of Tobacco Retail Establishments and Proposal for Future Regulation in Barre City*

Allen: An introduction, with a few goals to foster greater sense of civic pride. Hoping to change perceptions of downtown, attract and retain new residents. Projecting a healthy theme.

David: Inquiring about a comparison about a number of retailers between Barre and Burlington.

Allen: Will look into Chittenden county, Springfield, St Albans, Rutland, Bennington.

11 of the 17 primary retail options are in the commercial corridor of Main St.

Proposing that any changes that occur would grandfather any preexisting tobacco retailers to continue as is. Looking to focus on downtown revitalization.

Statistics discussed: since 2020 over 500 homes (over 5%) have been purchased as primary residencies. Average wage has increased. A growth of 16%. Poverty is dropping for the first time since 1990.

Discussion to create a classification for general tobacco retailers or explore some pre-existing options with Janet. A consideration for a poll to residents for feedback and a public hearing.

Sichel: looking at the time at 6:56pm. Explaining how this commission could work on topics between meetings in an appropriate way.

Smith and Allen volunteered to work together to continue research on this topic.

6. Old Business.

CVRPC Regional Plan and Future Land Use Mapping with Housing Targets

We are recommending the resolution to be put in front of the city council to sign up for tier 1 B.

Maddie motioned to recommend tier 1B to city council, seconded by Unanimous agreement.

7. Confirm Date of Next Meeting: **September 10, 2026**

8. Executive Session: Not needed

9. Staff Updates: None

10. Round Table: Allen seeking help on explaining Tax Increment Financing or TIF. Janet to present next month.

11. Adjourn:

Smith motion to adjourn, Cobb seconded, unanimous in favor.



Barre City TIF District

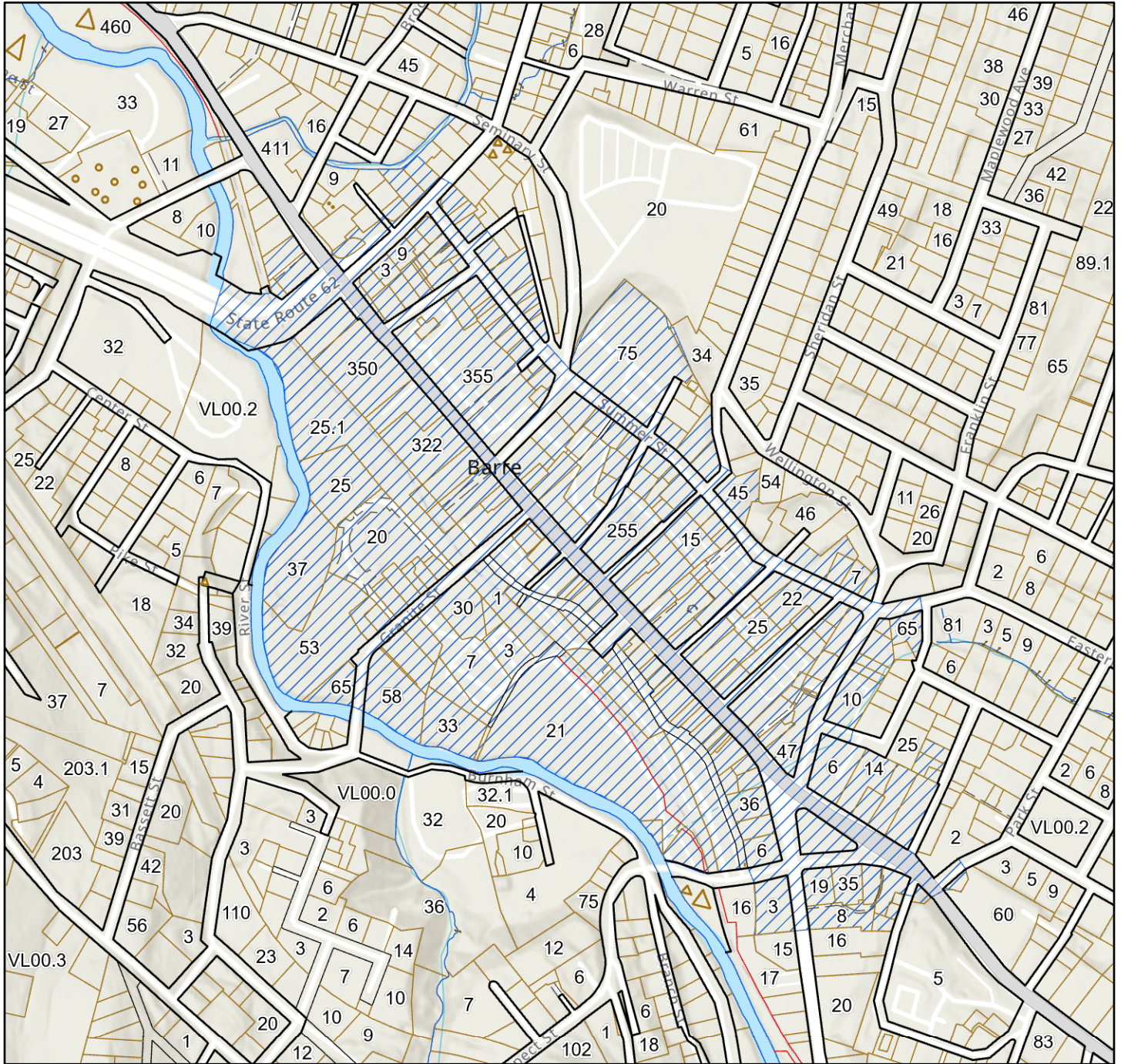
City of Barre, VT

1 inch = 541 Feet



www.cai-tech.com

October 2, 2026



Condo	Railroad	RoadNotPar
PWater	Right of Way	WaterLines
Private Road	Private Road ROW	TIF District
Property Line	PropNotPar	
Public Road	Property Hook	

Data shown on this map is provided for planning and informational purposes only. The municipality and CAI Technologies are not responsible for any use for other purposes or misuse or misrepresentation of this map.

ANALYSIS OF TOBACCO RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS AND PROPOSAL FOR FUTURE REGULATION IN BARRE CITY



PRESENTATION GOALS

- Recap **current goals** from the 2020 Municipal Plan
- Discuss tobacco retail density in Barre City and **economic effects**
- **Update mindset** of City demographics
- Propose a **new approach**



CURRENT CITY GOALS

PER 2020 MUNICIPAL PLAN

- Foster a greater sense of **civic pride** among Barre City residents
- Attract and **retain new residents**
- **Plan for a Healthy Future**
- Link economic development goals and strategies to **building a sustainable community** so that today's decisions and actions will not diminish the opportunities for future generations to live healthy and successful lives in the city
- **Make more “spaces”** (spaces designed for people to be in and enjoy) and **reduce the number and impact of “non-places”** (spaces designed for people to pass through as a means to an end)
- **Implement the city's land use strategies** as set forth in [the Municipal Plan], which identify and **establish policies for the downtown business district**, commercial zones, neighborhood commercial zones, industrial zones, and mixed-use zones



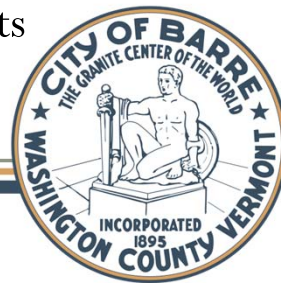
WHAT IS THE STANDARD?



Vermont 18+: Vermont Department of Health. [Vermont Tobacco and Alcohol Retail Audit](#). Apr. 2025. Accessed 10 August 2026

Vermont 21+: Estimated total population of 535,000 (21+) divided by 711 tobacco retailers per 2024 audit.

Barre 21+: Estimate is based on the 2020 census ratio. We can estimate roughly 6,780 of the 8,214 Barre City residents are eligible to purchase tobacco.



THERE ARE THAT MANY? YES.



17 Total Retailers



14 Sell Vapes



15 Sell Alcohol

**Mostly in the
Designated
Downtown**



WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

- **Barre only receives small portion of the revenue:** half of the licensing fee per year and 70% of the 1% in local options tax
- High tobacco density signals **social vulnerability and socioeconomic vulnerability** for new residents and businesses. Barre is perceived as a **risk for new investment**.
- Tobacco tax paid had dropped by \$33.6M since 2020 signaling consumption is down and that competition in this space is high. Retailers will fight for sales introducing **market fragmentation and local business instability** where tobacco is a large portion of planned income.
- These types of retail locations are not modeled to have shoppers linger. They represent spaces **designed for people to pass through** as a means to an end.
- **Variety and quality of Barre's downtown is an important** to attract new residents and maintain tourism

Revenue figures sourced from Vermont Department of Taxes from CTT-646 and CTT-642. Dated 2/9/26.

Perception of dense tobacco retail perception discussed in 2022 study "Associations of Alcohol and Tobacco Retail Outlet Rates with Neighborhood Disadvantage" from the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.



WHY FOCUS ON THIS NOW?

- **Barre is changing and we need to keep to capitalize on the momentum to attract new residents and focus on downtown revitalization to support a healthy local economy.**
- Since 2020:
 - Over 500 homes, 12% of the housing stock, have been purchased in the last 6 years representing **a possible 500 – 1000+ new homeowner residents**
 - Average wage has increased from \$36,178 to \$62,087, a **real wage growth of 16%**
 - Dept of Labor reports a **growth of 513 employees** in Barre businesses
 - Barre's **poverty rate is dropping** for the first time since 1990
 - Greenlight Real Estate estimates the **average home price has increased** by over \$110,000
 - Barre is one of the youngest cities in Vermont with an **average age in the early 40s**



SO WHAT CAN WE DO?

*“Although municipalities are limited because Vermont is a Dillon’s rule state, the Legislature has delegated to them authority to regulate alcohol and tobacco that is fairly expansive. Municipalities can enact local ordinances, create or amend governance charters, and utilize land use controls to regulate the sale, possession, and consumption of alcohol and tobacco... **Municipalities in Vermont tend to “do what they have always done,”** only looking at past successful practices.*

Given the multiple options potentially available to regulate alcohol and tobacco, municipalities could be more creative and aggressive in their approach moving forward.”



LET'S TRY SOMETHING NEW

- Using new **land use classifications**, Barre can:
 - **Reduce clustering** by implementing location buffers between licensed tobacco retailers
 - **Increase incentives** for specialty businesses to come to Barre
 - **Protect vulnerable-focused locations** like schools, parks, and senior living by implementing sensitive use areas
- The following slides are suggestions with drafted classification language meant to initiate conversation



LET'S TRY SOMETHING NEW

The goal is not to eliminate these regulated products from the community or Downtown District, **but to reduce clustering** and allow the downtown to function more closely to the goals identified in our Municipal Plan



LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

General Tobacco Retailer

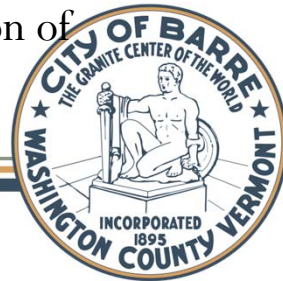
- Any establishment licensed to sell tobacco products through a State-issued Tobacco license offering tobacco or nicotine products and does not meet the definition of a Tobacco Specialty Retailer, Convenience Store, or Grocer
- Includes, but is not limited to:
 - Convenience stores
 - Smoke or vape shops
 - Business with more than 10% of floor area or display dedicated to the sale of tobacco products



LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

Tobacco Specialty Retailer

- A retail establishment authorized to sell tobacco products through a State-issued Tobacco license, with a focus on small-scale or specialty production
- No more than 30% of the floor area or display shall be devoted to the sale of tobacco products, and such establishments are characterized by the sale of cigars, pipe tobacco, and roll-your-own products
- Cigarettes, vapes, and e-nicotine delivery devices shall be allocated no more than 10% of the floor area or display
- No drive-through sales or self-service displays are accessible to customers
- An establishment shall not qualify as a Tobacco Specialty Retailer if it also meets the definition of a Cannabis Retailer



LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

Cannabis Retailer

- Any establishment licensed to sell recreational use cannabis products



LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

Grocer

- Any establishment with the primary purpose of selling fresh, prepared, and packaged food for off-site consumption and household goods. It may offer retail sales of tobacco or alcoholic products for off-site consumption, if licensed by the State of Vermont, as an accessory use.
- Business with a minimum of 70% of floor area dedicated to the sale of fresh, prepared, and packaged food
- A minimum of 20% of the floor area shall be dedicated to the sale of fresh food categorized as:
 - Fresh produce
 - Dairy, including milk and cheese
 - Raw meat



LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

Grocer

- No more than 10% of the floor area or display shall be devoted to the sale of tobacco
- Includes, but is not limited to:
 - Grocery stores
 - Markets
 - Bodegas



LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

Convenience Store (Update to Existing)

- An establishment that sells a limited line of staple food, packaged food, and convenience items primarily for off-site consumption. It may offer prepared foods or drinks for immediate consumption either on-site or for take-out as an accessory use. **It may offer retail sales of tobacco, if licensed by the State of Vermont, as an accessory use.**
- **To meet this classification, no more than 20% of the floor area or display shall be devoted to the sale of tobacco products**



LIKE-USE BUFFERS

General Tobacco Retailers and standalone Convenience Stores with Tobacco Retailer licenses shall not be located within **750 feet** of another business with an active Tobacco Retailer license. Distance shall be measured in a straight line from the nearest point of the structure containing the proposed use to the nearest point of the structure of any existing such use.

Cannabis Retailers shall not be located within **1,500** feet of another such use. Distance shall be measured in a straight line from the nearest point of the structure containing the proposed use to the nearest point of the structure of any existing such use.



LIKE-USE BUFFERS

Cannabis Retailers shall not be located within **750 feet** of a General Tobacco Retailer. Distance shall be measured in a straight line from the nearest point of the structure containing the proposed use to the nearest point of the structure of any existing such use.

Tobacco Specialty Retailers **shall be exempt** from minimum separation requirements, provided they do not meet the definition of a General Tobacco Retailer

Properties with combined Convenience Store and Fueling Station uses and Grocers **shall be exempt** from minimum separation requirements



AND SENSITIVE-USE SPACES...

- Spaces in the Downtown Review Overlay District or classified as a Civic location, which include **any public or quasi-public facility or facility supporting a vulnerable population**, including, but not limited to:
 - Community Facilities, as defined in 1104, except municipal parks with an area less than 10,000 square feet
 - Public libraries as recognized by the State's Department of Libraries
 - Rehabilitation services or residential treatment facilities, as defined in 3228
 - Senior Housing
 - Assisted Living
 - Group Home
- Once defined, consider establishing a buffer around Sensitive-Use spaces



AND SENSITIVE USE SPACES...

Tobacco Specialty Retailers shall not be located within **500 feet** of designated Sensitive-Use spaces. Distance shall be measured in a straight line from the nearest point of the structure containing the proposed use to the nearest point of the property boundary of the Sensitive Use.

General Tobacco Retailers and Cannabis Retailers shall not be located within **750 feet** of designated Sensitive-Use spaces. Distance shall be measured in a straight line from the nearest point of the structure containing the proposed use to the nearest point of the property boundary of the Sensitive Use.



AND SENSITIVE USE SPACES...

Convenience Stores and Grocers with regulatory substance licenses, including tobacco and tobacco enhancement, shall not be located within **500 feet** of designated Sensitive-Use spaces. Distance shall be measured in a straight line from the nearest point of the structure containing the proposed use to the nearest point of the property boundary of the Sensitive Use.



WHAT HAPPENS TO EXISTING SHOPS?

Nothing. They continue to operate as they have been.

If a new policy is adopted, Planning Commission can decide if these businesses are non-conforming or if the policies only impact new licensees moving forward



SUMMARY

These updates are intended to:

- **Prevent new tobacco retailers** in the downtown and DROD based on the current market saturation
- **Support the character and economic vitality** of the Downtown District by encouraging businesses where the Tobacco offerings are either specialized or incidental and subordinate to their primary retail offerings
- **Promote public health and safety** by establishing Sensitive Use areas
- Maintain a balanced mix of commercial activity to **encourage Vermonters and tourists to spend time in our Designated Downtown.**



SUMMARY

Our objective for downtown should not be maximizing the number of businesses.

Instead, we should focus on:

Creating a downtown environment capable of attracting and retaining repeat visitors, residents, businesses, and new diverse retail and quality of life investment.



ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Should updates include language to signage like logos displaying tobacco use or less available signage space?
- Should other age-restricted products also be classified? This could include retail alcohol and weapons.



Downtown Business & Development Community Survey

Barre City Planning Commission is seeking community input on the current mix of businesses in the downtown area and residents' vision for its future. The purpose of this survey is to better understand what residents value about downtown, what they would like to see more of, and whether there are aspects of the current business mix they believe should change.

1. How would you describe your overall satisfaction with the current mix of businesses in downtown Barre City from Dente Park to City Hall park with the gazebo?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Not sure

2. Are there any types of businesses or establishments that you believe are overrepresented in downtown?

Please list any that come to mind.

3. Are there any types of businesses or establishments that you would like to see more of downtown?

Please list any that come to mind.

4. How well do you feel the current mix of businesses in downtown reflects the historical character of Barre's downtown?

- Very well
- Somewhat well
- Neither well nor poorly
- Somewhat poorly
- Very poorly
- Not sure

5. How well do you feel the current mix of businesses in downtown reflects the needs of our community?

- Very well
- Somewhat well
- Neither well nor poorly
- Somewhat poorly
- Very poorly
- Not sure

6. Thinking about the future of downtown, which of the following is most important to you? Select your top three.

- Attracting a greater variety of businesses
- Filling vacant storefronts
- Attracting businesses that reflect the character and values of the community
- Increasing locally owned businesses
- Creating more opportunities for dining, shopping, and entertainment
- Creating more family-oriented businesses and activities
- Maintaining the current mix of businesses
- Other: _____

- Not sure

Staff Updates for October 8, 2026 Packet

- The DRB did not meet in August, as the Barre Evangelical Church has not come back with revisions to their application as requested by them. They did meet at their October meeting to conduct the business of approving a Decision and minutes.
- The DRB's next meeting was for November 5, 2026 and their deadline for any hearing was Friday, October 2, 2026. No new applications were received, therefore they will not meet in November.
- In Assessing, now that the appeal process is underway, the BCA (Board of Civil Authority) began hearing assessment appeals on Wednesday, September 30th, and will continue into December. Anyone wishing to grieve now must utilize next year's process.
- FEMA buyout status: This week the demolition began on Scampini Square, beginning the removal of the 2 vacant apartment buildings known as 5 and 15 Scampini, along the river.
- Outstanding FEMA buyouts are now all approved! The 3 applications that got stalled with FEMA from the government shutdowns have not all just recently been awarded. We now have all 27 that we applied for in 2024 now approved and under grant condition.
- The City has received CDBG-DR funding for \$4.2M under Agency of Commerce's Round 3 applications for a public-private project that seeks to subdivide a portion (Wobby Park area) of City property that will then be sold to a developer who will then construct 17 townhomes for sale to income eligible buyers. The project also involves the City purchasing two commercial buildings along North Main Street adjacent to the Public Safety Building parcel for demolition as part of floodplain restoration.
- We have heard that the grant award from CDS (Congressionally Directed Spending) funding for the Harrington Avenue Debris Rack and Floodplain project has been approved through the remaining RFI's, and are just now waiting to receive the actual grant.

These are the high points that have been happening these last few weeks, thanks.