



TOWN OF WILLISTON

7900 Williston Road
Williston VT 05495
802-876-1168

May 12, 2025

Vermont General Assembly
112 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633
Attn: House Committee on Ways & Means

Re: S.127 Provision to Sunset TIF District Program

Dear Members of the House Ways & Means Committee,

The Town of Williston urges you not to sunset Vermont's existing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program. While we are encouraged by the progress of the CHIP bill and agree that it could become a useful tool to encourage the development of primary homes for low- and middle-income households, CHIP is not a substitute for TIF. The two programs serve different, complementary purposes and achieve fundamentally different outcomes.

CHIP is structured to support project-specific housing development. It may help unlock certain parcels that are ready for vertical construction but does not support the kind of integrated, infrastructure-led planning that TIF enables. TIF, by contrast, is a transformative tool for municipalities to carry out cohesive, long-term investments across entire districts—unlocking land, catalyzing private development, and achieving statewide goals around smart growth, affordability, and sustainable downtown revitalization.

Williston has spent the past several years preparing to responsibly and effectively use a TIF District. Our town is seeing the payoff of decades of planning to direct growth into our designated growth center and discourage sprawl. This includes securing our growth center designation in 2006, adopting a [future vision plan in 2021](#) and form-based code in 2022, and making major local investments in planning and visioning for our Taft Corners area.

Today, this area that would constitute our district remains dramatically underutilized—yet it holds enormous potential. With a TIF District, Williston could unlock thousands of new housing units, including a significant share affordable to the missing middle; young families, teachers, public safety workers, and retail employees who currently struggle to find housing where they work. Act 181 established housing goals for the state and region, Williston's draft mid-and High production goals by 2050 are 2,807 and 4,212. Neither of these benchmarks are possible without TIF. The high up-front cost of critical infrastructure is a major impediment to development. Without municipally-led construction of new grid streets and necessary wastewater infrastructure in Taft Corners, the needed development will not occur. TIF is one of the only tools available in Vermont that can close this infrastructure gap without burdening already strained municipal budgets and taxpayers.



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By contrast, CHIP is not designed to fund infrastructure on this scale, nor does it support the coordinated planning and placemaking necessary to build an inclusive, walkable downtown. South Burlington's Market Street is a clear example of what's possible with TIF: over 500 homes built over the last couple years, with hundreds more on the way—an outcome simply not achievable under CHIP.

Chittenden County faces enormous housing pressure, and Williston, as a regional hub, is ready to do our part. Sunsetting TIF now would send a discouraging signal: that Vermont is retreating from its commitments to redevelopment, revitalization, and smart, climate-conscious growth. TIF doesn't take from the Education Fund unless you assume all development would happen anyway. In reality, these projects don't pencil out without TIF. In Williston's case, we are confident that the development under consideration will not occur—or will happen in a far less coordinated, less affordable, and less sustainable way—without this tool.

The TIF program is already limited, with only four districts remaining under statute. It would be far more prudent to evaluate the future of the program once those remaining slots have been allocated and as CHIP's outcomes become clearer. Ending the program prematurely cuts off one of the most effective tools Vermont has to grow its grand list, increase housing supply, and meet its land use and climate goals.

Williston has spent four years and tens of thousands of dollars preparing a responsible, high-impact TIF application. We ask you not to dismiss this effort or the proven value of this program.

Respectfully,

Edward Kenney

Ted Kenney, Chair
Williston Selectboard

Erik Wells

Erik Wells,
Town Manager

CC: Representative Erin Brady, Representative Angela Arsenault, Representative Bridget Burkhardt, Senator Ginney Lyons, Senator Thomas Chittenden, Senator Kesha Ram-Hinsdale, Charlie Baker, CCRPC Executive Director