

## **Comments of Thompson's Point Leaseholders Association Steering Committee on the Land Use Regulations (LURs) Proposed Changes**

August 21, 2025

Members: Fran Stoddard, Co-President, Beth Humstone, Co-President, John Lawlis Vice President, Dean Williams, Treasurer, Erin Hanley, Secretary, Christine Colby Giraudo, Leaseholder, Jessie Price, Leaseholder, Charlie Russell, Leaseholder

*This document represents consensus of the members of the Committee. Individual members of the committee and other leaseholders may have additional points of view.*

### **COMMENTS ON THE AUGUST 28, 2024 DRAFT CHANGES**

In August of 2024 a draft of the changes to the LURs affecting the Seasonal Home Management District was presented and discussed by the Charlotte Planning Commission (PC). ([https://charlottevt.org/vertical/sites/%7B797C5C63-8973-48DF-A5F9-82DC6FAE7EDF%7D/uploads/Redline version of Table 2.7 LURs amends -- rev. 7 8.28.24\(1\).pdf](https://charlottevt.org/vertical/sites/%7B797C5C63-8973-48DF-A5F9-82DC6FAE7EDF%7D/uploads/Redline%20version%20of%20Table%202.7%20LURs%20amends%20rev.%207%208.28.24(1).pdf)).

Our comments address the proposed LURs as they stand in that document.

We are appreciative of the progress that is being made to the amendments to Table 2.7 of the LURs that govern the changes that leaseholders can make to their lots upon application to the town for a zoning permit or conditional use approval. We note that these changes will be applicable to leaseholders making such applications and are not retroactively applied to other leaseholders.

What Are We Trying To Do (reference: Charlie Pughe's Framing of Amendments)

[https://charlottevt.org/vertical/sites/%7B797C5C63-8973-48DF-A5F9-82DC6FAE7EDF%7D/uploads/Notes for Edits on 9 5 2024.pdf](https://charlottevt.org/vertical/sites/%7B797C5C63-8973-48DF-A5F9-82DC6FAE7EDF%7D/uploads/Notes%20for%20Edits%20on%209%205%202024.pdf)

As leaseholders we are very concerned about preserving the unique character of this seasonal home community which has been inhabited by camps through leases for over 130 years. Thompsons Point has served as the town's poor farm; the land has been farmed for over a century and to this day there are fields that are mowed for hay. In addition to the over 130 densely-settled seasonal camps, there are large fields that are used for on site sewage disposal, a wastewater treatment facility, a water utility, a road network of 5 roads (Thompsons Pt Rd, North Shore Rd, Association Way, Flat Rock Rd, and Lanes Lane), a clubhouse and two areas with tennis courts, and a network of trails through woodland. There are six town access points including Whiskey Bay where there is parking.

We are concerned about the protection of the fragile environment of Thompson's Point (TP) and the need to balance such concerns with the active life of seasonal residents and townspeople in this very compactly developed area. There is also an emerging concern as to how we are going to maintain our camps, many of which are nearly or over 100 years old. In addition, in this time of climate change with its shifts in weather

patterns that are causing flooding and creating erosion, we are often confronted with the need to make alterations to our leased lots for our personal and building safety and the protection of the environment. We hope the Planning Commission will keep this in mind as they work on the changes to the LURs.

Finally, we ask that the Planning Commission keep in mind the requirements of the state Shoreland Protection Act and of our leases to avoid inconsistencies and duplication.

We are supportive of the following changes:

1. Revisions to the Purpose Clause (Table 2.7.A.) In addition, we suggest adding the word “unduly” before “adversely affect” in subsection (5).
2. Accessory Structures allowed as a Permitted Use (Table 2.7.C. 2 & 3)
3. Minimum Setback/Shore, see (F)(9). However, we think that the 95.5ft referenced is the mean water level, not the mean “high” water level. Whatever the standard you use should be consistent throughout the regulations for all shoreline setbacks.
4. (F) District Standard: (1)

We have these concerns:

1. (F)(2): Table 2.7. C.2 relates to “accessory structures” and refers to F(2) which changes “accessory structures” to “utility sheds.” This should be consistent but perhaps more important why are accessory structures limited to utility sheds in this amendment? Many of the accessory structures provide sitting/study areas, some provide bedrooms which are counted towards the occupancy limit, and some are garages. Utility sheds would preclude uses that already exist and have been there for decades. We recommend revising “utility sheds” to “accessory structures.”
2. (F)(3): “extended use” needs to be defined. Tents should continue to be excluded from this provision.
3. (F)(5): “No existing or proposed use or activity shall result in soil erosion or adversely impact wildlife habitat areas.” Soil erosion is of great concern to the leaseholders and we are supportive of that provision. We are concerned about the broad language regarding impacting “wildlife habitat areas.” These areas are not defined. There is wildlife all over TP. When we are in residence, wildlife activity is more limited for some wildlife, but still very active for others. How would the DRB determine if a project would have an impact on wildlife habitat during the six months of our occupation of the camps? We think this part of the standard should be deleted. Nevertheless, implementing ecologically sound, scientifically based development controls is important and will foster the best wildlife environment possible given the existing density of camps, roads, trails, and lake access. Existing requirements, town and state, limiting the area under a roof, impervious area, building height, accessory structures, erosion prevention, maintenance of vegetative cover, and tree pruning and removal are adequate;

further restrictions are unnecessary and have the effect of devaluing our lots while not providing ecological, conservation, or wildlife benefits.

4. (F)(8)(a):
  - a. We are confused by this language. It refers to “the building footprint that is covered by a roof, including porches and decks.” The definition of “building footprint” in the LURs is: “The area of land physically occupied by a building on the ground, including any deck, porch, or other appurtenant structure attached to the building, and any area of land over which any portion of a building or appurtenant structure overhangs. The building footprint does not include uncovered patios, walkways, driveways, landscaping or other unattached structures.” This definition specifically excludes unattached structures. So we assume that the 7% coverage limitation under this provision only applies to the principal structure (ie. seasonal dwelling) and not to accessory buildings that are unattached. Was that the PC intent? We think it should be made clear that the coverage restriction applies to the seasonal dwelling as well as accessory structures.
  - b. We think the standard should be amended to say, “...does not exceed 7% or the size of the existing footprint of the seasonal dwelling and accessory structures” whichever is greater. Table 2.7. (E) should be amended to reflect this revision as well.
5. (G) District Design Review Standards. We appreciate the singling out of the Thompsons Point Historic District for design review and the removal of this requirement for the rest of the leaseholders’ lots. We would like to see (1) and (2) in the proposed draft also inserted into the DR B’s conditional use review standards so that the rest of TP still has this level of scrutiny. Further, we would like to see (2) reworded to say, “The project shall identify any existing unique natural features on site.”
6. Side yard setbacks: we had been waiting for the revised maps of TP in order to address this issue. We have expressed in previous communications to the PC our concern with the unworkability of the current 50 foot side yard setback in many camp lots for both seasonal dwellings and accessory structures. We now would like the side yard setbacks to be changed to 25 feet. We will present a map that illustrates our reasoning.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our comments.