Plainfield East Village Expansion Execution Report

Final report from the East Village Expansion Advisory Committee to the Plainfield Select Board

December 2025

Introduction:

In March of 2025, the Plainfield Select Board chartered the East Village Expansion Advisory Committee (EVEAC) to:

> develop a financially feasible plan for the Select Board to implement that will create infrastructure and sellable lots for a new neighborhood East of the current Lower Village, on 23.9 acres of land currently owned by Syringa Investments LLC and Pigeon Pond LLC, with the following goals:
>
> 1) Re-house those affected by the floods of July 2023 and July 2024;
> 2) Provide additional, affordable housing amidst Vermont's housing crisis;
> 3) Include a mix of single-family homes, multiplexes, tiny houses and apartments;
> 4) Revitalize the town, prioritizing flood-displaced and other Plainfield residents and those who have made significant contributions to the town;
> 5) Restore lost tax base;
> 6) Expand the Water and Wastewater user base;
> 7) Determine a timeline according to what makes the most sense logistically, ecologically, and financially:
> 8) Place infrastructure as early as possible, so that buyers can design and construct homes as early as possible;
> 9) Be cost-neutral to the Town;
> 10) Create public, common, and open space and paths that enrich the lives of Plainfield residents.[1]

The charter included several aspects that were not possible to accomplish due to certain prerequisites not being met, specifically:

- Developing all permits
- A fully actionable lot sales plan, with specific lot pricing
- While a public vote on the land purchase bond was held, a public vote was not held on the project as a whole.

This final report contains the EVEAC's sum of collective wisdom and planning, based upon careful consideration of all available data to-date. As noted in each section, not all EVEAC members agree on every part of this plan.

[1] EVEAC Charter: https://www.plainfieldvt.gov/uploads/8/1/0/6/81063668/east_village_expansion_advisory_committee.pdf

The report as a whole was passed by the EVEAC on December 3rd, 2025 by a vote of 10 in favor, and one was absent.

Outline of this Report:

Our understanding of the EVEAC Charter calls for the EVEAC to develop plans for the following project aspects:

1) Overall Timelines and Sequencing of Steps
2) Project Design
3) Detailed Budget & Financing Options
4) Project Management Plan
5) Lots Sales Plan
6) Permitting Plan

This report is organized with one section for each aspect/plan.

1) Overall Timelines and Sequencing of Steps

A detailed Gantt-chart timeline is provided as Appendix A. While this timeline uses fixed dates, it is based upon an assumption of full project funding being secured by January 2026. If full funding were to be secured later, the timeline would need to shift back accordingly.

Generally, the timeline would proceed as follows:

1) Finalize Project Design based upon revised permitting and public input
2) Issue Final Engineering RFP and hire an Engineer
3) Permitting (Local DRB + Storm Water)
4) Project Management
5) Construction
6) Lot Sales

This outline and Gantt chart are based upon many assumptions. Some delays are likely.

10 members of the EVEAC found this section to be generally accurate and complete, and 0 did not. One member was absent.

2) Project Design

At the time of this final report, some significant aspects of the design parameters are in flux, specifically:

- Final wetlands permitting rules, per Vermont EO 06-25 (see Section 6 – Permitting)
- Project revenue needs based upon grant funding received.

Once these parameters are known, based upon them, the 2025-2-19 schematic should be revised, presented to the public via online survey (with paper and in-person meeting options) in 1-2 rounds, and then finalized.

10 members of the EVEAC found this section to be generally accurate and complete, and 0 did not. One member was absent.

3) Detailed Budget & Financing Options

A detailed budget for this project, as submitted with the Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery application (CDBG-DR), is included as Appendix B.

Additional financing options include (none of which are specific recommendations):

I. Other Grants: The EVE continues to be a Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) Priority Project and should thus be seen as a strong proposal for additional grant funding options, including:
   A. Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery, Round 2
   B. Community Development Block Grant (not Disaster Recovery)
   C. Northern Borders Regional Commission
   D. State Clean Water and Drinking Water revolving loan funds and grants.

II. Vermont Community and Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP): This new program uses a simplified form of tax-increment financing (TIF) to specifically pay for housing infrastructure, such as is contemplated for the EVE. The funding terms are favorable and have been abundantly authorized by the State. There are 2 steps to CHIP:
   A. Applying for CHIP authorization to the State to use both incremental municipal and school property tax funds for 20 years for debt repayment to place the infrastructure. Requires an affirmative vote to submit by the Select Board.

   B. Debt financing – The type of debt is relatively flexible under CHIP. It need not be the town that borrows or a public organization that provides the

financing. If the debt is municipal debt, it would require a town vote, like any other bonding. If the debt is not municipal (e.g. private debt taken out by a developer), no town vote would be required.

III. Lot Sale Revenue: With an exemption from Vermont wetland rules under Vermont Executive Order 06-25 for the project lands, expanding the project scale to include more sellable land would increase project revenue over what it would cost to add more lots.

None of these financing options are mutually exclusive, so any/all of them could be used at the same time. Our observations are that land sale revenues and housing value tax revenue affect the feasibility of this project and that there are differing opinions about what is desirable vs feasible.

10 members of the EVEAC found this section to be generally accurate and complete, and 0 did not. One member was absent.

4) Project Management

There are several aspects of this project which will require specific, detailed management. These could be carried out by a single person, but may be more efficiently carried out by multiple people with different, more specialized skill sets.

A) Design/Engineering – This will be the work of developing a final lot and infrastructure layout (per Section 2 of this plan) and confirming that final engineering conforms with this layout and goals.

B) Grant/Funder Management and Reporting – Depending on the funding sources used, this could be a significant or minimal amount of work. Large federal grants will have significant reporting criteria. A project using no federal funding will require much less work.

C) Permitting Management – See Section 6 on permitting for details. Many aspects of permitting have been resolved to-date. The most significant aspect remaining is expected to be Plainfield Development Review Board (DRB) review under the Subdivision zoning criteria, which will require public presentation of the discussion with the Plainfield DRB and possible design modifications.

D) Infrastructure Construction Management – This will be the work of checking that construction occurs according to plans and making work order changes needed based upon the actual site conditions that occur. Construction could take 5-10 months,

depending on how well the various trades are coordinated, how many contingencies occur in the field (e.g. do we hit ledge that requires blasting?), and if excess soil from grading work can be "wasted" on-site or has to be trucked away (the impact of this is larger than it would seem).

Some of the construction work will have to be certified by professional engineers and should be included in the Phase 2 engineering bid contract. Most of the day-to-day work of monitoring construction could be carried out by a professional Clerk of the Works and/or Owner's Rep, depending upon the budget available.

The Town Roads Foreman, Roads Commissioner, Town Water & Wastewater System Chief Operator, and the Water & Wastewater Commission have all requested to be actively involved both during the design and the construction to make sure that the project is designed and built with efficient long-term operation and maintenance in mind.

Generally, construction would proceed as follows, once the final construction contracts have been executed:

1) General grading of site, access ways, and stormwater management. This process will be extensive.
2) Trenching for installation of underground utilities (water, sewer, maybe power and data).
3) Installation of underground utilities with engineering review prior to burying.
4) Road bedding and stormwater management installation
5) Road Toppings
6) Home construction may be able to begin.
7) Sidewalks and trees

Thoughts and considerations about engineering and construction to-date are contained in a letter from Engineering Ventures provided as Appendix C.

E) Lot Sales – Extensive survey work will be required to clearly mark all lots and public lands. Open market lot sales should be carried out by a professional realtor, as determined by an open bidding process. Commission on many lots like this are likely to be in the 3 – 5% of total sales revenue range.

If any lots are given to qualified low-to-moderate income individuals, this would best be handled using a codified process through an affordable housing partner such as Downstreet Housing and Community Development.

F) Housing Development – Lots sold or granted directly to housing developers (non-profit or for-profit) as part of the project development will obviously not require further sale, but coordinating the needs of these partners will be required to make sure both that they can deliver and that they do deliver.

Lots sold or granted to individuals and developers will need clawback and occupancy provisions both to ensure housing development and discourage lot sale speculation.

10 members of the EVEAC found this section to be generally accurate and complete, and 0 did not. One member was absent.

5) Lots Sales Plan

Per Section 4, open market lot sales should be carried out by a professional realtor, as determined by an open bidding process. Commission on many lots like this are likely to be in the 3 – 5% of total sales revenue range.

If any lots are given away or sold at a reduced price to qualified low-to-moderate income individuals, this would best be handled using a codified process through an affordable housing partner such as Downstreet Housing and Community Development. Special considerations could be offered to people who were displaced by flooding and/or previous/current residents of Plainfield if such standards are codified and uniformly applied (such as within a scoring rubric for applicants).

Advertisement for lots sales will likely require a **multi-channel approach** to maximize visibility and ensure strong sales across both income-qualified and market-rate buyers.

1. Social Media & Digital Promotion

- Promote the project website on **Front Porch Forum** and **Facebook**, targeting central Vermont communities and flood-impacted towns.
- Link posts to the **Town of Plainfield website** and share through nonprofit and partner networks.
- Incorporate media coverage and updates into posts to drive engagement.

2. Media Coverage

- Leverage strong existing press (Boston Globe, Washington Post, Inside Climate Change, Times-Argus, VT Digger, The Bridge).
- Issue **press releases** at key milestones (lot release, groundbreaking, partnerships).
- Continue cultivating local and national press relationships.

3. Direct Mail

- Send **flyers/postcards** to residents of Plainfield, Marshfield, East Montpelier, and Montpelier.
- Messaging will emphasize affordability, community rebuilding, and resiliency.
- *(Budget confirmation required for printing and postage.)*

4. Realtor Partnerships

- Explore collaboration with local realtors for MLS listings and expanded exposure.

5. Not-for-Profit Partnerships

- Collaborate with **Downstreet Housing**, **Habitat for Humanity**, **Hope Coalition**, and other nonprofits specializing in low-to-moderate-income housing.

- Use partner outreach to identify income-qualified buyers and support them through the process.

6. Local Signage & Postering

- Place posters and signs in Plainfield and neighboring towns at high-visibility community hubs (libraries, cafes, town halls, community boards).

7. Outreach to Existing Prospects

- Personally follow up with the **prospective buyers** already identified.
- Provide updates, invite them to events, and maintain engagement throughout the sales process.

8. Paid Advertising

- Run **targeted ads** in regional print outlets, on local TV/radio, and possibly through digital placements.

10 members of the EVEAC found this section to be generally accurate and complete, and 0 did not. One member was absent.

6) Permitting Plan

The project has received preliminary determinations on several important aspects of permitting and, at present, is expected to need limited additional permitting.

Required Permitting:

A) State Stormwater Permit – Handled by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), the project has undergone an initial stormwater permitting review. While final engineering designs are still to-be-developed, and will be subject to the standard ANR permit review, no major challenges or obstacles are foreseen.

B) Plainfield Development Review Board (DRB) – As a subdivision, the project is permitted by Plainfield Zoning Regulations[2], and will require submission of a plat to the Plainfield DRB and multiple public hearings. A desktop traffic study has been performed showing no concerns and the project designs to-date have been drafted according to the lots size and setback rules that are contained in Plainfield's Zoning Regulations and thus no major challenges or obstacles are foreseen.

[2] https://www.plainfieldvt.gov/uploads/8/1/0/6/81063668/2025-03-24__zoning_adopted_03-04-2025.pdf

Permitting Likely Not Required:

A) Act 250 – The project is in a Neighborhood Development Area and has received an Act 250 Jurisdictional Opinion that it is (as of the date of this report) exempt if construction begins prior to January 2027.

B) State Wetlands – Vermont Executive Order 06-25 has prompted the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources to draft new wetlands regulations that, if adopted, would exempt the project from State wetlands review.[3]

C) Federal Wetlands – Due to a Supreme Court ruling (*Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency*) and subsequent guidance issued by the Army Corps and EPA, any wetlands on this project site are not subject to federal jurisdiction.[4]

D) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – The project has submitted a full, 12-part NEPA review as part of the CDBG-DR grant application and no significant items were found.

10 members of the EVEAC found this section to be generally accurate and complete, and 0 did not. One member was absent.

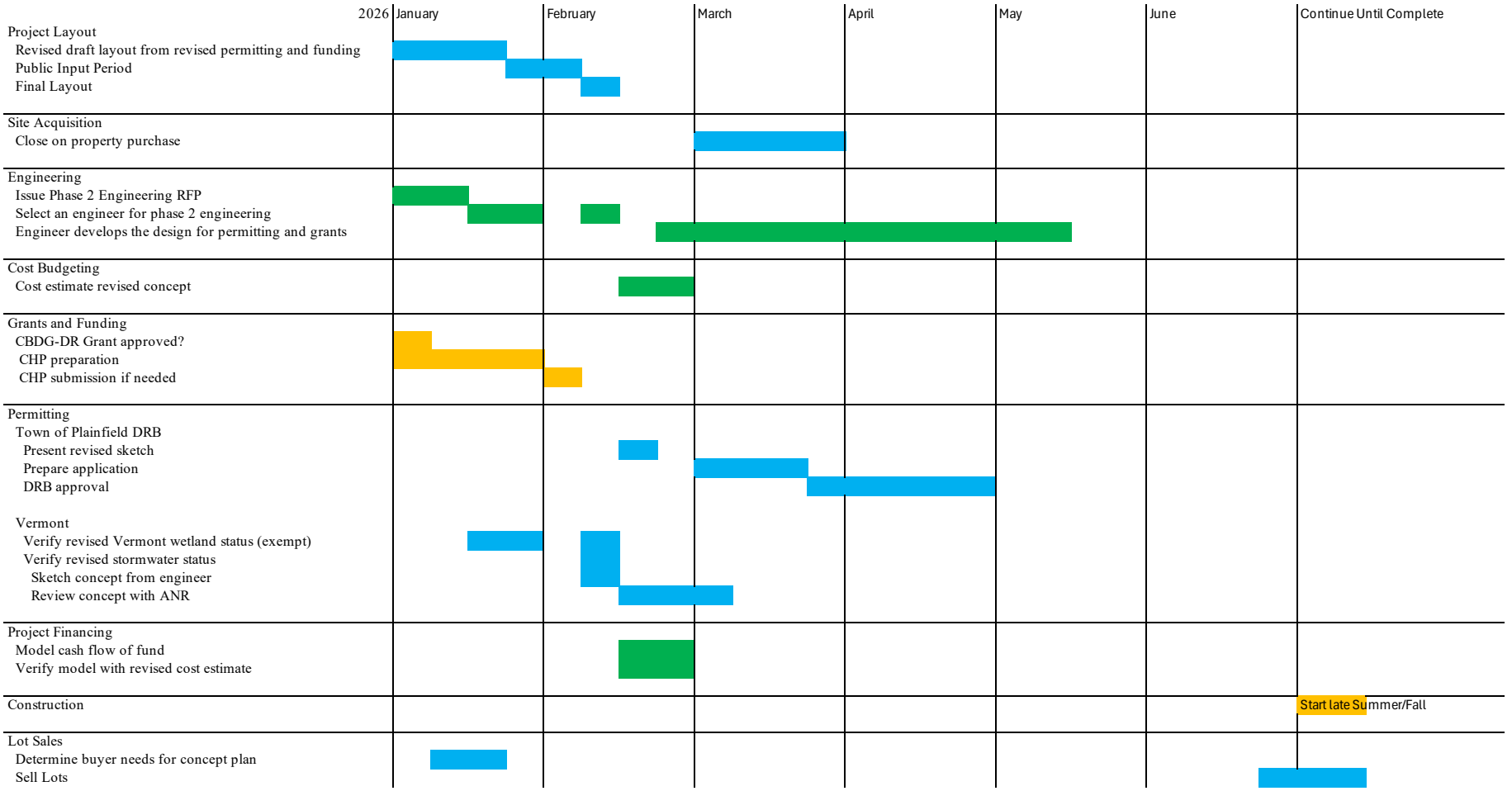
In conclusion, while this report considers many aspects of the project and the goals of this Committee, it is neither a feasibility study nor an analysis of the community politics of this project. There is a lot more to this project than is represented in this report and the numerous supporting documents generated by the EVEAC and the previous *ad-hoc* committee.

Respectfully submitted,

The East Village Expansion Advisory Committee (EVEAC)

[3] https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/documents/VermontWetlandRulesProposal_Annotated_2025-10-22.pdf
[4] https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2025-03/2025cscguidance.pdf

Appendix A - Timeline



Appendix B - Budget

East Village Expansion Proposed Grant Budget	9/25/2025	Per Unit	Assumptions
Acquisition		45	
Land	$ 575,000	$ 12,778	
Property Appraisal	$ 6,000	$ 133	
Legal , Title Ins. and Recording Fees	$ 10,000	$ 222	
Total Acquisition	**$ 591,000**	**$ 13,133**	
Construction Hard Cost			
Building demo & removal (asbestos ab	$ 20,000	$ 444	
New pad, slab, hookups, driveway	$ 30,000	$ 667	
New manufactured home	$ 110,000	$ 2,444	
Infrastructure - W/WW/SW/Elect Sitework - wetlands	$ 2,210,000	$ 49,111	This aligns with industry standards for per lot infrastructure construction
protection/excavation/grading/electric al undergrounding /paving	$ 900,000	$ 20,000	
Landscaping & site ammenities	$ 590,000	$ 13,111	plantings, mailboxes, common area amenities
General Conditions	$ 338,850	$ 7,530	
Contractor mark-up, bond, ins (17.5%)	$ 718,175	$ 15,959	
Design/estimating contingency	$ 558,840	$ 12,419	12%
Construction Contingency	$ 720,300	$ 16,007	15%
Owner's Rep - construction mgmt	$ 300,000	$ 6,667	$150 hr x 20 hrs/week x 18 mos
	$ -	$ -	
Total Hard Construction	**$ 6,496,165**	**$ 144,359**	
Soft Costs			
Site Planning, Civil Eng.	$ 480,000	$ 10,667	schematic design through completion
Other engineering/landscape design	$ 90,000	$ 2,000	landscape design + common area (VHCB grant-eligible)
Legal/Accounting	$ 15,000	$ 333	grant closings + closing documents template
Survey	$ 75,000	$ 1,667	Boundary + individual lot plats
Phase 1 ESA update	$ 1,000	$ 22	Require when Phase 1 is 12-18 mos old or older
NEPA for Martin Meadow	$ 3,000	$ 67	Federal funding regulation
Permits/Fees (+allowance for Act 250)	$ 40,000	$ 889	Provided by EngVentures ($10k allowance for Act 250)
Marketing/Advertising	$ 30,000	$ 667	Budget for communications committee & realtor
Construction Loan Fees	$ 17,500	$ 389	Depends on lender and loan amount (VCLF = .05% of loan amount x $3.5MM)
Construction Inspection Fees	$ 7,500	$ 167	
Construction Interest	$ 30,000	$ 667	6%/ $3MM loan /$15k per month x 2
Insurance	$ 6,000	$ 133	Town rider
Realtor Fees/Commissions on LMI Lots	$ 60,000	$ 1,333	12 lots x $100k x 5%
Archeology	$ 10,000	$ 222	
Temp relocation & moving costs	$ 5,000	$ 111	
Working Capital / pre-dev VCF costs	$ 15,000	$ 333	money for small, unforeseen items
Project Management	$ 540,000	$ 12,000	$100/hr x 20 hrs x 52 weeks x 5 years $780k = $150 hr x 20 hours/week x 52 weeks x 5
Soft Cost Contingency	$ 119,400	$ 2,653	8%
Downstreet home subsidies & prog mg	$ 1,375,000	$ 30,556	$250k per home + $20k dev fee per home + $25k PM
Grant Admin/Town Audit	$ 10,000		single audits
Total Soft Costs	**$ 2,919,400**	**$ 64,876**	
TOTAL DEVELOPMENT COSTS	**$ 10,006,565**	**$ 222,368**	
Match for Martin Meadows	**$ 303,691**		
Less VCF loans for purchase	**$ (600,000.00)**		$600k acquisition
TOTAL GRANT REQUEST	**$ 9,710,256**		
	$ 9,406,565		

Appendix C

ENGINEERING VENTURES PC

208 Flynn Avenue, Suite 2A, Burlington, VT 05401 · 802-863-6225
85 Mechanic Street, Suite E2-3, Lebanon, NH 03766 · 603-442-9333
368 Broadway, Suite 11, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 · 518-205-9141

Plainfield – New Neighborhood – Project Status Summary

The Plainfield New Neighborhood project is in the schematic design phase. Work to date has generated base existing conditions plans (from boundary survey work and GIS based information). These include NRCS soil mapping, LIDAR-based elevation contours, and aerial imagery. At a minimum, topographic survey will be needed to supplement LIDAR contours along Main Street along East Hill Road, and at critical design areas. We believe that some northern portions of the project area have been surveyed for the current owners, but do not have this information in dwg format. Full topographic survey coverage would be best.

Limited geotechnical investigation was completed in the form of four test pits, which outlined soil profiles and checked for shallow ledge conditions. Additional soil investigation would be warranted as design progresses so that ledge removal can be minimized during the design process.

Several wetland areas were identified and mapped on site by a wetland consultant and reviewed with VT DEC staff. These have also been incorporated into the base existing conditions file. Several productive meetings with Wetlands Office staff have occurred.

Design work has included layout of new access roads from Main Street and East Hill Road, along with layout of roads through the development area. Several lot configurations have been generated, along with building envelopes. Based on this layout, initial cut and fill numbers have been generated. Soil export is being considered in project estimates.

Initial stormwater designs have been generated for central and eastern portions of the development area. These will need to be reconfigured to match recent layout changes. More design work is needed for the Main Street access and northwestern driveway area. Stormwater systems for these areas will affect parcel layouts by Main Street. A productive meeting was held with Kevin Burke of the Stormwater Section to discuss ways to incorporate Low Impact Design practices into a compact development area.

Central and southwestern portions of the development area drain toward an existing drainageway that ultimately crosses Creamery Street via a culvert. To date, stormwater work for this area has been limited to identification of drainage areas, some initial modeling, and a series of email conversations with adjacent landowners. A full system design will be needed here that addresses state permit requirements and considers the downstream concerns.

The project team has discussed water and sanitary sewer with Plainfield Public Works and generated conceptual designs for both of these utilities. We have identified connection points to the town systems and confirmed general ability to serve.

Electrical power for the project will be provided by Green Mountain Power. GMP has provided initial options for both above-ground and underground power to serve this development.