
APPLICATION COMPLETENESS & STAFF REVIEW COMMENTS MEMO

DATE: July 8, 2026 (revised per June 30, 2026 staff/applicant meeting)

TO: Andrew Johnston, P.E., Verdantas LLC; Agent
Sarah Bronson, Riding to the Top Therapeutic Riding Center; Applicant

FROM: Natalie Thomsen, Town Planner

Cc: Steve Puleo, Planning Director
Windham Planning Board

RE: #26-04 – Major Site Plan – Riding to the Top Therapeutic Riding Center – 14 Lilac Drive – Final Plan Review

Scheduled for Planning Board meeting: **July 27, 2026**

Thank you for submitting your final plan application on June 16, 2026. The application is incomplete. Staff has reviewed the application and found several outstanding items listed below that need your attention before the Planning Board final plan review. Your application is tentatively scheduled for review on July 27, 2026. The Planning Board meeting is an "in-person meeting" at the Town Council Chambers in the Town Hall located at 8 School Road. The meeting begins at 6:00 PM, and your attendance is required.

Project Information:

Riding to the Top Therapeutic Riding Center, represented by Verdantas LLC, proposes the expansion of its existing therapeutic riding facility on an approximately 52-acre property at 14 Lilac Drive. The project includes a new barn, a new outdoor covered riding arena, a new tractor/bedding shed, an intern/tiny house, improvements to the existing indoor arena/office building, reconfigured paddocks and parking areas, a relocated propane tank enclosure and well house, and new utilities and stormwater management facilities. Subject property is identified as Tax Map: 7; Lot: 27B; Zone: Farm (F) zoning district, in the Upper Presumpscot River watershed (runoff drains to a wetland tributary to Small Brook, then Inkhorn Brook).

Staff Review Comments

The memo will be updated as staff comments are provided.

Planning Department:

- **Dwelling unit – intern/tiny house (Building 6) (§120-406).** The Site Layout and Materials Plan (C-101) identifies Building 6 as an "Intern/Tiny House," and the bulk table includes a net residential density calculation, indicating a dwelling unit is proposed. A floor plan is not required; please note on the plan the approximate square footage of the building as shown (e.g., the concrete pad/footprint dimensions) and the number of bedrooms. Please also identify how the unit will be served in that general location, including: the wastewater design flow for the unit and whether it is included in the design flow of the proposed subsurface disposal system, the water and utility connections serving the building, and the access/drive serving it.

Please note that as a residential dwelling unit, Building 6 is subject to the following [Article 12 Impact Fees](#), to be paid with the issuance of the building permit for the unit: [Recreation Impact Fee](#), [Open Space Impact Fee](#), [Public Safety Impact Fee](#); and [Municipal Office Impact Fee](#). All fees will be determined and collected for any building, or any other permit for the development, [§120-1201C](#).

- **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – wetland impacts ([§120-812A](#))**. The Grading and Drainage Plan (C-102) identifies wetland fill of 3,670 SF plus 320 SF at the expanded crossing (approximately 3,990 SF total). While the narrative states the impact is below the 4,300 SF threshold and qualifies for the Minor Alteration exemption under 38 M.R.S. §480-Q(17) so that no individual MDEP permit is required, the narrative also acknowledges that a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit may be required. Please provide the USACE determination or authorization (e.g., the applicable Nationwide Permit or written confirmation that no federal permit is required). If not available before the meeting, this will be recommended as a condition of approval under [§120-807F\(1\)](#).
- **Reinforced-turf overflow parking – product specification required ([§120-812C](#))**. The 22-space event/overflow parking area is shown as “reinforced turf.” Please provide the manufacturer’s product specification (cut sheet) for the specific reinforced-turf system proposed, and confirm that the surface is designed to support the anticipated loads, including emergency-vehicle access. A general label of “reinforced turf” on the plan is not sufficient; staff requires the actual product specification for the record.
- **Parking stall dimensions ([§120-812C](#))**. There is a discrepancy in the parking stall dimensions. The project narrative states all stalls are 9’ × 18’ with a 24’ aisle, while the Site Layout and Materials Plan (C-101) legend labels the staff/visitor and overflow stalls as 10’ × 20’. Please reconcile the stall dimensions between the narrative and the plan. The number of standard spaces and ADA/van-accessible spaces should also be clearly quantified and labeled on the plan.
- **Dumpster enclosure screening ([§120-812T](#))**. A dumpster pad is shown on the Site Layout and Materials Plan (C-101), but screening details are not included. Please provide the dumpster enclosure detail showing the required fencing or landscaping screening and a level paved or graveled surface. Screening of the manure storage, material storage, and vegetation refuse areas is not required; these areas are located away from public view with very limited exposure to the abutting residential properties. If a manure storage receptacle is constructed through NRCS funding, a condition of approval will require that it be located and constructed in accordance with the NRCS program requirements.
- **Noise standards – acknowledgment ([§120-812S](#))**. The application does not include a noise narrative. Given the abutting residential use to the north, please provide a statement acknowledging and confirming compliance with the §120-812S sound-pressure standards, and specifically acknowledge that no construction activities are permitted between the hours of 10:00 PM and 6:00 AM on a site abutting a residential use.
- **Construction schedule – phasing plan ([§120-815C\(2\)](#))**. The narrative states the project will be phased based on funding availability, with construction commencing in summer 2026 and completion targeted for September 2028. A detailed construction schedule is not required at this time; please provide a general construction sequence describing the anticipated phasing framework and how funding availability may affect the order of the work. Please acknowledge that, per §120-815C(2), all improvements covered by the site plan approval must be completed within two years of the date the performance guarantee is accepted by the Town Manager, with extensions at the Town Manager’s discretion. If the project is constructed in phases, a condition of approval will provide for the Town Engineer to establish performance guarantees for each phase,

with the two-year completion period running from each posting; a detailed construction schedule can be confirmed at the required pre-construction meeting once a contractor is on board.

Additional items for completeness:

- **Waiver – minor road/private road standards (§120-555).** Please restate the waiver request as a general waiver of the private road construction standards of §120-555 (Appendix B, Table 3 and diagram) for the existing Lilac Drive, and add the cost implications of reconstructing the existing road to meet those standards to the justification, with responses to each criterion in [§120-808B\(2\)](#). The waiver request from §120-812I (overhead/underground utilities) should be restated to identify the specific number of existing utility poles to be retained before the riser pole and underground connection, rather than lengths and distances. The turnaround-location and driveway-connection waivers may be combined into a single request, supported by the practicality of the site design and the Fire Department's ability to circulate the site as designed.
- **Frontage, access easement, and amended subdivision plan (§120-406E / §120-533).** The preliminary amended subdivision plan prepared by Survey, Inc. has been received and is being reviewed under companion application #26-11, which is scheduled ahead of this application on the July 27, 2026 agenda. Prior to endorsement of the amended subdivision plan, please provide the finalized plan bearing the surveyor's signed stamp, a general note identifying it as a partial (fragmented) plan of the Twin Meadows Subdivision depicting the easement approved to create frontage along Lilac Drive, and the Town's standard subdivision conditions of approval on the plan (staff will provide the standard conditions). Recording of the approved plan will be addressed through the conditions of approval under #26-11.
- **Sight distance and full extent of Lilac Drive (§120-812B).** Please show the available sight distances at the Lilac Drive / Land of Nod Road intersection (per MDOT standards), and show the full extent of Lilac Drive to its intersection with Land of Nod Road, including the traveled-way width and easement dimensions.

As staff review comments related to compliance with any applicable review criteria become available, I will send them to you ASAP. We will need your response by July 13, 2026 or earlier to be included in the Planning Board agenda. Thank you for your attention to these matters. Provide one copy of your response to staff comments with all revised application materials and one (1) plan set. Email an electronic copy of your response letter, supporting documentation, and plan set. Please feel free to call me with any questions or concerns.

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