



MUNICIPAL PLAN APPROVAL CHECKLIST

Town: Washington

Date: 2/6/2014

Reviewer: Kim McKee

Committee: Tim Carver – East Montpelier (absent) , George Malek – Orange, Janet Shatney – Woodbury (absent), Ron Krauth – Middlesex, Bill Arrand – Worcester (absent)

Town Representative(s): Gary Winders

Background: The following is a review of the 2013 Washington Town Plan under the provisions and standards of Chapter 117, Section 4350, wherein it is stated “a regional planning commission shall review and approve plans of its member municipalities, when approval is requested and warranted.” Conditions warranting approval include findings that the plan:

- Contains each of **the elements** listed in section 4382 of Chapter 117;
- Is consistent with **the goals** established in Section 4302 of Chapter 117. (“Substantial progress toward attainment” of these goals is the standard by which consistency is evaluated); and
- Is **compatible** with the Regional Plan and the approved plans of other municipalities in the Region.

General Comments/Notes: The previous Washington Town Plan was adopted in 2003 and approved by CVRPC in the same year. The 2013 Plan is similar, but not identical, in content to its predecessor. It contains updated planning data and key additions in a number of content areas addressing child care, public transportation options, a revised policy for communication towers, and considerations for the Regional Housing Distribution plan. The 2013 Plan also includes more detailed description of desired densities in the Village District and provides solid expanded sections on solid waste, education, emergency services and recreation. However, many of the goals and policies are unchanged from the 2003 Plan and remain quite broad and general in most instances. Washington is one of the most rural communities in the Central Vermont Region (as measured by both population and population density). However, it does appear to be growing and the Plan recognizes a trend of dispersed growth expanding into upland areas and foresees similar growth to continue occurring. While the Plan does not recommend specific zoning regulation changes at this time, the Plan puts forth “Land Use Guidelines” which offers suggestions to landowners, developers and residents regarding voluntary techniques to minimize the negative impacts of new development. It should be noted that CVRPC staff met with the Washington Planning Commission during the development of this Plan to review requirements and assist in providing data updates.

Staff Conclusion(s): Despite the shortcomings identified in this review, the 2013 Washington Town Plan contains the essential elements of a municipal plan and at least makes some progress towards attainment of the statutory goals. Most of this progress, however, is philosophical rather than concrete. Seldom does the Plan spell out specific actions (with timelines, responsible parties) that need to be taken to realize its objectives or use mandatory language. For this reason, future Plan updates would benefit from revisiting previous goals and objectives and noting completion or progress, from a more descriptive narrative or map outlining areas for future housing growth per the Regional Housing Distribution Plan, and from developing specific implementation strategies and mandatory language where appropriate. Staff encourages the Review Committee to recommend “approval” of the Washington Town Plan before the full Regional Commission.

On 2/6/2014 the Town Plan Review Committee voted to recommend approval of 2013 Washington Town Plan to the full Regional Commission. On 2/11/2014 the Regional Commission approved the Town Plan Review Committee's recommendation for approval.

Summary of MUNICIPAL PLAN REQUIREMENTS (under 24 V.S.A., Chapter 117, Subchapter 5)

A Required Plan Elements/Maps [§4382(a)] Each of the elements are required in some form for all municipal plans:	Map	Pages	Comments, notes, suggestions
1. Statement of municipal policies, objectives, programs to guide growth and development		-	The Basic Goals of the Washington Plan (p7) in the Introduction chapter of the Plan combined with a listing of “ Goals ” and “ Policies ” in each Chapter of the Plan pertaining to the topics covered therein satisfies this requirement.
2. Land use plan (and map) showing proposed land use areas/districts	y	63-66, 82	<p>This element is addressed in the Land Use chapter of the Plan, wherein existing land use and zoning are described and prospective land uses are discussed, accompanied by goals and policies pertaining to each. Agricultural lands, scenic resources, and the Village area and corresponding municipal water system are given special consideration.</p> <p>Future updates would benefit from more detailed information on the zoning requirements or desired densities for the two Districts described. A map of existing zoning districts and wetlands is provided in the map section at the end of the Plan.</p>
3. Transportation plan (and map) showing needed/proposed improvements	y	61-62, 84	This element is addressed in the Transportation chapter of the Plan wherein the existing transportation infrastructure is discussed and future actions considered. A General Highway map of Roads by Functional Class is provided in the map section at the end of the Plan.
4. Utilities, facilities, services plan (and map) showing present/proposed facilities, including water, sewer, solid waste, libraries, medical facilities, storm water drainage	y	25-47, 61-62, 81	<p>This element is addressed primarily in the Utilities, Facilities and Services Chapter of the Plan, wherein health and sanitation, municipal water, solid waste, public utilities, education, child care emergency services, public lands and recreation, community facilities, and local governance are discussed and planned.</p> <p>However, other relevant topics are discussed in other chapters. Recreation/trails and hazard mitigation are also addressed in the Transportation chapter. Well head protection areas are also discussed in the Physical Geography; The Land and its Resources Chapter of the Plan, and municipal water and wastewater disposal are also addressed, as previously mentioned, in the Land Use Chapter. A Utility, Facility, Transportation and Education map is provided in the map section at the end of the Plan.</p>

5. Educational facilities plan (and map) ; often included with the utilities/facilities element	y	30-31, 46, 81	<p>The Plan contains an “Education” section within the Utilities, Facilities and Services Chapter, wherein the Washington Village School (pre-K – grade 8) afterschool programs and adult education opportunities are discussed. The Plan would benefit from discussion of secondary education.</p> <p>Educational policies are set forth under the broad Goal of providing and maintaining the services necessary for the health and welfare of the Town. The school sites appear on the Utility, Facility, Transportation and Education Map, mentioned earlier.</p>
6. Statement of municipal policies on preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic and historic features and resources	y	15-24, 76, 78-80	<p>This Element is addressed chiefly under the “Physical Geography: The Land and its Resources” chapter of the Plan wherein resource production lands (farms, forests and mineral resources), natural areas, critical wildlife habitat, surface waters, wetlands, floodplains, groundwater, historic resources and “special places” are discussed.</p> <p>A Natural Resources map including deer yards, bear habitat, wellhead protection areas, wetlands, protected lands and surface waters is provided in the map section at the end of the Plan. Maps displaying general soil categories, soils by slope category and soils by septic suitability are also included in the maps section.</p>
7. Energy element , including analysis of resources, needs, scarcities, costs, problems, and opportunities for conservation		48-52	<p>This element is addressed in the Energy chapter of the Plan wherein the sources of energy consumption are acknowledged including household heating, private vehicles and electricity – the former two discussed in more depth. The Plan has an in-depth discussion of public transit services and use and its benefits for reducing energy consumption. The energy goal and policies express support for conservation, as well as consideration of renewable sources of power.</p>
8. Housing element , including program for addressing affordable housing needs	y	53-56	<p>This element is addressed in the Housing chapter of the Plan wherein statistics on housing affordability are presented and the Regional Housing Distribution Plan is discussed. A set of goals and policies are put forth. A Housing Resources map is provided in the map section at the end of the Plan.</p>
9. Implementation program for the plan’s objectives		6	<p>An Implementation section in the Introduction chapter outlines six strategies as to how the Town will attempt to implement the goals, policies and recommendations offered throughout the Plan. Included are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use in Act 250 review (though the use of “should not” does not qualify as mandatory language, as outlined in the “Purpose” section) • Evaluating the concept of working creatively with neighboring towns

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing plans and activities of State agencies for consistency • Providing a guide for local decision-making • Promoting the philosophy of the Plan at the regional level • Use as a foundation for land use regulations
10. Statement of how plan relates to development trends/plans for adjacent municipalities, areas and the region		6, 8	<p>The Introductory Chapter of the Plan contains a Compatibility Statement noting that Washington’s potential for inter-municipal land use conflicts is limited by virtue of its geography and planning goals. This section concludes by stating that the Plan’s basic focus of preserving rural character while accommodating reasonable growth and development, and current development patterns do not appear to threaten or obstruct planning goals of any neighboring community or CVRPC.</p> <p>A strategy outlined in the Implementation section notes that the Plan will be used by evaluating the concept of working creatively with neighboring towns.</p>
11. Economic development element that describes present economic conditions and the location, type, and scale of desired economic development, and identifies policies, projects and programs necessary to foster economic growth. (effective date of July 1, 2012)		12, 57-60	<p>This element is addressed in the Economic Development chapter of the Plan which offers a brief description of unemployment and existing businesses – noting limited infrastructure as a reason for suitable small-scale development. A number of tables display statistics on class of worker, business receipts, employment, establishments and average wages.</p> <p>Goals and policies relate to balancing growth with natural resources and community character, supporting home occupations, land use regulations that support appropriate growth in the Village Center and maintaining a capital improvement plan for road maintenance and improvement.</p>

B. Inventories, Studies, Analyses [§4302 (d), 4382(c)]. Include as appropriate to survey existing conditions and probable future trends		Pages	Comments, notes, suggestions
1. Population characteristics and distribution, including income and employment		9-13	Demographic characteristics are identified in Chapter 2, A Statistical Profile of Washington .
2. Existing & projected housing needs by type, amount, loc.		53-56	<p>The Plan generally inventories the town's current housing stock, identifying number of housing units, occupancy, owner vs. renter-occupied, median housing values and median gross rent; as well as affordability indicators. The Plan only contains very general discussion about the challenge of providing an adequate supply of decent and affordable housing without discussing existing trends or housing needs/issues specific to the community. Housing type is only addressed goals and policies.</p> <p>The corresponding goal/policies do identify the need to avoid creating barriers to the affordability of housing options for low-income residents and the elderly. In addition, although the Plan encourages partnerships with non-profit agencies to aid in financing affordable housing, no thorough inventory or specific needs are identified. Future Plan versions would significantly benefit from thoroughly addressing the overall housing goal.</p>
3. Existing and estimated patterns of growth in various land use classifications, and in relation to facilities & services			This is addressed throughout the plan. See facilities, services and land use comments in Section (D) below.
C. Consistency with Broad State Goals [§4302] Plans must show consideration/evidence of a continuing planning process that includes:		Pages	Comments, notes, suggestions
1. Coordinated, comprehensive planning process		5-7, 71-72	The Plan Introduction specifically addresses this goal and describes the role and purpose of the Town Plan and regulatory mechanisms such as zoning and Act 250. The narrative also identifies the role of the Planning Commission in the planning process (Government section 4.13) and acknowledges the volunteers from the various boards and community groups that assisted in developing the Plan in the Appendix. The Epilogue provides further explanation of the role
2. Citizen participation at all levels of the planning process		67, 71-72	Citizen participation is highlighted in the Appendix . In addition to the required public hearing, the Plan was informed and review by numerous volunteer committees and residents. A 1994 resident survey is also mentioned in the Epilogue .
3. Consideration of use of resources, consequences of growth to region and state		-	This is generally addressed throughout the Plan. Particularly relevant corresponding sections include the Introduction; Physical Geography: The Land and its Resources; Utilities, Facilities and Services; Energy; Housing; Land Use

			and Epilogue.
4. Working creatively with other municipalities to develop, implement plans;		6, 25-47, etc.	<p>The Implementation section states that the Town will attempt to implement the Plan by evaluating the concept of working creatively with neighboring towns and issuing a compatibility statement.</p> <p>The Plan narrative does identify current municipal service partnerships and regional services in which it participates (e.g. CVSWMD, schools, fire, ambulance, etc.). It also broadly identifies that due to the nature of development patterns and trends, it is more likely that adjoining towns with employment centers (i.e. Barre area) will have a significant impact on development in Washington as opposed to vice versa. Future Plan updates would benefit from further discussion of potential partnerships across municipalities.</p>
D. Consistency with Specific State Goals [§4302] Plans must make substantial progress towards attainment of the following goals: (*or explain why goal is not applicable):		Pages	Comments, notes, suggestions
1. Plan development to maintain historic settlement pattern of compact villages surrounded by open countryside, including:		7, 23-24, 63-66	<p>The Plan restates this goal almost verbatim in several sections (“Basic Goals”, p7, for example) and reinforces it in the districting proposals of the Land Use Plan, wherein more intense development is directed to the Village area and away from resource lands. In addition, the utility and service extension policies, the resource protection goal, housing policies and economic policies help to support this philosophy.</p> <p>The narrative identifies the Village District as the area in which to encourage future development of residential and appropriate commercial projects. Infrastructure constraints and proximity to flood-prone waterways are cited as considerations, however.</p> <p>The Plan narrative also identifies the Rural Residential District as the area that is almost entirely low density residential in nature with steeper slopes and soil limitations for on-site septic. Goals and policies emphasize preservation of scenic views, working farms and protection of natural resources. More specific policies to reduce fragmentation and protect natural areas (including clustering of lots and structure, easements or acquisition, etc.) are included in the Land Resource goals and policies.</p>

<p>(i) Encouraging intensive residential development primarily in areas related to community centers and discouraging strip development along highways.</p>		<p>A basic goal of the Plan is to encourage development of a village center which will give a central focus and foster a sense of community among residents by seeking to channel more mixed-use development in the village center and by discouraging strip development. There is no specific discussion of any existing strip development or desired development patterns along the Rt 110 corridor outside of the Village District.</p> <p>In terms of appropriate areas for more dense residential development, the Plan specifically notes its intent that the Village District has the highest density of development (Land Use Goal 2) and that future development of residential and appropriate commercial projects should be encouraged in the Village District (Land Use Goal 1). Desired density is described as consistent with the present population and housing densities and the traditional New England Village character.</p> <p>The Housing chapter policies encourage development of multi-family housing in the Village District. Clustering of development is encouraged to preserve open space/rural character, reduce infrastructure costs and maintain affordability.</p> <p>The Plan narrative identifies that although Washington has generally retained its rural character, that the Rural Residential district has seen the most dramatic increase in housing starts over the past several years and is where growth pressures will be most pronounced.</p> <p>The Plan could better address this with more specific regulatory or non-regulatory implementation strategies to encourage development in the Village District – i.e. report on progress or barriers to construction of a municipal wastewater system since 2003– and implementation of policies to protect sensitive resources in the Rural Residential district. Future plan updates would also benefit from updates on the success of the zoning ordinance in making substantial progress towards these goals.</p>
<p>(ii) Encouraging economic growth in growth centers and / or village and urban centers</p>		<p>The Plan narrative states in the Economic Development chapter that the Town will foster, through the zoning ordinance, small economic development within the village – the current commercial center. These uses include affordable housing, a medical clinic, law offices, retail shops and other community-scale commercial entities. The plan states that infrastructure constraints make any large-scale development inappropriate for the Town.</p>

			The public and municipal buildings are already located in the Village.
(iii) Reinforcing the character and planned growth patterns of public investments, including infrastructure			<p>The Utilities, Facilities and Services chapter of the Plan outlines a goal of continuing to work to plan for the construction of a municipal wastewater system to serve the Village – limited infrastructure currently exists and is the limiting growth factor. The Plan does not mention the status of this work, including feasibility studies/cost analyses. A municipal water system serves the village, but beyond mentioning the number of existing users and a policy of development not placing unreasonable burden on the system, remaining capacity or future investments are not discussed.</p> <p>The Plan recognizes that this infrastructure is needed to attract more dense residential and small-scale commercial development to the village areas.</p>
<p>2. Provide a strong and diverse economy</p> <p>(A) Does the plan have an economic development chapter?</p> <p>(B) Does the plan discuss its position in terms of regional employment? (i.e. is it an employment center, is it a bedroom community, etc.)</p> <p>(C) Does the plan discuss unemployment or lack thereof?</p> <p>(D) Does the plan discuss the balance of improving the economy and maintaining environmental standards?</p>		12, 57-60	<p>The Statistical Profile chapter discusses the Town’s evolution into a bedroom community, though the Economic Development chapter does not include this discussion nor address regional employment centers. Reference exists in the listed Labor Market Area (employment tables), in the Land Use chapter where it is noted that the Barre area is rapidly expanding and in the description of one of Washington’s churches references that many parishioners work in Barre & Montpelier.</p> <p>The plan includes tables with Employment by Industry; Median Household Income; and Poverty Levels in the Statistical Profile and Business Receipts; Establishments, Employees and Avg Wages; and the Unemployment rate in the Economic Development chapter. These sections also include discussion of trends.</p> <p>The plan addresses the balance of improving the economy and maintaining environmental standards, specifically in an Economic Goal of encouraging economic development provided it does not degrade surface or subsurface water; cause air pollution; or differ substantially in scale or character with the surrounding structures.</p> <p>The Statistical Profile also generally notes that the Town will need to take advantage of those lands capable of supporting development without detriment to the environment.</p>
3. Broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities		25-47	The Plan narrative identifies regional resources for adult education and vocational training though could benefit from further discussion of access and use amongst

<p>A. Does the plan discuss adult education?</p> <p>B. Does the plan discuss where educational opportunities are and might be found?</p> <p>C. Is the town working with the local school district or the community to provide educational opportunities in schools and in other community settings</p>			<p>Washington residents. An Education goal in the Utilities, Facilities and Services chapter is to encourage broader access to educational and vocational opportunities for its citizens.</p> <p>The Plan discusses community-based and collaborative educational opportunities throughout the Utilities, Facilities and Services chapter including an after-school program and consideration of a joint contract school district with the neighboring Town of Orange. A community recreation area and park is noted to be an outstanding resource for recreation and education and the public library is also referenced as offering community programs and online continuing education courses.</p>
<p>4. Provide for safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient transportation systems</p> <p>A. Is the proposed land use plan coordinated with the transportation network? Does it discuss the connection between land use and transportation efficiency?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access management • Discouraging new roads in outlying areas <p>B. Does the Transportation chapter discuss and encourage multi-modal transportation?</p> <p>C. (C) Does the Transportation chapter discuss and encourage public transit?</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">45, 49-52, 61-62</p>	<p>A narrative on Transportation systems is included in various sections of the Plan including the Transportation; Utilities, Facilities and Services; Energy and Land Use chapters. The proposed land use plan outlining desired densities in the Village and Rural Residential Districts is very generally tied to the transportation network, whose main artery and only paved road (Rt 110) serves the Village.</p> <p>Transportation Chapter of the Plan includes a goal of encouraging development patterns that reflect the capacity of the existing functional classification of roadways and that the Town should not assume the responsibility for maintaining any new roads unless brought to Class 3 standards.</p> <p>The Energy Chapter notes that by promoting efficient land use patterns and facilitating alternative transportation options, Washington can take action to bring about a sustainable energy future. The Plan also recognizes private vehicles as one of three main sources of energy consumption – the fact that Washington is considered a “bedroom community” contributing to a need to commute. Access management is not discussed, likely due to the size of the Village and lack of existing congestion or traffic flow issues.</p> <p>The Utilities, Facilities and Services chapter (Recreation); Energy chapter and Transportation chapter discuss multi-modal transit options including development of a bike/ped path connecting the Village to Carpenter Park and an inventory of public transit options that could reduce private vehicle use. The Energy chapter includes a policy of endorsing the concept of energy saving transportation alternatives and public transit (encouraging ride-sharing, etc.). Both the Utilities, Facilities and Services and Transportation chapters include a goal of encouraging multi-modal travel options to stabilize increasing traffic</p>

			volumes and achieving environmental objectives.
5. Identify, protect and preserve important natural and historic features of the Vermont landscape, including		15-24	
<p>(i) Significant natural and fragile areas</p> <p>(A) Does the plan identify significant natural and fragile areas? Does the plan include criteria for what makes an area “significant”?</p> <p>(B) If identified, does the plan clearly (not vaguely) discuss how they should be preserved?</p> <p>(C) If identified, is land use proposed in such a fashion that these areas will be protected?</p> <p>(D) Does the plan discuss alternative (non-regulatory) ways to protect these areas (other than through land use regulations)?</p>			<p>As mentioned above, “The Land and its Resources” Chapter of the Plan discusses resource production lands (farms, forests and mineral resources), natural areas, critical wildlife habitat, surface waters, wetlands, floodplains, groundwater, historic resources and “special places.” Maps further identify many of these resources as the end of the Plan.</p> <p>It is a basic goal of the Plan “to protect and preserve important natural, historic, recreational, scenic and cultural features of the landscape.” Both of these themes are reinforced throughout the document by specific policies and objectives addressing farms, forests, surface waters, groundwater, habitat, aesthetics, historic sites, etc. Most of these statements can be found in Chapter 3, under “Land Resource Policies” and in the Land Use Plan. A partial list of these recommendations includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The promotion of creative development techniques to minimize impacts and fragmentation. • Promotion of a variety of non-regulatory preservation measures. • A “right to farm/log” policy. • A recommendation to create a Town Conservation Commission. • Encouraging appropriate land uses in the Wellhead Protection Area. • Encouraging vegetative buffers along surface waters. • Requiring the examination of aesthetic concerns in the extension of utilities and siting of towers. <p>The Land Use Plan’s district goals serve to promote settlement patterns and land use activities which support these goals. In addition, the Plan contains a unique and valuable section entitled “Land Use Guidelines” which offers excellent non-regulatory suggestions to landowners, developers and residents regarding voluntary techniques to minimize negative impacts of new development.</p>
<p>(ii) Outstanding water resources, including lakes, rivers, aquifers, shorelands, and wetlands</p> <p>(A) Does the plan identify outstanding water resources, including lakes, rivers, aquifers, shorelands and wetlands? Does the plan</p>			<p>A. The plan includes a list of water resources. Though the classification system is discussed – the list could be supported better if the classification of waters listed were identified or there were updates on previous Watershed Planning efforts. Good definitions of surface waters/wetlands and relation to natural functions (biodiversity, etc.).</p>

<p>include criteria for what makes a resource “outstanding”?</p> <p>(B) If identified, does the plan clearly (not vaguely) discuss how they should be preserved?</p> <p>(C) If identified, is land use proposed in such a fashion that these areas will be protected?</p> <p>(D) Does the plan discuss alternative (non-regulatory) ways to protect these areas (other than through land use regulations)?</p>			<p>B. The Plan encourages creative development techniques (clustering), off-site mitigation, voluntary easements, and acquisitions in fee simple or less than fee simple, and landowner education as preservation strategies.</p> <p>C. These themes are reinforced in the Land Use Plan in discussion and District goals/policies.</p> <p>D. Yes – creation of a Conservation Commission, easements/acquisition, Voluntary Guidelines, etc. The Plan would benefit from updates on progress in forming a Conservation Commission.</p>
<p>(iii) Significant scenic roads, waterways, and views</p> <p>(A) Does the plan identify scenic roads, waterways and views? Does the plan include criteria for what makes a scenic resource “significant”?</p> <p>(B) If identified, does the plan clearly (not vaguely) discuss how they should be preserved?</p> <p>(C) If identified, is land use proposed in such a fashion that these areas will be protected?</p> <p>(D) Does the plan discuss alternative (non-regulatory) ways to protect these areas (other than through land use regulations)?</p>		<p>22</p>	<p>A. “Special Places” with discussed as significant for scenic values though specific scenic resources not identified. Rural Residential District in Land Use chapter generally described to have the most scenic countryside with excellent views of mountain ranges. “Scenic Corridors, which make up the entrances to the Town from the North and South” are referenced as preservation targets in the Land Use Plan (p65). A Village District policy also notes that the pastures, woodland and hillside that serves as a backdrop to the Village should be preserved, though the Plan would benefit from a map or more specific identification.</p> <p>B. Yes – a Conservation Commission should form to better define/identify these “Special Places,” strategies identified in Land Resource Goals and Policies include agricultural zoning, formation of local land trust, off-site mitigation, tax abatement, TDR, etc.</p> <p>C. Generally, yes. See corresponding land use review for more information.</p> <p>D. Yes – see B.</p>
<p>(iv) Important historic structures, sites, or districts, archaeological sites and arch. sensitive areas</p> <p>(A) Does the plan identify historic structures, sites, or districts, archaeological sites and archaeologically sensitive areas? Does the plan include criteria for what makes a scenic resource “significant”?</p> <p>(B) If identified, does the plan clearly (not</p>		<p>22, 74</p>	<p>A. The Plan identifies historic properties in an Appendix and discusses their significance briefly in the “The Land and its Resources” Chapter of the Plan</p> <p>B. Landowners should be supported in retaining these values through purchase of conservation easements, the current use tax program, grants and whatever other means are available. More discussion on condition of historic resources, threats or more detailed preservation strategies would be helpful.</p>

<p>vaguely) discuss how they should be preserved? (C) If identified, is land use proposed in such a fashion that these areas will be protected? (D) Does the plan discuss alternative (non-regulatory) ways to protect these areas (other than through land use regulations)?</p>			<p>C. Village areas are encouraged for development; however a Land Resource policy states that development near historic structure or sites identified in the Plan should not compromise their aesthetic integrity nor interfere with their function.</p> <p>D. Grants are mentioned.</p>
<p>6. Maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife and land resources. Vermont’s air, water, wildlife, mineral and land resources should be planned for use and development according to the principles set forth in 10 V.S.A 6086(a)</p> <p>A. Is there a complete inventory/map of existing water resources, wildlife habitat, mineral resources and other land resources?</p> <p>B. Does the plan discuss air quality? If so, does it describe measures to maintain and improve its quality?</p> <p>C. Does the plan discuss water quality? If so, does it describe measures to maintain and improve its quality?</p> <p>D. Does the plan discuss wildlife resources? If so, does the plan describe measures to maintain and improve its quality?</p> <p>E. Does the plan discuss floodplain protection? If so, does the plan describe measures to maintain and improve its quality?</p> <p>F. Does the proposed land use pattern maintain or improve the quality of the resources listed above?</p>			<p>A. Yes – see #5(i) above.</p> <p>B. Declining air quality referenced as a human health hazard caused by the continued use of fossil fuels in the Energy chapter. Strategies to reduce energy use in this chapter support measures that would improve air quality.</p> <p>C. Water quality and water classifications system discussed, though not in relation to specific Washington waterways. Resource protection strategies put forth in Land and Resources goals and policies support measures that would improve water quality, such as maintaining vegetative buffers.</p> <p>D. Critical wildlife habitat discussed, certain wildlife habitats mapped. Timber and wildlife management will be encouraged. Other strategies and Voluntary Guidelines support protection of wildlife habitat and corridors.</p> <p>E. Discussion of importance of floodplains in “The Land and Its Resources” chapter as well as a goal to retain undisturbed areas of vegetation to protect property from flood flow and back erosion.</p> <p>F. Yes – see #5(i) above.</p>
<p>7. Encourage the efficient use of energy and the development of renewable energy resources</p> <p>A. Does the town recognize the connection between energy, transportation and land use?</p> <p>B. Does the energy chapter of the plan discuss energy efficiency and renewable energy?</p> <p>C. Does the plan contain policies and</p>		<p>48-52</p>	<p>The Plan contains a very good Energy chapter that recognizes the connection between energy, transportation and land use in the narrative. It includes the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for and lengthy discussion on public transit and multi-modal transportation options

<p>recommendations that encourage energy efficiency?</p> <p>D. Does the plan contain policies and recommendations that encourage the development of renewable energy resources?</p> <p>E. Does the pattern of land use proposed in the community appear to encourage the efficient use of energy either through the proposed location of development in relation to community services, or in terms of lot layout and design?</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for “demand-side management” and home weatherization programs • Encouraging the efficient design and siting of buildings • Promoting the use of renewable energy resources • Support for efficient building standards <p>The Plan would benefit from discussion of a more thorough discussion of renewable energy resources and siting considerations.</p> <p>See corresponding land use section review.</p>
<p>8. Maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, including identifying, providing, and protecting public access to noncommercial outdoor recreational opportunities, where applicable.</p> <p>A. Does the plan discuss recreation and identify important recreational areas?</p> <p>B. Does the land use plan encourage development that protects or harms access to or the availability of recreational activities?</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">34-38, 46-47</p>	<p>The Utilities, Facilities and Services chapter of the Plan contains an inventory of local outdoor recreation assets and public recreation programs, highlighting the accomplishments of various recreation-based groups and committees, and proposing various future projects.</p> <p>The Plan also includes a Recreation goal of encouraging, where appropriate, the dedication of recreational easements and public access before new development is approved and a goal of supporting the feasibility study for connecting to a regional trail system. The land use plan generally does not encourage development that harms access to or the availability of recreational activities.</p> <p>The Plan also outlines in “The Land and Its Resources” chapter the intention to work with the landowners to protect timber, wildlife, aesthetic and recreational values in areas with “Special Places” and puts forth strategies to retain those values (easements, current use, grants, etc.).</p> <p>The Plan also includes recreation goal language that supports continuing to hold rights of way for class 4 roads and public trails.</p>
<p>9. Encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries, including:</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">16-17</p>	<p>A Basic Goal of the Plan is to “strengthen sound agricultural management and forest industries while encouraging the manufacture, marketing and use of value added products and locally grown foods.” Agricultural and forest resources as well as protection status are inventoried.</p>
<p>(i) protection of long-term viability of agricultural and forest lands and maintenance of low overall density</p>			<p>The Plan narrative addresses the protection of agriculture and silviculture, specifically: avoiding fragmentation by situating development so as to leave the most productive portions of the site available for use, recognizing a “right-to-farm/log,” encouraging regulatory and non-regulatory methods for forest and</p>

			<p>farmland preservation including agricultural zoning, the formation of a local land trust or participation in a regional one, tax abatement programs, off-site mitigation, transferable development rights, and the voluntary sale of development rights..</p> <p>Voluntary Guidelines in the Epilogue reinforce these recommendations as well as designating the Rural Residential District where much of the forests and farms are located as low overall density.</p>
(ii) encouraging the manufacture and marketing of value-added agricultural and forest products			<p>The Land Resource Goal and Policies state that the Town encourages the siting of non-polluting businesses and industries which might use or sell locally produced farm or wood products in Washington, provided such siting and activity is otherwise consistent with this Plan. A goal in the Land Use plan also notes that the remaining farms should be supported in staying in operation and policy states, “distribute information on the Current Use Program and other State programs that assist agriculture and barn preservation.”</p>
(iii) encouraging sound forest and agricultural practices		20	<p>The Plan narrative encourages VT Accepted Agricultural Practices and Acceptable Management Practices.</p>
(iv) planning public investment so as to minimize development pressure on agriculture and forest land			<p>See corresponding land use section review. The majority of farm and forest lands are located within the Rural Residential districts.</p>
10. Provide for the wise and efficient use of natural resources, facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources and proper restoration and preservation of aesthetic qualities		23	<p>The Plan outlines that the remaining earth materials extraction operations in the Town are primarily gravel. The narrative notes that it is vital that care be taken in siting and operating future gravel pits in order to avoid land use conflicts and environmental damage.</p> <p>A Land and Resource policy states that “gravel extraction, like other commercial/industrial uses, should be compatible with their surroundings and with surrounding land uses. Traffic types and volume and noise levels will be factors in making this determination. In addition, active sites should be well screened and mined areas quickly reclaimed.”</p>
11. Ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing, including:			
(i) Encouraging housing to meet the needs of a diversity of social and income groups in the community, particularly for citizens of low and moderate income.		53-56	<p>The Housing chapter contains the goal of encouraging safe and affordable housing for future generations and for all segments of its population, including the elderly, disabled and lower income groups. Among the proposals offered are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pledge to avoid regulatory/permitting barriers

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging creative site designs (clustering) to reduce infrastructure and land costs • Encouraging multi-family housing in the Village • Encouraging partnerships with non-profit housing advocacy groups. • Discouraging large-scale residential developments or subdivisions due to infrastructure constraints (“large-scale” not defined). <p>Washington’s efforts with regards to housing could benefit from a more thorough analysis of housing needs and more specific implementation measures.</p>
(ii) Ensuring that new and rehabilitated housing is safe, sanitary, located conveniently to employment and commercial centers, and coordinated with the provision of necessary public facilities and utilities.		<p>The Plan generally identifies that the trend for the majority of residential housing development has been scattered homes on large lots in the rural residential district. The Plan does identify that more dense housing is appropriate in village areas.</p> <p>While the Housing chapter narrative recognizes that providing an adequate supply of decent and affordable housing for all residents without compromising community character or overburdening physical infrastructure is one of the most difficult challenges facing Vermont communities, there is no discussion or policies related to the age, quality or condition of the housing stock. The Plan could benefit from discussion of use and remaining capacity (i.e. municipal water system) of existing infrastructure or anticipated future costs when considering future housing and suitable locations.</p>
(iii) Identifying sites for multi-family and manufactured housing in locations similar to those generally used for single-family conventional dwellings.		<p>A Housing policy states that permitting processes should avoid creating barriers to affordable housing options and that the current Zoning Ordinance allows affordable and elderly housing in both Zoning Districts. Greater density is encouraged in Village areas and the Plan states that development of multi-family housing should be encouraged in the Village District. More specifics are not identified in regards to locations.</p>
(iv) Allowing accessory apartments within or attached to single family residences.		<p>The Plan does not discuss the use of accessory dwelling units.</p>
<p>12. Finance and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet future needs, (eg fire, police, EMS, schools, water, sewage, & solid waste)</p> <p>A. Public facilities and services should include fire and police protection, emergency medical</p>	<p>25-47, 58</p>	<p>The Plan addresses the following public facilities and services: government services ; public buildings; education; child care; fire protection; EMS; water supplies; police; cemeteries; churches; disaster planning; solid waste disposal; and waste water.</p> <p>Listed among the Basic Goals is to plan for public investments in the construction</p>

<p>services, schools, water supply and sewage and solid waste disposal.</p> <p>B. The rate of growth should not exceed the ability of the community and the area to provide facilities and services</p>			<p>or expansion of infrastructure (and services) that reinforces the desired growth patterns of the Town. The policies in the Utilities, Facilities and Services chapter of the Plan generally reinforce this concept. The Plan narrative notes that through thoughtful infrastructure planning and maintenance, Washington may encourage growth where it is most suitable and least expensive to the community. A primary proposal is future construction of a municipal wastewater system to serve the village, though the Plan would benefit from updates on progress or addition of more specific goals or policies (appointing a Committee, etc.). The narrative discussing the sewage ordinance could be brought up-to-date.</p> <p>Specific goals are listed for the Fire Dept., FAST Squad, library (ADA Accessibility), and public buildings, but more detail could be provided on potential funding sources for many of these projects.</p> <p>Discussion of a Capital Improvement Budget is included in the Economic Development chapter – a connection to planned improvements in the Utilities, Facilities and Services chapter would benefit the Plan.</p>
<p>13. Ensure the availability of safe and affordable child care</p>		<p>31-32</p>	<p>Child care is addressed within Utilities, Facilities and Services chapter the Plan narrative. No specific analysis of existing services vs. need is presented and no recommendations for addressing needs are included.</p>
<p>E. Compatibility with Municipal, Regional Plans [§4350] Plans must be:</p>		<p>Pages</p>	<p>Comments, notes, suggestions</p>
<p>1. Compatible with other regionally approved town plans</p>		<p>15</p>	<p>The Introduction Chapter of the Plan contains a section entitled “Compatibility Statement” (p15). This narrative states that the Town’s potential for inter-municipal land use conflicts is limited due to its geography and planning goals. Desired and current development patterns do not appear to threaten or obstruct the planning goals of any neighboring community. This section would benefit from a brief (one paragraph each) discussion of conditions/trends/planning issues in neighboring towns.</p>
<p>2. Compatible with the Regional Plan</p>		<p>15</p>	<p>The Compatibility Statement also states that desired and current development patterns do not appear to threaten or obstruct the planning goals of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission. See Regional Housing Distribution Plan below.</p>

The Regional Housing Distribution Plan is intended to be used by municipalities when updating their land use plans and regulations; AND Town Plans adopted after January 1, 2009 are expected to incorporate this Housing Distribution Plan onto their town plan housing element.

The Washington Town Plan narrative states: *The Distribution Plan allocates 89 new housing units to Washington over the next ten years (2010-2020). This exercise is required in order for Washington’s Town Plan to receive regional “approval” by CVRPC. The assignment of housing units to locations in Town is not to be considered a mandate but is a planning exercise that will allow Washington to be better prepared for future development.*
Units to plan for between 2010 and 2020 = (89 (forecasted) + 19 (deficit)) x 80% = 86 units (p. 55)

Specific corresponding implementation measure(s) are found in the Housing Chapter of the Plan:

Housing Goal: The Town of Washington encourages safe and affordable housing for future generations and for all segments of its population, including the elderly, disabled and lower income groups.

Housing Policies:

- 1) Any permitting process that is established should avoid creating barriers to the affordability of housing options. Currently our Zoning Ordinance allows affordable and elderly housing in both of our Zoning Districts.
- 2) Washington encourages housing development that reinforces and compliments existing neighborhoods. Ideally development of multi-family housing should be encouraged in the Village District to reduce over development of our rural areas, however due to the District’s lack of a sewer system and location near several brooks, housing sites in the Village District are severely limited.
- 3) The Town encourages creative site designs, including clustering, as a means to reduce infrastructure and land costs, and thereby promote affordability.
- 4) Partnerships with non-profit agencies, including community land trusts and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund, are encouraged to provide assistance in financing affordable housing projects.
- 5) Large-scale residential developments or subdivisions are inappropriate for Washington and should be discouraged. Simply put, the town's present infrastructure will not facilitate large-scale development.

Town Plans shall contain a detailed map or maps of the town showing the town’s preferred locations for future housing units – consistent with current or proposed zoning – for 80% of the anticipated 10 to 15 year housing demand.

A **Housing Resources Map** (pg. 83) displays residential building points as well as recent housing growth locations (2009-2013). Accompanying narrative notes that “development of multi-family housing should be encouraged in the **Village District**” and a goal states that “it is the intent of this Plan that the **Village District** has the highest density of development.” (p63-64)

	Narrative describing the Rural Residential District notes that there are areas in the District which are well suited for residential development, particularly along the roadways. (p64)”
Town Plans shall also provide mapping updates that identify the locations and number of housing units created in the town since the previous town plan adoption.	The Housing Resources Map (pg. 83) displays the number of housing units created from 2009 to 2013.
Towns and cities are required to demonstrate the community’s intent to meet the proposed housing unit numbers laid out in the Housing Distribution Plan or to describe in detail the obstacles that make attainment impossible. CVRPC will consider the planning effort to encourage housing development in relation to the Housing Distribution plan when approving a municipal plan.	The Housing Distribution Plan is generally addressed in the narrative of the corresponding Housing chapter and Land Use Plan , which cites lack of wastewater and proximity to several brooks as limiting potential housing sites. The Plan would benefit from discussion of areas within the Village that could support housing growth. The Epilogue notes the constraints of the Town Plan and Town Zoning Ordinance in affecting the development of land and states that if residents “are really going to keep the rural character and natural beauty of Washington then that will only be done by the individual decisions that we make as landowners and land developers.”
CVRPC can and will work with municipalities to overcome any local barriers to housing production that prevent attainment of the housing unit numbers and suggest programs of local actions to address those barriers to housing. Towns unwilling to implement programs to address barriers to housing may have their plans denied Regional approval.	n/a