



## REGIONAL PLAN COMMITTEE

July 16, 2018 at 4:00pm

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission Conference Room  
29 Main Street, Suite #4, Montpelier, VT 05602

<u>Page</u>	<u>AGENDA</u>
	<b>4:00<sup>1</sup></b>
	<b>Adjustments to the Agenda</b>
	<b>Public Comments</b>
	<b>4:05</b>
	<b>Elections<sup>2</sup></b>
	Elect a Chair and Vice Chair
2	<b>4:10</b>
5	<b>Preferred Site Designation</b> (enclosed)
	a) Define a process for when CVRPC would use its preferred site guidance
	b) Develop preferred site designation guidance
34	<b>5:45</b>
	<b>Meeting Minutes – April 20, 2018</b> (enclosed) <sup>2</sup>
	<b>5:50</b>
	<b>Meetings</b>
	a) Set next meeting date
	b) Set regular meeting day/time
	<b>6:00</b>
	<b>Adjournment</b>

<sup>1</sup> Times are approximate unless otherwise advertised.

<sup>2</sup> Anticipated action item.



## MEMO

Date: July 13, 2018

To: Regional Plan Committee

From: Bonnie Waninger, Executive Director

Re: Renewable Energy Preferred Site Designation

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☒ **ACTION REQUESTED:** No formal action is requested. This is the preliminary discussion to determine direction for the Commission's policy or guidance.

### Issue

The State of Vermont provides incentives to any net-metered, renewable energy generation project located on designated Preferred Sites. Projects greater than 150 kW are required to be located on a preferred site. The Public Utilities Commission designated state-level sites in Rule through net-metering rules effective July 1, 2018. Beyond state-named sites, two opportunities exist for sites to be designated as preferred locations:

- specific locations designated in a duly adopted municipal plan for the siting of a renewable energy plant or specific type or size of renewable energy plant, provided that the plant meets the siting criteria recommended in the plan for the location; and
- specific locations identified in a joint letter from the municipal legislative body and the municipal and regional planning commissions in the community where the net-metering system will be located.

Adopted municipal plans in Central Vermont do not designate preferred sites. Municipalities working on enhanced plans to achieve Certificate of Energy Compliance have not designated specific sites beyond the state-level sites. Municipalities are using the "joint letter" approach to designate sites.

The CVRPC Board of Commissioners expressed discomfort with supporting a site-by-site designation approach without criteria or guidance in place for how a community or the CVRPC will make

designations about preferred site designation. The Commission directed the Regional Plan Committee to develop criteria or guidance.

#### Committee Meeting

Before staff can develop draft guidance or criteria, it is critical to understand what the Commission wants to accomplish and how deeply it wants to dive into locational analysis and guidance.

For the Committee's discussion, please review the Regional Plan's land use planning areas and the PDF of a potential Preferred Sites Designation process.

At the meeting, I will have a presentation to help the Committee develop a shared understanding of the issue. The presentation will end with questions to narrow the focus of the guidance. Those questions include:

- Where does the Commission reside on the spectrum of deferring decisions to municipalities and establishing regional preferred locations?
- Does the scale of development (residential, commercial, utility) matter and, if so, how?
- Will CVRPC treat all technologies the same? If not, is the treatment based on impact?
- Will CVRPC consider cumulative impacts and, if so, how?
- To what extent should community and municipal (and developer?) engagement occur during this process?

#### Guidance provided by the Regional Plan

CVRPC's adopted Regional Plan becomes effective July 17, 2018. The Plan provides guidance through:

- 1) land use guidance for all types of projects through policies, land use planning areas, and maps. This guidance is used to evaluate Act 250 and Certificate of Public Good projects.
- 2) The enhanced energy plan's statements of need, statements regarding project siting, designation of preferred sites, policy and actions, and statements regarding municipal plans.

#### *Regional Plan*

In accordance with Statute, the Regional Plan aims to develop compact centers separated by rural countryside. The Plan is available on CVRPC's website at [www.centralvtplanning.org](http://www.centralvtplanning.org). Scroll to the bottom of the screen to find the 06/12/18 plan. The plan's title is in smaller text.

Excerpts describing the Plan's Land Use Planning Areas are included in the meeting packet. The Planning Areas focus on the overall pattern and form of development across the rural to urban spectrum rather than on specific densities or uses, which the Plan said are more properly defined at the local level. The Committee may want to consider how the scale of renewable energy generation projects fit within the pattern and form defined in the Land Use Planning Areas.

*Regional Energy Plan*

The Regional Energy Plan builds on the Regional Plan's base concept. The renewable energy resource maps screen wind and solar energy locations based on impacts to state and regional constraints. The Plan states the maps are for guidance only. Development can still occur in those areas, but it may be constrained (more difficult to achieve, harder to permit, etc.).

The Plan includes statements that the CVRPC will defer to municipalities on preferred site designation. It also includes statements that suggest CVRPC is not deferring full decision authority to municipalities. Examples include:

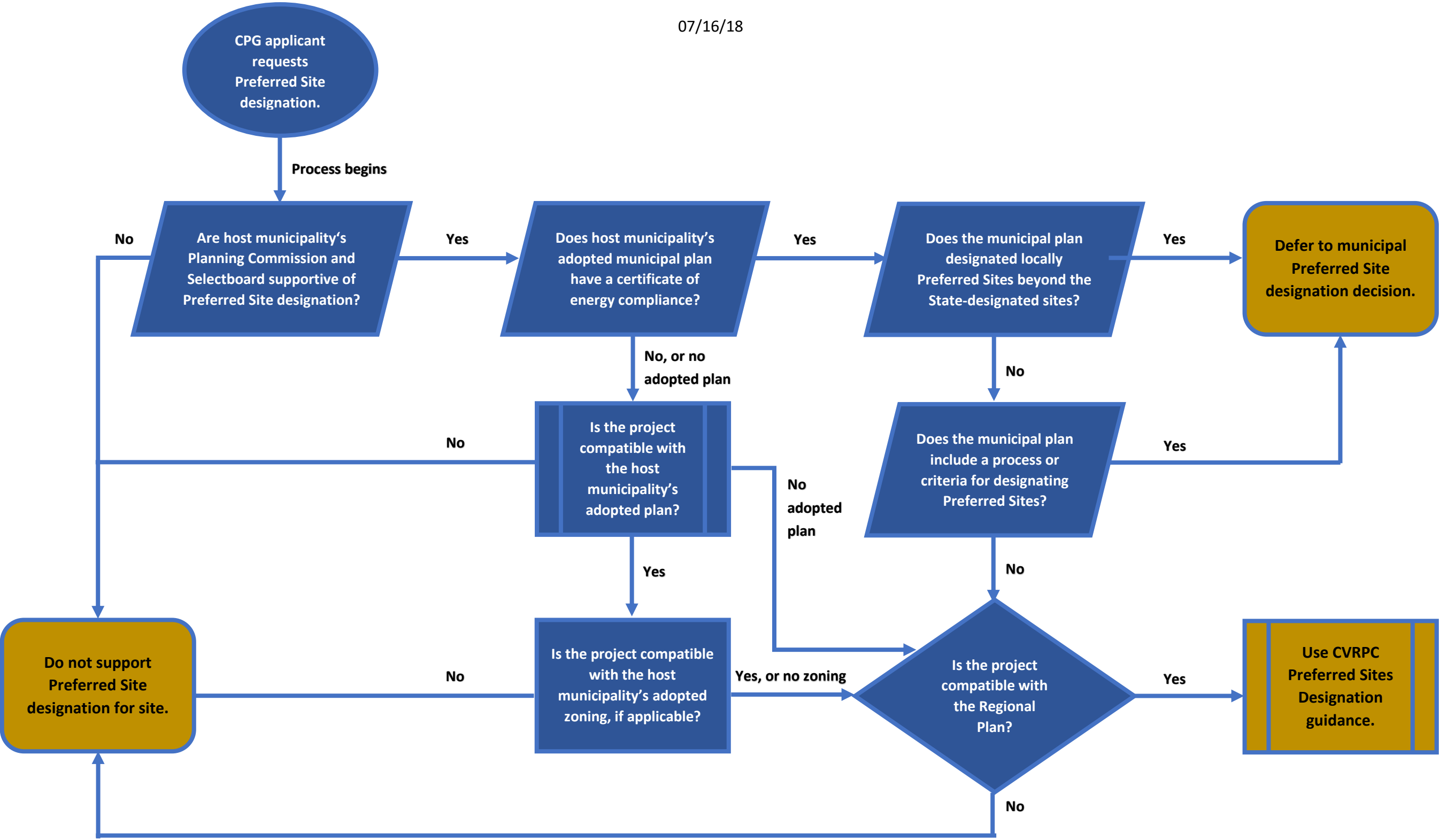
- Page vii – Conflict Resolution discusses when the municipal or Regional Plan will take precedent.
- Page 15 – Discusses Rural and Resource land use planning areas in terms of approaches and goals for wind generation.

The Commission's decision to develop guidance for preferred site designation reinforces that it is not fully deferring decision authority to municipalities. Developing guidance or a review process will make the preferred sites designation experience more predictable for municipalities, energy generation developers, and the Commission.

CVRPC Preferred Sites Designation Process

DRAFT

07/16/18



The Planning Areas are not meant to be detailed representations of current conditions, nor are they intended to be distinct areas of segregated future land uses. The Planning Areas focus on the overall pattern and form of development across the rural to urban spectrum rather than on specific densities or uses, which are more properly defined at the local level.

### **Future Land Use Planning Areas**

**Regional Centers** are the Region ' s core downtowns, plus their surrounding mixed- use neighborhoods, which accommodate high density commercial, institutional, industrial and residential uses. Regional Centers in Central Vermont include portions of the City of Montpelier, Barre City and Waterbury Village, each of which contains a state- designated Downtown district and infrastructure that includes urban road networks, sidewalks, public spaces and public water and wastewater systems. These areas provide regional services and employment and are areas where efforts to reduce travel demand through ridesharing, transit and multi-modal transit options are critical.

Regional centers are not only the dominant attractors of work and personal business trips in the Region, they also attract significant numbers of trips from the outside the Region. The Region ' s greatest concentrations of office space, retail space, banking services and other generators of personal business are located in downtown Montpelier and Barre City. Relative to the other downtown areas, Montpelier and Waterbury have more office space (such as the State Office Complex). Barre City also has State Offices at the McFarland House and City Place, and has more manufacturing and industrial land uses.

### Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission Designating Future Land Uses

The following criteria and data are used when staff and Commissioners make land use area designations in the CVRPC Regional Plan. (Criteria are generally in order of priority.) Boundaries of land use area designations are for general planning purposes only and may contain errors and omissions. Data should be verified during permitting processes per the provisions of the regulatory authority.

#### *Area Designation Criteria:*

1. Is it consistent with the state land use planning goals found in 24 V.S.A., §4302 (compact centers surrounded by rural areas)?
  - Proximity to villages/downtowns/growth centers designated by the Vermont Downtown Board and/or recognized hamlets, town centers or regional centers identified by CVRPC's Regional Plan
  - Is the area walkable (compact configuration allowing for less than ¼ to a ½ mile round trip)?
  - Is there a visual or physical break (river, steep slope, change in density or type)?
2. Proximity to existing infrastructure
  - Public wastewater, water, sidewalks, highways and transit, schools, recreation parks, other town services
3. Current Conditions
  - Orthophotos: development density and extent
  - Road network: potential access and connections
  - Resource constraints: conserved lands, steep slopes, rare threatened and endangered species and significant natural communities, wetlands, floodplains, elevations about 2500 ft, and lake shore buffers.
4. Town planning and zoning
  - What does the locally adopted and regionally approved Town Plan say?
  - Do the town zoning districts match current infrastructure and future land use plans?

There is one State-designated Growth Center within the Region and its boundaries are adjacent to the City of Montpelier 's Designated Downtown. Growth Center designation in Vermont recognizes municipalities that demonstrate a capacity to plan and invest in vital, walkable, mixed-use centers and must include and support a designated Downtown, Village Center or New Town Center. A Growth Center has clearly defined boundaries that can accommodate a majority of commercial, residential, and industrial growth anticipated by the municipality or municipalities over a 20-year period.

**Town Centers** are less densely populated settlements and smaller than regional centers, but similarly accommodate many of the same residential, civic, commercial and light industrial uses. Typically referred to as “Villages,” factors in determining the presence and boundaries of a Town Center include: a state-designated village center, local road network and availability of public utility infrastructure, relatively dense development and smaller lot sizes (1 unit per acre or higher), a mix of land uses, and a distinct separation from surrounding rural areas.

The Region’s largest Town Centers that provide water and wastewater infrastructure and also serve as sub-regional retail and employment centers include Waitsfield Village/Irasville and Northfield Village. Additional Town Centers that provide water and/ or wastewater infrastructure, or both, include Warren Village, Cabot Village, Colbyville (Waterbury), Marshfield Village, Northfield Falls, Plainfield Village, Williamstown Village, Washington Village, East Barre, Worcester Village and Waterbury Center.

East Montpelier Village, East Calais, Maple Corner, Woodbury Village, Moretown Village, Duxbury Village, Middlesex Village and Roxbury Village round out the twenty existing Town Centers recognized in this Plan.

A subcategory of Town Centers in this Plan is New Town Centers. “New Town Center,” as defined by the State, means the area planned for or developing as a community’s central business district, composed of compact, pedestrian-friendly, multistory, and mixed use development that is characteristic of a traditional downtown, supported by planned or existing urban infrastructure, including curbed streets and sidewalks and on-street parking, storm water treatment, sanitary sewers, and public water supply.” Though there are no state-designated New Town Centers within the Region, the Town of Berlin desires to encourage the expansion of the historic town area in the vicinity of Berlin Four Corners to adjacent areas to serve as a location of a mix of small-scale commercial, high density residential and civic uses in a traditional village setting.

#### **Policies:**

1. In order to maintain the existing settlement patterns, higher density residential, commercial, and industrial development should be located in Regional Centers and Town



Centers.

2. Small-scale shopping centers, designed to complement the historic character and support the vibrancy of community centers, are most appropriate in Town Centers or Hamlets (see Rural Areas). Community and Regional Shopping Centers, however, are less appropriate in Town Centers or Rural Areas and should be located in Regional Centers as a first priority and Mixed-Use Commercial areas as a second priority.

3. Encourage infill, redevelopment, adaptive reuse of existing buildings and reuse of “brownfield ” sites in Regional and Town Centers. Encourage the revitalization and reuse of viable historic structures whenever possible.

Strategy 3a: Work with municipalities to align local capital planning and public investment strategies with infill and redevelopment goals.

Strategy 3b: Support implementation of infill and redevelopment activities identified in the 2015 Vermont Downtown Action Team reports (Barre City, Northfield, Waterbury, Waitsfield and Warren).

4. Municipalities should consider use of innovative tools such as “form- based ” land use regulations. These types of regulations focus less on specific uses and more on the physical form of the built environment, utilize dimensional standards to shape how buildings relate to each other, to streets, and to other public spaces.

Strategy 4a: Explore opportunities to conduct a regional workshop focused on Implementing Form-based Land Use Regulations.

5. Continue to work with municipalities and VTTrans to reduce conflicts between traffic needs and human-scale functions of Regional and Town Centers through practices like traffic-calming measures, pedestrian-safety improvements and gateway treatments. Priority for the use of public funding for the maintenance or improvement of infrastructure shall be for those that support concentrated development in Regional and Town Centers.

**Shopping Center Definitions**

*(Source: Bennington County Regional Plan)*

A shopping center may include one or multiple stores, in single or multiple ownership, functioning together as one integrated complex. For the purposes of the Regional Plan, the following definitions apply:

**Small-Scale Shopping Center:** A shopping center with a store or stores that sell daily living needs and convenience goods such as food, medicine, clothing, and hardware, and may also include service businesses (e.g., laundry, hair salon, bank, auto or bicycle shops). These centers range in size from 10,000 to 30,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area.

**Community Shopping Center:** A shopping center with a store or stores that sell a broad range of goods (such as food, clothing, furniture, appliances, sporting goods) and which also may include personal and professional service establishments. Large grocery stores, department stores, and movie theaters are often found in these centers. Gross floor area in a community shopping center may range from 30,001 to 300,000 sq. ft.

**Regional Shopping Center:** A shopping center (or “shopping mall”) including stores that sell a wide variety of merchandise and services – similar to but larger and more extensive than a community shopping center – usually built around one or more large anchor department stores. These centers exceed 300,000 sq. ft. in gross floor area.

Strategy 5a: Support identification of corridors for new roads or road segments in and around Regional and Town Centers as part of a local planning process, and support for construction of those roads and utility infrastructure to help drive growth in a way that supports compact center development.



**Figure 1: Connected Streets.** The diagrams above illustrate two different traffic patterns created by new development (shown in light gray). The diagram on the left highlights several smart growth principles by integrating the new roads with the existing road and providing for a mixture of uses at a density consistent with compact development (Smart Growth Vermont).

6. Priority for the use of public funding for the development of affordable housing and assisted living facilities shall be for those located within Regional and Town Centers in order to increase access to services.
7. The placement of municipal and other government buildings should be in established Regional and Town Centers in order to maintain and enhance the vitality of these areas.
8. Encourage the development of public places and cultural events within Regional and Town Centers.
9. Support the creation of off-road bike and pedestrian paths that connect Regional and Town centers with residential areas and neighboring centers in a hub and spoke pattern.
10. Identify key areas with flood storage capacity and encourage floodplain protection measures such as land acquisition or restrictive land use regulation in areas up- stream of Regional and Town Centers.

**Industrial** consists of areas where existing and future commercial and industrial activities are encouraged, including new development and redevelopment. Largely clustered in the vicinity of the Region 's urbanized areas, these include industrial parks and active quarries in Barre City, Barre Town, Berlin, Montpelier, East Montpelier, Middlesex and Northfield. A small industrial district is also located on the border of Fayston and Waitsfield, the location of the Mad River Industrial Park.

The specification of commercial/industrial sites allows for location of these types of businesses without creating adverse impacts on adjacent land uses. Large-scale commercial/industrial uses, which are important to the region, need to be located in areas where off-site impacts such as noise, traffic and light/glare can be mitigated.

### **Policies**

1. Industrial uses are encouraged to locate first in existing industrial areas and secondly in industrial areas assigned in municipal plans which are in accordance with the goals and policies included in this plan.
2. It is acknowledged that commercial activity and small scale, individual industrial activities will take place in other parts of the region as directed by town plans, which can address the town needs with more specificity.

**Mixed-Use Commercial** include areas of commercial, office and mixed-use development built in a spread out pattern and served by water and wastewater infrastructure. Typically dominated by commercial service industries, the intent of this land use category is to transform these areas into higher-density, mixed-use settlements through infill and redevelopment. These areas in the region are concentrated along US 302, Fisher Rd, VT 12 and south of Route 2 in Berlin, and also includes South Barre in Barre Town.

Planned commercial or mixed uses within existing linear commercial zoning districts along major road corridors must be developed carefully to avoid sprawl, traffic congestion, and safety hazards.

Municipalities should not encourage strip development because additional development of this type would negatively impact the economic vitality of commercial areas in nearby Regional and Town centers. Communities should give substantial consideration to the long term impacts of creating or extending strip development.

### “Strip Development”

Title 10: Chapter 151, the Vermont statute dictating the Act 250 land use permitting process, defines “strip development” as follows:

“Strip development” means linear commercial development along a public highway that includes three or more of the following characteristics: broad road frontage, predominance of single-story buildings, limited reliance on shared highway access, lack of connection to any existing settlement except by highway, lack of connection to surrounding land uses except by highway, lack of coordination with surrounding land uses, and limited accessibility for pedestrians. In determining whether a proposed development or subdivision constitutes strip development, the District Commission shall consider the topographic constraints in the area in which the development or subdivision is to be located.”

### Policies

1. Encourage the transformation of existing commercial areas into areas serving a mix of uses, including residential, and offering diversified transportation options, while also conforming to traditional historic development patterns.

Strategy 1a: Work with towns to incorporate standards such as placement of buildings near the road with parking areas to the side and rear, attractive building design, application of access management principles and provision of pedestrian facilities within the center and facilities that connect to sidewalks and public transit.

2. Large scale retail constituting a substantial regional impact should be permitted only if it includes exemplary building and site design as described above in Policy 1, and is determined to have a net beneficial impact based on an independent economic and community impact study that may be requested by the host municipality and/or CVRPC.

**Resort Centers** are developments that are associated with large-scale recreational facilities, which in Central Vermont are concentrated around ski area facilities in the Mad River Valley.

Downhill facilities and associated development at Lincoln Peak (Warren) and Mt. Ellen (Fayston) of Sugarbush Resort and Mad River Glen (Fayston) all provide recreational facilities, services and jobs and contribute to the Region 's seasonal housing stock. Sugarbush Resort has been undergoing substantial expansions at Lincoln Peak for the past decade as part of a Lincoln Peak Base Area Redevelopment Master Plan to im- prove base area/guest facilities and to increase the bed base of the resort.

Access to these resort areas are provided via VT Rte 100 together with VT Rte 17, German Flats Rd., the Sugarbush Access Rd. and seasonal transit services.

**Policies:**

1. The Towns of Warren and Fayston have developed specific ski area planning districts and regulations in its municipal plan and zoning bylaw to ensure that development is consistent with town goals. As the impacts of these resorts extend be- yond municipal boundaries, this Plan recognizes that the Town of Waitsfield participates with the Towns of Warren and Fayston participate in the Mad River Valley Planning District (MRVPD). Also including representation from Sugarbush Resort and the Mad River Valley Chamber of Commerce, the MRVPD carries out a program of planning for the future of the Mad River Valley and conducts studies regarding key issues, such as affordable housing, recreation and trail planning and economic development that are incorporated into local plans. Future growth at Sugarbush Resort and Mad River Glen that is compliant with local plans and bylaws is consistent with this Plan.
2. The focus of alpine ski area development in the Region should remain on the expansion of existing facilities rather than development of new ones.

**Rural** areas encompass the majority of the Region 's land area and are generally rural in character. Much of the Region 's residential development in recent decades has occurred in these areas in a low-density pattern along transportation routes. These areas encompass much of the Region 's large forest blocks, sand/gravel/mineral deposits, and prime agricultural soils that, when in productive use, contribute to the working landscape and have significant economic value. Rural areas also include residential, small-scale commercial and industrial, and recreational uses.

New subdivisions can be planned to incorporate the positive characteristics of earlier rural settlements, such as a community identity, public open spaces, and preservation of important resources (such as agricultural soils and forest blocks). Many of these objectives can be realized by clustering lots to create a Hamlet-type character around the homes, while setting a significant percentage of the project area aside as open space reserved for agriculture, forestry, wildlife habitat or public recreation.

**Hamlets** are smaller than villages, and are typically concentrated residential settlements woven into the fabric of Rural Land Use Planning Areas that may or may not provide minor commercial and civic services. Hamlet areas are identified on the Future Land Use Map by center points; when making land use decisions using the policies in this Plan, Hamlet Areas must include the locally recognized extent of the hamlet as it is delineated in the appropriate town plan.

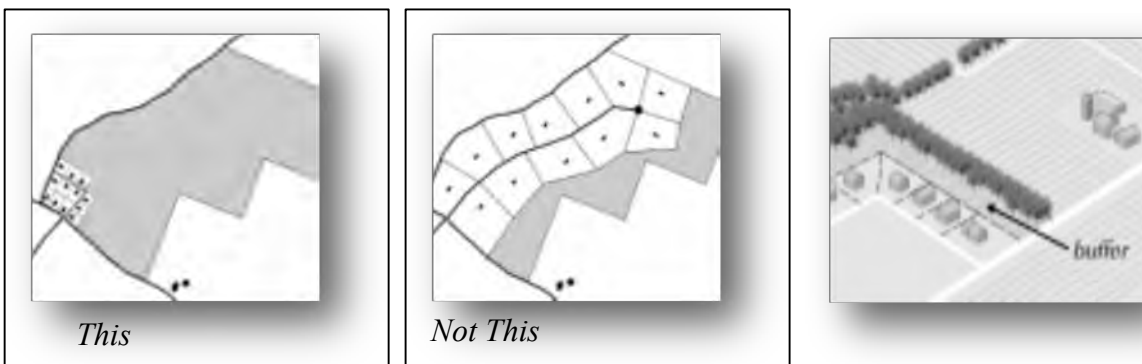
Hamlets in the Region include Riverton (West Berlin), South Village (Northfield), Cogswell, Upper Graniteville, Lower Graniteville, Upper Websterville, Lower Websterville, East Orange, Orange Village, Adamant, North Montpelier, East Montpelier Center, Putnamville (Middlesex), East Warren and South Woodbury.

**Policies:**

1. Development should be designed to minimize its impact on the viability of agricultural operations or its contribution to fragmentation of forest Blocks. .

Strategy 1a: Provide guidance and training on regulatory and non-regulatory tools for open space and resource protection available to towns for use in town plans and regulations. Encourage implementation of tools such as conservation subdivisions, clustered development, transfer of development rights, building envelopes and variable lot size in all subdivision development, and especially within rural residential and productive rural lands.

2. Development is encouraged to be built outside of farms and along the edges of forests, preferably with buffers between such development and agricultural uses or environmentally sensitive areas.



**Figure 2. Avoiding Fragmentation and Minimize Use Conflicts:** Incorporate buffers between developed and resource lands to avoid conflicts between incompatible uses — maintain a well-defined edge between developed and open land. (Smart Growth Vermont).

3. Policies that enable owners of farm and forestland to bear the financial responsibility of resource protection should be supported.

4. Development that diminishes the rural character of the area as defined by local and regional plans is discouraged. Development is encouraged to incorporate the following principles:

- Convenience and safety of vehicular and pedestrian movement, including measures such as traffic calming, within the site, and in relation to adjacent areas or roads.



- Compact development that allows for use of shorter power lines and shorter, narrower, and interconnected roads that result in lower maintenance costs.

- When new roads are being constructed, consideration should be given to burying power and phone lines, if practicable.

5. Develop and expand existing Hamlets in a form that maintains traditional density and residential settlement pattern. Encourage towns to enable this pattern of development in local land use regulations.

6. Wildlife connectivity areas should be protected from fragmentation and uses that reduce their viability for movement of wildlife, particularly where they connect forest blocks.

7. Non-residential uses, including small service businesses, small professional offices and inns are acceptable land uses for Rural Areas provided that such uses are planned as relatively small in size or scale, are not primary or dominant uses in an area, do not unduly conflict with existing or planned residential, forestry or agricultural uses, and do not unduly affect rural character. Towns should limit the number and size of such establishments to prevent a proliferation of scattered commercial development that does not serve the needs of the community.

8. Occupations that are customarily practiced in residential areas, and which do not affect the character of those areas, are another form of small-scale commercial use common in and appropriate for rural areas. Small professional offices, antique shops, and craft studios are examples of such "customary home occupations."

9. Cross country ski centers, mountain biking facilities and other outdoor recreational areas represent an economically viable means of maintaining rural open spaces with little secondary development; both expansion and development of new facilities are consistent with this Plan.

**Resource** areas are dominated by lands requiring special protection or consideration due to their uniqueness, irreplaceable or fragile nature, or important ecological function.

These include:

- Protected lands;
- Elevations above 2,500 ft (elevations above 1,700 ft in Waitsfield, as regulated);
- Slopes of 25% or more;
- Rare, threatened or endangered species and significant natural communities;
- Wetlands;
- Special flood hazard areas; and
- Shoreline protection areas;

Both Highest Priority Forest Blocks and Highest Priority Connectivity Blocks are also present within the high elevations and encompass areas of steep slopes, areas with rare, threatened or endangered species, significant natural communities and wetlands. As a subcategory of Resource lands, this plan recognizes *critical resource areas* (see page 2-9 for a description) as key sites that are particularly sensitive and should be given maximum protection. Please refer to the callout box on the following page for the methodology used to determine Resource areas.

**Policies:**

1. Conservation of the natural landscape and careful management of lands is sought for these areas. Development in these areas should be subject to extensive planning, review and conditions that ensure its protection.
2. Any development proposed within critical resource areas shall provide evidence as to why the development cannot be avoided, and shall provide mitigation for natural resources impacted by the development.
3. The extension of permanent roads, energy transmission facilities, and utilities into Resource areas is discouraged.

4. Development on wetlands, steep slopes of 25% or more, and ridge lines should be avoided.
5. Avoid or limit development and investment in identified flood hazard areas, where feasible.
6. Avoid development that fragments forest blocks and habitat connectors.

### **Future Land Use Map Resource Data and Sources**

Data is for general planning purposes only and may contain errors and omissions. Data should be verified during permitting processes per the provisions of the regulatory authority. Scale limitations exist and data is only as accurate as the original source.

- Protected lands: This data consists of both private and public protected lands. These include VT State Forests, Parks, Wildlife Management Areas, Town Forests, and Land Trust Easements.  
Source: Vermont Conserved Lands Database, VT Land Trust, and Towns
- Elevations above 2,500 ft (elevations above 1,700 ft in Waitsfield, as regulated): This data consists of all areas about the elevation of 2500 ft and in Waitsfield VT above 1,700 ft.  
Source: USGS contours over 2500 ft and Town of Waitsfield Land Use Regulations
- Slopes of 25% or more: This data includes all areas with slopes of 25% or more.  
Source: CVRPC slope analysis using 10 meter Digital Elevation Model.
- Rare, threatened or endangered species and significant natural communities: This data consists of all mapped rare, threatened or endangered species and significant natural communities as identified by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, Natural Heritage Inventory.  
Source: Vermont Fish and Wildlife Vermont Natural Heritage Inventory <http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=229831>
- Wetlands: This data consists of all mapped class 2 wetlands as identified in the Vermont Significant Wetlands Inventory.  
Source: Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation Water Quality Division Wetlands Section
- Special flood hazard areas: This data consists of FEMA mapped Special flood hazard areas Zone A and AE.  
Source: FEMA Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map data
- Shoreline protection areas: This data consists of all lakes and ponds greater than 10 acres plus a buffer of 250 feet (Lake Shore Protection areas in Calais, as regulated) .  
Source: CVRPC selected Vermont Hydrologic Dataset lakes and ponds greater than 10 acres and then buffered those by 250 ft and the Town of Calais Land Use Regulations.

## GENERAL LAND USE GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

### Goal 1:

**To promote sound management, conservation and use of the Region's natural resources.**

### Policies:

1. Municipalities are encouraged to establish conservation commissions (under V.S.A. 24, Chapter 118) to assist in the identification, study, maintenance and protection of important natural resources.

2. Encourage the improved identification and mapping of surface and groundwater resources.

Strategy 2a. Work with State and Federal partners, such as U.S. Geological Survey, VT Geological Survey, and the Agency of Natural Resources in delineating ground watersupply, aquifers, and groundwater protection areas.

Strategy 2b. Support towns in identifying wetlands and vernal pools that are not already mapped by the State of Vermont.

3. Support the betterment of surface water quality in the Region.

Strategy 3a. Storage and utilization of fertilizers, pesticides, petro-chemicals, herbicides, sludge, or other potentially harmful industrial, agricultural, commercial or residential materials, must be accomplished in a manner compatible with existing regulations.

Strategy 3b. CVRPC opposes the downgrading of surface water classifications unless such action is required to accommodate treated effluent from new or expanded municipal sewage treatment facilities. The Commission also opposes the upgrading of surface water classifications where such upgrading might be misleading or dangerous to users.

Strategy 3c. Where a proposed project involves a discharge into, or withdrawal from, any of the Region's surface waters, consideration should be given to the short and long term impact on such waters and to applicable health and water regulations. The potential degradation of water quality, the impact on wildlife, the assimilative capacity of waters, and the effect on the Region's ability to support future growth should be evaluated. Protection of the public health, safety, and welfare shall be the primary objectives.

Strategy 3d. Native vegetated buffer strips in riparian zones and shoreland areas should be protected or maintained according to Best Management Practices outlined in the Vermont Handbook for Shoreland Development and VT ANR Guidance Regarding Riparian Buffers to protect functional habitat and improve water quality.

Strategy 3e. Encourage and assist with the acquisition of conservation easements along waterways according to priorities identified in River Corridor Plans.

Strategy 3f. Assist with and support efforts to remove dams that are not serving a useful purpose and other artificial barriers from rivers and streams. Help identify dams that are not serving a useful purposes and that should be listed for removal in conformance with state and federal rules and regulations.

Strategy 3g. Assist landowners in identifying funding opportunities to support buffer- plantings on their properties that would support stream bank and shoreland restoration.

Strategy 3h. High density development in proximity to surface waters should consider community septic systems to permit adequate setback of the leaching area, or connections to public systems, if possible.

4. Encourage enhanced educational opportunities on watershed functions, protection and restoration, particularly those targeted to youth.

Strategy 4a. Develop a clearinghouse of resources that could be used by teachers and other groups working with youth to provide education on these topics.

5. Avoid or limit development and investment in identified flood hazard areas. Where established economic and institutional centers exist , development in these centers shall adhere to strict floodplain management standards to minimize flood damage and public safety risk.

Strategy 5a. Continue to conduct outreach to municipalities regarding the most recent state River Corridor maps as delineated by the VT Agency of Natural Resources and their implications.

Strategy 5b. Encourage and provide technical assistance to municipalities in enhancing the regulatory standards in their municipal flood hazard regulations, including the in- corporation of River Corridor regulations.

Strategy 5c. Fill and new structures within mapped floodways as identified on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps shall be prohibited, except where a substantial public benefit is provided. ”

Strategy 5d. Wetlands that provide a flood storage function as determined by the VT Wetlands Program should be left undisturbed or development should be required to provide compensatory storage or restoration on-site or in the immediate vicinity, if disturbed.

Strategy 5e. Assist municipalities in identifying and limiting development on lands adjacent to waterways that provide flood storage or other beneficial function through acquisition, easement, deed restriction or zoning that encourages cluster design, particularly for those upstream floodplains that provide flood protection functions for the Region ’ s downtowns and village centers.

Strategy 5f. CVRPC will have a FEMA Certified Floodplain Manager on Commission staff.

6. Improve flood resilience planning, education and outreach activities to create a citizenry aware of flood risks, potential costs, and actions that can serve to reduce risk and future property loss.

Strategy 6a. Continue to assist municipalities in developing local hazard mitigation plans and flood resilience elements as part of municipal plans.

Strategy 6b. Promote participation in FEMA 's Community Rating System, where appropriate; Assist un-enrolled towns in applying for the Community Ratings System and assist towns already involved in the Community Ratings System in improving their rating.

Strategy 6c. Consider coordination of a multi-jurisdictional Program for Public Information, an ongoing effort to prepare, implement, and monitor a range of public information activities.

Strategy 6d. If requested, perform an audit of municipal web sites and communication methods and recommend additional information and communication methods that will increase local awareness of flood risks, municipal flood resilience planning, and actions property owners and residents can take.

Strategy 6e. Partner with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources to coordinate Region-wide flood resilience-related trainings targeted to real estate agents, developers, business owners and other stakeholders with interest in floodplain management.

7. Minimize fragmentation of forest blocks and habitat connectors.

Strategy 7a. Promote the Use Value Appraisal (Current Use Program) and other non-regulatory approaches to forest conservation and management, including support of forest products and conservation easements.

Strategy 7b. Encourage municipalities to identify forest blocks and habitat connectors and plan for the minimization of forest fragmentation.

Strategy 7c. Work with municipalities to incorporate development review standards in zoning and subdivision regulations that address forest and wildlife resources.

**Goal 2:**

**To enhance and support the viability of the Region's resource based industries.**

**Policies:**

1. CVRPC supports and encourages the protection and continued productivity of viable primary agricultural soils, productive forest land, and mineral resources. Sound land use planning including flexible development options, fair government pricing taxation and subsidy programs, agricultural diversity, and promotion of value-added products and industries are viewed as means to this end.

2. Public improvements are considered a significant reason for farmland's metamorphosis into prime development land. The installation of sewer or water lines, and roads across or into the immediate vicinity of agricultural parcels or primary agricultural soils can encourage the development of farmland. For this reason they require careful review. Such improvements will be discouraged unless:

- such a position would conflict with the local plan; or
- the improvements are required to implement the settlement pattern goals set forth in this Plan or in that of a Central Vermont municipality;
- there is an overriding public need being served; or
- adequate permanent protection is inherent in the development proposal; or
- parcels or soils affected are determined to be "not viable" for reasons of size, topography, surrounding land use, or potential productivity.

3. CVRPC encourages municipalities to identify locally significant agricultural and forest parcels and/or districts through locally and consensually developed land evaluation and site assessment programs (e.g. LESA and FLESA). Such identification can assist in establishing protection priorities and programs.

4. CVRPC recommends continuation of, and participation in, the Use Value Appraisal Program as a means to promote continuing sound management of resource lands by taxing them fairly and according to their current use.



5. CVRPC will, in conjunction with other stakeholders and relevant organizations, consider methods to determine the amount of agricultural land required to meet the Region 's long term requirements under a "worst case scenario " regarding food importation.

6. The extraction of sand and gravel should not be unduly detrimental to surrounding land uses or the environmental quality of the area. A reclamation plan should be included as part of any extraction proposal. Possible alternative uses should be identified in local plans. Municipalities are encouraged to map the important, accessible sources.

7. New developments that encroach upon resource lands, and the occupants thereof, are encouraged to respect the rights of resource land owners to continue existing operations, and undertake appropriate expansions, according to accepted practices.

### **Goal 3:**

**To encourage the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside while promoting development in economically viable locations.**

### **Policies:**

1. New development should be planned so as to respect the historic settlement pattern of compact villages, neighborhoods, and urban centers separated by rural countryside.

Accordingly, CVRPC:

- Endorses the concept of creating new villages to accommodate new growth.
- Endorses "smart growth" planning principles as embodied in this Plan and supports the designation of "Growth Centers " – be they identified in local plans or through the State process codified in Act 183. We would also support efforts to simplify the State Growth Center designation process so as to make its benefits more accessible to a broader cross-section of communities.
- Will assist municipalities in conducting the studies required to prepare applications to the Downtown Board for State Growth Center Designation.
- Supports the appropriate expansion of existing settlements, particularly where excess infrastructural capacity exists. (The existing settlements within Central Vermont are those areas currently served by public water and/or sewer systems or characterized by

higher densities of development. Existing settlements include, but are not limited to, the downtowns and cities, the villages and the myriad concentrated residential neighborhoods.)

- Encourages PUD, "cluster" or "open space" design for new residential and commercial developments, particularly those outside of existing settlements or planned growth areas and discourages the development of commercial and residential sprawl.
- Encourages "in fill" development and adaptive reuse of buildings in existing settlements.
- Supports and encourages revitalization efforts directed towards strengthening and improving villages and cities.
- Recognizes that some environmental and development "trade-offs" will be necessary to achieve desired growth patterns. To this end, CVRPC believes that mandatory mitigation of any agricultural soils or habitat losses, even at a reduced ratio, within State designated Growth Centers is counterproductive to enticing development and recreating traditional land use patterns.
- Believes that land use restrictions should not unduly hinder self-employment for residents. Such opportunities may help reinforce traditional land use patterns through economic incentives.
- Believes that land use plans should not unnecessarily infringe upon the landowner's ability to enjoy and profit from the investment and use of private property.
- Encourages municipalities and individual landowners to identify sites which may qualify for assessment and/or cleanup under the EPA 's Brownfields Grant Program.
- Encourages municipalities to undertake build-out modeling in order to better evaluate development capability and future growth potential under current zoning, as well as to examine the potential impact of employing alternative density strategies.

2. To seek ways to overcome the economic disincentives to development within existing built-up areas, including the high costs associated with the construction of, or hookup to, necessary infrastructure. CVRPC:

- Recognizes Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as a valuable tool for supporting infrastructure development in planned growth areas and supports amending current State law to make it more practical for communities to implement.
- Over the next five years CVRPC will continue to work with municipalities to prepare a regional land use map that incorporates the developing land use plans of its municipalities and displays locally and/or State designated growth centers. In conjunction with this effort, CVRPC will provide technical assistance in growth center planning, upon request,

and in conjunction with State guidelines.

- will recognize growth center designations and employ them to attempt to achieve desired growth patterns through its influence over public expenditures and development review decisions, where applicable.
- Will provide assistance to municipalities seeking such funding for brownfield assessment and remediation, upon request.

**Goal 4:**

**To protect environmentally sensitive or unique areas.**

**Policies:**

1. Natural and fragile areas identified in this Plan should receive protection from harmful uses.
2. Where natural and fragile areas occur on developable private lands and where their adequate protection would preclude any other reasonable use of those properties, acquisition in fee simple or less than fee simple is recommended.
3. Where a potentially harmful development or activity is proposed in proximity to a natural or fragile area, measures should be taken to ensure adequate protection.
4. CVRPC encourages the inclusion of natural and fragile areas information and mapping in local plans. (Municipalities should not be limited by the definitions and designations included here, as it is recognized that this Plan may not include all locally significant sites.)
5. It is the policy of CVRPC to encourage the maintenance of existing wildlife habitats and habitat connectors. Municipalities are encouraged to identify those of local importance.

Strategy 5a. Work closely with partners such as The Nature Conservancy, the Staying Connected Initiative and Vermont Fish and Wildlife to identify areas within the Region that are sensitive to development, which contains the most recorded species, the most diverse communities, etc., and have this data available for incorporation in member town plans.

6. Any activity that would degrade important groundwater supplies is discouraged.

Specifically, development activities in designated WHPA's shall be carefully reviewed for groundwater impacts.

7. Hazardous wastes shall be disposed of properly to prevent any degradation of groundwater.

8. It is the policy of CVRPC to encourage the preservation of wetlands so as to protect their function and productivity. Efforts (including consideration of site design options) should be made to mitigate against the possible adverse impacts of development on the Region's wetlands.

9. Prevent the spread of terrestrial invasive species and forest pests.

Strategy 9a. Work with partners to implement coordinated invasive species and forest pest education, detection, prevention and control measures.

Strategy 9b. Encourage landscaping with native species over the use of non-native species, particularly in non-urban environments. Work with UVM Extension Master Gardeners on educating homeowners on the use of native trees and plants.

#### **Goal 5:**

#### **To preserve the aesthetic quality of the Region**

#### **Policies:**

1. Municipalities and developers are encouraged, through design and siting of structures, to make a concerted effort to preserve access to and enjoyment of scenic views for the public.

2. Unless effectively screened, or clearly in the best interest of the general public, ridge line development or conspicuous development on locally prominent landscape features is discouraged.

3. The scale and siting of new structures should be in keeping with the surrounding landscape and architecture; however, towers should utilize stealth technology.

4. Outdoor lighting should be limited to minimum levels necessary to ensure safety and

security of persons and property.

5. Light sources shall be shielded and not directly visible from public roads or adjacent residences.

6. Landscaping with native species is generally preferred over the use of nonnative species, particularly in non-urban environments. The use of non-native trees and plants for landscaping can lead to unintended introductions of species which out- compete native vegetation.

7. Where possible, parking lots and storage areas should be well landscaped and/or otherwise screened from view on public roads.

8. CVRPC encourages the State and municipalities to maintain existing roadside views by means of vegetation clearing, where appropriate.

9. CVRPC will attempt to inventory and map the Region's scenic resources, with assistance from municipalities.

10. The location of telecommunication towers is a significant aesthetic issue within the Region. Policies intended to minimize negative impact are presented in the wireless telecommunication facilities policies of this Plan.

11. CVRPC will track indicators that show impacts on aesthetic quality and natural beauty in Central Vermont.

12. New development should make all reasonable attempts to minimize noise pollution and shall not exceed accepted standards in residential areas.

**Goal 6:**

**To ensure that new development in the vicinity of the Region 's interstate interchanges is appropriate to the setting and considers the impact of such development on adjacent village and urban centers.**

**Policies:**

1. CVRPC encourages interchange modeling and identification of preferred development scenarios.
2. CVRPC will encourage and assist municipalities in planning for land use in and around interchange areas.
3. CVRPC will continue to support the Town of Berlin 's efforts to plan for and implement the creation of a new village center in the vicinity of Exit 7.
4. CVRPC will encourage the concept of management associations (similar to transportation management associations) to promote master planning for interchange zones.
5. CVRPC will exercise its status as a statutory party in Act 250 whenever new development has the potential to impact the form and function of an interchange area or adjacent communities.
6. In support of regional land use priorities that support the development of village and urban centers, CVRPC will not encourage development at interchanges where that development will result in a demonstrable negative impact on adjacent village or urban centers. CVRPC will, however, encourage development at interchanges that complements or appropriately expands existing growth centers according to a locally developed, regionally approved plan.
7. New development should employ design guidelines that foster economic vitality in growth areas and encourage the maintenance of the rural, working landscape.

**Goal 7:**

**To manage the quality and quantity of storm water runoff in order to avoid property damage and negative impacts on surface and groundwater.**

**Policies:**

1. New development should, through design and maintenance, attempt to minimize changes in the volume and chemical composition of runoff. Methods recommended to achieve this

objective include:

- Avoiding construction on steep or unstable slopes and in high elevations (Slopes in excess of 25% and elevations above 2,500 feet are generally thought to be prohibitive for most kinds of development.);
- Stabilizing entrances to construction areas to eliminate tracking of sediment onto paved public roads;
- Employing cluster/open space design techniques;
- Minimizing development road and sidewalk widths to those which are necessary for safety and access;
- Avoiding the use of wide radius, paved cul-de-sacs, where appropriate ("Hammerhead" turns, smaller radius turns, and landscaped cul-de-sac islands are some other options.);
- Minimizing the removal of native vegetation to the extent practical;
- Phasing new construction to minimize the amount of disturbed soil at any given time where practical; and
- Providing vegetated buffers between roof lines and paved areas and between sidewalks and roads, where appropriate.

2. Structural Best Management Practices (BMP's) should be used, as appropriate, to control storm water on new development sites before, during and after construction (including plans for long term maintenance and operations). Objectives and applications include:

- Storm water retention: wet ponds, artificial wetlands
- Storm water detention: dry basins
- Storm water filtering: bio-retention, sand filters, compost filters
- Storm water velocity control: filter strips, grassed swales, rock swales
- Erosion control: construction schedule, seeding/mulching, check dams, run-off diversions
- Sediment control: sediment basins/traps, filter fabric/silt fences, hay bales, inlet protection
- Infiltration: infiltration basins, trenches, dry well, leaching catch basins, infiltration islands, pervious surfaces

3. Acceptable Management Practices (AMP's, as defined by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources) should be employed on all agricultural, silvacultural and earth extraction operations.

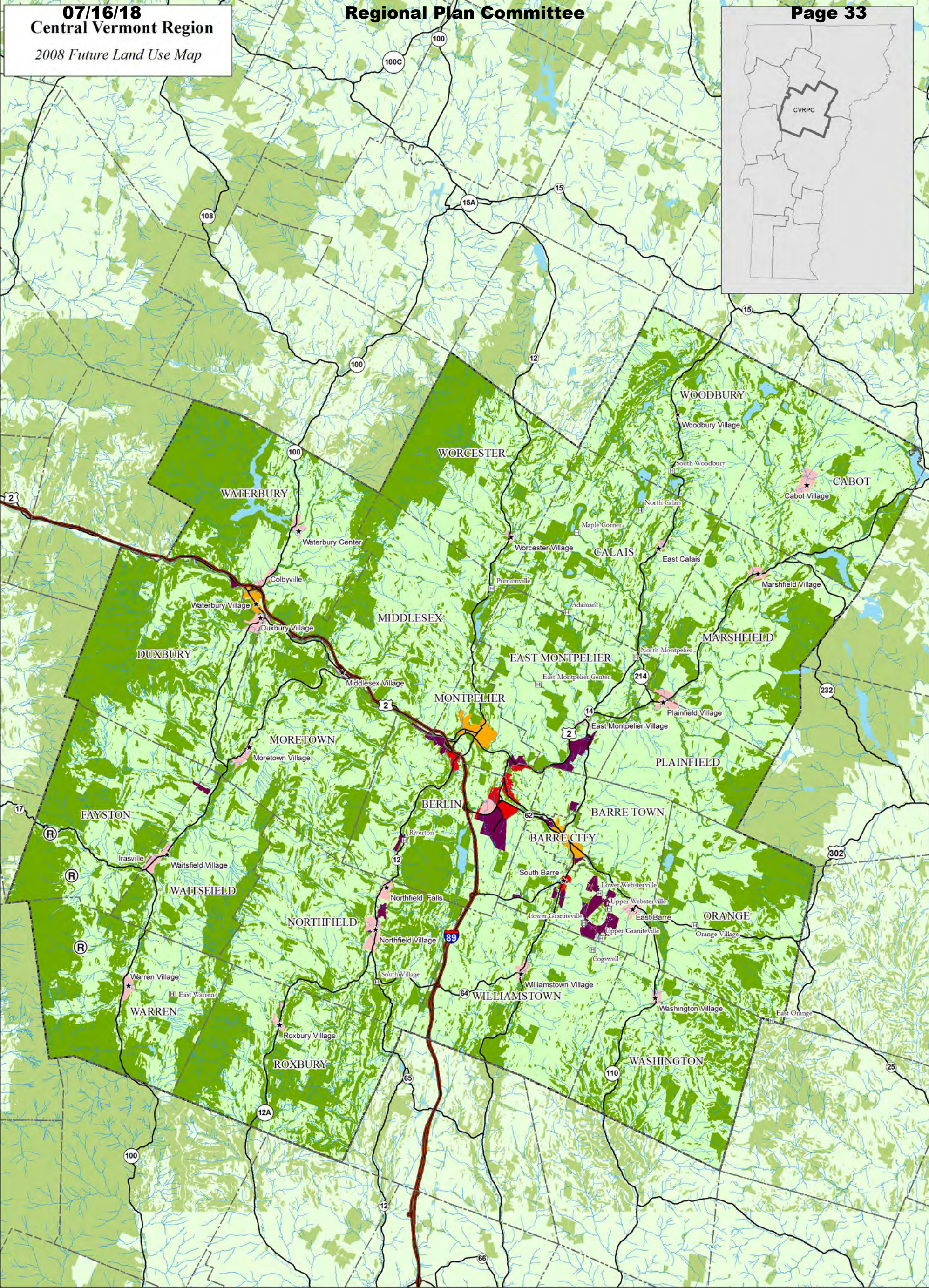
4. Efforts should be made to minimize the extent of impervious surfaces and surface runoff associated with parking facilities. The following methods are recommended:

- Constructing structured parking facilities (i.e. multi-level garages) where practical and appropriate in order to provide a higher ratio of parking spaces to impervious surface area;
- Using pervious materials in "spillover" parking areas;
- Integrating the use of landscaped areas as "bio-retention" filters; and
- Providing smaller spaces for compact cars.

5. Municipalities should consider adopting policies and practices to reduce the volume and impacts of storm water runoff, including:

- Encouraging storm water management through the use of BMP's (as outlined in policy 2) in local plans, zoning bylaws, and building permits;
- Minimizing zoning setbacks to allow for shorter driveways, and allowing shared driveways;
- Instituting maximum, as well as minimum, parking ratio requirements in local bylaws to prevent "overbuilt" parking lots;
- Allowing for shared parking facilities in local bylaws;
- Adopting "pooper scooper" ordinances to prevent the pollution of surface waters with pathogens and nutrients;
- Protecting high elevations and steep slopes from intensive development in local bylaws;
- Properly sizing and maintaining culverts;
- Properly maintaining ditches on dirt roads to slow runoff and filter sediments as per the "Road Design and Maintenance Handbook" published by the Vermont Local Roads Program;
- Separating combined storm water/sewer systems (CSO's) which can discharge raw sewage to surface waters during big storms; and
- Making sure road salt storage areas are covered.
- Consulting the "Erosion Control Prevention Manual" published by the Vermont Geological Survey.





Future Land Use

- Resource
- Rural
- Regional Center
- Town Centers
- Industrial
- Mixed-Use Commercial

- Hamlets
- Resort Centers
- Villages

Adopted 10/13/2015

0 2 4 6 8 10 Miles

Data should be verified during permitting process per the provisions of the regulatory authority. This map is for general planning purposes only. This map may contain errors and omissions. See page 2-19 and 2-31 of the Land Use Element for a complete explanation.





**CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGIONAL PLAN COMMITTEE**

**April 20, 2018  
Meeting Notes**

A meeting of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission's Regional Plan Committee was held on Friday, April 20, 2018 in the Conference Room of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.

**Committee Members Present:**

Laura Hill-Eubanks –	Town of Northfield
Ron Krauth –	Town of Middlesex
Janet Shatney –	Barre City
Scott Bascom –	Barre Town

**Committee Members Absent:**

Dan Hoxworth –	Capstone Community Action
Dara Torre –	Town of Moretown

**Others Present:**

Julie Potter –	Town of East Montpelier
Bonnie Waninger –	CVRPC Executive Director
Eric Vorwald, AICP –	CVRPC Senior Planner

**CALL TO ORDER**

At 1:06pm, without a quorum of the committee present, it was determined that the meeting could not be brought to order.

**CHANGES OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

No changes to the agenda were offered.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No members of the public were present.

**CONSIDERATION OF CHANGES TO THE 2016 CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLAN  
OR THE CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL ENERGY PLAN TO ADDRESS CONSISTENCY  
WITH THE STANDARDS OF ACT 174**

Mr. Vorwald provided the committee with an overview of the purpose for the meeting. He noted that, following the April Commission meeting, he contacted the Department of Public Service to discuss the proposed language prohibiting wind generation above 2,500 feet to ensure the Regional Energy Plan would not run afoul of the standards. During this discussion, it was noted that this prohibition would be inconsistent with the other aspects of the Regional Plan since development was permitted above 2,500 feet. Based on this, Mr. Vorwald outlined several options for moving forward which included amending

the Regional Energy Plan or amending the Regional Plan. The Committee engaged in a robust discussion regarding possible changes to the text in order to address the inconsistencies as outlined. The Committee agreed that amending the Energy Plan would be easier than amending the Regional Plan and encouraged staff to move in that direction.

A second item that staff requested input from the Committee was related to the height limitation that was approved at the April Commission meeting. Staff noted that the Department provides specific definitions for the scale and height of wind generation and recommended that the Regional Energy Plan follow those definitions or provide specific language to define and justify an alternative height. Staff outlined language for the Committee to consider and discussion occurred regarding this specific aspect.

Following the discussion by the Committee, it was determined that the best approach to address the concerns regarding height would be to present the information to the Commission and include images of the various heights of recognizable structures within the community or the region to provide a comparison. Additionally, staff was asked to further research the heights of specific structures including wind turbines, communication towers, silos, or other facilities that may be impacted by a height limitation.

With no other information to discuss, the meeting concluded at 3:15pm.