



MEMO

Date: February 28, 2023

To: Regional Plan Committee (RPC)

From: Clare Rock, Senior Planner

Re: New Regional Plan - committee orientation to regional plan process

☒ **ACTION REQUESTED:** The committee will be tasked with:

- a. Vision and Aspirations: Staff requests the committee endorse or support the changes so they can be used in the writing of the new plan.
- b. Structure and Organization of Plan: Staff requests the committee endorse or support the structure so it can be used in the writing of the new plan.
- c. Stakeholder Groups: Staff is seeking input from the committee on the identified stakeholders – is anyone missing?

To orientate committee members to the project this memo is a follow up to the memo included in the February 8, 2023 Board packet.

Purpose, statutory authority and requirements

Vermont Regional Planning Commissions coordinate planning at the regional level through the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive regional development and conservation plan (along with related studies.) In general, regional plans assess the challenges and opportunities related to growth and development within the region and present solutions that transcend or cross municipal boundaries.

Current plan: The current Regional Plan can be viewed [here](#). The current plan is a re-adoption of the 2008 plan. A description of the amendments which have been made to this plan in recent years are included in the front of the plan.

Regional Plan assessment: In 2013, VAPDA paid a consultant to assess all Vermont regional plans. A copy of this assessment can be accessed [here](#). Much of the assessment likely applies to CVRPC's current plan. CVRPC staff aim to consider this assessment in development of the new plan.

Key statutory references: Staff is providing the following key statutory references for committee review. The following sections of statute lay out the duties of the RPC and the purpose of the regional plan and the required elements which must be included in the plan. The last link is to the state planning goals which the plan must be in alignment with.

[24 V.S.A. § 4345a Duties of regional planning commissions](#)

[24 V.S.A. § 4345. Optional powers and duties of regional planning commissions](#)

[24 V.S.A. § 4347. Purposes of regional plan](#)

[24 V.S.A. § 4348a. Elements of a regional plan](#)

[24 V.S.A. § 4302 Purpose; goals](#)

Key Components of the Plan

The Plan will cover topics including energy, transportation, utilities and facilities, housing, economic development, natural resource conservation and historic preservation as specified in [24 V.S.A. § 4348a. Elements of a regional plan.](#)

The plan will culminate in:

- a future land use plan and MAP that is expected to identify present and prospective locations, intensities, and characters of various land uses (including but not limited to areas for land conservation, working lands, neighborhoods, and village centers and downtowns);
 - An explanation of a future land use plan and map is included in the [Vermont Planning Manual](#) (see chapter titled *Step 4: Map Out the Future* starting on page 63.)
 - Staff envisions the new regional future land use map to be a departure from the one currently included in the [Regional Plan](#). (scroll to page 273 of the pdf)
 - As part of CVRPC's contract with ACCD this year, RPC's have been tasked with developing a recommended methodology to improve consistency between and among the region's future land use plans and maps by June 30, 2023. It will be expected CVRPC uses the recommendations to develop the new future land use map. Staff will provide updates to the RPC when they become available.
- identification of areas of regional significance; and a definition of what the RPC will consider a project or development that will have a substantial regional impact (SRI) (and to the extent possible identify locations of proposed developments which will have a potential for regional impact);
 - As per [24 V.S.A. § 4345a Duties of regional planning commissions](#) see number (17) which states " As part of its regional plan, define a substantial regional impact, as the term may be used with respect to its region. This definition shall be given due consideration, where relevant, in State regulatory proceedings."
 - The current [Regional Plan](#) includes a definition on page 1-5. Staff would like to

further this define this term to aid in the review of Act 250 and Section 248 projects.

- Staff has reviewed SRI definitions from other RPC's plus a draft definition was created in 2017 and supported by the Project Review Committee, however it was never bought before the board for approval. Staff will share these with the committee in the upcoming months for review and discussion.
- As regional plan chapters are drafted and reviewed, please consider what types of projects and developments might be considered to have substantial regional impact. (Such as those which may impact a certain number of forest/agricultural acres, create a certain number of jobs or vehicle trips.

Vision and Aspirations

The plan will be visionary and inspiring PLUS guiding and helpful for Central Vermont municipalities. It will include a Vision for the future and include a set of high-level aspirations. The aspirations will be used as planning principles which will guide subsequent policies and actions.

As referenced in the February 8, 2023 memo to the CVRPC Board a draft vision statement and overarching regional plan aspirations/goals exists from pre-pandemic work. The vision statement and aspirations were developed during the Plan Central Vermont work and were bought before the Board on March 10, 2020 for review and comment. Board members were presented with the statements and asked to vote on their top 3 priorities. Board members were also provided the opportunity to comment upon the statements.

Attached please find the *Comments and Feedback: Vision + Aspirations* document which includes the board votes, comments and suggested staff revisions (based upon the board comments.) Staff requests the Committee endorse or support the changes so they can be used in the writing of the new plan.

See attached titled: *Comments and Feedback: Vision + Aspirations*

Structure and Organization of Plan

Staff proposes to organize the contents of the plan around the aspirations, and proposes the following draft ‘table of contents.’ Staff has cross referenced this draft table of contents and finds it can meet the statutory requirements. Staff requests the Committee endorse or support the structure so it can be used in the writing of the new plan.

Chapters	State requirements:
Introduction & Vision: Welcome to the Region	n/a
By the numbers: Data Profile	State Planning Goals: (d)
Culture of cooperative planning	State Planning Goals: (b)(1)(2)(4) Required Element: (8)
Prosperous, equitable, and adaptable economy	State Planning Goals:(c)(1)(B)(2)(3)(13) Required Element: (10)
Economically viable working landscape	State Planning Goals: (c)(9)(A)-(D) Required Element:
Ecologically functioning natural systems	State Planning Goals: (c) (5)(A)(B) (6)(A)(B)(C)(10) Required Element: (6) (A) (B)
Changing climate	State Planning Goals:(c)(14)(A)(B)(C)Required Element: (11)
Range of housing choices	State Planning Goals: (c)(11)(A)(B)(C)(D)Required Element: (9)
Reliable and affordable energy	State Planning Goals:(c)(7)(A)(B)Required Element: (3)
Rural character and unique historic settlements	State Planning Goals:(c)(5)(C) (D)Required Element:(6) (A)
Cost-effective infrastructure	State Planning Goals: (c)(12)(A)(B) Required Element:(5)
Healthy, active and connected population	State Planning Goals:(c)(8)(A)(B)
Integrated regional transportation system	State Planning Goals: (c)(4) Required Element: (4)
Land Use & Implementation Program	State Planning Goals: (b)(3)(c)(1)(A)(C)(D)(9) (e) (2) (A) – (F) Required Element:(1)(7)
Definitions	n/a

Stakeholder Groups

For a plan to be useful and effective, input from stakeholders is a critical component. Staff has defined the following stakeholder groups which will need to be engaged in the process. Staff is seeking input from the committee on the identified stakeholders – is anyone missing?

<p>Plan Audience Groups who are most impacted by the Plan and who will use the Plan</p>	<p>Primary Audience Municipalities and Mad River Valley Planning District (MRVPD): to guide coordination between local and regional planning, and foster mutual cooperation and collaboration on local planning efforts Developers: to guide compatible development which conforms to the regional vision CVRPC (Board, Committees, + Staff): to provide direction on policy, implementation, workplan development and strategic planning</p>
	<p>Secondary Audience State Planning + Policy Offices State Permitting Officials, Boards + Commissions Non-profit organizations and advocacy organizations Economic Development Organizations Neighboring Regions</p>
<p>Key Partners Regional groups and organizations which are instrumental to successful implementation of the Plan</p>	<p>Primary Partners Municipalities CVRPC</p>
	<p>Secondary Partners Mad River Valley Planning District Regional organizations and advocacy organizations (such as: Downstreet Housing and Community Development, Capstone, School Supervisory Unions, Friends of the Winooski River...etc.) Economic Development Organizations (such as: CVEDC, BADC, CV Chamber of Commerce...etc.)</p>
<p>Content Experts Regional and Statewide groups and organizations which may be asked to review sections of the plan for accuracy and technical input</p>	<p>VNRC Energy Action Network Friends of the Winooski River CVEDC Health Department District Office</p>

Stakeholder Engagement

The following lays out the various levels of participation in the planning process which will be used during the plan development process. Adapted from *International Association for Public Participation*.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate
Participation Goal	To provide balanced + objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the group throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the group on each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
The Promise	You will be kept informed.	You will be kept informed; listened to; concerns and aspirations acknowledged; You will provide feedback on how decisions were implemented.	You will be kept informed; Your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives. You will provide feedback and input on how decisions were implemented.	You will provide advice and innovation in formulating solutions and your advice and recommendations will be incorporated into the decisions to the maximum extent possible; your decisions will be implemented.
Sample Techniques	Info Sheet / Website	Public Comment / Focus Groups / Surveys / Public Meetings	Workshops / Deliberative Polling / Summit	Advisory Committees / Consensus Building / Participatory decision making

The following table proposes the various levels of participation for the stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder Group	Level of Participation	Method
CVRPC Board of Commissioners	Involve	May include surveys, workshops, discussions at regular board meetings. Updates via Committee and Staff reports. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be provided with regular progress updates; • Be given the opportunity to review and comment upon drafts; and • Provide input on proposed policies and actions.
Regional Plan Committee	Collaborate	Regular meetings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and comment of plan drafts and proposed goals; • Assist in the identification and development of policies and actions; • Respond to concerns and comments by interested/affected parties; and • Bring up items of local or regional concern for Committee consideration.
TAC	Consult	Regular meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be given the opportunity to review and comment upon transportation drafts;
PRC	Consult	Regular meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be given the opportunity to review and comment upon SRI;
Municipal Officials, Boards, Committee's + Representatives plus Mad River Valley Planning District (MRVPD)	Inform / Consult	Website, weekly news blast, newsletters, RPC education + training opportunities, submission of annual town reports, and may include flyers at town meeting day (2024)

Secondary Partners	Consult	Methods may include surveys, focus groups/interviews
Secondary Audience	Inform	Website, weekly news blast, newsletters, press releases
Content Experts	Consult	Request feedback on draft plan chapters

Tentative Timeline

