

Table of Contents

- 2 – Agenda
- 3 – Draft Minutes 7/2/2024
- 5 – Memo
- 7 – Goals and Strategies – 2025 Draft Chapter
- 13 – Goals and Strategies – 2016 Regional Plan Chapter with Analysis of Proposed Changes
- 20 – Economy Draft Chapter



Regional Plan Committee

August 6, 2024 at 4:00 pm

29 Main Street, Suite 4, Montpelier, VT 05602

To join Zoom meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87815276521?pwd=Mmw5U080SGpCTUFNVHZFSERQUll0dz09>

Meeting ID: 878 1527 6521, Passcode: 783374

One tap mobile 1(929)436-2866 or 1(301)715-8592

Persons with disabilities who require assistance or alternate arrangements to participate in programs or activities are encouraged to contact Nancy Chartrand at 802-229-0389 or chartrand@cvregion.com at least 3 business days prior to the meeting for which services are requested.

AGENDA

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 4:00 pm² | Adjustments to the Agenda
Public Comment |
| 4:05 pm | Approval of Minutes³ |
| 4:10 pm | Election of Officers³ |
| 4:20 pm | Economy Chapter review |
| 5:10 pm | Discussion: review process
Meeting schedule
Utilities, Facilities, & Services (Infrastructure) – 1 or 2 chapters?
Substantial Regional Impact definition workflow |
| 5:30 pm | Adjourn |

Next meeting: September 4, 2024

¹ Dial-in telephone numbers are “Toll” numbers. Fees may be charged to the person calling in dependent on their phone service.

² All times are approximate unless otherwise advertised

³ Anticipated action item.

CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Regional Plan Committee

Draft Minutes

June 4, 2024 4:00 – 5:30 pm

Via Zoom

Committee Members:

X	Alice Peal, Waitsfield Alternate Rep
	Rich Turner, Williamstown Rep
X	Doug Greason, Waterbury Rep
X	Mike Miller, Montpelier Alternate Rep
X	John Brabant, Calais Rep

1
1 Staff: Lincoln Frasca, Will Pitkin, Eli Toohey, Niki Sabado (in person), Sam Lash (remote)

2
3 **Adjustment to the Agenda**

4 No adjustments.

5
6 **Public Comment**

7 D. Greason moved to accept April 2024 meeting minutes, J. Brabant seconded. All in favor, motion
8 carried.

9
10 **Discussion**

11
12 Staff presented completed Equity Integration Tool and discussed how it would be integrated into the
13 regional plan.

14
15 Discussed process for committee members to edit draft regional plan.

16
17 Discussed proposed order of chapters in regional plan. J. Brabant suggested moving Land Use chapter
18 forward, Climate Change chapter farther back.

19
20 Discussed extent to which 2025 regional plan will be written from scratch vs. adapted from previous
21 regional plan.

22
23 D. Greason suggested using more binding language such as “shall” in regional plan, highlighted TRORC
24 Regional Plan as an example.

25
26 Discussed Housing chapter, topics included encouraging housing development in areas with wastewater
27 infrastructure, what demographics proposed housing development is for, definitions of common terms,
28 housing for frontline populations.

29
30 D. Greason requested that staff bring a chapter template to next meeting.

31
32 M. Miller suggested that committee mainly be responsible for deciding direction and priorities of
33 regional plan and staff mainly be responsible for writing, emphasized how long review process would

- 1 take if committee wordsmithed every chapter. Discussion followed regarding parts of regional plan
2 where committee can have the most impactful feedback.
3
4 Discussed workflow and how to present chapters to committee for review. Discussed how to keep
5 committee members who cannot attend updated on progress.
6
7 J. Brabant suggested that committee meet in August, committee agreed. Committee also agreed to
8 meet on July 2nd, no conflicts with Independence Day plans.
9
10 D. Greason moved to adjourn, J. Brabant seconded, all in favor, motion carried.



MEMO

Date: August 2, 2024
To: Regional Plan Committee
From: Will Pitkin, Planner
Re: August 2024 Meeting

Please find attached the Economy draft chapter of the Regional Plan. It is also attached separately as a Word doc if committee members want to make edits directly in the text. The most recent draft is largely the same as the previous draft distributed in June; however, staff have incorporated committee feedback on issues such as flooding, impacts on small businesses, and actionable wording of goals and strategies. Thank you to committee members who have already provided edits to the previous draft.

Also attached are lists of the goals and strategies from the current draft chapter and from the Economy chapter of the 2016 Regional Plan as amended, with an analysis of proposed changes to the previous goals and strategies.

At Tuesday's meeting, we will discuss the following:

- Economy draft chapter
 - Please see lists of goals and strategies in the draft chapter vs. in the previous Regional Plan, plus analysis of proposed changes to the previous goals and strategies.
- Review process
 - What does the committee want to discuss in meetings? How in depth do you want to review each chapter in committee meetings?
 - If additional meetings are needed, how often does the committee want to meet?
 - Consensus: Utilities, Facilities, and Services – one chapter or two?
 - The committee previously discussed whether to break the Infrastructure chapter into two chapters (Social Infrastructure and Physical Infrastructure) or keep it as one chapter titled Utilities, Facilities, and Services but did not reach a clear consensus.
 - Please note that the 2016 Regional Plan had this as one chapter titled Utilities, Facilities and Services.

- Workflow for defining Substantial Regional Impact
 - Suggestion: Project Review Committee proposes a definition then Regional Plan Committee either approves or modifies the definition.

If you have text edits to the Economy draft chapter, please make them in the attached Word doc with Track Changes on and send them to toohey@cvregion.com; meyer@cvregion.com; frasca@cvregion.com; voigt@cvregion.com; sabado@cvregion.com; pitkin@cvregion.com.

Goals & Strategies

The following goals and strategies are focused on planning for the future of the Region's economy and working landscapes. Adaptive management strategies are necessary in balancing multiple uses and responding to climate change, increased development pressure, increasing demands for diverse outdoor recreation opportunities, and ambitious statewide conservation goals.

Goal 1: Full employment and the creation and preservation of high-quality jobs in a diverse range of occupations.

Strategy 1.1: Assist municipalities and partners to promote career exploration and education planning for all young people and reduce barriers to participation in post-secondary education or training.

Strategy 1.2: Provide technical assistance to municipalities and support regional educational institutions in trainings, field demonstrations and internships.

Strategy 1.3: Provide technical assistance to municipalities and career and technical education programs to build pipelines between training and employment.

Goal 2: Business retention, growth and development that anticipates and meets market opportunities.

Strategy 2.1: Focus retention, growth and development efforts on industries and businesses that are a good fit with the Region's existing economic base and support sustainable economic development.

Strategy 2.2: Assist municipalities, economic development and community action partners to promote entrepreneurship and innovation in all business sectors and encourage small and micro business development.

Goal 3: Sustained economic growth in communities with high unemployment or low per capita income.

Strategy 3.1: Assist municipalities and partners in establishing higher environmental standards for economic growth.

Strategy 3.2: Assist municipalities and partners to ensure the impacts of growth are not unduly borne by frontline communities.

Goal 4: Focused growth and development in areas where services and utilities are available.

Strategy 4.1: Engage with and provide technical assistance to municipalities to apply for state designations in existing compact settlements not yet designated by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

Strategy 4.2: Assist participating municipalities in designation areas in utilizing technical assistance and incentives offered by State designation programs to preserve and reuse significant, economically viable, and historic structures.

Strategy 4.3: Engage and assist municipalities in rezoning village centers for mixed-use development, encompassing commercial, light manufacturing, artisan and residential uses at traditional village density.

Strategy 4.4: Assist municipalities in planning for capital investments, identifying barriers to redevelopment or reuse, and planning for adaptive reuse of buildings using resources of programs such as *CVRPC's Brownfields Assessment Program*.

Strategy 4.5: Assist and prioritize assistance with community-identified priority/anchor revitalization projects in our downtowns, village centers and growth centers

Strategy 4.6: Provide technical assistance to municipalities to update plans and bylaws to encourage context appropriate development in existing villages and commercial areas.

Strategy 4.7: Assist and engage with municipalities and Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation (CVEDC) to prioritize assistance with community-identified priority revitalization projects in our downtowns, village centers and growth centers.

Strategy 4.8: Assist municipal-led efforts to help businesses relocate out of river corridors and floodplains.

Strategy 4.9: Assist municipalities and utility partners in planning for availability and improved quality of broadband to enable telecommuting and home-based work opportunities, particularly in more rural areas of the Region.

Goal 5: Strengthened and sustainable resource-based industries throughout the Region.

Strategy 5.1: Assist municipalities and partners in the protection of prime and statewide agricultural soils for the sustainable production of local agricultural and value-added products.

Strategy 5.2: Assist municipalities in identifying locally significant agricultural and forest parcels and/or districts through locally and consensually developed processes, including land evaluation and site assessment programs (e.g. LESA and FLESA). Such identification can assist in establishing protection priorities and programs.

Strategy 5.3: Assist municipalities to encourage use of mandatory clustering, planned unit development, or conservation subdivision design to conserve the best farmland and productive forest blocks.

Strategy 5.4: Assist municipalities and local farms in identifying options for keeping farm parcels intact, viable, and available for dual land use where appropriate.

Strategy 5.5: Assist forest landowners in connecting with organizations such as USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation to help them determine and meet their management objectives and improve overall forest management.

Strategy 5.6: Assist economic development programs that grow value-added manufacturing associated with natural resources, agricultural, and forest products industries including support of the production and marketing of local foods and beverages, granite industry, and forest products.

Strategy 5.7: Assist municipalities in mapping mineral resources and establishing local standards to regulate and minimize disturbance during extraction.

Strategy 5.7a: Assist municipalities to ensure that local standards conform with the *Vermont Standards and Specifications for Erosion Prevention & Sediment Control*.

Strategy 5.7b: The extraction of sand and gravel shall not be unduly detrimental to surrounding land uses or the environmental quality of the area and shall follow any permit requirements.

Goal 6: Sustainably managed, economically viable recreation and ecosystem services of resource lands.

Strategy 6.1: Engage with municipalities and partners in the Use Value Appraisal Program and aid County Foresters in promoting the program and the economic benefits of sustainable forest management.

Strategy 6.2: Assist municipalities in developing zoning ordinances and participate in the Act 250 review process to minimize fragmentation of forest blocks and habitat connectors

Strategy 6.3: Encourage and assist towns in setting up local tax stabilization programs for forestland protection.

Strategy 6.4: Assist municipalities in the identification of forest blocks and habitat connectors and plan for the minimization of forest fragmentation in adherence to The Forest Integrity Act 171.

Strategy 6.5: Provide technical assistance to municipalities seeking funds to expand outdoor recreation opportunities, such as projects that meet the VOREC Community Grant Program criteria.

Strategy 6.6: Collaborate with municipalities, economic, conservation and land use partners to host an annual meeting focused on best-practice-partnerships that support local food systems.

Strategy 6.7: Promote representation of the agricultural and/or forestry sector on town and regional economic development committees/boards.

Strategy 6.8: Engage with municipalities on using resources such as the *Handbook for Local Action in Sustainable Agriculture*.

Goal 7: Accessible outdoor recreational opportunities and scenic resources that meet the needs of residents and visitors and respect the natural environment.

Strategy 7.1: Engage with and assist municipalities and partners in the protection of scenic resources.

Strategy 7.1a: Work with municipalities and partners to develop public processes to identify, map and monitor impacts to significant scenic resources.

Strategy 7.1b: Collaborate and assist municipalities to ensure that siting and design of development minimizes impacts on scenic resources.

Strategy 7.1c: Engage with municipalities and developers to plan for, through design and siting of structures, preserved access to and enjoyment of scenic views for the public.

Strategy 7.1d: Assist municipalities and participate in the Act 250 permit review process to ensure any development on ridgelines or locally prominent landscape features is effectively screened to protect scenic resources.

Strategy 7.1e: The scale and siting of new structures shall be in keeping with the surrounding landscape and architecture.

Strategy 7.1f: Utility infrastructure and corridors shall be sited to minimize aesthetic impacts, particularly in areas of local and regional scenic importance. Wherever practicable, utility lines will be installed underground or behind structures in downtowns and village centers.

Strategy 7.1g: Where possible, parking lots and storage areas shall be well landscaped and/or otherwise located or screened out of view from transportation corridors.

Strategy 7.1h: The location of telecommunication towers is a significant aesthetic issue within the Region. Strategies intended to minimize negative impact are presented in the Energy and Infrastructure chapters of his plan.

Strategy 7.1i: Outdoor lighting shall be shielded and limited to minimum levels necessary to ensure safety and security of persons and property. Due consideration shall be given to the guidelines set forth in the “Outdoor Lighting Manual for Vermont Municipalities.”

Strategy 7.1j: Light sources shall be shielded and not directly visible from transportation corridors or adjacent residences. Due consideration shall be given to the guidelines set forth in the “Outdoor Lighting Manual for Vermont Municipalities.”

Strategy 7.1k: Engage with the State and municipalities to maintain existing roadside views by means of vegetation clearing, where appropriate.

Strategy 7.2: Any new development shall make all reasonable attempts to minimize noise pollution and shall not exceed accepted standards in residential areas.

Strategy 7.3: Assess and anticipate recreational needs and identify recreational access issues specific to resources or user groups.

Strategy 7.3a: Partner with Vermont Trails and Greenways Council to encourage and foster the provision of diverse outdoor recreational opportunities with consideration given to the needs of those with mobility challenges, aging populations, youth, and economically marginalized people.

Strategy 7.3b: Coordinate efforts to improve recreational access to the Region’s surface waters while protecting significant water related natural areas.

Strategy 7.3c: Participate in Act 250, Section 248 and State rulemaking processes related to use of public waters within the Region to implement policies and strategies in this Plan related to water resources and recreational use.

Strategy 7.3d: Assist municipalities to ensure that new development proposals preserve access to recreational areas for the general public.

Strategy 7.3e: Work with municipalities and landowners to encourage voluntary use of lands for public recreation and enjoyment where possible, to maintain the State’s tradition of informal resource-based recreation on private lands.

Strategy 7.3f: Assist municipalities in engaging participation of recreational user groups in municipal planning and long-range planning for public land units to enhance management and mitigate conflicts.

Strategy 7.3g: Participate in long-range planning for regionally significant public lands.

Strategy 7.3h: Provide trainings on how local schools and school grounds can be used as resources for community-wide physical activity during non-school hours.

Strategy 7.3i: Assist towns, organizations or institutions seeking to improve or renovate park, playground and recreation areas that are accessible.

Strategy 7.3j: Assist municipalities and partner organizations plan for the creation of new recreational facilities and parks throughout the region that are accessible.

Strategy 7.3k: Promote and share how towns are successfully supporting their local recreation departments and facilities.

Strategy 7.3l: Compile and map public noncommercial outdoor recreational assets and publish for use by municipalities and residents.

Strategy 7.4: Assist municipal partners to and private partners to facilitate recreational activities that focus on respect, enhancement, and education of the natural environment. Recreation and related facilities shall minimize impacts on natural resources.

Strategy 7.5 Assist municipal partners to create and manage intermunicipal recreation districts. (Inter-municipal districts are legal arrangements whereby a governmental entity joins with another to provide recreational facilities or services. Through these arrangements, increased opportunities may exist for municipalities to acquire or develop land, provide services, or manage an area.) Accordingly, CVRPC will continue to provide administrative and technical assistance to the Wrightsville Beach Recreation District.

Strategy 7.6: Work with municipalities and partners towards the maintenance and development of trail and greenway networks to provide recreational diversity, tourist amenity, habitat linkage, and low impact transportation choices.

Strategy 7.6a: Work with municipalities to help plan local trails and greenways.

Strategy 7.6b: Work with the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council and municipalities to promote the concept and development of a Regional trail, greenway, and recreation plan that connects and builds upon local initiatives.

Strategy 7.6c: Assist municipalities and partners in the development of multi-purpose trail corridors along former rail beds.

Strategy 7.6d: Engage with municipalities to maintain public access on Class IV roads and public trails for public recreational use.

Strategy 7.6e: Engage with municipalities and partners in the formation and sustained efforts of local trail committees and volunteer groups to support expansion of local trail networks.

Strategy 7.7: Assist municipalities and partners to enhance awareness and promotion of recreational resources to residents and visitors including enhancing the viability of existing nordic and alpine ski areas and foster their development in a manner which will enable them to remain competitive and adapt to climate change while ensuring that they will protect and co-exist with the natural, physical, and socio-economic environment.

Strategy 7.7a: Update and distribute a Region-wide recreation map.

Strategy 7.7b: Engage with tourism promotion organizations and business groups to incorporate recreational resources into tourism promotion efforts.

Strategy 7.7c: Any expansion or redevelopment shall be conducted in a planned, orderly manner that reflects and addresses the relationship between recreation and facility development, natural and scenic resources and historic village and settlement patterns.

Strategy 7.7d: Any expansion or redevelopment shall follow appropriate trail-building techniques and practices.

Goal 8: Resilient economies that adapt to extreme weather events including flooding.

Strategy 8.1 Work with CVEDC and community partners to develop and implement outreach strategies targeted to business and residential property owners to raise awareness of flood risk and promote strategies and resources to reduce vulnerabilities.

Strategy 8.2 Assist communities to direct new commercial or industrial development to areas not at risk from erosion and inundation flood hazards, where feasible.

Strategy 8.3 Work with CVEDC and community partners to develop the Regional Project Priority List for Central Vermont.

Strategy 8.4 Provide technical assistance to towns in planning for economic drivers to build community-led resilience hubs.

ECONOMIC GOALS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Full employment and the creation and preservation of high quality jobs in a diverse range of occupations.

Goal 2: Business retention, growth and development that anticipate and meet market opportunities.

Policy 1: Promote career exploration and education planning for all young people and reduce barriers to participation in some form of post-secondary education or training.

A. Promote sharing of best practices within the Region’s supervisory unions with regards to dual-enrollment, work-based learning internship and apprenticeship programs and assist with identifying resources and incentives for these efforts.

B. Promote an annual regional Student Career Day/Job Fair event targeted to High School students for summer employment, job shadow opportunities and internships.

C. Facilitate effort to identify partners and formalize network of STEM-related (science, technology, engineering and math) companies, high schools, educational institutions, Tech Centers, and Community College of Vermont (akin to Vermont Youth Conservation Corps. concept, applied to STEM sectors) to provide hands-on training and internships.

D. Identify, inventory and support resources programs that place emphasis on sound management and mentorship for young workers, particularly at-risk youth, in partnership with service providers such as Washington County Youth Services Bureau and ReSource/ReBuild.

E. Support and engage with Young Professionals organizations to better understand professional development needs and barriers to workforce stability in younger workers.

Policy 2: Deliver training and life-long learning to retain and expand a robust workforce with skills to match needs for current and future available jobs.

A. Support availability and awareness of training programs for underutilized workforce populations (e.g. dislocated, special needs and older workers) to attain skills to transition to new careers.

B. Increase local delivery of information regarding regional workforce training resources (e.g. Front Porch Forum, employer groups/trade associations, municipal web sites).

C. Promote partnerships with digital workforce training programs such as those piloted by the Vermont Digital Economy Project to increase access to workforce training opportunities, including those in more rural communities.

Commented [ET1]: 4 The level of employment, or unemployment rate, which provides the maximum sustainable rate of economic growth and Gross Domestic Product without resulting in accelerating inflation. A Full Employment rate that is also just above the rate which will cause inflationary pressure, is called the Non-Accelerating Inflation Rate of Unemployment (VT Dept. of Labor).

Commented [ET2R1]: footnote from our current plan

Commented [ET3]: Stayed the same (added hyphen to high-quality)

Commented [ET4]: Stayed the same in rewrite

Commented [ET5]: This strategy 1.1 in rewrite, changed promote to "assist municipalities and partners"

Commented [ET6]: These are strategies 1.2 and 1.3 in rewrite **Strategy 1.2:** Provide technical assistance to municipalities and support regional educational institutions in trainings, field demonstrations and internships. **Strategy 1.3:** Provide technical assistance to municipalities and career and technical education programs to build pipelines between training and employment.

Commented [ET7]: CVRPC doesn't do this - CVEDC does

D. Encourage and collaborate with the State to conduct or reference existing labor skills gap analyses, where available, to: i) improve workforce data availability, ii) identify the types of jobs that businesses need to fill, and iii) document anticipated skills shortages.

Policy 3: Focus retention, growth and development efforts on industries and businesses that are a good fit with the Region’s existing economic base and support sustainable economic development.

A. Increase collaboration between regional planning and economic development organizations, such as Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation, Capstone Community Action and Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce, in order to accomplish strategies identified in Policy 3. ECONOMIC 7-14 Central Vermont Regional Plan 2016

B. Support and encourage expansion in sectors that are poised for growth, such as: health care, high tech manufacturing, software development and information technology, value added agriculture, higher education and recreation and tourism.

C. Support education on sustainable business best practices, on topics such as recycling, use of environmentally friendly materials and processes, and implementing energy efficiency improvements.

D. Explore opportunities to expand value added manufacturing networks (i.e. processing, storage, distribution, wholesale, retail, direct-to-consumer) and information exchanges.

E. Develop and disseminate information on development incentives, techniques and resources for towns and local development groups.

F. Provide a range of information regarding regulatory processes and available financial and technical resources and, where feasible, facilitate trainings for developers, entrepreneurs and business owners.

G. Research cooperative development models (e.g. Evergreen Cooperatives in Cleveland, Cooperative Development Institute in Massachusetts, Cooperative Vermont in Burlington) and identify potential partnerships between the Region’s cooperatives (the credit unions, food coops, and few worker-owned cooperatives) and other major “anchor” institutions (the State, educational institutions, etc.) to encourage more cooperative development in the Region.

Policy 4: Promote entrepreneurship and innovation in all business sectors and encourage small and micro business development.

A. Assess zoning and other regulatory barriers to entrepreneurship and small and micro business development, including home-based businesses and diversified agricultural enterprises.

Commented [ET8]: This is Goal 3 in the rewrite Goal 2: Business retention, growth and development that anticipates and meets market opportunities. **Strategy 2.1:** Focus retention, growth and development efforts on industries and businesses that are a good fit with the Region’s existing economic base and support sustainable economic development. **Strategy 2.2:** Assist municipalities, economic development and community action partners to promote entrepreneurship and innovation in all business sectors and encourage small and micro business development.

Commented [ET9R8]: added to rewrite Goal 3: Sustained economic growth in communities with high unemployment or low per capita income.

Commented [ET10]: Our new plan is supporting the expansion of all sectors, not supporting one sector over the other because they are larger share, but instead supporting economic diversity.

Commented [ET11]: This is now in the infrastructure Chapter and references Universal Recycling Law

Commented [ET12]: More specific language about value-added businesses in the rewrite

Commented [ET13]: Need to add something about CVEDC or how we share grant and program opportunities with municipalities?

Commented [ET14]: Partnering with CVEDC to do so in rewrite

Commented [ET15]: Put in rewrite without the specific organizations mentioned

Commented [ET16]: CVEDC and Capstone named in rewrite

Commented [ET17]: Work with municipalities and economic development partners to assess and address...

B. Continue to expand availability and improve the quality of broadband to enable telecommuting and home-based work opportunities, particularly in more rural areas of the Region.

Commented [ET18]: See strategy 4.8 rewrite

C. Identify policy and programmatic gaps and opportunities to expand access to capital for businesses, particularly knowledge-based.

Commented [ET19]: CVEDC

D. Work with Capstone Community Action partners to explore opportunities to develop a network (e.g. "Community Capital Exchange") where local businesses and investors come together to identify capital needs, investment, and opportunities to apply commercial strategies to maximize improvements in social and environmental well-being, such as Capstone Community Action's Community Capital Exchange initiative.

Commented [ET20]: CVEDC?

E. Encourage organizations or professional associations to provide networking and a unified voice to creative economy sectors (writers, web designers, etc.).

Commented [ET21]: Assist municipalities with Creative Economy Network

F. Explore opportunities for regional innovation partnerships and/or technology transfer with employers, educational and research institutions and other public partners.

Commented [ET22R21]: didn't exist during last plan write

G. Encourage online marketing training and technology use for small and micro businesses, including participation in Vermont Digital Economy Project trainings and use of aggregated web platforms such as the Vermont Food System Atlas or Made in Vermont.

Commented [ET23]: Capstone currently holds the microbusiness development program CVEDC would know of other opportunities

H. Increase collaboration with business development organizations to enhance delivery of technical assistance to the wide range of small and micro businesses and entrepreneurial enterprises serving the Region.

Policy 5: Implement the goals and policies presented in the Utilities, Facilities and Services and Land Use elements of this Plan that enhance and optimize quality of place to attract and retain employers and residents.

These efforts to enhance and optimize quality of place include preservation of historic and cultural assets; maintaining the scenic qualities of our agricultural and forest lands, protection of natural resources and environmental quality, expansion of local food systems and healthy lifestyles, and increased access to recreational opportunities and amenities

POLICY 6: Ensure availability of commercial and industrial space to meet employment and business expansion needs.

A. Assess capacity of commercial and industrial space using available data, including existing GIS information, and identify the various types of commercial and industrial space needs.

B. Assist municipalities in promoting marketable sites and identifying assets, deficits and options available to meet industrial and commercial site development needs; for example, the

potential for use of small wastewater treatment systems.

C. Maintain inventory and support the reclamation and redevelopment of blighted, contaminated or potentially contaminated sites (i.e. “brownfields”). Continue to actively seek funds to facilitate this effort.

D. For uses that do not require a rural location, guide and assist commercial, industrial and institutional uses to locate in downtowns, villages and adjacent industrial areas, or at those locations in the fringe areas that have been significantly developed and are zoned for such purposes.

Policy 7: Implement the goals and policies presented in the Energy, Utilities, Facilities and Services and Transportation elements of this Plan to maintain and plan for adequate infrastructure, energy, telecommunications, and transportation systems to accommodate and support business growth and expansion.

These efforts to maintain and plan for adequate systems to support business growth and expansion include support of:

A transportation system that efficiently transports goods and services and employees to their place of work;

An efficient and stable energy system that provides for reduced costs, consumption and reliance on nonrenewable energy sources;

State-of-the-art telecommunications/broadband infrastructure that would increase work options and reduce commuting and its impacts on the transportation infrastructure and the environment; and Water, wastewater and storm water management systems in locations that allow for appropriately-scaled commercial and industrial expansion, higher densities and co-location of jobs, housing and services.

Policy 8: Support the continued use and sustainability of our natural resources and associated industries.

A. Encourage the continued productivity of viable mineral resources.

B. Facilitate the use of locally obtained materials for building and highway construction and maintenance. Assist municipalities in mapping the important, accessible resources.

C. Ensure that resource extraction operations follow best management practices to minimize impacts to the local and surrounding environment and other land uses, and to allow for site restoration.

D. Implement the goals and policies presented in the Land Use element of this Plan related to continued use, sustainability and protection of productive forests and prime agricultural soils.

Goal 3: Incomes sufficient to meet or exceed basic needs with opportunities to advance and to achieve financial security.

Policy 9: Support and encourage the business community and policy makers in developing

strategies for the retention and creation of jobs that pay a livable wage.

A. Research and develop case studies of businesses that are pursuing or have achieved a livable wage for employees as a goal, research and identify primary barriers to businesses being able to pay livable wages, and research impacts of livable wage policies and incentives on the economies of other places.

Policy 10: Implement the goals and policies presented in the Housing, Transportation and Utilities, Facilities and Services elements to expand access to resources that promote stability in the workforce, including workforce housing, transportation solutions, affordable child care, and medical and mental health care.

Policy 11: Support efforts to develop and disseminate information on career pathways and advancement opportunities for industry sectors poised for growth.

A. Encourage employers to provide for training and education opportunities for employees of all ages to acquire, maintain, and improve the skills and knowledge necessary to advance.

B. Support statewide initiatives such as the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) Equity Pipeline and other Statewide Consortia developing career pathways in priority sectors identified in the 2020 Statewide CEDS, such as health care and value added agriculture.

Policy 12: Support projects identified in the 2020 Statewide Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

Goal 4: Dynamic and resilient downtowns, villages and commercial districts.

Policy 13: Find new uses and opportunities for vacant and under-utilized sites and buildings.

A. Encourage and assist applications for Village Center designations in existing compact settlements not yet designated by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

B. Assist participating municipalities in designation renewals and in utilizing technical assistance and incentives offered by State designation programs to preserve and reuse significant, economically viable, and historic structures.

C. Support rezoning of village centers for mixed-use development, encompassing commercial, light manufacturing, artisan and residential uses at traditional village density.

D. Assist municipalities in: planning for capital investments, identifying barriers to redevelopment or reuse, and planning for adaptive reuse of buildings.

E. Support and prioritize assistance with community-identified priority/anchor revitalization projects in our downtowns, village centers and growth centers as they are identified.

Policy 14: Focus infrastructure investments in downtowns, village centers and growth centers and promote use of healthy community design principles in public

Commented [ET24]: Defined in statute as the hourly wage required for a full-time worker to pay for one-half of the basic needs budget for a 2-person household, with no children, and employer-assisted health insurance, averaged for both urban and rural areas (VT Legis. Joint Fiscal Office).

Commented [ET25R24]: footnote from current plan Rewrite has an updated livable wage table for 2023 data

Commented [ET26]: This is 2023 CEDS in rewrite

Commented [ET27R26]: not in goals or strategies but in the body of the chapter

Commented [ET28]: This is Goal 4 in rewrite Goal 4: Focused growth and development in areas where services and utilities are available.

Strategy 4.1: Engage with and provide technical assistance to municipalities to apply for state designations in existing compact settlements not yet designated by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

Strategy 4.2: Assist participating municipalities in designation areas in utilizing technical assistance and incentives offered by State designation programs to preserve and reuse significant, economically viable, and historic structures.

Strategy 4.3: Engage and assist municipalities in rezoning village centers for mixed-use development, encompassing commercial, light manufacturing, artisan and residential uses at traditional village density.

Strategy 4.4: Assist municipalities in planning for capital investments, identifying barriers to redevelopment or reuse, and planning for adaptive reuse of buildings using resources of programs such as CVRPC's *Brownfields Assessment Program*.

Strategy 4.5: Assist and prioritize assistance with community-identified priority/anchor revitalization projects in our downtowns, village centers and growth centers

Strategy 4.6: Provide technical assistance to municipalities to update plans and bylaws to encourage context appropriate development in existing villages and commercial areas.

Strategy 4.7: Assist municipal-led efforts to help businesses relocate out of river corridors and floodplains.

Strategy 4.8: Assist municipalities and utility partners in planning for availability and improved quality of broadband to enable telecommuting and home-based work opportunities, particularly in more rural areas of the Region.

Commented [ET29]: rewrite: **Strategy 4.4:** Assist municipalities in planning for capital investments, identifying barriers to redevelopment or reuse, and planning for adaptive reuse of buildings using resources of programs such as CVRPC's *Brownfields Assessment Program*.

investments and land use regulations.

A. Promote incorporation of Healthy Community Design⁶ and Complete Streets⁷ principles into public infrastructure, redevelopment projects, land use regulations and community engagement efforts.

B. Assist municipalities in pursuing resources to upgrade infrastructure, including roads, sidewalks, bike paths, multi-use paths, bridges, rail, water, wastewater, and stormwater. Promote shared services via inter-municipal agreements where appropriate.

6 Healthy Community Design links traditional concepts of planning (land use, transportation, community facilities, parks and open spaces) with health themes (physical activity, public safety, access to nutritious food, air and water quality, mental health and social equity) (Vermont Dept. of Health).

7 Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities (Smart Growth America).

Commented [ET30]: in transportation, housing and land use chapters

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Commented [ET32]: MAKE SURE THESE ARE ALL IN INFRASTRUCTURE, LAND USE AND HOUSING chapters

Policy 15: Increase economic resilience by mitigation of and adaptation to extreme weather events and flooding.

A. Encourage and assist employment centers with participation in FEMA's Community Rating System to enhance community-wide floodplain management efforts and reduce flood insurance premiums.

B. Develop and implement outreach strategies targeted to business and residential property owners to raise awareness of flood risk and promote strategies and resources to reduce vulnerabilities.

C. Work with communities to upgrade flood hazard bylaws and improve storm water mitigation strategies in order to minimize risks to homes, businesses and public infrastructure.

D. Encourage communities to direct new commercial or industrial development to areas not at risk from erosion and inundation flood hazards, where feasible.

E. Consider the benefit to local and regional economic resilience when prioritizing assistance with Hazard Mitigation Assistance grants.

Commented [ET33]: Maybe add to rewrite new goal "Resilient economy with mitigation plans that are able to adapt to extreme weather events including flooding."

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Commented [NS35]: Strategy 8.2 in rewrite

Policy 16: Support coordinated and complementary efforts to market the Region's unique, yet-connected downtowns and villages.

A. Utilize results from Vermont Downtown Action Team retail market analyses to assist with marketing available commercial space, business recruitment and start-up support.

B. Promote collaborative marketing with common themes among regional downtowns and villages, chambers of commerce, scenic byway committees and Vermont Tourism via region-wide events and tours (e.g. cycling; hiking; food, farm and brewery; covered bridges; stone arts;

and fall foliage) targeted to both visitors and residents.

C. Support formation and expand capacity of community-based or business associations focused on village vitality, marketing and enhancements.

Goal 5: Sustainable and viable agricultural and forest lands.

Policy 17: Promote and expand asset-based recreation and tourism with an emphasis on year-round offerings.

A. Support efforts to develop and update local and region-wide inventories of natural, historic, scenic, agricultural and recreational assets at the local level to support tourism and quality of life promotion.

B. Investigate feasibility of a region-wide promotion effort similar to Newport's "Fresh by Nature."

C. Identify gaps in offerings and support expansion of facilities to develop off-season activities, host multi-day events, conferences and weddings and various related support services.

D. Work with municipalities to identify viable options for expanded commercial and public outdoor recreational facilities, including trail development and related infrastructure that are environmentally and culturally sustainable.

E. Explore options and pursue resources to update VT TrailFinder web site.

Policy 18: Foster collaborative partnerships among regional food system stakeholders.

A. Assist with identifying sustainable collaborative frameworks and funding sources to continue the work of the Central Vermont Food Systems Council.

B. Collaboratively host an annual meeting focused on best-practice partnerships among economic development, land use planning and conservation stakeholders to support local food systems.

C. Promote representation of the agricultural and/or forestry sector on town and regional economic development committees/boards.

D. Promote Handbook for Local Action in Sustainable Agriculture developed by the State and targeted to municipal officials, boards and staff and local volunteers.

Commented [NS36]: Strategy 8.3 in rewrite

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Commented [ET38]: Goals 5, 6 and 7 in rewrite

Commented [ET39]: Obsolete program, found no information on it on the internet

Economy

Foster a prosperous, equitable, and adaptable economy that invests in the development of a skilled workforce, preserves an economically viable working landscape of farms and forests, and increases local food production and access to healthy food.

Introduction

A healthy economy is essential to maintaining quality of life for Vermonters. A diversified and dynamic economy provides employment, stimulates social and cultural interaction, and provides the resources for a wide variety of community services, including education, health care and well-maintained social and physical infrastructure. A diversified economy offers greater opportunities for individuals to engage in satisfying and meaningful occupations and pursuits. CVRPC is planning for economic development that achieves the best social outcomes for the Region’s residents.

Goals

- 1. Full employment and the creation and preservation of high-quality jobs in a diverse range of occupations.**
- 2. Business retention, growth and development that anticipates and meets market opportunities.**
- 3. Sustained economic growth in communities with high unemployment or low per capita income.**
- 4. Focused growth and development in areas where services and utilities are available.**
- 5. Strengthened and sustainable resource-based industries throughout the Region.**
- 6. Sustainably managed, economically viable recreation and ecosystem services of resource lands.**
- 7. Accessible outdoor recreational opportunities and scenic resources that meet the needs of residents and visitors and respect the natural environment.**
- 8. Resilient economies that adapt to extreme weather events including flooding.**

Economy.....	1
Introduction	1
Goals	1
1: Economic Development Partnerships	3
1.1: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).....	3
1.2: Partner Organizations	3
2: Economic Challenges and Resilience	3
3: Population and Workforce/Employment Trends	4
3.1: Population	4
3.2: Gender Parity	5

3.3: Race and Ethnicity of Workforce.....	5
3.4: Workforce Housing	5
3.5: Education.....	6
3.6: Access to Childcare.....	6
3.7: Participation and Employment	6
3.8: Household Income	7
3.9: Employment by Sector	8
4: Working Landscape.....	8
4.1: Agricultural Resources	9
4.1A: Prime Agriculture	9
4.1B: Diversification of Crops	10
4.1C: Dairy.....	11
4.1D: Maple Syrup	11
4.1E: Cannabis/Hemp	13
4.2: Forest Resources	14
4.2A: Productive Forest Soils.....	14
4.2B: Mineral Extraction	16
4.2C: Current Use Program.....	16
4.3: Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Economy	18
4.3A: Section Outdoor Recreation Trends.....	18
4.3B: Accessible Trail Networks.....	19
4.3C: Hunting, Trapping, and Fishing.....	20
4.3D: Scenic Resources	20
5: Downtown, Village Center and New Town Center Designations	21
Goals & Strategies.....	22
References	28
Statutory Requirements.....	30

1: Economic Development Partnerships

1.1: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

CVRPC adopted the West Central Vermont 2020-2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) in 2023. The goals of the CEDS align with and inform those of the Regional Plan.

The primary purpose of the CEDS is to improve the economic wealth and well-being of all the Region’s residents by strengthening local economic partnerships and enabling the Region to meet current and anticipated economic challenges. The CEDS is designed to build capacity, support local initiatives, and develop economic resiliency in West Central Vermont (40 towns across Addison County, Chittenden County, Rutland County, and the CVRPC Planning Area). CEDS was created in collaboration between West Central Vermont’s regional development corporations and regional planning commissions, including CVRPC. It leverages each participating region’s strengths and assets, while also meeting the requirements of the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) to secure new funding sources.

CEDS identifies the following priorities for the Region’s economy, among others: attract new workers and expand the labor force; facilitate equitable economic development by scaling down the delivery and accessibility of services to match the demand in the Central Vermont region; expand economic diversification and job creation; expand the public and private labor force, through training and education, to retain employees for longer term; to plan for climate change-induced infrastructure changes; and maintain quality of life that is to scale with the Central Vermont region’s recreational and hospitality demands.

1.2: Partner Organizations

To implement its economic development goals, CVRPC collaborates with partner organizations, such as the Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation at the regional level and Barre Area Development, Montpelier Alive, and Revitalizing Waterbury at the local level.

2: Economic Challenges and Resilience

Central Vermont’s economy has faced significant challenges in recent years, such as the rise of online shopping, the COVID-19 pandemic, and repeated flooding; planning efforts must focus on adapting to these and other disruptions to create a resilient economy that can withstand future challenges.

Flooding has affected most of the Region’s towns and contributed to significant economic decline. In the July 2023 flood, total damage to the Region’s economy was estimated at \$300 million and the average economic injury per business was \$150,000; one business reported \$6.5 million in damage. 46.6% of businesses in the region reported economic injury that severely impacted their ability of reopening, which extended the opening of their establishments more than 120 days (about 4 months) after the flood occurrence. BIPOC, New American, and Low and Middle Income (LMI) business owners faced even greater difficulties in opening due to communication barriers and accessing resources and contractors. Also, nearly all the businesses in the Region that were damaged by flooding had difficulty accessing funding to repair their properties.

The retail and service sector in Central Vermont have experienced further setbacks from the pandemic and repeated flood events due to infrastructure damage, supply chain issues, the increase of online sales, and the migration of state workers working from home, thus decreasing the day-to-day business transactions in major economic centers (Montpelier, Barre City, and Waterbury). The effects of flooding

and climate change contribute to reduction in tourism, a large source of economy, due to road and business closures and damage to waterways and trails.

To plan for a regional economy that is resilient to flooding, CVRPC will continue to work toward reducing flood damage and assisting those affected by flooding to build back safer. For small businesses and workers, flood damage reduction may involve floodproofing buildings, elevating utilities, and developing protocols to move assets to higher floors when flood warnings are issued. For small business owners, flood recovery may involve securing financing and necessary permits to rebuild in a way that reduces risk from future floods and gets businesses up and running as soon as possible after a flood. Funding for businesses affected by flooding is mainly in loans. Planning for the economic effects of repeated flooding can be planned for on the municipal and regional level.

To plan for a regional economy that is resilient to the effects of online shopping and future pandemics, CVRPC will continue to pursue economic incentives and collaborate with municipal and private partners to increase foot traffic in local businesses. Policy incentives, such as municipalities participating in the Vermont Community Investment Program, and financial incentives, such as grants and low-interest loans, help businesses to withstand temporary declines and adapt their business models to changing circumstances.

Adapting the regional economy to changing conditions will require building an efficient high-speed cable network for work-at-home professionals and expanding housing to bring a larger workforce to the region. Increasing access to financial resources, diversifying professional services, and creating resilient community networks will better enable Central Vermont to adapt to climate change and shifting patterns in the state’s economy.

CVRPC will continue to plan for an environment that is conducive to economic growth and that allows the Region’s businesses and workers to thrive in the face of challenges.

3: Population and Workforce/Employment Trends

3.1: Population

The population of the CVRPC planning area is 65,402 (2020 decennial Census). This accounts for 10% of the state’s total population. The population grew 2.8% between 2000-2010 and by 0.1% between 2010-2020. Due to pandemic-related immigration, it is unclear if the 2020 census accurately reflects the trends and additional data will be needed in future years to verify long-term trends.

The percentage of Vermonters 19 years or younger has been consistently decreasing since 2000, while the population of Vermonters 65 years and older has increased. As Vermont’s population ages out of the workforce, a smaller proportion of working adults must support a larger proportion of the population than in the past. Loosely defining working age as 20 years to 65 years, the following table illustrates how an aging population will put additional pressure on the number of adults in the labor force. Further, the number of Central Vermonters under age 20 has decreased in this same period, potentially indicating additional future scarcity in the workforce.

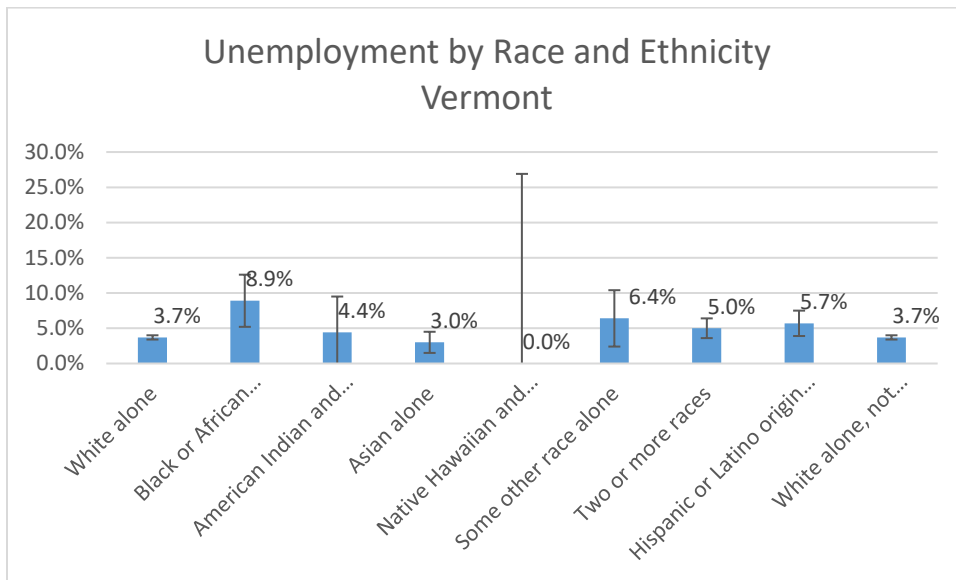
	2010	2015	2022
Working age (20-64 year)	62%	64%	59%
Younger and older Central Vermonters	38%	36%	41%

3.2: Gender Parity

Recent data (2019) show that nationally, the gender wage gap is \$0.18 cents, that is, an American woman on average make \$0.82 for every dollar a man makes. In Vermont, the wage gap is \$0.09, meaning that the average Vermont woman makes \$0.91 for every dollar an average man makes. While Washington County and Vermont as a whole are leaders nationwide on this issue, continued effort is needed to achieve parity. ¹

3.3: Race and Ethnicity of Workforce

A successful economy is one that provides equitable access to economic opportunity for Vermonters of all races and ethnicities. The chart below shows unemployment by race and ethnicity for the State of Vermont. While these numbers often have substantial uncertainty due to the limited sample sizes for many of the minority groups in Vermont, it demonstrates that White alone Vermonters generally experience lower unemployment than many of the other groups.



3.4: Workforce Housing

Central Vermont employers have regularly pointed out that local housing shortages are making recruiting more difficult. To help reduce this obstacle, CVRPC works with its municipalities to ensure town planning and regulation supports workforce housing. Workforce housing refers to affordable housing for workers such as teachers, nurses, police officers, and other essential service providers who typically earn between 60% and 120% of the area median income (AMI). This type of housing is designed to be affordable for individuals and families who might otherwise struggle to find suitable

¹ National Women’s Law Center, 2021. <https://vtdigger.org/2021/07/07/vermonts-gender-wage-gap-ranked-lowest-in-the-country/>

accommodation close to their places of employment due to high housing costs in the region’s cities, villages and more rural areas. [See Housing Chapter for more.](#)

3.5: Education

Ensuring that the future workforce is well-trained and able to meet the needs of existing employers is important. Resources to help residents develop necessary professional skills help retain central Vermonters and link young adults completing high school with careers. Vermont and Central Vermont are served by several important resources. Examples of the programs needed to foster workforce training include: the VT Department of Labor’s registered apprenticeships program, which provides work experience and training, and the Central Vermont Career Center, which is the region’s provider of Career Technical Education and provides training and a pipeline between students and employers. Additionally, Central Vermont benefits from local post-secondary educational institutions like Community College of Vermont and Norwich University.

Working to close holes in the workforce development and high school-to-work pipeline will help those individuals who do not pursue a post-secondary education receive adequate training and take advantage of opportunities to enter local demanded high-skilled and high-paying occupations.

3.6: Access to Childcare

Affordable high-quality childcare is foundational to both the health of the next generation and necessary for our economic viability. On average Vermonters with children 5 and under spend over 25% of their income on childcare costs, which is higher than the national average of 20%. ²Childcare and associated goals are included in this plan in greater detail in the [Utilities, Facilities, and Services Chapter](#).

3.7: Participation and Employment

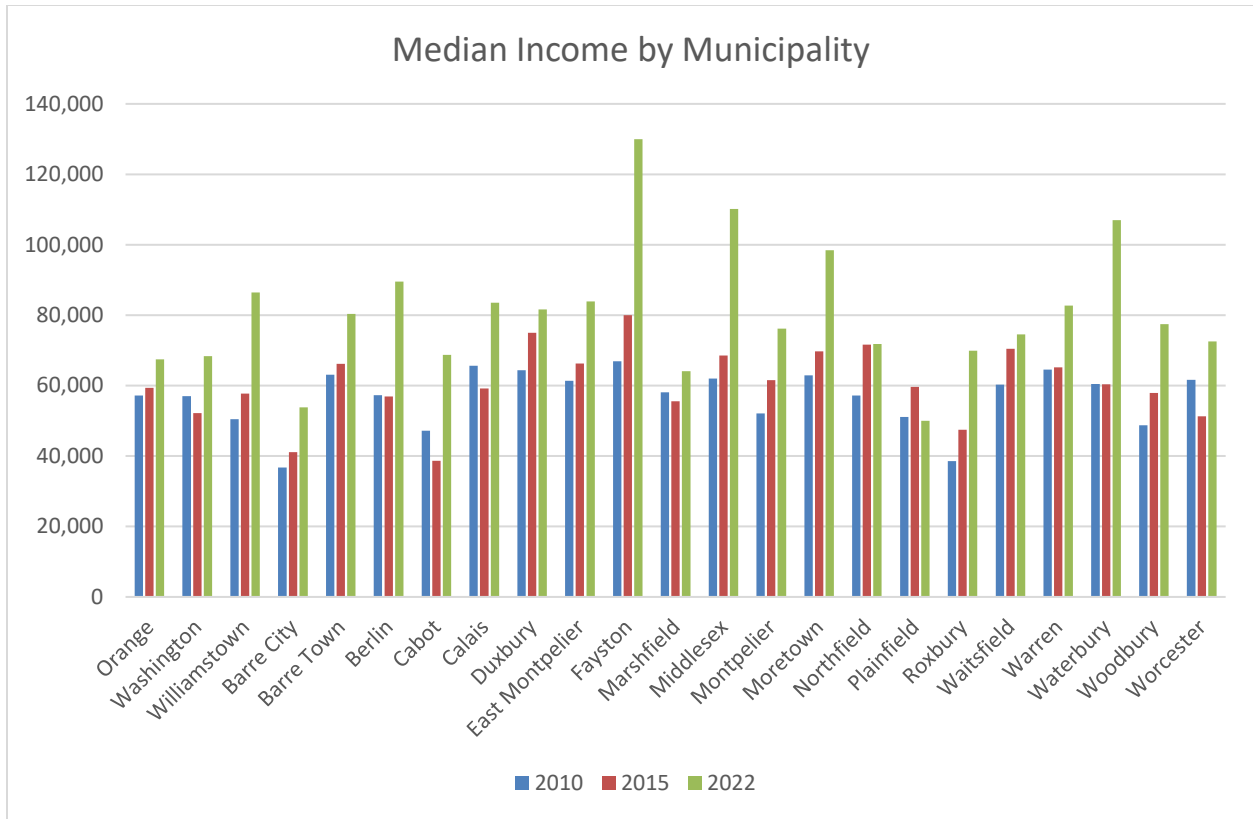
While unemployment measures the percentage of the labor force that is currently without a job or has experienced a decrease in employment, the labor force participation rate is the percentage of those of working age who are in the labor force. Vermont currently has low unemployment claims, and the unemployment rate has been decreasing state and countywide for over a decade. The labor force participation rate and population have not kept up with the workforce needs for the state or for our region resulting in employer vacancy rates remaining high.

Labor force participation rate may be impacted by factors such as;

- Higher rate of retirement due to aging population
- Slow rate of population growth
- Increased dependent care needs
- Desire for higher wage jobs and disinterest in low wage jobs
- Fear of contracting the COVID 19 virus/vulnerability to health implications from COVID
- Higher unemployment benefits and pandemic era economic stimulus payments

² <https://vermontbiz.com/news/2022/march/15/vermonters-spend-over-25-income-average-toddlers-child-care>

3.8: Household Income



ACS – Table S1903

Median household income can be used as a measure of economic vitality for a region. The above chart shows incomes increasing in most Central Vermont municipalities. However, this growth has not been evenly distributed across each of the municipalities within the CVRPC planning region.

The Basic Needs Budgets and Livable Wage Report published by the Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office (2023) defines livable wages and outlined in the table below. All hourly wages given are per wage earner.

2022 Basic Needs Budget Wages		
Family Type	Urban	Rural
Single Person	\$20.03	\$18.80
Single Parent, One Child	\$35.50	\$31.00
Single Parent, Two Children	\$45.92	\$39.47
Two Adults, No Children	\$15.11	\$15.55
Two Adults, Two Children (one wage earner)	\$37.43	\$36.71
Two Adults, Two Children (two wage earners)	\$25.97	\$24.32

3.9: Employment by Sector

Central Vermont has a diverse economy. However, many of its top industries are similar to elsewhere in the state. As host to the state capital, Montpelier, the Central Vermont economy is characterized by a high percentage of employment in the public administration sector.

Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector - 2019		
	Total	Percent
Health Care and Social Assistance	5,432	16.60%
Retail Trade	4,080	12.50%
Educational Services	3,430	10.50%
Public Administration	3,189	9.80%
Accommodation and Food Services	3,006	9.20%
Manufacturing	2,245	6.90%
Finance and Insurance	2,256	6.90%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,587	4.90%
Construction	1,423	4.40%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	1,310	4.00%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	1,137	3.50%
Wholesale Trade	1,035	3.20%
Transportation and Warehousing	707	2.20%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	435	1.30%
Information	399	1.20%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	314	1.00%
Utilities	261	0.80%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	212	0.60%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	156	0.50%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	76	0.20%

4: Working Landscape

Central Vermont’s working landscapes are where people manage, nurture, and harvest the resources of nature. The benefits of healthy soils, diverse forests, local products, and outdoor recreation span intrinsic and economic values. Farmlands, forest lands, and mineral resources are vitally important to the economy and character of our Region. This Plan encourages the protection and diversification of resource production lands and the livelihoods of the people who use them. This strategy includes recognizing the benefits of productive landscapes, promoting local products, and rethinking the land use patterns that threaten their existence. This includes building relationships to address the historical marginalization of Western Abenaki communities. Planning and promoting indigenous events and

workshops will help increase the understanding of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and its significance in sustainable land use.

The following pages outline the primary elements of the working landscape, the purpose they serve and why it is important to plan for their future uses. Regional trends have been derived from local data to better understand the strengths and opportunities of Central Vermont's working landscape.

4.1: Agricultural Resources

Many towns throughout the Central Vermont Region struggle to maintain productive agricultural lands due to numerous factors such as the financial pressure to develop, competition with large scale production within global markets, and local regulatory policies that may discourage agricultural production at varying scales. Large farmlands of more than 50-acres are especially at risk. In 2023 the Vermont Natural Resources Council released parcelization trends from 2005 to 2015 showing a 10.1% decline in farmland parcels of 50-acres or more statewide and a 4.6% decline in Central Vermont.

-See 2017 USDA report for more data: [USDA Full Report](#), [USDA Quick Stats](#), [USDA 2017 County Highlights](#) (Display select county highlights for Washington/Orange into pie charts?)

Farming helps to define the Region's cultural identity and provides Central Vermont residents with open space, recreational opportunities, economic gains, and a sense of place. Locally grown food products require healthy soils and farms and are necessary for Vermont's food supply to be self-sufficient and sustainable. Agricultural lands also provide wildlife habitat, capture carbon dioxide, protect floodplain functions, and help maintain water supplies through groundwater recharge. The *Central Vermont Food Systems Council* works to expand the Region's sustainable food system to ensure everyone has access to affordable and quality food.

4.1A: Prime Agriculture

Identifying, protecting, and improving agricultural lands is a priority for communities in the Region. A number of Central Vermont communities have built protections for prime agricultural soils into their zoning and subdivision regulations. These practices include requiring or encouraging clustered development at the edges of open spaces and agricultural lands. Several towns have set the goal to create an agricultural overlay district to help identify appropriate places for housing developments and conservation subdivisions while preserving valued agriculture land. Other municipal strategies to preserve viable farmland include requiring land set aside for future farming be large enough to enroll in Current Use or have a permanent easement. Certain agricultural lands in the region may be suitable for dual land uses and the possibility of mixing activities like farming and grazing with housing and energy development should be considered.

CALL OUT BOX: Defreest Farm, Waitsfield³

Fourth generation dairy farmers of the Defreest Farm in Waitsfield have chosen to prioritize biodiverse farming practices, flood resilience, and recreation along 70-acres of the Mad River. The entire farm is protected under a conservation easement with the Vermont Housing Conservation Board and Natural Resource Conservation District. In addition, a 39-acre river corridor easement is held by the Vermont Land Trust and Department of Environmental Conservation. The Defreest Farm has also worked with the United States Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program to retire more than eight acres of agricultural land close to the river. Native trees and shrubs are now being planted along the river to improve water quality, flood resilience, and wildlife habitat. This project also guarantees recreational access to the public along a river trail maintained by the Mad River Path, a local nonprofit trail organization.

-map of prime ag. lands

- Map / Graph of Current Use Ag. Land (Data is not on VNRC Parcelization site)

4.1B: Diversification of Crops

Town plans across the Region call for the diversification of agriculture development. Creative solutions are being implemented to encourage agricultural enterprises such as tourism and events, farm stands, value-added products, and place-based recreation. Communities are supporting small-scale processing businesses and lobbying for flexibility in “on-farm” sales. Numerous towns have set goals to help with the education and marketing of locally grown products to visitors and residents. According to University of Vermont Extension Center for Sustainable Agriculture, over the last one hundred years climate change has increased annual precipitation by 4.5” in the Northeast, and 60% of crop failures in Vermont are due to excess moisture (Faulkner 2023). Continuing to adapt to climate change has required farmers to work collaboratively across town and county boundaries to share resources and best management practices. This includes supporting the efforts of the Central Vermont Food Systems Council, the UVM Land Link program, and expanding gleaning programs like Central Vermont Community Harvest to reduce food waste prior to or during extreme weather events.

Progressive agricultural practices can reduce chemical runoff from farmlands and increase water quality. Technical and financial assistance is available through the Vermont Agency of Agriculture and Food Markets Best Management Practices Program to implement engineered and structural on-farm improvements to protect water quality such as replacing concrete barn floors with woodchips and using bedded pack management.

³ Growing Conservation-A Story of Three Farms:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yvdfKg6TvelyOsye297CjPyesPCOZcDk/view>

4.1C: Dairy

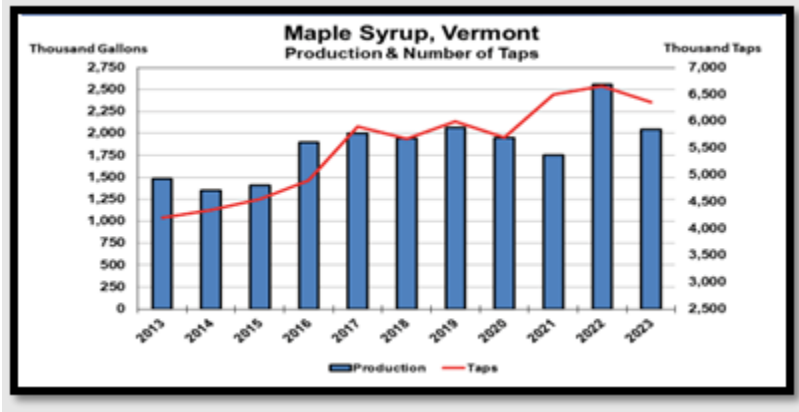
Dairy farming in Central Vermont is deeply rooted in the region's agricultural history and economy. While there are still family-owned and operated dairy farms in the region, many have had to form dairy cooperatives to stay viable. Vermont is known for its artisanal cheese products, a value-added product dairy farms have diversified to produce. Vermont Creamery and Cabot Creamery operate in the Region and use dairy products produced by many local farms and farm cooperatives in the region. Most of the farm operations in the CVRPC region are small to midsized. Migrant farmworkers, many from Latin America, help sustain the region's dairy industries. There are approximately 1,000 – 1,200 migrant workers in Vermont. The goals of this plan align with the mission of the Burlington based nonprofit Migrant Justice, who works with farmers statewide to build the voice, capacity, and power of the farmworker community and engage community partners to organize for economic justice and human rights.

4.1D: Maple Syrup

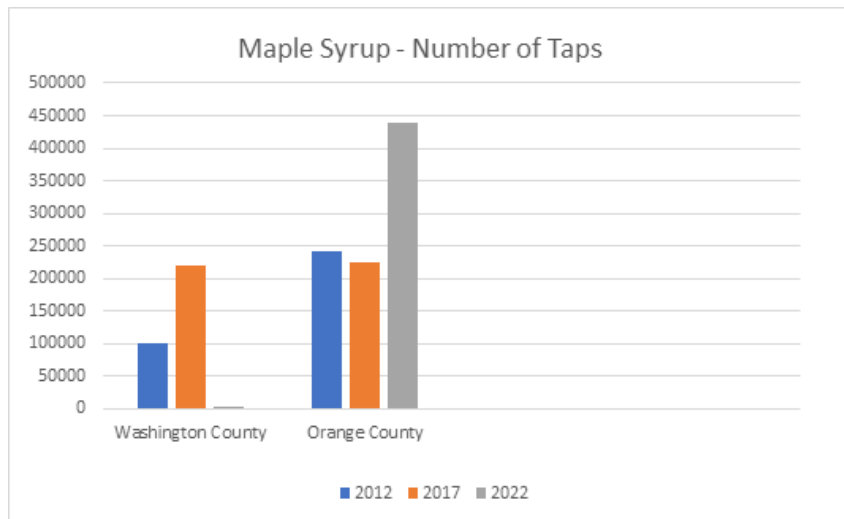
Maple syrup is a mainstay of the Vermont brand, and the state continues to lead production nationwide. Sugaring dates back long before European Settlement when Abenaki communities captured sap to use primarily as a preservative in the form of maple sugar (Cotnoir, *Land of Dawn*, 2021). Learning from traditional Abenaki sugarers today is an opportunity to build relationships and share strategies and adapt to a changing climate. Climate change is changing where and when sugaring operations occur. Warmer temperatures and shorter winters are shifting optimal sugaring conditions further and further north. Warmer temperatures also decrease the amount of sugar content in sap and increase both the amount of sap needed and the amount of time necessary to boil into the same end product (Cotnoir, *End of Maple*, 2021).

In 2022 production hit a record high totaling \$84.5 million with an average of \$33.10 per gallon (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2023). In Washington County the number of taps and gallons of syrup produced more than doubled between 2013 and 2017. These trends may continue as farmers look to diversify by including value-added products and promote agritourism.

-Insert map of sugaring operations in the region

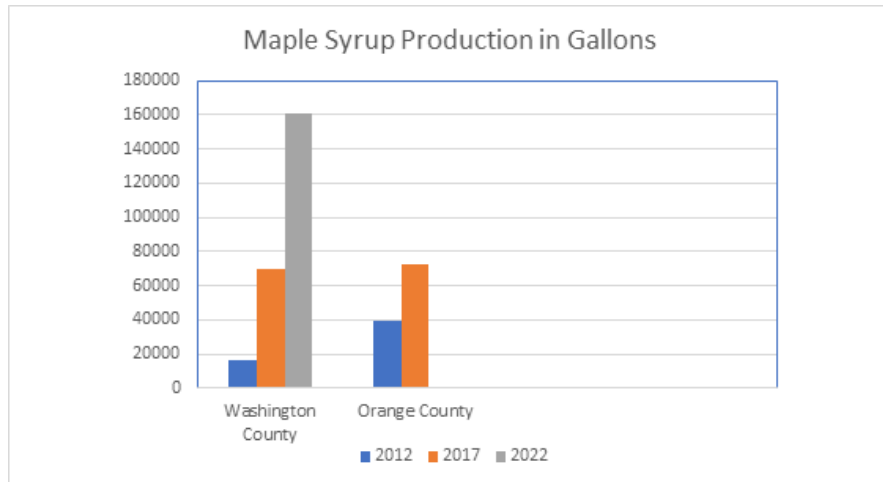


(USDA, *Maple Syrup*, 2023)



([USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service](#))

*Number of taps is not available for Washington County in 2022



[\(USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service\)](#)

*Gallons produced is not available for Orange County in 2022.

4.1E: Cannabis/Hemp

In 2018 Act 86 legalized the adult use of cannabis in Vermont. In 2020 Act 164 was passed to create an adult-use marketplace with retail shops and cultivation licenses (Vermont Growers Association 2023). Towns are currently faced with the decision of whether to opt-in to host retail cannabis establishments in their community. Cannabis cultivation, processing, testing and retail operations are regulated under 24 V.S.A. § 4414, and 24 V.S.A. § 2291. Municipalities may regulate any cannabis license type other than outdoor cultivation, per 7 V.S.A. § 863(b). Municipalities are also granted the ability to form Local Control Commissions to oversee licensing and compliance with business zoning bylaws. According to the Agency of Natural Resources’ Cannabis Control Board, approximately 40% of towns in Central Vermont have approved cannabis retail sales. Barre City, Barre Town, Berlin, and Middlesex have all established Cannabis Control Commissions. While sales of cannabis are on the rise the production of hemp in Vermont has dropped more than 90% since 2019. In 2022 only one farmer in Vermont grew hemp. However, the 2018 Farm Bill legalizing the cultivation and transportation of hemp across state borders leaves the possibility for an economically viable Vermont hemp industry (Epp 2023).

Cannabis is one of the most energy-intensive agricultural crops in the United States (Dowd 2019). In Colorado the production of dried flower products (not including processing for edibles, vapor, etc.) equaled about 2% of the state’s annual electric generation (VT Department of Public Service 2021). As cultivation of Cannabis in the Region increases energy efficiency must be considered.

4.2: Forest Resources

4.2A: Productive Forest Soils

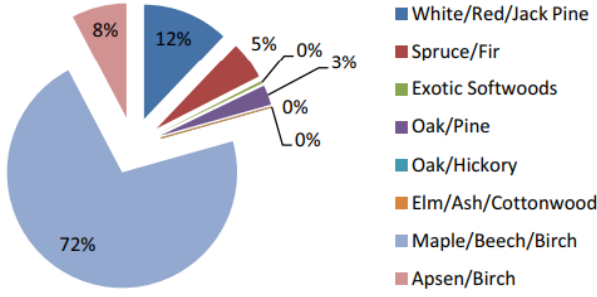
Productive forest soils are defined by the Natural Resource Conservation Service as soils which have reasonable potential for commercial forestry. These soils consist of large tracts which in themselves, or when combined, form a major economic unit for long-term timber production. The Region's calcium rich bedrock creates nutrient rich soils and productive forests (Nelson). Productive forests provide numerous ecological and community benefits. Trees absorb large quantities of carbon dioxide while their root systems stabilize soils and filter ground waters. Large forests provide habitat and connectivity for wildlife and plant species and serve as the stage for a multitude of recreational pursuits. The Region's economy and culture depend on the conservation of forests through long-term forest management programs accompanied by compatible patterns of growth and development.

-insert map of productive forest soils

As shown in the table below, the vast majority, approximately 77 %, of the Region is forested (*Forest Stewardship 2014*). There are nearly 357,000 acres of privately-owned forestland in Central Vermont (86% of forested acreage) and 59,549 acres of National and State Forests, State Parks, Wildlife Management Areas and Town Forests. While approximately 77% of the total land area in Central Vermont is forest land, for the first time in a century Vermont is experiencing an overall loss of forest cover. While it is hard to pin down the exact amount of acreage, a US Forest Service report indicates Vermont may have lost up to 69,000 acres of forest land between 2010 to 2015. Forest fragmentation is due to the conversion of forests to agriculture and commercial uses, yet the main cause is scattered residential development. It occurs incrementally and over time non-forested pockets tend to multiply and expand. Eventually the forest is fragmented and reduced to scattered, disconnected forest islands. As forest fragments become ever smaller, practicing forestry becomes operationally impractical, economically nonviable, and culturally unacceptable (Act 171 Guidance).

Land Use	Acreage	Percent of Region
Forest Land	404,127	77.53%
Ag/Open Land	66,257	12.71%
Scrub/Shrub	18,113	3.47%
Residential	15,600	2.99%
Surface Waters	6,075	1.16%
Wetlands	3,233	0.62%
Commercial/ Services	2,837	0.54%
Industrial	1,560	0.46%
Institutional/Government	1,317	0.25%
Roads and Parking Lots	1,132	0.22%

Forest Types, Washington County



Forest Types, Vermont

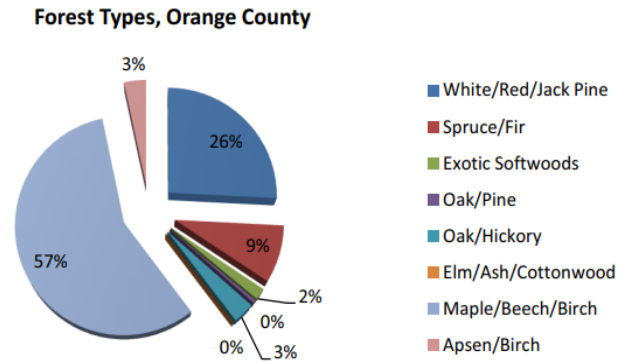


Figure 10: Orange County Forests by Type¹⁰

2014 CVRPC Forest Stewardship

Insert 2013-2022 pulp and fuel wood data (Washington / Orange)

4.2B: Mineral Extraction

The granite quarries of Central Vermont are major contributors to our economy and regional heritage. Beyond granite the known mineral resources of the Region include talc, asbestos, chromite, verde antique, sand and gravel. Sand and gravel deposits play an important part in local and personal economies for road building and maintenance materials. The planning process can be used to encourage locations and operating procedures that minimize the disturbances of resource extraction. Town plans across the region have adopted goals to establish standards regulating mineral extraction. Historically quarried areas in Barre now offer new opportunities for recreation at Mill Stone Trails, and art and music events such as “RockFire,” and the 2022 dance theatre piece “The Quarry Project.”

4.2C: Current Use Program

The Use Value Appraisal (UVA) Program also known as Current Use, is a tax incentive program for landowners who practice long term forestry or agriculture. Eligible landowners can have their land appraised based on the value of its wood or food production rather than residential or commercial value. This nonregulatory option can benefit landowners while protecting forest and agricultural lands. Regulatory practices are simply not enough to conserve the mostly private forests of Vermont. Town plans across the Region emphasize education and outreach to willing landowners as a critical step in protection from future development. The Vermont Natural Resources Council released a study showing the amount of Central Vermont forestland enrolled in the Current Use Program increasing from 2005 to 2015. The greatest change in the Region has been among non-Vermont residents where enrollment of

forestland increased by 29% (*Tracking Parcelization 2023*). The Town of Orange alone experienced a 319% increase, adding nearly 4,000 acres of forestland, in non-Vermont resident enrollment during the 15-year study period. This trend of forestland enrollment by non-Vermont residents is likely to aid in regional and statewide conservation efforts by maintaining wildlife connectivity and preventing forest fragmentation.

The key findings from the Vermont Natural Resources Council “Tracking Parcelization Over Time” statewide study include:

- The number of acres in the “residential” category is increasing, while “farm” and “woodland” acreage is decreasing, with “woodland” parcel acreage decreasing the fastest.
- The amount of land in larger parcels is shrinking, while the amount of land in smaller parcels is increasing.
- Most dwellings are built on smaller parcels compared to larger parcels.
- The Current Program is playing a role in protecting large woodland parcels.
- Land values for large parcels continue to rise.
- Spatial examination using Property Transfer Tax data suggests subdivisions are occurring in intact forest blocks and rural or natural resource land use areas.

Recommendations for local actions from the Vermont Natural Resource Council include:

- Strengthen policies to reduce forest fragmentation in municipalities that have zoning and subdivision regulations, with a particular focus on reducing fragmentation in conservation and rural residential districts.
- Support the adoption of subdivision regulations in municipalities that do not have land use regulations to minimize the fragmenting impacts of subdivision on forestland.
- Encourage the establishment of municipal conservation funds to leverage state and federal dollars to conserve forest land and create/expand town forests.

County	Change in Acreage in 50 + Acre Parcels	2005 Acreage	2020 Acreage	Percent Change
Addison	-22,906.81	275,225.39	252,318.58	-8.32
Bennington	565.24	187,266.26	187,831.50	+0.30
Caledonia	-2,916.97	251,252.47	248,335.50	-1.16
Chittenden	-4,841.49	158,369.47	153,527.98	-3.05
Essex	-1,247.41	296,743.44	295,496.03	-0.42
Franklin	-4,802.22	289,871.01	285,068.79	-1.65
Grand Isle	-1,895.36	24,916.55	23,021.19	-7.60
Lamoille	-3,377.77	171,142.71	167,764.94	-1.97
Orange	-5,654.57	319,857.13	314,202.56	-1.76
Orleans	-5,765.82	317,456.66	311,690.84	-1.81
Rutland	-6,935.00	331,542.87	324,607.87	-2.09
Washington	-10,396.54	245,213.11	234,816.57	-4.23
Windsor	-3,346.15	291,508.55	288,162.40	-1.14
Windham	10,350.20	335,090.40	345,440.60	3.08

[Tracking Parcelization Over Time to Inform Planning and Policy. Phase IV: Executive Summary –
By Vermont Natural Resources Council](#)

4.3: Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Economy

Central Vermont’s greatest recreational facility is its landscape. Home to one of Vermont’s last undeveloped mountain ranges, the Worcester Range, and the only undeveloped alpine area, Camel’s Hump, the Region boasts some 59,549 acres of public outdoor recreational lands. A shared goal in towns plans is to preserve and enhance year-round access to diverse recreational opportunities. Central Vermont is a hub for statewide trail networks including the Long Trail, Catamount Trail, Cross VT Trail, Vermont Association of Snow Travelers, and the developing Velomont mountain biking trail. From day outings to multi-week adventures these trails offer the Region’s boldest adventures and most scenic ridgeline views.

4.3A: Section Outdoor Recreation Trends

The recreational economy relies on large intact forests and waterways for hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, hiking, biking, skiing, ice skating, snowmobiling, and much more. The Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing 2017 Benchmark Study found:

- Visitors made an estimated 13 million trips to Vermont for leisure, business, or personal retravel;
- Direct spending by visitors for goods and services totaled nearly \$3 billion
- Visitor spending supports an estimated 30,000 jobs for Vermonters (approximately 10% of all Vermont jobs); and
- Visitor spending contributed \$391 million in tax and fee revenues to the State of Vermont

The COVID-19 pandemic brought even more people to the outdoors seeking fresh air, exercise, and a safe place to socialize. The money spent on recreation and associated expenses in Vermont has national implications. In 2021 the [U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis](#) found that outdoor recreation accounts for 4% of Vermont's Gross Domestic Product, the third highest nationwide. Central Vermont municipalities are working to promote natural resources-based tourism, develop marketing strategies, and build the necessary infrastructure to meet increasing demand. Working with partnering communities and connecting trail networks can increase the direct and indirect benefits of outdoor recreation and tourism. Two of Vermont's three recreation districts exist in the Central Vermont Region; the Mad River Valley Recreation District and the Wrightsville Beach Recreation District. The recreation district model unites recreation providers, balances multiple uses, creates equity in access, and provides long-term stability (*MRVRD Strategic Plan 2018*).

-Insert map of recreation facilities

-regional recreation/tourism stats, if available (i.e. "% of bikers, hikers, skiers, snowmobilers...)

The [2019-2023 Vermont State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan](#) highlighted a number of Statewide trends that may have implications for recreation within the Region. The Public Recreation User Survey includes results from over 5,400 respondents. The majority of public users feel outdoor recreation is essential to their household. The top three activities are hiking, hunting, and mountain biking. Barriers to recreation include lack of time due to work and family obligations, time and distance required to recreate, and the expense of equipment.

Recreation providers were also surveyed. These providers include municipal representatives, private businesses, nonprofit organizations, land trusts, regional planning commissions, and state and federal agencies. The majority of providers reported increased funding for capacity building within recreation provider organizations and supporting ecological and conservation goals. Providers are limited most by resources to fund organizational budgets and budget stability year to year. The limited capacity to serve increased demand is a primary concern of providers.

4.3B: Accessible Trail Networks

Increasing access to the Region's outdoor recreational opportunities is a goal shared across local, regional, and state plans. Providing a diverse range of recreational experiences and improving accessibility for all abilities can strengthen our Region's connection to the landscape and increase positive indirect impacts for local economies. The goals of this plan align with those of the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council and their efforts to create trails for those with mobility challenges through a Vermont Accessibility Hub. Partners in this effort supported by this plan include:

- Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports,
- Vermont Mountain Bike Association,
- Upper Valley Trails Alliance,
- Northern Forest Canoe Trail, and
- Community Geographics

Private lands are essential to the fabric of the recreational landscape. Towns have chosen to work with willing landowners in strategic locations to establish cooperative agreements leading toward sustained long-term use of trails. Private landowners that do not post their land and allow public access are protected from liability under Vermont state law.

Montpelier recently produced their [“All Around Adventure Map,”](#) a guide to recreation in the capital city. A new accessibility trail to the iconic Tower is making the park more attractive to a diversity of residents and visitors. Access to Hubbard Park is enhanced with partnerships between the city and willing landowners. Region wide there is an opportunity for a more coordinated approach to recreation planning. Municipal coordination in recreation planning will improve trails connectivity, support a diversity of outdoor experiences, and promote unified marketing of these assets to bring awareness amongst residents and visitors.

4.3C: Hunting, Trapping, and Fishing

Hunting, trapping, and fishing are central to Vermont’s heritage. These activities are not just sources of economic income and recreational opportunity, but lifestyles for many residents and tourists alike. Central Vermont offers a variety of warm-water and cold-water fishing opportunities. The Winooski main stem, Dog River, Waterbury Reservoir, and the Woodbury-Calais Lakes region offer excellent fishing opportunities for a variety of trout, bass, and panfish. Numerous Wildlife Management Areas in the Region allow hunting in designated areas of State Forests and State Parks within the Region. Moose, bear, deer, and turkey are some of the sought-after game species found in the Region, with designated seasons and tag limits.

The sale of hunting and fishing licenses, equipment, and Vermont Habitat Stamps play an outsized role in funding conservation efforts at the federal and state level. In 2023 the sale of Habitat Stamps raised \$656,000 for land conservation and habitat improvement, including an approximate 60% federal match (Vermont Habitat Stamp 2023). The 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation reported that Vermont hunters spend over \$292 million annually. Overall, the sale of hunting and fishing licenses have been declining over the past three decades. The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department 2022 Performance-Based Budget Report showed a brief surge in the sale of hunting and fishing licenses during the COVID-19 pandemic. This corresponds with the repeated data that shows “not enough time” and “family/work obligations” are the biggest barriers to hunting and fishing participation. License sales have since declined, but the spike represents the importance of these traditional activities to Vermonter’s statewide. Indigenous hunting rights for members of state recognized tribes are protected under statute. In 2022 the rights of the free Abenaki Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping permanent Vermont licenses were expanded for both residents and non-resident citizens (*Nulhegan Abenaki Tribe 2022*).

4.3D: Scenic Resources

The scenic backdrop to the Region is tied closely with our high elevation mountain ranges and outdoor recreation economy. Ridgeline views attract year-round for hikers, leaf peepers, skiers, and outdoor enthusiasts alike. Identifying and protecting scenic resources is a shared value reflected in town plans across the Region. Most towns in the region have set goals to inventory scenic views and roads in order

to regulate and guide zoning, subdivision, and site plan review. Limiting development along scenic roadways and ridgelines is one strategy towns use to maintain their rural character. For example, the town of Waterbury is an iconic stop along the Route 100 Green Mountain Byway. This scenic corridor links historic villages and promotes local cultural and recreation opportunities along the way. The regional distribution of scenic resources is important to identify and consider for dispersed tourism, economic development, and restrictions for future housing and energy development.

-insert map of known scenic resources included in natural resources map

5: Downtown, Village Center and New Town Center Designations

The Vermont Community Investment Program (formerly the State Designation Program) seeks to encourage smart growth. It provides regulatory and financial incentives to municipalities to balance growth with preservation of our natural resources.

Act 181 (2024) reformed the program by consolidating from five designation types to two: State-Designated Downtown and Village Center (“Center”) and State-Designated Neighborhood (“Neighborhood”). Act 181 gave regional planning commissions a larger role in determining which areas receive designations; in addition to previously-designated areas the future land use maps in regional plans will identify new areas to receive designations, subject to the plans’ approval by the Vermont Land Use Review Board (formerly the Natural Resource Board).

The Center designation consolidates the following three former designations into one:

A **Downtown** designation intends to support community revitalization while preserving the historic character and enhancing the future of medium to large-sized historic centers. This designation provides communities with financial incentives, training and technical assistance to support local efforts to restore historic buildings, improve housing, design walkable communities and encourage economic development by incentivizing public and private investments.

A **Village Center** designation aims to revitalize small to medium sized historic centers with financial resources, training and technical assistance to attract businesses and economic vitality in Vermont’s smaller communities.

For municipalities that lack a historic downtown, Vermont statute [24 V.S.A § 2793b](#) provides the option of designating a **New Town Center**. Designation requirements focus on planning, capital expenditures, and regulatory tools promoting a pedestrian-oriented development pattern like our historic downtowns.

The Neighborhood designation consolidates the following two former designations into one. Note that Neighborhood designations must be adjacent to a Center designation.

Neighborhood Development Areas support housing development inside or within walking distance to a core designation.

Growth Centers are areas of planned growth beyond a commercial center with policies and regulations that ensure 20 years of development to enhance a designated core, while protecting farm and forest land outside the growth area.

MAP OF DESIGNATIONS IN CVRPC REGION (VT Planning Atlas)

Goals & Strategies

The following goals and strategies are focused on planning for the future of the Region's economy and working landscapes. Adaptive management strategies are necessary in balancing multiple uses and responding to climate change, increased development pressure, increasing demands for diverse outdoor recreation opportunities, and ambitious statewide conservation goals.

Goal 1: Full employment and the creation and preservation of high-quality jobs in a diverse range of occupations.

Strategy 1.1: Assist municipalities and partners to promote career exploration and education planning for all young people and reduce barriers to participation in post-secondary education or training.

Strategy 1.2: Provide technical assistance to municipalities and support regional educational institutions in trainings, field demonstrations and internships.

Strategy 1.3: Provide technical assistance to municipalities and career and technical education programs to build pipelines between training and employment.

Goal 2: Business retention, growth and development that anticipates and meets market opportunities.

Strategy 2.1: Focus retention, growth and development efforts on industries and businesses that are a good fit with the Region's existing economic base and support sustainable economic development.

Strategy 2.2: Assist municipalities, economic development and community action partners to promote entrepreneurship and innovation in all business sectors and encourage small and micro business development.

Goal 3: Sustained economic growth in communities with high unemployment or low per capita income.

Strategy 3.1: Assist municipalities and partners in establishing higher environmental standards for economic growth.

Strategy 3.2: Assist municipalities and partners to ensure the impacts of growth are not unduly borne by frontline communities.

Goal 4: Focused growth and development in areas where services and utilities are available.

Strategy 4.1: Engage with and provide technical assistance to municipalities to apply for state designations in existing compact settlements not yet designated by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

Strategy 4.2: Assist participating municipalities in designation areas in utilizing technical assistance and incentives offered by State designation programs to preserve and reuse significant, economically viable, and historic structures.

Strategy 4.3: Engage and assist municipalities in rezoning village centers for mixed-use development, encompassing commercial, light manufacturing, artisan and residential uses at traditional village density.

Strategy 4.4: Assist municipalities in planning for capital investments, identifying barriers to redevelopment or reuse, and planning for adaptive reuse of buildings using resources of programs such as *CVRPC's Brownfields Assessment Program*.

Strategy 4.5: Assist and prioritize assistance with community-identified priority/anchor revitalization projects in our downtowns, village centers and growth centers

Strategy 4.6: Provide technical assistance to municipalities to update plans and bylaws to encourage context appropriate development in existing villages and commercial areas.

Strategy 4.7: Assist and engage with municipalities and Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation (CVEDC) to prioritize assistance with community-identified priority revitalization projects in our downtowns, village centers and growth centers.

Strategy 4.8: Assist municipal-led efforts to help businesses relocate out of river corridors and floodplains.

Strategy 4.9: Assist municipalities and utility partners in planning for availability and improved quality of broadband to enable telecommuting and home-based work opportunities, particularly in more rural areas of the Region.

Goal 5: Strengthened and sustainable resource-based industries throughout the Region.

Strategy 5.1: Assist municipalities and partners in the protection of prime and statewide agricultural soils for the sustainable production of local agricultural and value-added products.

Strategy 5.2: Assist municipalities in identifying locally significant agricultural and forest parcels and/or districts through locally and consensually developed processes, including land evaluation and site assessment programs (e.g. LESA and FLESA). Such identification can assist in establishing protection priorities and programs.

Strategy 5.3: Assist municipalities to encourage use of mandatory clustering, planned unit development, or conservation subdivision design to conserve the best farmland and productive forest blocks.

Strategy 5.4: Assist municipalities and local farms in identifying options for keeping farm parcels intact, viable, and available for dual land use where appropriate.

Strategy 5.5: Assist forest landowners in connecting with organizations such as USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation to help them determine and meet their management objectives and improve overall forest management.

Strategy 5.6: Assist economic development programs that grow value-added manufacturing associated with natural resources, agricultural, and forest products industries including support of the production and marketing of local foods and beverages, granite industry, and forest products.

Strategy 5.7: Assist municipalities in mapping mineral resources and establishing local standards to regulate and minimize disturbance during extraction.

Strategy 5.7a: Assist municipalities to ensure that local standards conform with the *Vermont Standards and Specifications for Erosion Prevention & Sediment Control*.

Strategy 5.7b: The extraction of sand and gravel shall not be unduly detrimental to surrounding land uses or the environmental quality of the area and shall follow any permit requirements.

Goal 6: Sustainably managed, economically viable recreation and ecosystem services of resource lands.

Strategy 6.1: Engage with municipalities and partners in the Use Value Appraisal Program and aid County Foresters in promoting the program and the economic benefits of sustainable forest management.

Strategy 6.2: Assist municipalities in developing zoning ordinances and participate in the Act 250 review process to minimize fragmentation of forest blocks and habitat connectors

Strategy 6.3: Encourage and assist towns in setting up local tax stabilization programs for forestland protection.

Strategy 6.4: Assist municipalities in the identification of forest blocks and habitat connectors and plan for the minimization of forest fragmentation in adherence to The Forest Integrity Act 171.

Strategy 6.5: Provide technical assistance to municipalities seeking funds to expand outdoor recreation opportunities, such as projects that meet the VOREC Community Grant Program criteria.

Strategy 6.6: Collaborate with municipalities, economic, conservation and land use partners to host an annual meeting focused on best-practice-partnerships that support local food systems.

Strategy 6.7: Promote representation of the agricultural and/or forestry sector on town and regional economic development committees/boards.

Strategy 6.8: Engage with municipalities on using resources such as the *Handbook for Local Action in Sustainable Agriculture*.

Goal 7: Accessible outdoor recreational opportunities and scenic resources that meet the needs of residents and visitors and respect the natural environment.

Strategy 7.1: Engage with and assist municipalities and partners in the protection of scenic resources.

Strategy 7.1a: Work with municipalities and partners to develop public processes to identify, map and monitor impacts to significant scenic resources.

Strategy 7.1b: Collaborate and assist municipalities to ensure that siting and design of development minimizes impacts on scenic resources.

Strategy 7.1c: Engage with municipalities and developers to plan for, through design and siting of structures, preserved access to and enjoyment of scenic views for the public.

Strategy 7.1d: Assist municipalities and participate in the Act 250 permit review process to ensure any development on ridgelines or locally prominent landscape features is effectively screened to protect scenic resources.

Strategy 7.1e: The scale and siting of new structures shall be in keeping with the surrounding landscape and architecture.

Strategy 7.1f: Utility infrastructure and corridors shall be sited to minimize aesthetic impacts, particularly in areas of local and regional scenic importance. Wherever practicable, utility lines will be installed underground or behind structures in downtowns and village centers.

Strategy 7.1g: Where possible, parking lots and storage areas shall be well landscaped and/or otherwise located or screened out of view from transportation corridors.

Strategy 7.1h: The location of telecommunication towers is a significant aesthetic issue within the Region. Strategies intended to minimize negative impact are presented in the Energy and Infrastructure chapters of his plan.

Strategy 7.1i: Outdoor lighting shall be shielded and limited to minimum levels necessary to ensure safety and security of persons and property. Due consideration shall be given to the guidelines set forth in the “Outdoor Lighting Manual for Vermont Municipalities.”

Strategy 7.1j: Light sources shall be shielded and not directly visible from transportation corridors or adjacent residences. Due consideration shall be given to the guidelines set forth in the “Outdoor Lighting Manual for Vermont Municipalities.”

Strategy 7.1k: Engage with the State and municipalities to maintain existing roadside views by means of vegetation clearing, where appropriate.

Strategy 7.2: Any new development shall make all reasonable attempts to minimize noise pollution and shall not exceed accepted standards in residential areas.

Strategy 7.3: Assess and anticipate recreational needs and identify recreational access issues specific to resources or user groups.

Strategy 7.3a: Partner with Vermont Trails and Greenways Council to encourage and foster the provision of diverse outdoor recreational opportunities with consideration given to the needs of those with mobility challenges, aging populations, youth, and economically marginalized people.

Strategy 7.3b: Coordinate efforts to improve recreational access to the Region's surface waters while protecting significant water related natural areas.

Strategy 7.3c: Participate in Act 250, Section 248 and State rulemaking processes related to use of public waters within the Region to implement policies and strategies in this Plan related to water resources and recreational use.

Strategy 7.3d: Assist municipalities to ensure that new development proposals preserve access to recreational areas for the general public.

Strategy 7.3e: Work with municipalities and landowners to encourage voluntary use of lands for public recreation and enjoyment where possible, to maintain the State's tradition of informal resource-based recreation on private lands.

Strategy 7.3f: Assist municipalities in engaging participation of recreational user groups in municipal planning and long-range planning for public land units to enhance management and mitigate conflicts.

Strategy 7.3g: Participate in long-range planning for regionally significant public lands.

Strategy 7.3h: Provide trainings on how local schools and school grounds can be used as resources for community-wide physical activity during non-school hours.

Strategy 7.3i: Assist towns, organizations or institutions seeking to improve or renovate park, playground and recreation areas that are accessible.

Strategy 7.3j: Assist municipalities and partner organizations plan for the creation of new recreational facilities and parks throughout the region that are accessible.

Strategy 7.3k: Promote and share how towns are successfully supporting their local recreation departments and facilities.

Strategy 7.3l: Compile and map public noncommercial outdoor recreational assets and publish for use by municipalities and residents.

Strategy 7.4: Assist municipal partners to and private partners to facilitate recreational activities that focus on respect, enhancement, and education of the natural environment. Recreation and related facilities shall minimize impacts on natural resources.

Strategy 7.5 Assist municipal partners to create and manage intermunicipal recreation districts. (Inter-municipal districts are legal arrangements whereby a

governmental entity joins with another to provide recreational facilities or services. Through these arrangements, increased opportunities may exist for municipalities to acquire or develop land, provide services, or manage an area.) Accordingly, CVRPC will continue to provide administrative and technical assistance to the Wrightsville Beach Recreation District.

Strategy 7.6: Work with municipalities and partners towards the maintenance and development of trail and greenway networks to provide recreational diversity, tourist amenity, habitat linkage, and low impact transportation choices.

Strategy 7.6a: Work with municipalities to help plan local trails and greenways.

Strategy 7.6b: Work with the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council and municipalities to promote the concept and development of a Regional trail, greenway, and recreation plan that connects and builds upon local initiatives.

Strategy 7.6c: Assist municipalities and partners in the development of multi-purpose trail corridors along former rail beds.

Strategy 7.6d: Engage with municipalities to maintain public access on Class IV roads and public trails for public recreational use.

Strategy 7.6e: Engage with municipalities and partners in the formation and sustained efforts of local trail committees and volunteer groups to support expansion of local trail networks.

Strategy 7.7: Assist municipalities and partners to enhance awareness and promotion of recreational resources to residents and visitors including enhancing the viability of existing nordic and alpine ski areas and foster their development in a manner which will enable them to remain competitive and adapt to climate change while ensuring that they will protect and co-exist with the natural, physical, and socio-economic environment.

Strategy 7.7a: Update and distribute a Region-wide recreation map.

Strategy 7.7b: Engage with tourism promotion organizations and business groups to incorporate recreational resources into tourism promotion efforts.

Strategy 7.7c: Any expansion or redevelopment shall be conducted in a planned, orderly manner that reflects and addresses the relationship between recreation and facility development, natural and scenic resources and historic village and settlement patterns.

Strategy 7.7d: Any expansion or redevelopment shall follow appropriate trail-building techniques and practices.

Goal 8: Resilient economies that adapt to extreme weather events including flooding.

Strategy 8.1 Work with CVEDC and community partners to develop and implement outreach strategies targeted to business and residential property owners to raise awareness of flood risk and promote strategies and resources to reduce vulnerabilities.

Strategy 8.2 Assist communities to direct new commercial or industrial development to areas not at risk from erosion and inundation flood hazards, where feasible.

Strategy 8.3 Work with CVEDC and community partners to develop the Regional Project Priority List for Central Vermont.

Strategy 8.4 Provide technical assistance to towns in planning for economic drivers to build community-led resilience hubs.

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Statutory Requirements

State Requirements	CVRPC Goals & Strategies	Other Chapters
§ 4348a (10) An economic development element that describes...		
...present economic conditions and the location, type, and scale of desired economic development...	Goal 1;1.1-1.3, Goal 2;2.1-2.2, Goal 3; 3.1-3.2, Goal 4; 4.1-4.9, Goal 5; 5.1-5.7	Housing, Facilities, Utilities & Services, Energy, Land Use
...and identifies policies, projects, and programs necessary to foster economic growth.	Goal 1;1.1-1.3, Goal 2;2.1-2.2, Goal 3; 3.1-3.2, Goal 4; 4.1-4.9, Goal 5; 5.1-5.7	Housing, Facilities, Utilities & Services, Energy
24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(1)(B) Economic growth should be encouraged in locally designated growth areas, employed to revitalize existing village and urban centers, or both, and should be encouraged in growth centers designated under chapter 76A of this title	Goal 4; 4.1-4.9	Land Use

24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(1)(C) Public investments, including the construction or expansion of infrastructure, should reinforce the general character and planned growth patterns of the area.	Goal 1;1.1-1.3, Goal 2;2.1-2.2, Goal 3; 3.1-3.2, Goal 4; 4.1-4.9	Housing, Facilities, Utilities & Services, Natural Systems, Land Use
24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(2) To provide a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities and that maintains high environmental standards, and to expand economic opportunities in areas with high unemployment or low per capita incomes.	Goal 1;1.1-1.3, Goal 2;2.1-2.2, Goal 3; 3.1-3.2, Goal 4; 4.1-4.9, Goal 5; 5.1-5.7	Natural Systems, Facilities, Utilities & Services,
24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(3) To broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure the full realization of the abilities of all Vermonters.	Goal 1; 1.1-1.3	Facilities, Utilities & Services,
24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(6) To maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, forests, and other land resources.	Goal 5; 5.1-5.7. Goal 6; 6.1-6.8, Goal 7; 7.1-7.7	Natural Systems
24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(6)(A) 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).	Goal 5; 5.1-5.7. Goal 6; 6.1-6.8, Goal 7; 7.1-7.7	Natural Systems, Land Use
24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(6)(C) Vermont’s forestlands should be managed so as to maintain and improve forest blocks and habitat connectors.	Goal 5; 5.1-5.7, Goal 6; 6.1-6.8	Natural Systems, Land Use
24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(8) To maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for Vermont residents and visitors.	Goal 6; 6.1-6.8, Goal 7; 7.1-7.7	Natural Systems, Land Use
24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(8)(A) Growth should not significantly diminish the value and availability of outdoor recreational activities.	Goal 6; 6.1-6.8, Goal 7; 7.1-7.7	Natural Systems, Housing, Facilities, Utilities & Services, Land Use
24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(8)(B) Public access to noncommercial outdoor recreational opportunities, such as lakes and hiking trails, should be identified, provided, and protected wherever appropriate.	Goal 6; 6.1-6.8, Goal 7; 7.1-7.7	Natural Systems, Land Use
24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(9) To encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries.	Goal 5; 5.1-5.7 Goal 6; 6.1-6.8	Natural Systems, Land Use

24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(9)(A) Strategies to protect long-term viability of agricultural and forestlands should be encouraged and should include maintaining low overall density.	Goal 5; 5.1-5.7 Goal 6; 6.1-6.8	Natural Systems, Housing, Land Use
24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(9)(B) The manufacture and marketing of value-added agricultural and forest products should be encouraged.	Goal 5; 5.1-5.7	Natural Systems
24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(9)(C) The use of locally-grown food products should be encouraged.	Goal 5; 5.1-5.7	Natural Systems, Facilities, Utilities & Services,
24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(9)(D) Sound forest and agricultural management practices should be encouraged.	Goal 5; 5.1-5.7 Goal 6; 6.1-6.8	Natural Systems, Land Use
24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(9)(E) Public investment should be planned so as to minimize development pressure on agricultural and forest land.	Goal 5; 5.1-5.7 Goal 6; 6.1-6.8	Natural Systems, Land Use
24 V.S.A. § 4302 (c) (10) To provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont's natural resources and to facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources and the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the area.	Goal 5; 5.1-5.7 Goal 6; 6.1-6.8, Goal 7; 7.1-7.7	Natural Systems, Land Use
24 V.S.A. § 4302(c)(13) To ensure the availability of safe and affordable childcare and to integrate childcare issues into the planning process, including childcare financing, infrastructure, business assistance for childcare providers, and childcare workforce development.	Goal 1:1.1-1.5	Facilities, Utilities, Services